

GREATER TIFT COUNTY 2028 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Community Assessment

Tift County and the Cities of Omega, Tifton and Ty Ty



October 2008



Prepared by the
South Georgia
Regional Development Center

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Community Assessment is to present the foundation for the update of the Greater Tift County 2028 Comprehensive Plan. It provides a comprehensive review of the issues and opportunities that will affect the future growth of Tift County and the Cities of Omega, Tifton and Ty Ty. The Community Assessment includes an analysis and inventory of the existing Land Use, public policies and proposed revisions and capital improvements.

1.2 Preparation

The Community Assessment was prepared in compliance with the “Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning” as set forth by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) on May 1, 2005.

1.3 Scope

As required in the DCA Standards, the Community Assessment includes four basic components:

- 1) A list of issues and opportunities which the community wants to address.
- 2) An analysis of existing land use and development patterns.
- 3) An evaluation of the Community’s existing policies, actions, and development patterns for consistency with the State’s Quality Community Objectives.
- 4) An analysis of supporting data and information for seven different community elements: population, economic development, housing, natural and cultural resources, community facilities and services, intergovernmental coordination, and transportation.

The detailed statistical and quantitative findings of this assessment are included in the “Technical Addendum”.

2. STATEWIDE PLANNING GOALS

The State Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has established the following goals to assist communities in implementing their Comprehensive Plan. These goals will serve as a guide for the development of the Greater Tift County 2028 Comprehensive Plan and its Community Agenda.

2.1 Economic Development Goal

To achieve a growing and balanced economy, consistent with the prudent management of the state's resources that equitably benefits all segments of the population.

2.2 Natural and Cultural Resources Goal

To conserve and protect the environmental, natural and cultural resources of Georgia's communities, regions and the state.

2.3 Community Facilities and Services Goal

To ensure the provision of community facilities and services throughout the state to support efficient growth and development patterns that will protect and enhance the quality of life of Georgia's residents.

2.4 Housing Goal

To ensure that all residents of the state have access to adequate and affordable housing.

2.5 Land Use and Transportation Goal

To ensure the coordination of land use planning and transportation planning throughout the state in support of efficient growth and development patterns that will promote sustainable economic development, protection of natural and cultural resources and provision of adequate and affordable housing.

2.6 Intergovernmental Coordination

To ensure the coordination of local planning efforts with other local service providers and authorities, with neighboring communities and with state and regional plans and programs.

3. COMMUNITY PROFILE

Tift County is located in Southern Georgia along I-75 and US 82. Its population in 2004 was estimated to be 40,174 which was an increase of 4.61% from the 2000 census. Tift County encompasses 265.05 square miles and its municipalities include the City of Omega, the City of Tifton and the City of Ty Ty.

The City of Omega was originally a lumber town called “Surrey”. Omega was later named for the last letter of the Greek alphabet. It is generally thought this was chosen because Omega was located at the end of a railroad spur line from Tifton. It encompasses 1.78 square miles and is located on SR 319 in south-western Tift County on the border to Colquitt County. Omega had an estimated population of 1,353 in 2003.

The City of Tifton is located in the center of Tift County east and west of I-75. It is the County seat. The estimated population in 2003 was 15,863. With 8.63 square miles, it is Tift County’s largest municipality both in geographical size and population.

The City of Ty Ty encompasses 0.8 square miles and is located along SR 82 at the western border of Tift County with Worth County. There is some debate as to how the City of Ty Ty received its name: the first source is found on-line and states that the City was named for the railroad ties that were manufactured here; the second source familiar with the history of the City states that Ty Ty was named for the TITi bush that grew along the Ty Ty creek. In 2003 its estimated population was 741.

Location Map 3-1

4. ISSUES and OPPORTUNITIES

In order to be a realistic and implemental document, the Comprehensive Plan must identify and provide Tift County and its municipalities with workable goals, objectives and policies (= strategies) which will address the issues facing the communities and embrace opportunities that present themselves to Greater Tift County. The Technical Addendum of this document was the first step taken towards identifying these issues and opportunities. The quantitative information detailed in the addendum is summarized in the Community Assessment in a series of concise issue and opportunity statements. However, this series of statements is only a preliminary list of potential issues. The list will be further studied, refined and prioritized during subsequent local public and technical planning efforts and a final list of locally defined issues and opportunities for Greater Tift County will be included and published in the Community Agenda, which is the third and final portion of the Comprehensive Plan.

The following issues and opportunities are organized according to the elements of the Comprehensive Plan:

- Population
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Facilities and Services
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Intergovernmental Coordination

The issues and opportunities statements included here will be presented and discussed with the Steering Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee which were formed to guide the development of the Comprehensive Plan. These statements will also be presented during public participation workshops in the planning process. Through these discussions and the resulting feedback the final list of issues and opportunities to be presented in the Community Agenda will be developed as well as a series of strategies and implementation programs. These strategies and implementation programs will be the basis for the Short Term Work Program component of the Comprehensive Plan.

4.1 Population Change

Trend:

Past and current population trends show an annual net gain of approximately 6.5 % for Tift County and its municipalities. Like most areas in the region, its population is aging, but apparent is also that the younger population is stabilizing instead of increasing with an increase in the population segments of 0 – 13 year old. This indicates that the area will continue to have a considerable segment of younger families.

Issues:

- **Sustainability:** Development of traditional sub-urban style single family developments are among the most costly and least sustainable types of housing developments to provide in terms of infrastructure, fire/EMS, police and other services and in terms of impacts to the natural environment.
- **Competing Needs:** Young families and “empty-nesters” may compete for the same segment in housing and therefore create an even tighter supply of smaller, affordable and entry-level housing.
- **Population Diversification:** The tax impacts of a change to an overall older population are not entirely clear and need to be understood before a concentration or marketing to that population segment will be made a priority.
- **Ethnic Diversity:** Greater Tift County, as many other counties across the country, has been experiencing an influx and greater diversity of residents from different ethnic backgrounds. Different housing needs, educational needs, family needs and workforce skills need to be addressed to achieve a seamless integration into society and neighborhoods.

Opportunities:

- The Greater Tift County area already has shown commitment to managing growth and development pressures through thoughtful and pro-active planning. Recent planning efforts such as the Comprehensive Environmental Management Plan, the on-going revision of the City of Tifton’s Unified Land Development Code, the designation of “Signature City”, the Brownfield Initiative and the recent designation as “Water First” Community are examples of such pro-active planning that needs to be supported and continued.
- The projected growth of older households may also create a market for other more sustainable housing alternatives from the currently dominating single family subdivisions.
- The rise in elderly population may enhance a community’s economic base and provide a largely untapped knowledge and experience base for the labor market.
- A greater ethnic diversity in the population will contribute to a greater diversity in workforce skills and cultural backgrounds which can contribute to create a more well-rounded society with a higher quality of life for all.

4.2. Economic Development

Trend:

Greater Tift County is losing manufacturing industry that was more evenly distributed throughout the County, but is gaining on service sector jobs and health care and education jobs due to the concentration of several institutions of higher education in the area north of Tifton and the growth and development of the Tift County Regional Medical Center. Despite this growth job opportunities for professional jobs are still lacking, recruitment of more industry, especially agriculturally related, is needed in combination with education programs to produce a sufficiently sized workforce with the appropriate skills to be marketed.

Issues:

- **Return on investment for Ag Businesses:** Find opportunities for the agricultural businesses and operations to receive a return on their investment in order to preserve agriculture in the area.
- **Opportunities for Young People:** Private/public partnerships need to be established to provide summer jobs and internships for the younger population segments to attract and retain younger people and increase workforce pool and expertise, not just in commercial and industrial areas, but also in the agricultural area.
- **Lack of local Area Jobs:** The area lacks local employment opportunities.
- **Low average wages:** The area lacks high paying jobs; the average wage is still below Georgia’s state average.
- **Low local Workforce Education Level:** The area lacks a qualified workforce with sufficient education. Educational level of the workforce is an issue in Tift County, as those who do not have high school diplomas are not ready skill-wise to embrace opportunities at MTC, ABAC, etc. Tift County eliminated its support of Literacy Volunteers last year. Literacy Volunteers is a key player in the Adult Literacy arena, but had to cut the director’s position to half-time because of Tift County’s cut. MTC’s adult literacy program is the largest player, but it is not able to expand its program in Tift County because of funding limitations. Next year is expected to be even tighter because of federal reductions in funding to adult programs. Educating the adult population remains key to educating the school-aged population.
- **Community Identity:** Tifton/Tift County does not have a discernable character or identity. The development of an identity or “brand” for the area could help economic development initiatives and

provide a tool to promote the Greater Tift County area as a quality community in which to live and do business in.

- **Lack of Utilization of I-75 Interchanges:** Tift County has seven interchanges with I-75, of which only two are fully utilized. Tift County needs to exploit its location and transportation infrastructure including the airport, to attract new distribution centers and possibly create an inland port.
- **Relocate Recycling Center to property across from Heatcraft.** The Recycling Center occupies desirable industrial location and this way would still be kept in the industrial park.
- **Vacant Buildings.** Vacant buildings could be purchased and refurbished and made available for potential prospects.
- **Lack of first-class offices buildings.**
- **Lack of Marketing Materials.** Develop marketing materials to distribute to developers, potential prospects, trade associations, etc and develop and budget for an advertising program. Also continue to work with state and power company project officials to keep the area in the eye of potential prospects.
- **Permitting Process:** The permitting processes are often inconsistent and do not provide sufficient guidance and flexibility to allow for sustainable development and consistency for developers.

Opportunities:

- Development of Agricultural Small Business, agriculture related business and niche farming would build on the existing agricultural culture, expand the business and take advantage of developments, expertise and support at the local higher educational institutions. This would include forming Co-ops for commodities such as vegetables or bio-energy and ethanol.
- Private/public partnerships need to be established to provide summer jobs and internships for the younger population segments to attract and retain younger people and increase workforce pool and expertise, not just in commercial and industrial areas, but also in the agricultural area.
- Public/private partnerships need to be established to provide education of the workforce for higher paying jobs and assist in training and placement. Continue to work with Moultrie Tech and Quick Start as a valuable recruiting tool. Continue to work with the Adult Literacy programs in the area to provide necessary basic skill levels in the workforce.
- Improved quality of life will attract more residents, a better workforce and better employment opportunities by attracting industries that will rely on these residents.
- Increase and encourage research to find viable solutions to our energy problems and to produce food and fiber more efficiently by working with more efficient farming methods, utilizing more effective irrigation and finding natural (without chemicals or pesticides) ways for disease control, and possibly put a model into place for others to follow as an example in Tift County.
- Local educational institutions such as ABAC, Moultrie Tech, Troy University, and the University of Georgia Tifton Campus need to be recognized as providing a great base for a workforce and a great asset for economic development and attraction and retention of industry. USDA and UGA need to expand their research efforts in Tifton.
- Pursue the designation of Greater Tift County as a Center of Excellence in Agriculture for the Southeastern United States. The area currently hosts the Agricultural Innovation Center, leads the world in turf grass development and other innovative agricultural research.
- The health care industry in the area needs to be recognized as a basis for higher paying jobs and a potential regional growth industry.

- Greater Tift County needs to utilize ag-businesses, the educational institutions and the health care sector as a basis to attract other, related clean industry.
- Tourism efforts should be strengthened to create a Convention and Visitor's Bureau, and create opportunities for tourists to stay overnight. This could be achieved by attracting sporting events that would attract visitors and families, encouraging agri-tourism and eco-tourism as well as other cultural-heritage events.
- Assist in the development of hotel and conference facilities across from the Conference Center to take advantage of first-class conference facilities. Assist the Agrirama and its committee in pursuing these goals.
- Strengthen retail opportunities through tax allocation districts and other tools that aid retail development. Tifton is ranked ninth in the State in retail pull power with 1.57. A pull factor greater than 1.00 indicates that a community is capturing more retail sales from consumers in other communities than it is losing.
- Strengthen Greater Tift County's reputation as a place for government offices, corporate headquarters and data processing centers.
- Implement Tax Allocation Districts.
- Develop a high-quality business park to attract back-office headquarters.
- City of Ty Ty is home to the Ty Ty Nursery and Smith's Nursery. The nurseries are a destination for tourists and should be promoted to encourage more visitors. Proposed commercial main street character area could tie into the theme.
- The extension of the airport runway to 7,000 feet may contribute significantly in the ability to attract businesses that rely on general aviation activities for employees and their business.
- Streamline and coordinate the permitting processes in Greater Tift County to provide consistency and incentives for developers to provide high quality development while also guaranteeing sustainable and quality development for Greater Tift County without undue tax burden or burden on the natural and social environment.
- Develop a comprehensive marketing plan to develop a community identity with strategies on how to implement the marketing plan.

4.3 Housing

Trend:

Greater Tift County has many areas that consist of older housing stock which require maintenance and repair, but which remain affordable for many of the residents. New housing is being built and proposed, however, much of it does not address the need for additional affordable, but good quality housing stock for younger families and retirees. Mobile Homes now fulfill the need for affordable housing and some communities consist of as much as 60% of Mobile Homes as their housing stock. Programs need to be developed to address housing needs for quality affordable housing. These new programs would be in addition to existing programs administered by the Community Development Authority.

Issues:

- **Older Housing Stock:** Many areas in Greater Tift County consist of older housing development; while many are stable neighborhoods, there are some instances of maintenance issues. To ensure the continued stability of these neighborhoods, continued code enforcement, community policing and property maintenance support programs are needed. This applies to all areas of Tift County including Tifton, Ty Ty, and Omega.

- **Lack of Affordable, Good Quality Housing:** Greater Tift County must adopt a strategy to accommodate the anticipated increase in need for affordable housing.
- **Location and lack of maintenance of Mobile Home Parks specifically and rental properties in general often result in low-quality housing:** strategies need to be adopted to encourage maintenance of existing Mobile Home Parks. Mobile Homes are for many residents in the low and very low income groups the only option to own their home and possibly the land it is placed on.
- **Segregation of Housing Stock:** Mix of higher priced and affordable housing has not been proven and successfully implemented.
- **Vacant Lots:** vacant lots need to be maintained instead of being neglected and can serve as infill development locations.
- **Lack of opportunities and lack of knowledge to attain homeownership:** of quality affordable housing by working poor and even “middle” income families.

Opportunities:

- Construction of quality housing tailored for retirees can attract more retirees to the area.
- Continued and joint implementation of the Georgia Initiatives for Community Housing.
- Greater Tift County needs to take advantage of the opportunity to promote a more sustainable growth that addresses the community’s desire for a greener environment.
- Develop mechanisms to maintain the value of the existing and future housing stock, while also providing diverse, affordable and quality housing. This can be done by taking advantage of the downtown mixed use character, where urban lofts and condominiums can be included or by incorporating incentives or requirements for developers to provide a certain amount of affordable housing either by contributing to a fund or providing them on-site or off-site.
- Old neighborhoods are also perceived as providing quality character to the area and should be maintained and preserved in high quality.
- A major chain grocery store located close to residential neighborhoods would certainly help attract more building of houses.
- Provide a menu of incentives for affordable housing such as allowing a mix of housing sizes while maintaining the same quality of housing, funding contributions for off-site construction of affordable housing in exchange for incentives, off-site or on-site construction of affordable housing in exchange for pre-determined incentives.
- Jointly adopt and implement the International Property Maintenance Code to give Code Enforcement the abilities and tools to encourage proper maintenance and clean-up of properties.
- Provide educational workshops, seminars and other support for potential homeowners to achieve homeownership.
- Develop partnerships to build and market affordable infill housing in urban areas of Greater Tift County.

4.4 Natural Resources

Trend:

Pressures from new development have been negatively impacting environmental resources, especially groundwater recharge areas and existing native habitat, be it upland or wetland habitat. Development proposals are being submitted

and approved without the appropriate safeguards in place to protect existing natural resources from these development pressures and to assure sufficient mitigation. The desire is strong among residents and elected officials to provide such safeguards and ensure continued quality of life through sufficient greenspace, open space and protection of natural resources.

Issues:

- **Water Resource:** Water in general and groundwater specifically are becoming a resource in high demand and low supply. No development should decrease in any way the carrying capacity of drainage basins.
- **Groundwater Recharge Areas:** existing groundwater recharge areas need to be protected from direct impacts (draining) by development and need to be protected from pollution to keep drinking water safe and clean.
- **Green and Open Space Conservation & Development:** Trees and other natural resources are not protected enough.
- **Parks and Recreation Space Creation:** facilities that promote fitness and social, outdoors gatherings including recreation facilities and bike routes in greenways need to be expanded.
- **Existing Parks improvements to function as social gathering spaces.** Existing parks need to be improved with facilities such as gazebos, picnic areas etc. to be utilized more fully as social gathering spaces.
- **Pressures from agricultural and development communities** continue to impede on the sensitive wetlands environments, especially along I-75 and Hwy 82.

Opportunities:

- Create a vision for quality and sustainable growth in the Greater Tift County Area.
- Create preservation opportunities for wetlands such as using docks or boardwalks to cross a wetland rather than filling it in; lay-out of access paths along high ground; preserve existing drainage and minimize diverting water to or from wetland areas; avoid clearing or replacing natural native vegetation along the wetland edge (create a buffer); control exotic/invasive plant species; and follow State/Federal wetland regulations.
- To protect groundwater recharge areas, the following protection opportunities include: wellhead protection program; limit impermeable surfaces with maximum building footprints and maximum paving areas; require sewer service instead of septic systems, especially for non-residential; establish zoning overlay districts; and provide incentives for recharge sensitive design.
- Designate the location of a regional water reservoir for Tift County if applicable.
- Develop implementation measures for conservation to protect existing and especially mature trees and other natural resources including wetlands and native upland habitat by allowing credits for wetland and upland preservation, mitigation or rehabilitation including on-site and off-site, other mitigation alternatives and requiring a certain minimum amount of existing native habitat for landscaping purposes.
- Open Space and Green Space are viewed by residents as part of the attractiveness of Greater Tift County. Encourage and expand the protection of those resources.
- Open Space and Green Space requirements need to be made part of the approval process for site plans and subdivision early on to ensure that sufficient, contiguous and quality land is set aside and not left-over parcels under power lines. No site plan or subdivision plan approval should be given without meeting these criteria.

- Requirements shall be established that all residential subdivisions and site plans provide sufficient and contiguous passive and active recreation space for its residents. The quantity (acreage) of recreation land to be set aside shall be tied to a threshold dependent on the number of dwelling units.
- Requirements shall be established to preserve and protect all existing and future water recharge areas.
- Include the recommendations of the CEMP into the Comprehensive Plan and incorporate the CEMP itself by reference.
- Provide incentives to utilize existing native vegetation to satisfy landscaping requirements. This will also promote water conservation and be more cost effective.
- Match trees and spaces.
- Protect and preserve farmland by developing programs such as Transfer or Purchase of Development Rights Programs, Agricultural Easement Purchase Programs; Conservation Easement Programs; giving Local Tax Incentives; or providing for Agricultural Overlay Districts.
- Incorporate the development and maintenance of stormwater and flood control plans into Open Space and Green Space preservation through incentives or design alternatives.

4.5 Cultural Resources:

Trend:

Identification, preservation, and promotion of Greater Tift County's cultural resources have been fueled by public and private efforts, such as historic societies, museums, and the Georgia Museum of Agriculture (Agrirama). In fact, since the adoption of the Georgia Historic Preservation Act in 1980, only the City of Tifton has enacted a local historic preservation ordinance and been active in promoting their cultural and architectural heritage. Omega, Ty Ty, and unincorporated Tift County are lacking in historic preservation efforts.

Issues:

- **Identification of Historic and Cultural Resources:** A comprehensive historic resource survey for Greater Tift County has not been completed. Detailed surveys for the historic downtown of the City of Tifton are available however at the library, the City Clerk's office and other locations.
- **Protection for Historic and Cultural Resources:** Local historic preservation programs are either inadequate or do not exist for areas outside of the existing designated historic districts.
- **Abandoned, Dilapidated, and/or Contaminated Buildings:** Historic buildings that are empty, in poor repair, or contaminated by lead paint and/or asbestos are a frequent occurrence throughout Greater Tift County.
- **Citizens are Unaware of Historic and Cultural Resources:** Due to the lack of local preservation programs and the lack of funding for cultural programs, many of Greater Tift County's citizens are unaware of historic and cultural resources or their benefits.
- **Development Encroaching on Historic Property:** The high rate of growth Greater Tift County is experiencing may threaten historic resources and cultural landscapes.

Opportunities:

- The first step in protecting historic and cultural resources is identifying what resources exist. Greater Tift County should undertake a county-wide, comprehensive historic resources survey, as a survey of this type

would aid in creating a locally-based historic resources inventory that could be used in both statewide and local planning processes.

- Tift County, Omega, and Ty Ty have the opportunity to adopt proactive regulations, such as historic preservation ordinances or character area plans before continued insensitive development results in a permanent loss of their historic and cultural resources.
- Underutilized historic buildings and structures throughout Greater Tift County should be adaptively used.
- Develop a joint Greater Tift County local incentive or assistance program to encourage local building owners to take advantage of the voluntary historic designation process for their buildings. Such local incentives could be tax incentives, cash or in-kind.
- Greater Tift County’s cultural resources could be promoted and used to market the area, increasing economic and tourism opportunities in its communities.
- Develop a comprehensive Cultural Heritage Plan to identify cultural gaps and needs for Greater Tift County and identify fiscal needs and possible resources as well.
- Public education programs about Greater Tift County’s cultural resources and historic preservation, such as recently developed brochures, could be created to inform citizens about their importance. Educational programs could also be developed for school-age children promoting local history and heritage.

4.6 Community Facilities and Services

Trend:

Developments have been approved and built without taking into consideration the cumulative impact on the existing infrastructure and any capacity improvements necessary to accommodate those impacts. Local governments have been planning reactively to address the impacts and taxpayers have shouldered the burden. Local governments are starting to require that all infrastructure improvements for developments have to be in place ahead of development and should be partly, if not completely financed by the developers. The City of Tifton and Tift County have been recognized for their commitment to protection and stewardship of their water resources with their “Water First Community” designation by the State of Georgia.

Issues:

- **Increasing Demand for Services:** Greater Tift County is growing with a more diverse population and industry and with that growth comes an increasing demand for services. Careful planning and coordination is required to ensure that adequate services are available for the next 20 years.
- **Litter Removal:** Funding needs to be provided for an efficient and effective litter removal throughout the County.
- **Provision and Timing of Services:** Residential and commercial developments are approved and constructed without ensuring that the proper services (water, sewer, roads) are in place when the impacts occur. Projected capacity needs and funding sources for the provision of capacity for water, sewer, roads, fire/EMS and police have to be established prior to any approvals of subdivisions or site plans.
- **Lack of Curbside Recycling.** Efforts should be made to bring back curbside recycling and put into effect county-wide.
- **City of Omega Sewer Capacity:** The City of Omega is at capacity of accepting new permits because the capacity of the existing sludge fields has been exhausted. New sludge fields have been purchased and are in the process of being readied for acceptance of sewer. It is anticipated that the new capacity will last for 20 years based on existing growth.

- **City of Omega Groundwater Wells.** Omega’s groundwater wells are located within the City and are surrounded by residential or commercial development. Sufficient safeguards need to be established that no contamination or degradation of the water quality occurs by limiting the types of uses within a certain distance of the wells to prohibit any kind of hazardous substances within the cone of influence of the wells.
- **City of Ty Ty Groundwater Wells.** Ty Ty’s groundwater wells are also located within the City and are surrounded by residential or commercial development. Sufficient safeguards need to be established that no contamination or degradation of the water quality occurs by limiting the types of uses within a certain distance of the wells to prohibit any kind of hazardous substances within the cone of influence of the wells.
- **City of Omega lack of local EMS service.** The City of Omega is building a new Fire station and needs to work with Greater Tift County Fire Department to locate an EMS service and vehicle at that fire station.
- **Lack of EMS services for the unincorporated area of Brookfield.** Brookfield also is in need of an EMS service and needs to work with Greater Tift County Fire Department to locate an EMS service in that area.
- **City of Ty Ty lack of local EMS service.** The City of Ty Ty is in need of an EMS Service and needs to work with Greater Tift County EMS to locate an EMS service in that area.
- **City of Ty Ty:** needs to provide additional capacity for water system improvements, including improvements and repairs to elevated water storage tank, upgrading water and sewer lines, and expansion of water treatment facility.
- **Lack of requirements for treatment of Stormwater.** Requirements need to be established to provide proof and detail on provision of adequate on-site and off-site retention and detention of stormwater concurrent with development. Such proof needs to be established prior to approval of residential and non-residential subdivisions or site plans
- **Cumulative impacts of approvals are not taken into account.** Requirements need to be established to account for cumulative impacts of development on existing and proposed facilities.
- **Infrastructure constructed without meeting City/County/State Standards.** Often local governments are asked to take ownership of infrastructure once that infrastructure needs major repairs or maintenance, but it doesn’t meet the local government’s standards.
- **Lack of funding for Library Operations and Programs:** The library has struggled to serve Tift County while undergoing a renovation of its facilities. It considered building a new building which would better address future needs, but was unable to find enough funding to proceed. Now, the board is renovating a facility which allows for no new programs.
- **Veterans Park and Track Park in the City of Omega** need improvements such as shelters, gazebos, Picnic Areas and other active recreational amenities to be more fully utilized for social gatherings.

Opportunities:

- Plan and guide the growth via the provision of water and sewer lines and tie the services into the appropriate land use.
- Tie the timing of development approvals to the construction of water and sewer services and roads. Services need to be part of the development.

- Shared cost of providing public services and facilities for new development – The developers need to bear the cost of providing public services and facilities. Improved planning could ensure services and facilities are used most efficiently as development occurs.
- Establish a joint Capital Improvement Program for all the communities which would be updated annually and would aid in planning future investments.
- Fire and Police Services need to be maintained at excellent quality of service standards.
- The Strategic Water Plan needs to be part of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Develop education programs and identify fiscal resources for implementation to teach the importance of litter control and water conservation to the new generations from K-12 in public and private schools.
- Develop strategies to conserve and limit water use by offering credits or incentives to local water providers/farmers/companies that hold permits and do not withdraw the maximum amount that their permit allows; promote water conservation programs and funding opportunities for irrigation retrofits, use of grey water; construction of catchment ponds; provide education opportunities for homeowners and businesses on low-flow fixtures, xeri-scaping etc.
- Develop a 5-year Capital Improvements Program for construction of Public Facilities not just limited to water, sewer and roads, but also include public services such as parks, libraries and other public buildings.

4.7 Land Use and Development

Trend:

Redevelopment of the downtown area, providing cohesiveness and integration with the interchange areas, and attraction and expansion of targeted industries offer new opportunities for greater Tift County to find itself as a unique destination and more sustainable community that supports a healthy quality of life for its residents and businesses alike.

Issues:

- **Threat to Rural Character:** Maintain the rural character of the area despite growth and development pressures.
- **Threat to existing Farmland:** Encroaching development poses a threat to existing farmland, not only by turning existing farmland into residential subdivisions, but also by endangering neighboring farmland through perception of incompatible uses.
- **Uncontrolled Growth:** Slow the uncontrolled growth of traditional housing areas or subdivisions to control impacts and assure that services are available before or at the same time as the houses.
- **Urban Sprawl:** Land Use is not defined enough to avoid urban sprawl and to provide a balance between housing, commercial demand and the environment.
- **Community Identity:** Tifton/Tift County does not have a discernable character or identity. The development of an identity or “brand” for the area could help economic development initiatives and provide a tool to promote the Greater Tift County area as a quality community in which to live and do business.
- **Lack of Cohesiveness in Planning:** There is no integration of the areas around the interchanges and downtown which would provide a cohesive use of land and architecture.

- **Inappropriate Lot Sizes:** Residential developers expect to buy agricultural properties and develop them to suburban standards with small lots which are out of character with the area. Lot sizes need to be appropriate to the area.
- **Use of Resources:** Traditional suburban development designs contribute to increase and excess in energy use.
- **Aid to struggling areas:** Opportunities for reinvestment and redevelopment of declining residential and commercial areas need to be created.
- **Approval of Subdivision with sufficient available service capacity for water, sewer and roads.** Subdivisions should only be approved when sufficient capacity is available for them and no development should be approved that would decrease the capacity of drainage basins.
- **Lack of Scrutiny of Developments before approval.** Development review needs to hold all developments to the same standards of development review to provide consistency and certainty for all parties involved.
- **Lack of quality Grocery Stores and more high-end retail.** Many people will travel out of town to find more diversity in retail and groceries.
- **Lack of Recreation Amenities.** There is a perceived lack of activities for the evening hours including quality movie theatre, restaurants and other entertainment activities.
- **Flexibility to Implement Mixed Uses.** All current zoning regulations in the area lack the flexibility to implement a mixed use development, both vertically and horizontally. Zoning Districts should not be based on lot sizes but on gross density per acre.
- **Lack of Medical Emergency Facility in Omega, Ty Ty and Brooksville:** Omega, Ty Ty and Brooksville do not have a medical emergency facility; residents have to drive to Tifton for emergency treatment. A facility such as the one on the south side of Tifton needs to be established in Omega and Ty Ty.
- **Many non-conforming structures and uses exist.** Most of these non-conforming uses and structures suffer from lack of maintenance and aesthetics and need to be phased out as soon as possible or renovated or replaced.
- **Lack of affordable housing.** Smaller lot sizes with smaller houses need to be available throughout the community where appropriate and where sustainable with water and sewer in order to provide good quality entry level housing.

Opportunities:

- Improved quality of life will attract more residents, a better workforce and better employment opportunities by attracting industries that will rely on these residents.
- Protect existing farmland from development by developing incentives to keep farmland agricultural and make it productive for farmers to do so and require sufficient buffers or transitional areas to protect existing farm operations from perception and complaints about incompatible farming uses next to newer residential subdivisions.
- Develop incentives for developers to incorporate more than minimum required green space, open space and conservation areas into their subdivision designs.
- Land Use needs to be defined to avoid urban sprawl and to provide a balance between housing, commercial demand and the environment. Certain areas of the County should incorporate the possibility for high density development where appropriate.

- Develop a cost sharing mechanism where developers bear the cost of infrastructure and services to support their development.
- Develop regulations that will require that utilities in all new subdivisions be located underground.
- Develop and create opportunities for mixed-use communities integrating housing and commercial.
- EMAG needs to be utilized as a Land Use Steering Committee to help implement the Comprehensive Plan after it is adopted.
- Greater Tift County needs to adopt the vision of developing into a “Green Community” and take action to implement that vision. A “Green Community” development goal would give greater Tift County the tools to distinguish itself from any other community. Develop a comprehensive plan to outline and implement a cohesive identity and community.
- Develop an overlay zone or zoning district to develop the interchange and downtown areas into a cohesive and integrated area.
- Coordinate with the School Board on Future Land Use designations to locate schools in areas where residential development is desirable.
- Tie development approvals to the provision of appropriate roads, sidewalks and green spaces (open space and conservation). Developments need to define their set asides for roads, water, sewer and green space up front prior to review and approval.
- Designate minimum lot sizes to maintain character of an area, e.g. large minimum lot size of 5 acres for agricultural/rural areas. Lot sizes need to be tied to land use.
- Designate minimum requirements for set-asides such as open space/green space and landscaping.
- Protect natural resources within developments by promoting the use of conservation subdivision designs. Create a conservation subdivision ordinance and provide incentives for creating those and providing greenway connections.
- Future energy needs and cost need to be included in the design of development.
- Encourage quality sustainable growth by encouraging more traditional neighborhood developments. They may not be viable in every situation, but they should be required when developing adjacent or within the more urban areas.
- Encourage regulation of rental properties for proper maintenance and limit number of occupants for safety.
- Provide regulations that will ensure that existing and proposed uses are compatible and to ensure that proposed uses are appropriate and compatible with natural and cultural uses surrounding it.
- Provide regulations that ensure that any proposed zoning will be compatible with the underlying “Future Land Use” as shown in the Comprehensive Plan. No zoning shall be approved that is not consistent with the comprehensive plan. A compatibility matrix shall be established to provide an easy overview at which “Future Land Use Designations” and zoning categories are allowed. The Unified Code shall determine appropriate permitted uses, special exceptions and accessory uses for each zoning category.
- Develop regulations that will provide more flexibility in zoning and uses, provide for decentralized nodes (like mini-communities), provide links from there to the educational institutions and provide corridors (including bike and pedestrian) from one node/mini-community to another.

4.8 Transportation

Trend:

Existing roads are falling behind in carrying capacity due to faster than anticipated growth of residential and non-residential development in fringe areas; congestion, delays and increased traffic accidents occur as a result. Cross-connectivity and access management is needed to manage existing and future traffic. Bicycle and pedestrian planning in general has not kept up with development and lack of these facilities is sorely evident in non-motorized vehicles using major roadways.

Issues:

- **Increase Safety for School Children:** Providing safe walkways for children walking to school.
- **Creating a Safe Bicycle and Pedestrian Friendly Community:** The opportunity for increasing bicycling and pedestrian activity should be considered as part of road improvement projects. Paving shoulders or providing bike lanes can be accommodated as part of road maintenance or widening improvements. Such implementation measures will make bike and sidewalk projects more economical and part of a “complete road” concept. Throughout the county, there is a lack of sidewalks along residential roadways; this is a problem especially within the city limits. Safety is also an issue as bicycles and increasingly motorized wheelchairs utilize traffic lanes.
- **Competing Business Areas:** A proposed truck route around Tifton may jeopardize the redevelopment of downtown by luring businesses to the truck route, however, it may also provide for easier access to the downtown by eliminating heavy truck traffic in that area. Appropriate zoning districts will need to be put into place along the truck route so not to provide competition for downtown businesses.
- **Parking:** Any revitalization of downtown areas needs to take into consideration the often competing needs of number and location of parking spaces. A sufficient number and distribution of parking spaces is needed to ensure viability of the businesses without detracting from the attractiveness of the area, siting a parking structure into the middle of a block, or covering a large expansive area with asphalt instead of attractive green space.
- **Highway 82 Corridor and other Entry Roads into Tifton lack landscaping and beautification.** The Hwy 82 corridor specifically, but all entry roads coming from the interchanges need to be cleaned up and beautified to serve as an entrance statements to and throughout the community. Beautification and landscaping standards should be adopted for all major highways and collectors.
- **Lack of road maintenance.** Many roads in Greater Tift County lack a sufficient maintenance program to fix pot holes, dirt roads need to be paved.
- **Traffic safety in rental areas** – rental areas appear to have a larger problem with residents speeding on roads, parking in inappropriate areas and engine noise. Traffic calming measures should be stepped up in rental areas as well as increased maintenance of roads.
- **Widening of Moore Hwy.** The widening including the addition of turn lanes for Moore Hwy/8th Street/Baldwin Avenue would greatly increase traffic flow and safety for adjacent areas.
- **Provide an alternative road from the Holiday Inn to Wal-Mart other than Hwy 82.** The proposed truck route in the southern part of Tifton would address this issue.
- **Multiple Access Points and Increased Connectivity.** Requirements need to be established for the approval of residential and non-residential subdivisions and site plans to provide for multiple access

points to the surrounding roadway network to distribute the traffic more evenly, to avoid congestion, and to provide more access points for emergency services and vehicles.

- **Major Transportation Corridors are too centered and concentrated.** Encourage that major transportation corridors will be developed concurrent with growth to provide better east-west and north-south access where desired for growth.
- **Lack of Public Transportation.** Lack of public transportation was specifically noticed in areas of higher education and areas medical facilities.

Opportunities:

- Any truck route around Tifton would have to be carefully planned in conjunction with future land use and development to provide complementary uses and not jeopardize revitalization of downtown.
- Accelerate widening Carpenter Road and other roadways improvements to provide sufficient capacity for existing and proposed development.
- Develop an access management plan for all major corridors throughout the County to maximize traffic flow and safety.
- Lobby State and federal officials for support to accelerate funding for the truck route.
- Requirements need to be established that all public or private roads meet subdivision standards including right-of-way dedications as part of the residential and non-residential site plan and subdivision approval process. No site plan or subdivision plan approval shall be given without meeting these criteria.
- Develop requirements for contiguous sidewalks and bike paths including the potential for overpasses or underpasses.
- Extension of the airport runway to 7,000 feet.

4.9 Intergovernmental Coordination

Trend:

The decreasing availability of state and federal funds require that Omega, Ty Ty, Tifton and Tift County maintain a high level of coordination with each other and with regional and state officials.

Issues:

- **Coordination to provide effective and efficient services:** as the cities and Tift County increasingly rely on each other to provide services, all entities need to ensure that proper agreements are in place to ensure adequate delivery of public services to its citizens across jurisdictional boundaries.
- **Reactivate the Citizens:** There is a feeling that local citizens are more reactive than proactive. Local governments should maintain strong communication links with citizens and civic organization to encourage all to become active participants in the local civic life.
- **Lack of public notice and transparency of approval process.** All agendas and minutes shall be published on the governments' websites for public review.
- **Lack of coordination with long-term School Board planning** and location of major schools jeopardizes long-term planning for infrastructure and cohesive land use planning and designation of appropriate zoning districts.

Opportunities:

- The population at large and specifically the older population segment provide a significant pool of volunteers, resources and expertise that needs to be tapped into for the good of the community.
- Provide more coordination between the jurisdictions by adopting unified, if at a minimum, consistent codes and standards.
- Appoint a School Board member to the Greater Tift County Planning & Zoning Commission, voting or non-voting, to provide input and feedback on all development items before the Commission and to improve coordination with the School Board on all planning issues.
- Involve the Hospital Authority in all major planning efforts and issues coming before the Planning & Zoning Commission.

5. ANALYSIS OF EXISTING LAND USE and DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

In order to adequately develop Greater Tift County’s vision for future development, an understanding of its historic development and existing land use patterns is necessary. For a future vision to be achievable, it must be grounded in the reality of the current environment. This section provides a brief synopsis of the historical development of Greater Tift County, an analysis of the Existing Land Use, and a discussion of the development patterns including any Character Areas and Areas which may require Special Attention during the planning process.

5.1 Existing Land Use

An existing land use map is a representation of what is on the ground at any given point in time. For the purpose of this analysis, the City of Omega, City of Tifton, City of Ty Ty and Tift County Existing Land Use Maps (Map 5-1 through 5-4) were created based on physical site visits and information received from the Tift County Tax Assessor’s Office. The depicted uses may or may not be accurately reflected by the property’s current zoning classification

Table 5-1: Current Land Use Categories

USE	OVERVIEW
Residential	The predominant use of land within this category is for single family and multi-family dwelling units organized into general categories of net densities.
Commercial	Land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities, organized into general categories of densities. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building. Office uses may be separated from other commercial uses such as retail, service or entertainment.
Industrial	Land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction activities, or other similar uses.
Public/Institutional	State, federal or local government uses and institutional land uses. These include city halls, government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc. Institutional land uses include colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals, etc.
Transportation/Communication Utilities	Includes major transportation routes, public transit stations, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, airports, ports, or other similar uses.
Park/Recreation/Conservation	Land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. May be publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, parks, preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers or other similar uses.
Agriculture/Forestry	Land dedicated to farming, agriculture or commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting.
Undeveloped/Vacant	Tracts of land that are served by typical urban services (water, sewer etc) but have not been developed for a specific use or were developed for a specific use that has since been abandoned.
Mixed Use	Mixed Land Use Categories may be created and applied at the discretion of a community. If used, they must be clearly defined, including the types of land uses allowed, the distribution of mixes of uses, and the allowable density of each use.
Historic	Land dedicated to uses that have received designation as historical structures or uses in the Federal or State Historical registers.
Water bodies	Water bodies such as lakes, streams, wetlands typically used in passive or active recreation or conservation/preservation.

Table 5-2: Current Land Use Unincorporated Tift County, November 2007

Existing Land Use Category	Acres	% of Total
Residential	17,182.96	10.57
Commercial	2,772.38	1.71
Industrial	615.54	0.38
Public/Institutional	5,829.16	3.59
Transportation/Communication Utilities	6,269.89	3.86
Park/Recreation/Conservation	91,558.31	56.33
Agriculture/Forestry	27,891.80	17.16
Vacant/undeveloped		
Historic		
Water	10,225.63	6.29
unknown	184.84	0.11
Total	162,530.51	100.00

Source: Tift County Tax Assessor, November 2007

Table 5-3: Current Land Use City of Omega, November 2007

Existing Land Use Category	Acres	% of Total
Residential	243.22	21.09
Commercial	50.24	4.36
Industrial	1.07	0.09
Public/Institutional	46.61	4.04
Transportation/Communication Utilities	108.25	9.39
Park/Recreation/Conservation	472.12	40.94
Agriculture/Forestry	179.12	15.53
Undeveloped/Vacant		
Historic		
Water	13.00	1.13
unknown	39.58	3.43
Total	1,153.21	100.00

Source: Tift County Tax Assessor, November 2007

Table 5-4: Current Land Use City of Tifton, November 2007

Existing Land Use Category	Acres	% of Total
Residential	2,290.13	28.43
Commercial	1,174.95	14.58
Industrial	89.23	1.11
Public/Institutional	1,434.47	17.80
Transportation/Communication Utilities	1,252.25	15.54
Park/Recreation/Conservation	7.71	0.10
Agriculture/Forestry	1,376.45	17.08
Undeveloped/Vacant		
Historic	0.87	0.01
Water	430.49	5.34
unknown	0.03	0.00
Total	8,056.58	100.00

Source: Tift County Tax Assessor, November 2007

Table 5-5: Current Land Use City of Ty Ty, November 2007

Existing Land Use Category	Acres	% of Total
Residential	174.19	34.09
Commercial	36.82	7.21
Industrial	0.00	0.00
Public/Institutional	89.18	17.45
Transportation/Communication Utilities	59.20	11.59
Park/Recreation/Conservation	5.78	1.13
Agriculture/Forestry	138.87	27.18
Undeveloped/Vacant		
Mixed Use		
Historic	0.00	0.00
Water	6.56	1.28
Unknown	0.37	0.07
Total	510.97	100.00

Source: Tift County Tax Assessor, November 2007

Unincorporated Tift County has a large percentage of its land use in agriculture and agriculture/conservation. Many active farms have taken advantage of the Georgia Tax incentive to place their land under a ten (10) year conservation easement and restrict development, and thereby taking advantage of the lower conservation tax assessment. Agriculture/Forestry/Parks/Recreation and Conservation account for about 73% of unincorporated Tift County's land use. This puts Tift County into the unique situation to have a significant amount of varied open space which can be utilized to adequately protect its water resources, the natural environment, and provide for a high quality of life. Any desired development can be clustered into designated development nodes without significantly reducing the open space. Residential development accounts for about ten (10) percent of the land use and commercial and Industrial cover about two (2) percent of the land use.

The City of Omega shows twenty-one (21) percent of residential use with close to four and a half (4.3) percent commercial use. Industrial use covers one (1) percent in the City. Forestry, agriculture, parks, recreation and conservation also account for over fifty percent of the land use.

The City of Tifton shows about twenty-eight (28) percent of residential use and compared to the other areas only seventeen (17) percent in agricultural, forestry, parks, recreation and conservation land use. Public and Institutional use is considerably higher than in other areas at almost eighteen (18) percent, as is the commercial and industrial land use at fifteen (15) percent.

The City of Ty Ty shows a very diversified distribution of its land uses. Its residential land use lies at thirty-four (34) percent, public and institutional at seventeen (17) percent, and agricultural, forestry, parks and recreation and conservation at twenty-eight (28) percent. The commercial land use in Ty Ty is at seven (7) percent.

Current Land Use Map 5-1

Unincorporated Tift County

Current Land Use Map 5-2

City Of Omega

Current Land Use Map 5-3

City Of Tifton

Current Land Use Map 5-4

City Of Ty Ty

5.2 Areas Requiring Special Attention

Greater Tift County's growth and development will have significant impacts on its existing residents, natural and cultural resources, community services and facilities and its infrastructure. This section summarizes the locations of some of the likely impacts of growth, including delineating areas where growth should be restricted or even completely avoided. Also included are areas in need of additional investment because of aesthetics, disrepair, pollution or other special need. These would primarily be areas where growth and redevelopment should be directed to.

Map 5-5 shows the general location of these areas.

The Department of Community Affairs has identified the following seven special conditions and requires that they be addressed if they exist within the area of influence:

- Areas of significant natural resources include wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and river corridors particularly where they are likely to be intruded upon or otherwise impacted by development;
- Areas where rapid development or change of land uses is likely to occur.
- Areas where the pace of development has and/or may outpace the availability of community facilities and services, including transportation facilities.
- Areas in need of redevelopment and/or significant improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness (including strip commercial corridors).
- Large abandoned structures or sites, including those that may be environmentally contaminated such as brownfields.
- Areas with significant infill development opportunities (scattered vacant sites).
- Areas of significant disinvestment, levels of poverty, and/or unemployment substantially higher than average levels for the community as a whole.

Through a review of Greater Tift County's Existing Land Use and the Technical Addenda, the following areas have been determined to warrant special attention:

5.2.1. Significant Natural Resources

- Little River is located within the Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) #0311020401 west of the City of Tifton. The Little River is listed on the 303(d)/305(b) list for low dissolved oxygen (DO) and should be protected to ensure a healthy aquatic ecosystem.
- New River is located within the Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) #0311020302 southeast of the City of Tifton. A four (4) mile segment of the New River is listed on the 303(d)/305(b) list for low dissolved oxygen (DO) and high levels of fecal coli form (FC). Since this river is classified for fishing by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD), considerations should be made to further make improvements to protect this natural resource.
- Southside Branch is located in the Southside Branch watershed east of the City of Tifton. This stream is listed on 303(d)/305(b) list for fecal coli form (FC). Management practices should be employed to reduce the FC source loads and to improve the quality of water.
- Westside Branch is located in the Westside Branch Watershed within the City of Tifton. This stream is on the 303(b)/305(d) list for fecal coli form (FC) and should be taken in consideration when making

decisions or implementing best management practices (BMPs).

- Ty Ty Creek is located in the Ty Ty Creek Watershed within the Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) # 0311020402. This includes Tift, as well as the City of Ty Ty. The segment of Ty Ty Creek from Little Creek, near Ty Ty, to Tucker Creek, near Omega, is listed on the 303(d)/305(b) list for low dissolved oxygen (DO) and fecal coli form (FC). Since this segment of Ty Ty Creek is located near the City of Ty Ty and in primarily forested or agricultural lands, the main cause for the low DO can be contributed to urban and rural runoff, naturally occurring causes, organic matter in the stream, and run-off causing nutrient build-up. Other sources that may cause the low DO and FC are animal waste, failing septic tanks, and improper methods of trash collection and disposal. It is necessary to improve on all possible causes of impairment.

Ground Water Recharge Areas should be protected to ensure the quality of public drinking water. For this reason, it is necessary to protect the subsurface water resources that City of Tifton and surrounding communities rely on as sources of public water. Groundwater is susceptible to contamination when unrestricted development occurs within significant groundwater recharge areas. It is, therefore, necessary to manage land use within groundwater recharge areas in order to ensure that pollution threats are minimized.

5.2.2. Areas where Development or Change of Land Use is Likely to Occur

- Carpenter Road/Whiddon Mill Road: Whiddon Mill Road/Carpenter Road area is experiencing proposed development of 900 residential units and adjacent commercial development without adequate assurance that water, sewer, roads, police, fire/EMS and school capacity will be established and funded concurrent with development. The area is adjacent to the City of Tifton with water and sewer available within reasonable distance and is located close to the University campus and centrally located within two main collector roads that will carry commuting traffic either north or south to the major employment centers. New streets should be connected (i.e. minimize cul-de-sacs) to disperse traffic, shorten walking/biking trips. Design features that encourage safe, accessible streets should be employed, such as: narrower streets, on-street parking, sidewalks, street trees, and landscaped raised medians for minor collectors and wider streets. The previously agricultural area is expected to change towards mixed use development.

The agricultural area north-west of Tifton Maintain at the same time should be protected to maintain its rural character by strictly limiting new development, protecting farmland and open space by maintaining large lot sizes (at least 10 acres), promoting use of conservation easements by land owners. Residential subdivisions should be severely limited, but if minor exceptions are made, they should be required to follow a rural cluster zoning or conservation subdivision design. Roadways should be widened only when absolutely necessary and carefully design any roadway alterations to minimize visual impact.

- Airport Overlay Zone: Due to the extension of the main runway to 7,000 feet, the area of influence at the end of the runway will require special zoning considerations to permit only development consistent with airport development and safety regulations. Housing development in this area will be inconsistent with airport operations and a change towards non-residential development is anticipated.

5.2.3. Areas where the pace of development may outpace the availability of public facilities and services

- Omega City Hall is in need of expansion to provide sufficient services to Omega's residents.

5.2.4. Areas of disinvestment, needing redevelopment, or improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness

- Tifton South Neighborhood (South of Hwy 82): This area contains some of the oldest neighborhoods in the Tifton area. Preserve and rehabilitate what remains of the original housing stock, while rebuilding on vacant land new attractive neighborhood following the principles of traditional neighborhood development. The neighborhood should include a well-designed new neighborhood activity center at appropriate location, which would provide a focal point for a grocery store, hardware store, and similar appropriately-scaled retail establishments serving residents. Strong pedestrian and bicycle connections should also be provided to encourage residents to walk/bike to work, shopping, or other destinations in area.
- Old Wal-Mart Infill area: Encourage a greater mix of uses (such as retail and services to serve industry employees) to reduce automobile reliance/use on site. To minimize visual impact, buffer industrial areas with vegetation and landscaping in places where major roads pass through area, or where industrial area abuts a differing land use. The area is already experiencing a slight resurgence by finding new uses for the Old Wal-Mart building, however, additional investment and attention is needed to return viable and attractive businesses to the area.

5.2.5. Large Abandoned Structures or Sites

- Horizons Mill Property:
The old Horizon's Mill property is an active Brownfield development site within the City of Tifton. The property has been cleaned up to EPA's specifications and development proposals are being considered for the site. It's proximity to older residential neighborhoods requires special attention to compatibility of uses and to strive for uses which will complement the residential area as well as help to revitalize the area.

5.2.6. Areas with significant Infill Development Opportunities

- In-town streets between the historic district (12th Street) and N. 20th Street: Historic properties should be maintained or rehabilitated according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Tifton Design Review Manual. New Development in the area should be of scale and architectural design to fit well into the historic fabric of the area. Pedestrian access and open space should be provided to enhance citizen enjoyment of the area. Focus on reinforcing stability by encouraging more homeownership and maintenance or upgrade of existing properties. Infill opportunities should be provided.

Map 5-5
Areas Needing Special Attention
General Locations Tift County

5.3 Recommended Character Areas

The use of “Character Areas” in planning acknowledges unique visual and functional differences that exist today in the various areas of Greater Tift County. Character Areas are intended to pro-actively guide future development by putting in place policies and implementation strategies which are tailored to each area. It is important to recognize that the designation of a Character Area will reflect the defining character of the entire geographic area outlined, but may not be accurate for every single parcel in the area.

Recommended Character Areas can be used to more specifically define areas that:

- (1) Have unique or special characteristics that need to be preserved;
- (2) Have the potential to evolve into unique areas; or
- (3) Require special attention because of unique development issues.

Table 5-6 provides a description of the proposed Character Areas for Greater Tift County and Maps 5-5 and 5-6 show their location.

Table 5-6: Description of Character Areas in Greater Tift County

Character Areas	Description/Location	Existing and Proposed Development Strategies
<p>City of Omega Downtown Mainstreet</p>	<p>“Downtown” Omega, consisting mostly of commercial and government buildings. Bound on the north by Florida Avenue, on the south by Georgia Avenue, on the east by Omega-Ellenton Road, and on the west by Florida Avenue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to utilize streetscaping program to improve pedestrian access and aesthetics. - Establish a “Main Street” with specialty retail and a variety of restaurants. - Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional rural character, and should not include franchise or corporate architecture. - Residential development should reinforce the town center through locating higher density housing options adjacent to the center, targeted to a broad range of income levels, including multi-family townhomes and apartments. - Protect historic properties from demolition and encourage rehabilitation with appropriate incentives, including National Register of Historic Places designation, which enables eligibility for tax incentive programs. - Improve parking availability and access.
<p>City of Ty Ty Downtown Mainstreet</p>	<p>On the north side of US Hwy 82; the area encompassing East. Elman Street to the north, Whiddon Mill Road to the east, US Hwy 82 to the south, and Nelson Street to the west; approximately a 10 block area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a “Main Street” with specialty retail and a variety of restaurants. - Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional rural character, and should not include franchise or corporate architecture. - Provide for greater pedestrian orientation and access with sidewalks, and connectivity to trails and greenspaces. - Encourage local character with attractive

Character Areas	Description/Location	Existing and Proposed Development Strategies
		clustering of buildings within the center, leaving open space surrounding the center. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve parking availability and access. - Utilize streetscaping features, such as decorative lighting, street furniture, landscape buffering, and sidewalks to create a safe and comfortable environment for citizens.
City of Tifton Downtown Cultural Heritage Area	Area encompassed by the Tifton Commercial Historic District.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The City of Tifton Downtown Master Plan is hereby incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan by reference and all recommendations and development strategies shall apply.
Old Ocilla Road Corridor	Suburban Area Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote moderate density, traditional neighborhood development (TND) style residential subdivisions. - There should be good vehicular and pedestrian /bike connections to retail/commercial services as well as internal street connectivity, connectivity to adjacent properties/subdivisions, and multiple site access points. - Encourage compatible architectural styles that maintain the regional character, and do not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture. - Wherever possible, connect to regional network of greenspace and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians, for both tourism and recreational purposes. - Promote street design that fosters traffic calming, such as narrower residential streets, on-street parking, and addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
Eldorado Village	Rural Village	Maintain rural atmosphere while accommodating new residential and commercial development by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Permitting rural cluster or conservation subdivision design that incorporate significant amounts of open space.

Character Areas	Description/Location	Existing and Proposed Development Strategies
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage compatible architectural styles that maintain the regional character, and do not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture. - Wherever possible, connect to regional network of greenspace and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians, for both tourism and recreational purposes. - Can be designed for greater pedestrian access, orientation, and character by an attractive clustering of buildings at the village center.
Chula Village	Rural Village	<p>Maintain rural atmosphere while accommodating new residential and commercial development by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Permitting rural cluster or conservation subdivision design that incorporate significant amounts of open space. - Encourage compatible architectural styles that maintain the regional character, and do not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture. - Wherever possible, connect to regional network of greenspace and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians, for both tourism and recreational purposes. - Can be designed for greater pedestrian access, orientation, and character by an attractive clustering of buildings at the village center.
Brookfield Village	Rural Village	<p>Maintain rural atmosphere while accommodating new residential and commercial development by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Permitting rural cluster or conservation subdivision design that incorporate significant amounts of open space. - Encourage compatible architectural styles that maintain the regional character, and do not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture. - Wherever possible, connect to regional network of greenspace and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians, for both tourism and recreational purposes. - Can be designed for greater pedestrian access, orientation, and character by an attractive clustering of buildings at the village center.

Character Areas	Description/Location	Existing and Proposed Development Strategies
Carpenter Road Corridor/ Whiddon Mill Road Corridor	From US Hwy 319 north to Zion Hope Road/Carrington Drexler Road. CEMP Target Area to preserve environmental resources	The Tifton/Tift County Comprehensive Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) as adopted in June 2007, is hereby incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan and all recommendations and development strategies shall apply.
Hwy 82 Corridor	From Ray Taylor Road to US Hwy 319 CEMP Target Area to preserve environmental resources	The Tifton/Tift County Comprehensive Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) as adopted in June 2007, is hereby incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan and all recommendations and development strategies shall apply.
Hwy 41 Corridor	From Cook County line north to Turner County line CEMP Target Area to preserve environmental resources	The Tifton/Tift County Comprehensive Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) as adopted in June 2007, is hereby incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan and all recommendations and development strategies shall apply.
Kent Road and the area surrounding the Tift County High School and the Tift Regional Medical Center	This is an established area with activity centered around two very substantial land uses – the hospital and high school CEMP Target Area to preserve environmental resources	The Tifton/Tift County Comprehensive Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) as adopted in June 2007, is hereby incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan and all recommendations and development strategies shall apply.

Character Areas	Description/Location	Existing and Proposed Development Strategies
<p>Agricultural Research, Education and Extension Park</p>	<p>This area would be designated to preserve a unique micro-community for growth and to protect environmental resources.</p> <p>To identify the region in and surrounding the University of Georgia Tifton Campus, the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, and the USDA Agricultural Research Service as an area of special character that should be preserved for the potential expansion of these institutions in Tift County. This would include all the areas: beginning at I-75 exit 66, proceeding west on Brighton Road to US 41, proceeding north on US 41 to Rigdon Aultman Road, west on Rigdon Aultman Road to Zion Hope Road, south on Zion Hope Road to Early Hutchinson Road, west on Early Hutchinson Road to Whiddon Mill Road, south on Whiddon Mill Road to Carpenter Road, north on Carpenter Road to Rainwater Road, east on Rainwater Road to Baldwin Drive, south on Baldwin drive to 20th Street, east on 20th Street to US41, and north on US41 to I-75 and including all University of Georgia property south of Rainwater Road to the Agrirama.</p> <p>This area should be planned to include easy access from I-75, US 41, and US 82.</p>	<p>The land use should be designated as a mixed use area to encourage the development of a micro-community atmosphere conducive to quality rental housing for students and to induce the development of small to mid-size agribusinesses that would take advantage of the strong agricultural research programs and highly qualified workforce associated with the universities. The area should be planned to include enhancements for pedestrian, bicycle, and electric vehicle usage due to the access needs of handicapped individuals and due to the high frequency of educational workshops for elementary school children that are conducted on the campuses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote high and moderate density neighborhood developments to accommodate student housing. - New development should be master-planned with mixed-uses, blending residential development with apartments and condominiums, retail businesses and services, and light agribusinesses and educational technology industries that are linked in a compact pattern that encourages walking and bicycling and reserves the potential for a campus bus system in the future. - Promote the development of lodging and restaurant facilities near the UGA-Tifton conference center to facilitate pedestrian access to the center. - There should be good vehicular and pedestrian/bike connections to retail and commercial services as well as internal street connections, connectivity to adjacent properties/subdivisions, and multiple site access points. - Plan primary access corridors that will accommodate increased traffic associated with collegiate sporting events. - Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the university character. - Whenever possible, connect to regional networks of green space and trails available

Character Areas	Description/Location	Existing and Proposed Development Strategies
		<p>to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreational purposes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote street design that fosters traffic calming such as narrower residential streets, on-street parking, and addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities: - Create a “furnishings zone” – an area of the roadside that provides a buffer between pedestrians and vehicles. It contains landscaping, public street furniture, transit stops, public signage, and utilities.
King Road	I-75 interchange west to the intersection with Rutland Road.	<p>Significant future development is expected in that area from I-75 to the intersection of Rutland Road. Development strategies need to include provision of infrastructure (water, sewer, roads) concurrent with development and buffers between incompatible uses, sidewalks, landscaping and protection of groundwater recharge areas.</p>

MAP5-6
Greater Tift County “Character Areas”

MAP 5-7
Tifton Area “Character Areas”

MAP 5-8
City of Ty Ty “ Character Areas”

MAP 5-9
City of Omega “Character Areas”

6. ANALYSIS of CONSISTENCY with QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

The Quality Community Objectives (QCO) as adopted by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) further define the statewide planning goals based on growth and development issues identified in local and regional plans throughout the state. The purpose of this analysis is to evaluate the consistency of Greater Tift County’s goals, objectives and policies with those objectives and to propose any necessary improvements.

Proposals for recommended improvements will have been discussed in the Public Participation Phase of this Plan and will be utilized as a basis for the implementation program included in the Community Agenda.

The analysis shows that Greater Tift County is in the process of addressing many of the Quality Community Objectives and will continue to do so with the development and implementation of existing and new planning strategies in the planning period.

6.1 Development Patterns

Traditional Neighborhoods			
Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, compact development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. If we have a zoning code, it does not separate commercial, residential and retail uses in every district.		x	Tifton/Tift County is currently revising their ULDC to provide for mixed use developments.
2. Our community has ordinances in place that allow neo-traditional development “by-right” so that developers do not have to go through a long variance process.		x	Tifton/Tift County is currently revising their ULDC to allow for neo-traditional development as a permitted use where appropriate.
3. We have a street tree ordinance that requires new development to plant shade bearing trees appropriate to our climate.		x	Tree Ordinances will be incorporated as part of the proposed ULDC.
4. Our community has an organized tree planting campaign in public areas that will make walking more comfortable in the summer.		x	
5. We have a program to keep poor public areas (commercial, retail districts, parks) clean and safe.	x		Cities and County have an effective Code Enforcement team to keep the area clean and safe.
6. Our community maintains its sidewalks and vegetation well so that walking is an option some would chose.		x	The proposed Greater Tift County Comprehensive Plan and ULDC will provide for continuity and safety of sidewalks.
7. In some areas several errands can be made on foot, if so desired.	x		Downtown Tifton is very walkable; however, other areas could use improvements in sidewalk safety.
8. Some of our children can and do walk to school safely.	x		More could be done to increase pedestrian safety through improvements to the existing network and the addition of more sidewalks and multi-use trails.
9. Some of our children can and do bike to school safely.	x		More could be done to increase bicyclist safety through the construction of bicycle lanes appropriate for children.
10. Schools are located in or near neighborhoods in our community.	x		Several schools are located in or close to neighborhoods, but several are also located outside.

Infill Development			
Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has an inventory of vacant sites and buildings that are available for redevelopment and/or infill development.		x	Such an inventory will be proposed through the updated comprehensive plan for Greater Tift County. Tifton has planned to undertake a building inventory of the downtown area.
2. Our community is actively working to promote brownfield redevelopment.	x		The Chamber of Commerce and other economic development entities are actively promoting redevelopment of brownfields, an effort that will be supported through specific policies in the proposed Comprehensive Plan.
3. Our community is actively working to promote greyfield redevelopment.	x		The Cities and County will be formalizing these efforts in the proposed Comprehensive Plan and ULDC.
4. We have areas of our community that are planned for nodal development (compacted near intersections rather than spread along a major road).	x		Such areas have been identified as Character Areas in the Comprehensive Environmental Management Plan and will be carried forward into the Comprehensive Plan
5. Our community allows small lot development (5,000 square feet or less) for some uses.		x	Small lot development will be permitted as part of the ULDC revision.
Sense of Place			
Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places, where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. If someone dropped from the sky into our community, he or she would know immediately where he or she was, based on our distinct characteristics.		x	Greater Tift County has recognized this issue as a weakness and is addressing this topic as part of its new Comprehensive Plan and ULDC revision.
2. We have delineated the areas of our community that are important to our history and heritage, and have taken steps to protect those areas.	x		The City of Tifton has a very active Historic Preservation Commission, but Greater Tift County is lacking in this area. Greater Tift County understands the importance of historical areas in creating a sense of place, and protection measures will be outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. The City of Ty Ty have renovated the historic building that now houses Ty Ty City Hall.
3. We have ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas.		x	This issue is being addressed in the ULDC revision.
4. We have ordinances to regulate the size and type of signage in our community.	x		A sign ordinance has been adopted recently; however, some improvements in phasing out undesirable signs or over concentrations of billboards still need to be developed.
5. We offer a development guidebook that illustrates the type of new development we want in our community.		x	Greater Tift County has recognized this issue as a weakness and is addressing this topic as part of its new Comprehensive Plan and ULDC revision.
6. If applicable, our community has a plan to protect designated farmland.	x		Farming is a valuable economic resource in Tift County and GOPS to protect farming and increase its value will be included in the Comprehensive Plan.

Transportation Alternatives			
Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have public transportation in our community.		x	Tift Lift provides limited demand services, however, a comprehensive public transportation system does not exist.
2. We require that new development connects with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit.	x		Greater Tift County has recognized this issue as a weakness and is addressing this topic as part of its existing subdivision regulations and the new Comprehensive Plan and ULDC revision.
3. We have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.	x		More could be done to increase pedestrian safety through improvements to the existing network and the addition of more sidewalks and multi-use trails and ensure connectivity and continuity of sidewalks. The City of Omega is in the process of providing sidewalks to the school.
4. We have a sidewalk ordinance in our community that requires all new development to provide user-friendly sidewalks.		x	This issue is being addressed in the ULDC revision.
5. We require that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks wherever possible.		x	This issue is being addressed in the ULDC revision.
6. We have a plan for bicycle routes through our community.	x		A bicycle master plan for Greater Tift County would be appropriate.
7. We allow commercial and retail development to share parking areas wherever possible.	x		There may be opportunities to allow for additional shared parking requirements, especially in overlay districts or character areas.
Regional Identity			
Each region should promote and preserve a “regional identity”, or regional sense of place, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.			
	Yes	No	Comment
1. Our community is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage.	x		Greater Tift County is similar to surrounding counties developed during the same era.
2. Our community is connected to the surrounding region for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.	x		Greater Tift County has significant agricultural activity and agricultural educational institutions.
3. Our community encourages businesses that create products that draw on our regional heritage (mountain, agricultural, metropolitan, coastal, etc.)	x		Greater Tift County has significant agricultural activity and agricultural educational institutions, including an agricultural museum and innovation center.
4. Our community participates in the Georgia Department of Economic Development’s regional tourism partnership.	x		Greater Tift County benefits from its partnership with the Georgia Department of Economic Development.
5. Our community promotes tourism opportunities based on the unique characteristics of our region.	x		Greater Tift County is active in promoting local special events and celebrations.
6. Our community contributes to the region, and draws from the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment and education.	x		

6.2 Resource Conservation

Heritage Preservation			
The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have designated historic districts in our community.	x		Downtown Tifton is a designated historic district. Others will be identified as part of the proposed Comprehensive Plan.
2. We have an active historic preservation commission.	x		Only Tifton has an active historic preservation commission. Others will be identified as part of the proposed Comprehensive Plan.
3. We want new development to complement our historic development, and we have ordinances in place to ensure this.		x	Complementary development regulations in areas adjacent to historic districts will be suggested in the Comprehensive Plan
Open Space Preservation			
New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation			
1. Our community has a green space plan.	x		A green space plan for Greater Tift County was developed in 2001.
2. Our community is actively preserving green space, either through direct purchase or by encouraging set-asides in new development.		x	Greater Tift County will promote the conservation and set-aside of green space through its new Comprehensive Plan and ULDC.
3. We have a local land conservation program, or we work with state or national land conservation programs, to preserve environmentally important areas in our community.	x		
4. We have a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development that is widely used and protects open space in perpetuity.		x	Greater Tift County will promote conservation subdivisions as a permitted use through its new Comprehensive Plan and ULDC.
Environmental Protection			
Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has a comprehensive natural resources inventory.		x	
2. We use this resource inventory to steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas.		x	
3. We have identified our defining natural resources and taken steps to protect them.	x		Passed on August 19, 1999. (Includes groundwater recharge, river corridors, and wetlands)
4. Our community has passed the necessary "Part V" environmental ordinances, and we enforce them.	x		
5. Our community has a tree preservation ordinance which is actively enforced.	x		Pertains to the City of Tifton only.

6. Our community has a tree-replanting ordinance for new development.	x		Pertains to the City of Tifton only.
7. We are using stormwater best management practices for all new development.	x		Managed through the Erosion & Sedimentation Control Act.
8. We have land use measures that will protect the natural resources in our community (steep slope regulations, floodplain or marsh protection, etc.).	x		Pertains to both the City and County.

6.3 Social and Economic Development

Growth Preparedness			
Each community should identify and put in place the pre-requisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These might include infrastructure (roads, water, and sewer) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities and managing new growth when it occurs.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have population projections for the next 20 years that we refer to when making infrastructure decisions.		x	This will be addressed as a part of the new Comprehensive Plan's Capital Improvement Program.
2. Our local governments, the local school board, and other decision-making entities use the same population projections.		x	The School Board uses Robert's Report, which has different projection than the census.
3. Our elected officials understand the land-development process in our community.	x		However, training opportunities will be provided as part of the Comprehensive Plan and ULDC process.
4. We have reviewed our development regulations and /or zoning code recently, and believe that our ordinances will help us achieve our QCO goals.		x	Improvements are needed to ensure sustainable development and will be addressed with the new Comprehensive Plan and the ULDC update in progress.
5. We have a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.		x	Improvements are needed to ensure sustainable development and will be addressed with the new Comprehensive Plan and the ULDC update in progress.
6. We have designated areas of our community where we would like to see growth, and these areas are based on a natural resources inventory of our community.		x	These areas will be designated in the new Comprehensive Plan.
7. We have clearly understandable guidelines for new development.		x	The ULDC revision in progress is addressing any issues that have been identified.
8. We have a citizen-education campaign to allow all interested parties to learn about development processes in our community.	x		The Community Participation Program applies to both the Comprehensive Plan and the ULDC.
9. We have procedures in place that make it easy for the public to stay informed about land use issues, zoning decisions, and proposed new development.	x		All public information is on the website and clearly advertised in the newspaper.
10. We have a public-awareness element in our comprehensive planning process.	x		A comprehensive community participation progress has been developed and includes the use of public meetings, fliers and an up-to-date website.
Appropriate Businesses			
The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, long-term sustainability, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skills job opportunities.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our economic development organization has considered our community's strengths, assets and weaknesses, and has created a business development		x	A business development strategy does not exist.

strategy based on them.			
2. Our economic development organization has considered the types of businesses already in our community, and has a plan to recruit businesses and/or industries that will be compatible.	x		The Chamber of Commerce is taking the lead on recruiting compatible businesses. The Cities of Ty Ty and Omega would benefit from increased participation with and from the Chamber.
3. We recruit firms that provide or create sustainable products.	x		
4. We have a diverse jobs base, so that one employer leaving would not cripple our economy.	x		The mix of employers includes educational and medical institutions, manufacturing, some retail and agriculture.

Employment Options

A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.

	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our economic development program has an entrepreneur support program.	X		Entrepreneur Friendly City Designation by the State.
2. Our community has jobs for skilled labor.	x		The major educational and medical institutions provide jobs for skilled labor.
3. Our community has jobs for unskilled labor.	x		The agricultural sector provides opportunities for unskilled labor.
4. Our community has professional and managerial jobs.	x		The major educational and medical institutions provide jobs for skilled labor.

Housing Choices

A range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community (thereby reducing commuting distances), to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.

	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community allows accessory units like garage apartments or mother-in-law units.	x		
2. People who work in our community can also afford to live in the community.	x		Housing in the greater Tift County area is fairly affordable; however, the need for more affordable housing is starting to be inconsistent with the type of new construction.
3. Our community has enough housing for each income level (low, moderate and above average).		x	Housing is especially needed for low income levels and efforts are underway to promote housing to provide for an alternative to mobile homes.
4. We encourage new residential development to follow the pattern of our original town, continuing the existing street design and maintaining small setbacks.		x	Improvements are needed to ensure sustainable development and will be addressed with the new Comprehensive Plan and the ULDC update in progress.
5. We have options available for loft living, downtown living, or “neo-traditional” development.	x		Greater Tift County has recognized this issue as a weakness and is addressing this topic as part of its new Comprehensive Plan and ULDC revision.
6. We have vacant and developable land available for multifamily housing.	x		Vacant land needs to be reviewed formally designated to ensure sustainability with resource conservation and farmland preservation.
7. We allow multifamily housing to be developed in our community.	x		
8. We support community development corporations that build housing for lower-income households.	x		
9. We have housing programs that focus on households with special needs.	x		

10. We allow small houses built on small lots (less than 5,000 square feet) in appropriate areas.		x	Greater Tift County has recognized this issue as a weakness and is addressing this topic as part of its new Comprehensive Plan and ULDC revision.
Educational Opportunities			
Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community provides workforce training options for its citizens.	x		The local educational institutions provide opportunities for the local citizens; however, improvements need to be made to be more inclusive of the local businesses.
2. Our workforce training programs provide citizens with skills for jobs that are available in our community.	x		
3. Our community has higher education opportunities, or is close to a community that does.	x		
4. Our community has job opportunities for college graduates, so that our children may live and work here if they choose.	x		There are a number of opportunities in Greater Tift County, but there also appears to be an unmet need for additional professional job opportunities especially in the professional office sector. The Cities of Ty Ty and Omega especially lack opportunities for professional jobs.

6.4 Governmental Relations

Regional Solutions			
Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We participate in regional economic development organizations.	x		Greater Tift County works closely with the local Chamber of Commerce.
2. We participate in regional environmental organizations and initiatives, especially regarding water quality and quantity issues.	x		Host community for Coastal Plains Experiment Station and NESPAL; joint Development Authority with Cook, Worth, and Turner.
3. We work with other local governments to provide or share appropriate services, such as public transit, libraries, special education tourism, parks and recreation, emergency response, E-911, homeland security etc.	x		Tift County and the Cities of Tifton, Omega and Ty Ty cooperate in providing many of these services to the citizens, such as Fire/EMS and medical services.
4. Our community thinks regionally, especially in terms of issues like land use, transportation and housing, understanding that these go beyond local government borders.	x		A radius of influence should be drawn around municipal and county boundaries to review developments on the borders to ensure consistency with its own regulations.
Regional Cooperation			
Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources or development of a transportation network.			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We plan jointly with our cities and county for comprehensive planning purposes.	x		The original Greater Tift County 2015 plan and now this plan were planned with its municipalities
2. We are satisfied with our Service Delivery Strategy.	x		Ongoing SDCC meetings have lead to numerous inter local agreements for joint service. However, this issue needs to be readdressed for greater effectiveness.

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3. We initiate contact with other local governments and institutions in our region in order to find solutions to common problems, or to raft region-wide strategies.	x		Tift County coordinates with its municipalities and the South Georgia Regional Development Center to address development and other issues.
4. We meet regularly with neighboring jurisdictions to maintain contact, build connections, and discuss issues of regional concern.	x		Tift County is making regular contact with its municipalities and neighboring jurisdictions and agencies. Also support quarterly TAG meetings of local officials. It is important to include the smaller jurisdictions such as the Cities of Ty Ty and Omega.

7. SUPPORTING DATA AND INFORMATION

The validity of the identified Issues and Opportunities and recommended Character Areas was checked by evaluating data and information pertaining to the following seven elements:

- 1) Population
- 2) Economic Development
- 3) Housing
- 4) Natural and Cultural Resources
- 5) Community Facilities and Services
- 6) Transportation
- 7) Intergovernmental Coordination

A 20-year planning time frame was employed for evaluating the listed data and information items. A variety of information and sources was used to compile the data including but not limited to interviews with city and county representatives, review of Census data, and review of past trends.

When evaluating this data and information, staff focused on:

- Whether it verified potential issues or opportunities identified above;
- Whether it uncovered new issues or opportunities not previously identified;
- Whether it indicated significant local trends that need to be brought to the attention of decision-makers;
- Whether it suggested adjustment of recommended character areas (e.g., to avoid intrusion into environmentally sensitive areas, etc.).

In order to ensure a concise and readable *Community Assessment* report, the following pages only include general statements and/or recommendations taken from the completed assessment. These statements pertain to potential issues or opportunities, significant trends affecting the community, or character area delineation.

**The complete evaluation including all data and maps
can be found in the respective Appendices A through G.**

APPENDIX A
POPULATION

APPENDIX A: POPULATION

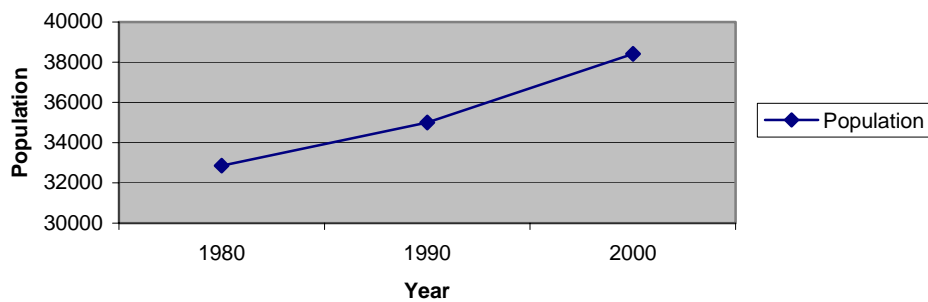
Understanding the past population trends and patterns is an important first step towards understanding how the population may change in the future. This section presents detailed information on the population demographics for Tift County and the cities of Omega, Tifton, and Ty Ty including past trends using data provided by the U.S. Census and future predictions based on county and regional trends and development patterns.

Past Population Trends:

Between 1980 and 2000 the total population of Tift County increased from 32,862 to 38,407 an increase of 5,545. (Figure A-1)

Source: U.S. Census 1980, 1990 and 2000.

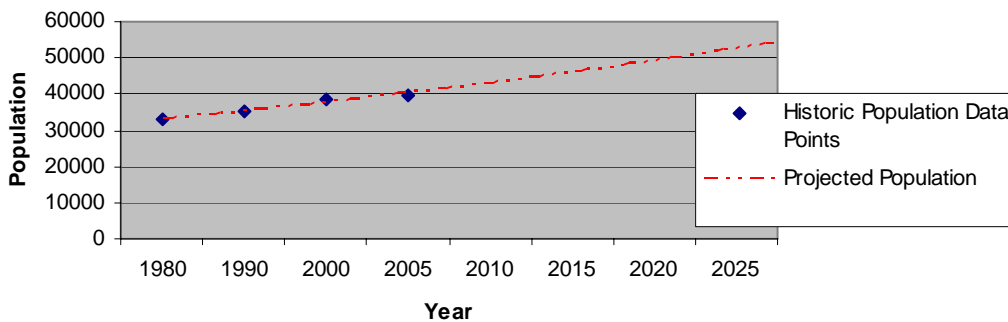
FIGURE A-1 HISTORIC POPULATION TRENDS



Information from the 1980, 1990, and 2000 Census as well as analysis of development patterns in surrounding counties were used to create an initial projection of the growth of population in Tift County.

Past population trends show a net gain in population in all of Tift County. Figure A-2 shows the trend of increasing population in Tift County up to 2030 and Table A-1 shows the projected growth of Tift County and the communities of Omega, Tifton, and Ty Ty using exponential regression analysis of the data from the 1980, 1990 and 2000 census.

FIGURE A-2 PROJECTED POPULATION TRENDS



Source: U. S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 and the South Georgia Regional Development Center 2006

Table A-1, Growth Trends for Tift, Omega, Tifton, and Ty Ty

Year	Tift County	Omega	Tifton	Ty TY
2005	39,793	1,423	15,388	741
2010	41,180	1,512	15,716	765
2015	42,566	1,598	16,043	790
2020	43,952	1,684	16,371	814
2025	45,338	1,770	16,699	839
2030	46,725	1,856	17,027	863

Source: U. S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 and the South Georgia Regional Development Center 2007

Table A-2, Ten Year Growth Tift County and Georgia

Year	Tift County	State of Georgia
1980-90	7.0%	18.7%
1990-2000	9.74%	23.37%
2000-10	7.22%	21.2%
2010-20	6.73%	22.48%
2020-30	6.31%	22.48%

Source: U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 and the South Georgia Regional Development Center

Table A-3, Tifton Population Projections

Year	Tifton
2005	15,388
2010	15,716
2015	16,043
2020	16,371
2025	16,699
2030	17,027

Source: U.S. Census 1980, 1990 and 2000, The Georgia Department of Community Affairs:

<http://www.georgiaplanning.com/dataviews/census2/> (2006) and the South Georgia Regional Development Center 2006.

Age Distribution:

The most apparent trends in Tift County involve the loss of people from ages 18 to 24 and gains of people 65 and older and the rapid gains of people 35 to 54 years old. The cities generally mirror the trend of the county. Table A-4 shows the historical age distribution of Tift County. Table A-5 shows population projections by age for 2010-2030. Table A-6 shows this projected distribution graphically and also shows how each of these groups will relate to each other in size.

Table A-4, Tift Historical Age Distribution

Tift County: Population by Age			
Category	1980	1990	2000
0 – 4 Years Old	2,781	2,778	2,961
5 – 13 Years Old	5,105	5,579	5,828
14 – 17 Years Old	2,497	1,701	1,670
18 – 20 Years Old	2,628	2,194	2,254
21 – 24 Years Old	2,363	2,124	2,187
25 – 34 Years Old	5,009	5,571	5,346
35 – 44 Years Old	3,546	4,958	5,546
45 – 54 Years Old	2,923	3,411	4,840
55 – 64 Years Old	2,718	2,729	3,277
65 and over	3,292	3,953	4,498

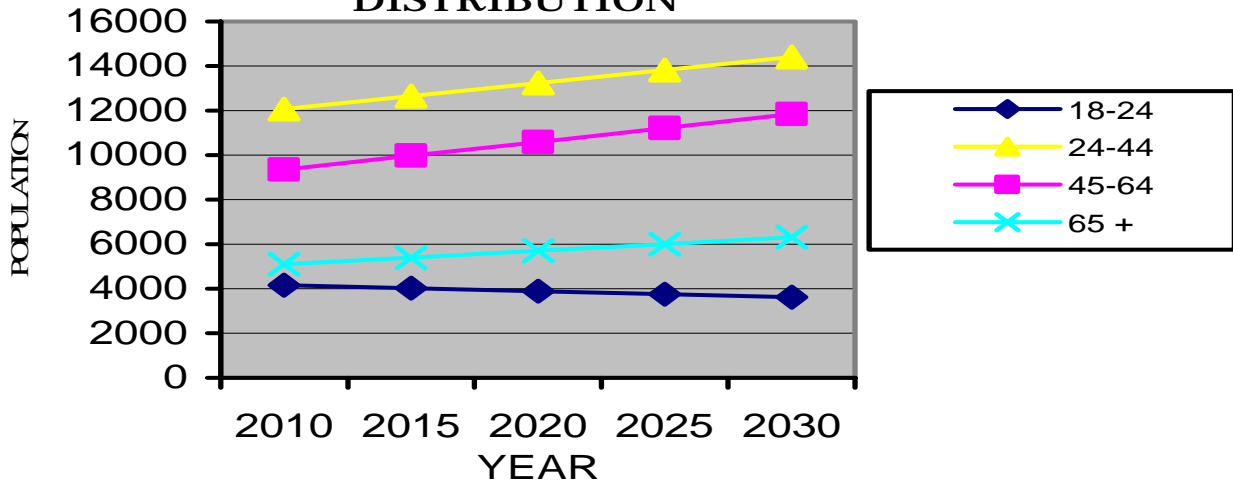
Source: 1980, 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census

Table A-5, Age Distribution Projections

Tift County: Population by Age					
Category	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
0 – 4 Years Old	3,051	3,096	3,141	3,186	3,231
5 – 13 Years Old	6,190	6,370	6,551	6,732	6,913
14 – 17 Years Old	1,257	1,050	843	636	430
18 – 20 Years Old	2,067	1,974	1,880	1,787	1,693
21 – 24 Years Old	2,099	2,055	2,011	1,967	1,923
25 – 34 Years Old	5,515	5,599	5,683	5,767	5,852
35 – 44 Years Old	6,546	7,046	7,546	8,046	8,546
45 – 54 Years Old	5,799	6,278	6,757	7,236	7,716
55 – 64 Years Old	3,557	3,696	3,836	3,976	4,116
65 and over	5,101	5,403	5,704	6,006	6,307

Source: Projections based off of 1980, 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census by the South Georgia Regional Development Center

FIGURE A-3 TIFT PROJECTED AGE DISTRIBUTION



Source: Projections based off of 1980, 1990, and 2000 U.S. Census data by the South Georgia Regional Development Center

The percentage of people 65 and older in Tift County has increased moderately over time. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to assume that this population is a very stable population and is merely increasing naturally due to the general increase of the population.

Race and Ethnicity:

Table A-6 shows the racial composition of Tift County based on use of 2000 Census data.

Table A-6, Racial Composition

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
White alone	24,098	24,520	24,941	25,013	25,084	25,331	25,577	25,824	26,070	26,317	26,563
Black or African American alone	8,530	8,951	9,371	10,066	10,760	11,318	11,875	12,433	12,990	13,548	14,105
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	46	44	42	60	78	86	94	102	110	118	126
Asian or Pacific Islander	82	133	183	284	384	460	535	611	686	762	837
other race	106	284	461	1,281	2,101	2,600	3,099	3,597	4,096	4,595	5,094

Table A-7 shows the Hispanic population composition of Tift County from 1980 until 2030.

Table A-7, Hispanic Ethnic Composition

Tift County: Hispanic Ethnic Composition											
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Persons of Hispanic origin	430	832	1,233	2,089	2,944	3,573	4,201	4,830	5,458	6,087	6,715

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (<http://www.georgiaplanning.com/dataviews/census2/>) 2007

Income:

According to the U.S. Census the average household income in 1990 for Tift County was \$29,525.38. In 2000 the average household income was \$45,596.00. Therefore, average household income rose by 55 percent. In comparison, Georgia’s average household income in 1990 was \$36,810. The average household income for Georgia in 2000, however, was \$80,077, representing a 117 percent increase in real average household income.

Table A-8 shows how Tift County compares to the State of Georgia in Household Income Distribution. For the most part Tift County has a higher percentage of residents within the lower income categories and a lower percentage of residents in the higher income categories than the State of Georgia. Table A-9 shows household income for the cities of Omega, Tifton, and Ty Ty.

Table A-8, Georgia and Tift County Average Household Income

Category	Georgia		Tift County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
	Total	2,366,575	3,007,678	12,144
Income less than \$9999	398,078	304,816	2,859	2,038
Income \$10000 - \$14999	204,142	176,059	1,379	1,158
Income \$15000 - \$19999	210,123	177,676	1,316	1,139
Income \$20000 - \$29999	405,424	383,222	2,048	1,941
Income \$30000 - \$34999	186,754	187,070	860	1,091
Income \$35000 - \$39999	160,205	176,616	773	786
Income \$40000 - \$49999	260,712	326,345	1,035	1,491
Income \$50000 - \$59999	179,962	278,017	658	1,134
Income \$60000 - \$74999	161,705	315,186	539	1,035
Income \$75000 - \$99999	109,354	311,651	388	1,092
Income \$100000 - \$124999	40,880	157,818	133	486
Income \$125000 - \$149999	16,094	76,275	46	157
Income \$150000 and above	33,142	136,927	110	383

Source: The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (<http://www.georgiaplanning.com/dataviews/census2/>) 2007

Table A-9, Household Income Distribution by Cities within Tift County

Category	Omega 1990	Omega 2000	Tifton 1990	Tifton 2000	Ty Ty 1990	Ty Ty 2000
Total	349	458	5196	5485	229	295
Income less than \$9999	117	71	1439	1053	61	45
Income \$10000 - \$14999	57	70	569	473	42	29
Income \$15000 - \$19999	48	39	545	476	27	23
Income \$20000 - \$29999	56	83	860	715	46	66
Income \$30000 - \$34999	15	27	349	441	13	29
Income \$35000 - \$39999	18	22	297	223	14	16
Income \$40000 - \$49999	15	60	381	546	16	30
Income \$50000 - \$59999	13	36	265	398	2	22
Income \$60000 - \$74999	2	21	182	404	4	10
Income \$75000 - \$99999	4	16	174	351	4	11
Income \$100000 - \$124999	0	12	44	155	0	5
Income \$125000 - \$149999	4	1	29	54	0	2
Income \$150000 and above	0	0	62	196	0	7

Source: The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (<http://www.georgiaplanning.com/dataviews/census2/>) 2007

Tift County and all of its communities have seen a rise in per capita income as shown in Table A-10. Per Capita Income is the total personal income divided by the total population and is often used to measure the personal wealth of a population. The Cities of Tifton and Ty Ty are projected to have the highest per capita income out of all cities in Tift County in 2030. The City of Omega will show the slowest growth in per capita income and is projected to have the lowest per capita income by 2030. This means that in 2030 Tifton and Ty Ty will be the cities with the highest amount of income per person and Omega will have the lowest amount of income per person in 2030.

Table A-10, Tift County and Cities Projected Per Capita Income

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Tift County	\$5,236	\$7,924	\$10,612	\$13,723	\$16,833	\$19,732	\$22,632	\$25,531	\$28,430	\$31,329	\$34,229
Omega	\$4,322	\$6,013	\$7,703	\$9,359	\$11,014	\$12,687	\$14,360	\$16,033	\$17,706	\$19,379	\$21,052
Tifton	\$5,338	\$8,201	\$11,064	\$13,760	\$16,455	\$19,234	\$22,014	\$24,793	\$27,572	\$30,351	\$33,131
Ty Ty	\$4,687	\$6,582	\$8,477	\$12,543	\$16,608	\$19,588	\$22,569	\$25,549	\$28,529	\$31,509	\$34,490

Source: The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (<http://www.georgiaplanning.com/dataviews/census2/>) 2006

Educational Attainment

Since 1980, fewer children have dropped out of school and more adults have pursued college educations and graduate degrees. Figure A-18 shows the educational attainment of Tift County residents in 1980, 1990 and 2000.

Table A-11, Tift County Educational Attainment

	1980	1990	2000
Less than 9th Grade	5,510	3,585	2,691
9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)	4,021	4,475	4,752
High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	4,003	5,631	7,082
Some College (No Degree)	1,937	3,023	3,639
Associate Degree	NA	1,200	1,478
Bachelor's Degree	962	1,696	2,154
Graduate or Professional Degree	1,055	1,219	1,490

Source: The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (<http://www.georgiaplanning.com/dataviews/census2/>) 2006

APPENDIX B
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

APPENDIX B: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A thorough understanding of the economic development characteristics can help to improve the overall economic wellbeing of the Greater Tift County community, allows planning for any associated housing and education needs, and provides the basis to develop the necessary economic development tools to ensure sustainable growth in the targeted industries.

Employment By Industry

The Greater Tift economy is based on thirteen (13) primary sectors. Table B-1 shows the percentages for each sector for Tift County from 1980 to 2000. Figure B-1 shows the percentages for the year 2000 in a pie chart. The greatest percentage is in Educational, Health and Social Services at 20.6 percent. The second largest is in manufacturing at 16.5 percent. Retail Trade follows at 14.3 percent. Table B-2 shows the percentages for each employment sector for the communities of Omega, Tifton, and Ty Ty.

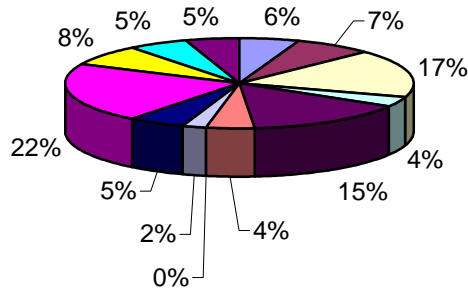
Table B-1, Tift Employment Sector History By Percent

Tift County: Employment by Industry				
Category	1980	1990	2000	2006
Total Employed Civilian Population	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining	8.8%	8.4%	5.4%	4.3%
Construction	6.3%	5.7%	7.0%	3.8%
Manufacturing	22.1%	19.9%	16.5%	13.4%
Wholesale Trade	4.3%	4.2%	3.7%	5.4%
Retail Trade	15.0%	16.8%	14.3%	12.8%
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	4.5%	5.3%	4.3%	7.2%
Information	NA	NA	1.4%	0.8%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	3.6%	3.9%	4.1%	3.2%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	3.9%	4.2%	5.0%	3.7%
Educational, health and social services	15.7%	17.0%	20.6%	31.3%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	5.5%	0.6%	7.4%	11.9%
Other Services	4.1%	8.2%	5.3%	X
Public Administration	6.1%	5.8%	4.9%	2.2%

Source: The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (<http://www.georgiaplanning.com/dataviews/census2/>) 2007

The portion of manufacturing jobs has been declining in the past twenty years as more and more jobs in this sector have been automated or outsourced. After a slight incline, retail jobs have declined somewhat, but still represent a larger portion of the employment, whereas the sector of education, health and social services has steadily grown over the past two decades, indicating a shift in employment and a change in resident industries. These numbers are supported by the large presence of higher education institutions such as UGA, Moultrie Technical College, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College and Troy University, and the presence of a large health care sector such as the Tifton Regional Medical Center. Employment in manufacturing and retail are more prevalent still in Omega and Ty Ty, whereas the Health and Education sector is more concentrated in Tift County and Tifton.

**FIGURE B-1 GREATER TIFT EMPLOYMENT
BY SECTOR**



- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Wholesale Trade
- Retail Trade
- Transportation, warehousing, and utilities
- Information
- Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate
- Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services
- Educational, health and social services
- Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services
- Other Services
- Public Administration

Source: The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (<http://www.georgiaplanning.com/dataviews/census2/>) 2007

Table B-2, 2000 Tift County and Municipalities Employment by Sector

Type	OMEGA	TIFT COUNTY	TIFTON	TY TY
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining	9.6%	5.4%	4.2%	4.8%
Construction	8.8%	7.0%	6.4%	7.1%
Manufacturing	18.2%	16.5%	13.4%	25.2%
Wholesale Trade	5.5%	3.7%	3.6%	5.8%
Retail Trade	14.9%	14.3%	15.0%	15.2%
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	7.0%	4.3%	3.9%	4.5%
Information	1.2%	1.4%	0.9%	1.9%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	4.1%	4.1%	3.6%	2.3%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	4.5%	5.0%	5.3%	5.5%
Educational, health and social services	8.4%	20.6%	23.3%	10.3%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	6.7%	7.4%	9.3%	5.2%
Other Services	9.6%	5.3%	5.7%	2.9%
Public Administration	1.4%	4.8%	5.3%	9.4%

Source: The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (<http://www.georgiaplanning.com/dataviews/census2/>) 2007

According to the Georgia Dept. of Labor statistics Industry Mix profile for 2006, Manufacturing still employed 13.4 percent of the labor force, and provided an average weekly salary of \$614, higher than the average weekly salary of \$536. Overall goods producing industry employed 21.5 percent of the workforce. Service providing jobs employed 56 percent of the workforce and covered both ends of the wage scale: accommodation/food service jobs offered a weekly average wage of only \$228, retail was in the middle with \$422 and health care was on the high end with \$781. The private sector employed a total of 77.5 percent and government employed 22.5 percent with an average weekly wage of \$722.

(Georgia Dept. of Labor – Tift County Area Labor Profile)

Labor Force

Tift County had an estimated labor force of 20,220 in 2006. The labor force includes all people who are physically able to work. In 2006, an estimated average of 19,195 people was employed, leaving 1,025 unemployed. This number gives Tift County an unemployment rate of 5.1 percent. Table B-3 shows Tift County’s unemployment rate in comparison with the Tift area, the State of Georgia and the United States. Tift County’s unemployment rate is slightly above the state average and in line with the surrounding counties.

Table B-3, 2006 Employment Status (Annual Averages)

	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate
Tift County	20,220	19,195	1,025	5.1%
Tift Area (Berrien, Colquit, Cook, Irwin, Turner, Worth, Tift Counties)	77,811	74,037	3,774	5.0%
Georgia	4,741,860	4,522,025	219,835	4.6%
United States	151,428,000	144,427,000	7,001,000	4.6%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor: (<http://www.dol.state.ga.us/pdf/pr/clab1004.pdf>) 2006

Wages

The average weekly wage in Tift County has increased by 6.3 percent from 2001 and 2004. However, despite the fact that Tift County’s average weekly wage has grown it was still less than Georgia’s average in 2004, which grew by 6.7 percent in the same time frame.

Table B-4, Tift and Georgia Average Weekly Wage

Year	Tift Average Weekly Wage	Georgia Average Weekly Wage
2001	\$478	\$676
2002	\$490	\$687
2003	\$502	\$704
2004	\$510	\$728
2006	\$546	\$776

Source: U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics 2006: <http://data.bls.gov/PDQ/outside.jsp?survey=en>

Table B-5, Tift and Georgia Average Annual Wage

Year	Tift Average Annual Wage	Georgia Average Annual Wage
2001	\$24,874.00	\$35,136
2002	\$25,478.00	\$35,734
2003	\$26,114.00	\$36,626
2004	\$26,538.00	\$37,866

Source: U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics 2006: <http://data.bls.gov/PDQ/outside.jsp?survey=en>

Commuting Patterns

Tift County residents are working inside the County as the commuting patterns show in Table B-6. 84.5 percent of Tift County residents work within Tift County and 68 percent of all workers live within Tift County; workers who commute in appear to come evenly from immediately surrounding counties.

Table B-6, Labor Force by Place of Work

Employed Residents of Tift			Persons Working in Tift		
County where employed	Number	Rate %	County of Residence	Number	Rate
Tift	14,291	84.5	Tift	14,291	68
Dougherty	420	2.5	Berrien	1,120	5.3
Turner	344	2.0	Worth	1,011	4.8
Cook	242	1.4	Colquitt	935	4.4
Irwin	229	1.4	Irwin	750	3.6
Worth	191	1.1	Cook	718	3.4
Ben Hill	188	1.1	Turner	677	3.2
Berrien	171	1.0	Lowndes	310	1.5
Other	836	4.9	Other	1,207	5.7
Total:	16,912	100	Total:	21,019	100

Source: US Census Bureau – 2000 County to County Worker Flow Files

Table B-7, Travel Time to Work

TRAVEL TIME TO WORK	Number	Percent
Workers who did not work at home	16,644	100.0
Less than 10 minutes	4,248	25.5
10 to 14 minutes	4,571	27.5
15 to 19 minutes	3,416	20.5
20 to 24 minutes	1,511	9.1
25 to 29 minutes	428	2.6
30 to 34 minutes	978	5.9
35 to 44 minutes	276	1.7
45 to 59 minutes	477	2.9
60 to 89 minutes	372	2.2
90 or more minutes	367	2.2
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	17.9	(X)

Poverty Status

In Tift County, 15.5 percent of families were in poverty in the year 1999. This is higher than the percentage for the United States, the State of Georgia, and the surrounding Georgia counties.

Table B-8, Tift County Poverty Status

	Number	Percent
Families	1,570	(X)
Percent below poverty level	(X)	15.5
With related children under 18 years	1,253	(X)
Percent below poverty level	(X)	22.9
With related children under 5 years	656	(X)
Percent below poverty level	(X)	28.8
Families with female householder, no husband present	923	(X)
Percent below poverty level	(X)	41.6
With related children under 18 years	837	(X)
Percent below poverty level	(X)	50.1
With related children under 5 years	459	(X)
Percent below poverty level	(X)	60.6
Individuals	7,374	(X)
Percent below poverty level	(X)	19.9
18 years and over	4,441	(X)
Percent below poverty level	(X)	16.7
65 years and over	601	(X)
Percent below poverty level	(X)	14.6
Related children under 18 years	2,880	(X)
Percent below poverty level	(X)	28.0
Related children 5 to 17 years	1,983	(X)
Percent below poverty level	(X)	26.9
Unrelated individuals 15 years and over	1,754	(X)
Percent below poverty level	(X)	31.4

Economic Resources

Development Agencies:

- *Tifton - Tift County Chamber of Commerce:* The Tifton-Tift County Chamber of Commerce is organized to advance the general welfare and prosperity of Tift County so that its citizens and all areas of its business community will prosper. Particular attention and emphasis are given to the Economic, Commercial, Agricultural, Civic, Cultural, Industrial, and Educational interests of the area.
- *Tift County Development Authority:* The Tift County Development Authority works to recruit new industry into Tift County and also seeks to help existing businesses to expand.
- *Downtown Development Authority:* The Mainstreet and Downtown Development Authority's mission is to develop Downtown Tifton into a regional destination point. Downtown Tifton should be so compellingly unique that people will go out of their way and pass by other towns just to visit Historic Downtown Tifton. Business Development encourages revitalization through reinvestment and participation in the process of community redevelopment.

Programs:

- *SGRDC Loan Program:* The South Georgia Regional Development Center loan department offers in-house loans and Small Business Administration financing to businesses within the 9- county region including Greater Tift County.
- *Workforce Investment Act Programs:* Various programs include the South Georgia Workforce Development Board, South Georgia CareerNET, area employers, and economic development organizations. Serves a 9-county region by providing job-skills training and education, establishing partnerships, and leveraging resources.
- *Department of Labor:* Through various programs, the department provides job matching for employers and job seekers, unemployment insurance, GED classes, a job-search resource center, assistance for individuals with disabilities, and education for migrant farm workers.

Education:

Greater Tift County is the location of several major educational institutions:

- *Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College* has a long and successful history in Tifton providing a quality education to aspiring farmers, business leaders, and health professionals.
- The *University of Georgia* has expanded its role and now, in addition to major provides undergraduate degrees in agriculture, as well as graduate and post graduate training in agriculture.
- *Moultrie Technical College* provides a variety of courses to teach and improve skills for employment. As the local administrator for Georgia's Quick Start Program, Moultrie Tech can provide customized, job-specific training for new or expanding companies.
- *Troy University:* Troy University is a public institution comprised of a network of sixty campuses in eleven countries and 17 states including a campus in Tifton. International in scope, Troy University provides a variety of educational programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels for a diverse student body in traditional, nontraditional and emerging electronic formats. Academic programs are supported by a variety of student services which promote the welfare of the individual student.
- Tift County was one of the first communities in Georgia to offer the Youth Apprenticeship Program and continues to be an active participant in this industry-driven and community-based educational system providing youth work experience in industry.

- Tifton has more PhDs engaged in agriculture research than any other community of its size in the Southeastern United States leading the way in development of new strains of grasses, crop-disease control, and watershed management. Tifton is home of the Agriculture Innovation Center designed to incubate agriculture-based industries.

Table B-9, Education of the Tift County Labor Force

	Percent Distribution by Age					
	Percent of Total	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65+
Some High School	32.4	34.3	26	24.2	31.3	50.6
High School/GED	29.9	27.8	32.7	35.9	28.7	23.4
Some College	24.3	36.5	25.3	22.4	23.2	15.4
College Grad 4 Yr	8.0	1.2	10.2	10.3	9.4	6.5
Post Graduate Studies	5.4	0.2	5.8	7.3	7.4	4.1
Totals	100	100	100	100	100	100

Overall Tift though, Tift County’s population is mostly represented by residents who have not pursued an education higher than High School or an Associates Degree, especially in the older population. The younger population seems to be more college bound than previous generations.

Major Employers

The Chamber of Commerce identified the following as the major employees in the Tift County area:

Table B-10, Major Employers for Greater Tift County

Tift County Board of Education	1460
Tift Regional Hospital	1200
Target	800
Gibb Patrick Farms	775
Lewis Taylor Farms	770
Shaw Plant W-K	600
Georgia Vegetable	500
Wal-Mart	490
UGA Tifton Campus	450
Tift County	352
Abraham Baldwin College	350
HeatCraft	318
Orgill Brothers Distribution	307
City of Tifton	300
Exopack	300
Moultrie Technical College (Tifton Campus)	291
Kelley Manufacturing	240
Burlen Corporation	181
COI	178
Prestolite Wire	137
Lowe's	120

Fuji Photo Film	115
UPS	100
USDA-ARS	100
Taylor Made	87
Bold	76
Plant Telecommunications	72
Turner Distribution	70

APPENDIX C

HOUSING

APPENDIX C: HOUSING

Housing is not only an important resource for individuals and families; it is also an integral part of economic and community development. It is important to have a stock of affordable and quality housing that fits in with the character of the community. Substandard housing and a lack of affordable housing correlates is associated with crime, declining neighborhoods and many other social problems.

Following is a series of briefly discussed topics that provide a description of the existing housing conditions for Greater Tift County.

Housing Types

All housing type data comes from the US Bureau of Census, which identifies housing types by the amount of units per structure.

Table C-1 shows that Tift County's and the City of Tifton's housing stock consists of predominantly detached single family detached housing with about 57% of the total housing stock. The Cities of Omega and Ty Ty's share of single family housing is quite a bit lower at 42-47%. Meanwhile, Mobile Homes or Trailer housing comprises 27% in Tift County, 12 % in the City of Tifton, 41 % in the City of Omega and almost 51% in the City of Ty Ty. In the period leading up to 2000, shares of single family housing has decreased dramatically, while the share of Mobile Home or Trailer housing has increased by the same amount. Multi-family housing of more than 3 units are at about 10% in Tift County, 15% in Omega, 23% in the City of Tifton, and basically non-existent in the City of Ty Ty. These numbers are consistent with the trend that multi-family residents are a characteristic of more urbanized and densely populated areas.

Table C-1, Current and Projected Housing Types by Percent

Category	Tift County			Omega			Tifton			Ty Ty		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
TOTAL Housing Units	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Single Units (detached)	70.0%	60.1%	57.3%	75.6%	68.0%	42.6%	65.3%	56.1%	57.9%	75.7%	62.5%	47.7%
Single Units (attached)	1.3%	0.9%	1.6%	0.8%	0.5%	0.8%	2.3%	1.3%	1.9%	1.9%	0.4%	0.0%
Double Units	4.4%	4.1%	2.8%	0.0%	2.1%	0.2%	7.1%	8.1%	5.7%	2.4%	1.2%	1.7%
3 to 9 Units	6.9%	7.5%	7.3%	9.7%	5.5%	11.7%	11.7%	16.3%	15.0%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%
10 to 19 Units	1.4%	1.0%	0.4%	0.8%	0.3%	0.0%	2.0%	1.9%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
20 to 49 Units	1.1%	1.2%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	3.1%	2.1%	2.9%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
50 or more Units	1.1%	1.5%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	3.5%	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Mobile Home or Trailer	13.8%	22.9%	27.5%	13.1%	23.2%	41.6%	7.0%	9.1%	12.0%	18.4%	35.5%	50.7%
All Other	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2007

Table C-2 confirms the predominance of single family housing versus multi-family housing showing the number of building permits pulled for Greater Tift County from 2003 to 2007. Table C-3 meanwhile shows that Mobile Home Tie Downs are of equal significance in Tift County to single family building permits, reinforcing the assumption that affordable housing is needed in Tift County and that Mobile Homes at this time serve the affordable housing segment. All show a marked decrease in 2007, a result of the weakening housing market in the U.S.

Table C-2, Tift County Building Permit Data

	Single Family Residential	Multi-Family Residential
2003	88	0
2004	93	2
2005	131	0
2006	174	1
2007 (as of 12/5/07)	133	0

Source: Tift County Zoning, (2007)

Table C-3, Total Number of Manufactured Home Tie-Downs

Year	Number of Tie-Downs
2003	171
2004	116
2005	139
2006	180
2007	130

Source: Tift County Zoning (2007)

Age of Housing Units

In 2000, more than one-third of the houses in Tift County were more than 30 years old. Another 21% was 20 to 30 years old, roughly 20% were 10 to 20 years old, and about 24 % were less than 10 years old. Due to a 2 year gap in data the exact percentage cannot be calculated for houses under 10 years old in 2007, but it appears that only roughly 5% of houses have been built within the last 7 years. This is not a significant increase in housing stock and reinforces the statement that efforts need to be increased to maintain and renovate older housing stock. The municipalities in Tift County appear to have the same distribution of housing age, except that the City of Ty Ty has a much higher share of houses built since 1980.

Table C-4, Age of Housing

	Tift County		Omega		Tifton		Ty Ty	
Total:	15,411	100%	514	100%	6,019	100%	298	100%
Built 1990 to 2000	3,658	23.7%	142	27.6%	894	14.9%	99	33.2%
Built 1980 to 1989	2,995	19.4%	95	18.5%	944	15.7%	80	26.8%
Built 1970 to 1979	3,232	21.0%	67	13.0%	1,347	22.4%	50	16.8%
Built 1960 to 1969	1,986	12.9%	54	10.5%	969	16.1%	11	3.7%
Built 1950 to 1959	1,572	10.2%	83	16.2%	844	14.0%	22	7.4%
Built 1940 to 1949	994	6.4%	29	5.6%	616	10.2%	11	3.7%
Built 1939 or earlier	974	6.3%	44	8.6%	405	6.7%	25	8.4%

Source, US Census Bureau, 2007

Housing Occupancy

Tift County's housing occupancy rate was around 90% in 2000. The vacancy rate of the State of Georgia in 2000 was 8.4%, which is generally reflected in Tift County with the exception of Omega which has a higher vacancy rate than the rest of Tift County.

Table C-5, Housing Occupancy

	Tift County		Omega		Tifton		Ty Ty	
Total Units:	15,411	100%	514	100%	6,102	100%	289	100%
Total Vacant:	1,492	9.7%	63	12.6%	570	9.3%	24	8.3%
For rent	630		32		329		6	
For sale only	249		11		88		8	
Rented or sold, not occupied	91		9		37		3	
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	115		1		31		3	
For migrant workers	9		0		1		0	
Other vacant	398		10		84		4	
Total Occupied:	13,919	90.3%	451	87.4%	5,532	90.7%	265	91.6%
Owner occupied	9,370		308		2,747		214	
Renter occupied	4,549		143		2,785		51	

Source: US Census Bureau, 2007

Housing Value

From 1990 to 2000 the housing value in Tift County has increased at approximately the same rate as the housing value for the State of Georgia; however Tift County and Tifton are only at about 75% of the State's value, the City of Ty Ty at 56% and the City of Omega at only 44%.

Table C-6, Housing Costs

	Tift County 1990	Tift County 2000	Omega 1990	Omega 2000	Tifton 1990	Tifton 2000	Ty Ty 1990	Ty Ty 2000	Georgia 1990	Georgia 2000
Median Property Value	\$51,100	\$82,600	\$31,000	\$49,000	\$51,900	\$82,100	\$35,100	\$62,500	\$70,700	\$111,200
Median Rent in 2000 dollars	\$300	\$431	\$178	\$362	\$309	\$441	\$242	\$405	\$433	\$613

Housing Affordability

In 2000, the median rent in Tift County was \$431 while the average annual household income was \$45,596. A family making the average household income would have spent about 11 percent of their income on rent in 2000 if the family rented. This percentage was slightly higher than Georgia's percentage, which was 9 percent.

Housing Condition

Housing units that have no heating facilities and no plumbing facilities are only a very small percentage of the total housing unit in Tift County. It appears therefore that in spite of the relative old age of the housing stock, most units are adequately supplied with necessary infrastructure.

Table C-7, House Heating Fuel

	Tift County	Omega	Tifton	Ty Ty
Total:	13,919	448	5,437	266
Utility gas	1,917	19	1,459	9
Bottled, tank, or LP gas	2,669	120	382	87
Electricity	8,909	280	3,482	168
Fuel oil, kerosene, etc.	140	2	89	0
Coal or coke	0	0	0	0
Wood	135	11	19	0
Solar energy	24	0	0	0
Other fuel	8	0	0	0
No fuel used	117	16	6	2

Source: US Census Bureau, 2007

Table C-8, Plumbing Facilities

	Tift County	Omega	Tifton	Ty Ty
Total:	15,411	514	6,019	298
Complete plumbing facilities	15,299	508	5,954	294
Lacking complete plumbing facilities	112	6	65	4

Source: US Census Bureau, 2007

Projected Population and Housing Needs

Population projections provide the basis for estimating Tift County's future housing needs. The population projections are used to project the number of households. The difference between the number of households and the number of housing units, when adjusted for the percentage of vacancies, projects the need for additional housing units.

Projected Population and Households

In 2005, there were about 39,793 residents in unincorporated Tift County. This number is projected to increase by more than 17% to 46,725 in 2030. The growth rate is expected to increase by 7.2 percent to the year 2010, and then level off to 6.7 percent and 6.3 percent respectively to 2020 and 2030.

Table C-9, Population Projections for Tift, Omega, Tifton, and Ty Ty

Year	Tift County	Omega	Tifton	Ty Ty
2005	39,793	1,423	15,388	741
2010	41,180	1,512	15,716	765
2015	42,566	1,598	16,043	790
2020	43,952	1,684	16,371	814
2025	45,338	1,770	16,699	839
2030	46,725	1,856	17,027	863

Source: US Census Bureau, 2007

Table C-10, Ten Year Growth Tift County and Georgia

Year	Tift County	State of Georgia
2000-10	7.22%	21.2%
2010-20	6.73%	22.48%
2020-30	6.31%	22.48%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2007

Household size in Greater Tift County appears to be following the household size trend of the State of Georgia. Household size in Tift County is projected to level off through 2015 and then start a slow and slight increase through 2030. To get the projected number of households for Tift County projected population was multiplied by household size.

Table C-11, Household Size

Year	Greater Tift County
2000	2.65
2005	2.61
2010	2.59
2015	2.57
2020	2.58
2025	2.60
2030	2.63

Source: US Census Bureau, 2007
Georgia County Guide 2005-2006

Table C-11, Household Projections for Tift, Omega, Tifton, and Ty Ty

Year	Tift County	Omega	Tifton	Ty Ty
2005	15,246	545	5896	284
2010	15,778	584	6068	295
2015	16,563	622	6242	307
2020	17,036	653	6345	315
2025	17,438	681	6423	323
2030	17,766	706	6474	328

Projected Demand and Need for Housing

The number of housing units that are in demand at any time is equal to the number of households plus the number needed to provide an adequate vacant supply for market turnover. Therefore, to determined the total number of additional housing units that will be in demand in Greater Tift County through the year 2030, the 2000 vacancy rate for housing units was applied to the household projection data. The results are shown in Table C-12.

Table C-12, Projected Demand for Housing 2005-2030

	Vacancy Rate (%)	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Tift County	9.7	16,725	17,308	18,170	18,688	19,129	19,489
City of Omega	12.6	614	658	700	735	767	795
City of Tifton	9.3	6,444	6,632	6,822	6,935	7,020	7,076
City of Ty Ty	8.3	308	319	332	333	350	355

The number of housing units that will be needed is represented by the difference between supply and demand. The supply is considered to be the existing number of housing units in any given year, which is subtracted from the demand projections to estimate housing need. According to the Georgia County Guide and the 2000 Census, Tift County had 15411 units in 2000 and a growth rate of 3.6% to 2004 for an estimated unit count of 15,966. Projecting this growth rate to 2008, Tift County would have an estimated unit count of 16,540 in 2008. This means that an additional 768 units would have to be constructed in Tift County to meet projected housing demand by 2010.

Special Housing Needs

Elderly

In Tift County, the population segment of persons over 65 has been growing. Affordable, quality housing is limited in Tift County and the need for affordable and accessible housing will increase as the population ages and more retirees choose to call Tift County home for the retirement age.

Homeless

There are no population projections for homeless victims in Tift County as no current data is available.

Table C-13, Special Housing Needs 1999-2000

	AIDS Cases 1981-2000	Family Violence, # of Police Actions Taken, 2000	Total, # Age 62+, 2000	Total, % Age 62+, 2000	Disability (Any) % Age 16+, 1990	Adult Substance Abuse Treatment Need, 2001	Adult Substance Abuse Treatment Need, % of Total Population, 2001	Migrant & Seasonal Farm Workers and Dependents, Estimated # at Peak Employment, 1994	Migrant & Seasonal Farm Workers and Dependents, Estimated % of Total Population at Peak Employment, 1994
Tift	62	228	5,294	13.78%	30.85%	2,323	6.05%	2,703	7.57%
Median Number for Georgia Counties	19	88	3,028	15%	34%	1,240	6%	566	4%

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs Data Views: <http://www.georgiaplanning.com/dataviews/resources/special1.xls> (2007)

Migrant Farm Workers

Due to the prevalence of an agricultural economy in Tift County, migrant worker housing needs to be provided that is affordable and accessible. Around 8% of the housing, corresponding with the rate of the migrant population as shown in Table C-13 should be set aside for migrant worker housing.

APPENDIX D
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

APPENDIX D: NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Natural Resources Introduction

Consideration of natural resources is an important item in planning future growth patterns for any community. For Greater Tift County, the characteristics of the natural environment, including soils, topography, water supply, and wildlife habitats is essential information in defining the county's existing attributes and potential areas of improvements. An understanding of these will guide community leaders in maintaining a high quality of life and protecting the community's vital natural resources. Numerous times in this appendix the communities will be advised to consult the enclosed maps for making basic determinations about land uses and location of development relative to the boundaries of environmentally sensitive areas. To assist the communities with making more accurate determinations at reasonable scales, this data has been integrated into each community's Geographic Information System (GIS) housed at the South Georgia Regional Development Center (SGRDC). This data is also available for viewing and query at numerous GIS-capable terminals throughout the county.

General Physical Environment

Tift County is located in south-central Georgia and has a land area of 170,240 acres, or 266 square miles. It is within the Middle South Georgia Soil & Water Conservation District which is a nine-county district established in 1939. Most of the land is well-drained which makes the county well-suited for agriculture and the streams flow generally southeastward. The physical landscape is fairly homogenous with no outstanding physical features. Much of the land is used for agricultural purposes, with no notable forms of mineral extraction except for sand and gravel.

Tift County is located within the "Tifton Uplands" of the Southern Coastal Plain physiographic province. The county's land surface is characterized by gently rolling hills which are dissected by numerous rivers and streams. The largest of these are the Alapaha River which forms the county's northeastern border with Irwin County, and the Little River which flows southerly through the west central part of the county. Most of the county is gently sloping with the flattest areas being limited to floodplains of the larger rivers and streams. The steepest slopes are short, irregular, and mostly confined to upland areas northeast of Tifton.

Tift County's lowest elevation is 225 feet along the county's southern border where the Little River enters neighboring Cook and Colquitt Counties. The highest elevation is a little greater than 410 feet on hilltops along I-75 and the Georgia Southern & Florida Railroad 3-5 miles north of Tifton. The City of Tifton is generally above 350 feet with the County Courthouse and Post Office having elevations of 370 feet. However, the city's highest elevations are a little greater than 380 feet along 12th Avenue and Hall Avenue. Elevations in the City of Omega range from 290 feet along Gun Creek to 340 feet north and south of downtown. Elevations in the City of Ty Ty range from 290 feet on the southwest side toward Ty Ty Creek to 350 feet just northwest of downtown. The elevations are shown on maps D-1 and D-2.

Tift County's bedrock is composed of Pliocene-Miocene-Oligocene sedimentary rocks which were formed mostly during the Cenozoic Era (up to 70 million years ago). Below this, the rocks are Eocene and Paleocene sedimentary rocks. The sediments which formed these rocks originated in the "ancient" Appalachian Mountains which have been eroded to form the present day Piedmont and remnant mountains.

Tift County's climate is classified as humid-mesothermal (Cfa) according to the Köppen climate classification system. Winters are cool and short with periodic cold spells moderating in 1-2 days. Summers are hot and humid. Annual precipitation typically ranges from 45 to 50 inches and is spread evenly throughout the year (2-5 inches each month). Measurable snowfalls are very rare with a less than 5% probability each year. When they occur, snowfall amounts are most always less than one inch and melt quickly. In winter, the average minimum daily temperature is 39 degrees.

In summer, the average maximum daily temperature is 90 degrees. Tift County's growing season ranges from 8-9 months with an average of 250 days that have daily minimum temperatures greater than 32 degrees. The first winter freeze typically occurs in early November and the last freeze typically occurs in mid-March.

The county's topography is such that steep slopes as well as notable views and vistas are not present. Both the Alapaha and Little Rivers are scenic rivers (but non-designated) containing a dense tree canopy, and they are navigable by canoes most of the year.

Water Resources

Annual precipitation runoff for Tift County ranges from 10-11 inches, which equals approximately 6.5 billion cubic feet (48.5 billion gallons) of water. This represents the volume of water directly entering the county's rivers and streams. The remaining water either evaporates or is absorbed by the ground. Surface drainage within Tift County is directed by a dendritic (branching tree-like) stream pattern which flows generally southeastward. All surface waters within the county eventually flow into the Suwannee River which empties into the Gulf of Mexico. The county can be divided into three (3) major drainage basins for major rivers in South Georgia, including: Alapaha River (HUC 03110202), Little River (HUC 03110204), and Withlacoochee River (HUC 03110203). Map D-3 depicts these drainage basins within Tift County. It should be noted that both the Alapaha and Withlacoochee Rivers are direct tributaries of the Suwannee. The Little River is actually a tributary of the Withlacoochee, and it flows southward from Tift County for more than 45 miles before joining the Withlacoochee.

Flood hazards along the major rivers and streams typically occur in late winter and early spring. Map D-4 depicts flood hazard areas for Tift County as a whole, and Map D-5 depicts flood hazard areas for the City of Tifton. These maps represent areas affected by a 100-year flood which has a 1% chance of occurrence in any given year. It should be noted that smaller flood events occur more frequently and affect portions of the flood hazard areas. The City of Omega contains no flood hazard areas and the City of Ty Ty has only limited flood hazard areas.

Typical of coastal plain areas, all of Tift County, Tifton, Omega and Ty Ty consumer water supplies comes from underground aquifers which are porous underground rock layers containing water. The main aquifer beneath Tift County is the Floridan aquifer which consists of confined limestone, dolostone, and calcareous sand. Beneath this aquifer are the Claiborne and Clayton aquifers. The Floridan aquifer is principally recharged immediately south of the Fall Line which stretches across central Georgia from Columbus to Macon to Augusta. This is the point at which streams from harder rock formations of the Piedmont cross into softer rock formations of the Coastal Plain. Most sedimentary rock formations of the Coastal Plain begin at the ground surface just south of the Fall Line, therefore this is where most aquifer water originates. Recharge can also occur at other points where the aquifer updips to become closer to the surface allowing water from streams, sink holes, and ponds to permeate through more shallow ground into the aquifer.

The vertical distance from the ground surface to the top of the first major subterranean reservoir varies considerably in different parts of the county. This distance generally ranges from about 200 feet in the northern part of the county to about 350 feet in the southern part. Most wells in the county range from 230-500 feet deep. The deepest wells (500-700 feet deep) are located near Brookfield and to the west of Omega. Groundwater throughout the county ranges from moderately hard in the north to very hard in the south. Other water sources include direct feeds from the Alapaha, Little, and New Rivers, and also Arnold and Ty Ty Creeks.

Environmental Planning Criteria

In 1989, the Georgia Planning Act encouraged each local government to develop a comprehensive plan to guide its activities. In order to provide the local governments with a guideline so that they could prepare their comprehensive plan, the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) developed a set of minimum requirements that each local plan must meet known as the "Minimum Planning Standards." Part of the Minimum Planning Standards is the Part V Environmental Planning Criteria that specifically deal with the protection of water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, and wetlands. River corridors and mountains were added through a separate Act in 1991. In order for a comprehensive plan to meet the Minimum Planning Standards, it must identify whether any of these environmentally sensitive areas exist within the local government's jurisdiction, and if so, must prepare local regulations to protect these resources.

MAP D-1
Greater Tift County Topography

Map D-2
City of Tifton Topography

Map D-3
Greater Tift County Drainage Basins

Map D-4
Greater Tift County Flood Insurance rate Map

Map D-5
City of Tifton Flood Insurance Rate Map

In 2003, the Water Resource Protection Districts Ordinance (WRPDO) was adopted by Tift County and the City of Tifton. This ordinance protects the sensitive natural resources: groundwater recharge areas, protected river corridors, and wetlands located throughout Tift County. By explaining the requirements for developing property containing protected water resources, the ordinances help ensure our water resources are protected from adverse affects of land development. Map D-6 depicts the *Greater Tift County Water Resource Protection Districts*. Tift also has a Wetlands Protection Districts Ordinance.

Water Supply Watersheds

Not applicable.

Wetlands

Freshwater wetlands are defined by federal law to be "those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions." Wetlands generally include bogs, marshes, wet prairies, and swamps of all kinds. When a wetland functions properly, it provides water quality protection, fish and wildlife habitat, natural floodwater storage, and reduction in the erosive potential of surface water; in addition to recreational opportunities, aesthetic benefits, and sites for research and education. However, a degraded wetland is less able to effectively perform these functions. Wetlands play an important role in both the natural and built environments and should be preserved for this purpose. Human activities cause wetland degradation and loss by changing water quality, quantity, and flow rates, increasing pollutant inputs, and changing species composition as a result of disturbance and the introduction of nonnative species.

Over the past several decades, expansion of both agricultural and urban development in Georgia has caused a steady reduction of wetlands acreage. This has resulted in the destruction of valuable plant and animal habitats, increased magnitude of floodwaters, and the removal of natural filters for surface water drainage thereby endangering water quality throughout the county. Draining wetlands for agricultural purposes is still a common, but declining practice, while development pressure is emerging as the largest cause of wetland loss. Many natural wetlands are in poor condition and man-made wetlands fail to replace the diverse plant and animal communities destroyed by development. Prior to developing parcels containing wetlands, or that are suspected of having wetlands, a detailed wetlands survey and all applicable requirements under Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act should be completed.

A National Wetland Inventory (NWI) database for the geographic extent of Tift County has been constructed by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service and integrated into the county's Geographic Information System (GIS) and should be used to protect these sensitive areas. Map D-7 depicts the *Greater Tift County Generalized Wetlands*. These exist along floodplains of the major rivers but most are primarily in small pockets chained together by numerous small streams and account for approximately 28,752 acres in Tift County area.

In Greater Tift County, wetlands exist along the floodplains of the major rivers, such as Hardy Mill Creek, Little River, New River, and Ty Ty Creek, however, the majority of wetlands are in small pockets chained together by numerous small streams. Map D-7 depicts the *Greater Tift County Generalized Wetlands*. Of the 171,509 acres in Greater Tift County, approximately 28,752 acres¹ are identified as wetlands. See Table D-1 for a breakdown of wetlands within the city and county boundaries, while Table D-2 is for the targeted land use study areas.

Map D-6
Greater Tift County Water Resource Districts

Map D-7
Greater Tift County Generalized Wetlands

Table D-1, Wetlands

Location	Wetland Acreage	Overall Wetland Percentage
Unincorporated Tift County	27,651	96%
City of Omega	81	0.4%
City of Tifton	969	3.4%
City of Ty Ty	51	0.2%
Total Wetlands	28,752	100%
Percent of Greater Tift County in Wetlands		17%

Source: National Wetland Inventory and South Georgia Regional Development Center

Table D-2, Target Land Use Area Wetlands

Location	Wetland Acreage	Wetland Percentage of Project Area
Carpenter Road, Davis Road, Hwy 82, and Whiddon Mill Road	140	4%
Highway 41 Corridor	324	6%
Hospital / High School Study Area	353	10%
Total Wetlands in Target Areas	2,103 acres	

Source: National Wetland Inventory and South Georgia Regional Development Center

As Greater Tift County continues to grow, pressures from both the agricultural and development communities will only continue to impede on the sensitive wetland environments, especially along Interstate 75 and Highway 82. To assist with the protection and incorporation of wetlands, examples of preservation opportunities for wetlands include:

- Use docks or boardwalks to cross a wetland rather than filling it in;
- Layout access paths along high ground;
- Preserve existing drainage and minimize diverting water to or from wetland areas;
- Avoid clearing or replacing natural native vegetation along the wetland edge;
- Control exotic/invasive plant species; and
- Follow State and Federal Wetland Regulations.

Conservation Areas

A conservation area can be defined as a tract of land that has been awarded protected status in order to ensure that natural features, cultural heritage or biota are safeguarded. A conservation area can include a nature reserve, park, land reclamation project, conservation easement, etc. In many cases, properties that cannot be developed due to natural features are placed in conservation easements and this information can be located at the local tax office.

Parks

A park can be defined as a piece of open land for either passive or active uses and maintained by a local, state or federal government. In Greater Tift County, there are approximately 143 acres of parkland. Greater Tift County maintains various recreation facilities including seven baseball parks, four neighborhood parks, three gyms/basketball courts, one soccer park, 1 swimming pool, and one tennis court. As new parks are always welcomed by the community, it is also important to enhance the existing parks within Greater Tift County. There are a variety of mechanisms for protecting the natural resources found in Greater Tift County. Opportunities can range from local government initiatives, private property owner, and joint public – private partnerships and result in the designation of conservation areas, parks, and/or open space. Map D-8 depicts the *Greater Tift County Recreation Department Facilities*. Table D-3 outlines the recreation department facilities.

Map D-8
Recreation Department Parks & Facilities

Table D-3, Recreation Department Facilities

Facility	Includes	Acreage
Friendly City Park	E. B. Hamilton softball complex; the Friendly City Pavilion; Amphitheater and the Optimist Soccer Complex; picnic tables; a playground; and nature trails.	80.2
City Recreation Facilities	Six athletic fields used for baseball, softball, football, and soccer; four-lighted tennis courts; Baldwin Drive Pool; outdoor basketball courts; and picnic facilities.	24.2
Copeland Park	Playground equipment; basketball courts; and picnic facilities.	0.50
Haire Park	Playground equipment; basketball courts; and picnic facilities.	0.75
Puckett Park	Playground equipment; basketball courts; and picnic facilities.	1
Mott – Litman Gym	Outside multi-purpose area and a gymnasium (basketball, volleyball, table tennis, summer day camp activities and activity rentals).	9
Fulwood Park	Large playground; picnic pavilions; fields; and restrooms.	28
Total		143.45

Source: Tift County Recreation Department

Open Spaces

An open space can be defined as undeveloped land or common areas in a planned community that will not be developed and are reserved for parks, walking paths or other natural uses. These areas may not have any particular natural resources, but there has been a commitment to keep them from development.

Groundwater Recharge Areas

A groundwater recharge area is a surface land area where water that eventually enters an aquifer (an underground reservoir) is first absorbed into the ground². The term “recharge” is often used to describe the process by which groundwater is replenished. Most areas, unless composed of solid rock or covered by development, allow a certain percentage of precipitation to reach the water table. There are several factors that must be considered when calculating infiltration including vegetation cover, slope, soil composition, depth to the water table, and much more. It is also important to know that some areas allow more precipitation to infiltrate than in others and these areas of often referred to as "high", "critical", or “most significant” recharge areas.

The largest groundwater recharge area in Tift County is a narrow band lying just east of and parallel to the Little River. Map D-9 depicts the groundwater recharge areas within Tift County. Aquifer recharge areas are vulnerable to both urban and agricultural development. Pollutants from stormwater runoff in urban areas and excess pesticides and fertilizers in agricultural areas can access a groundwater aquifer more easily through these recharge areas. Once in the aquifer, pollutants can spread uncontrollably to other parts of the aquifer thereby decreasing or endangering water quality for an entire region. Therefore, development of any kind in these areas, including installation of septic tanks, should be limited.

In Greater Tift County, there are two “most significant” groundwater recharge areas that consist of approximately 17,643 acres or 10% of Greater Tift County. The first is located to the east of the Little River, while the second is located on the east and west of Ty Ty Creek, both of which run parallel to the streams. The remaining portions of Greater Tift County are located in an “average” groundwater pollution susceptibility area³. Map D-9 depicts the *Greater Tift County Groundwater Recharge Areas*, while Table D-4 provides a breakdown of the most significant groundwater recharge areas within the city and county boundaries, while Table D-5 is for the targeted land use study areas.

² Georgia Department of Community Affairs

³ Georgia Department of Natural Resources - Hydrologic Atlas 20

Map D-9
Greater Tift County Groundwater Recharge Areas

Table D-4, Most Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas

Location	Groundwater Recharge Acreage	Groundwater Recharge Percentage
Unincorporated Tift County	16,720	95%
City of Omega	0	0%
City of Tifton	770	4.2%
City of Ty Ty	153	0.8%
Total Groundwater Recharge Areas	17,643	100%
Percent of Greater Tift County in Groundwater Recharge Areas		17%

Source: USDA – Hydrologic Atlas 18 and the South Georgia Regional Development Center

Table D-5, Target Land Use Area Groundwater Recharge Areas

Location	Wetland Acreage	Wetland Percentage of Project Area
Carpenter Road, Davis Road, Hwy 82, and Whiddon Mill Road	2,654	26
Highway 41 Corridor	0	0%
Hospital / High School Study Area	0	0%
Total Groundwater Recharge Areas in Target Areas	2,654 acres	

Source: USDA – Hydrologic Atlas 18 and the South Georgia Regional Development Center

If hazardous waste or toxic substances pollute the water that seeps into the ground in a recharge area, these pollutants are likely to be carried into the aquifer and contaminate the groundwater, making it unsafe to drink. Once polluted, it is almost impossible for a groundwater source to be cleaned up⁴. Since Greater Tift County receives all of its drinking water from groundwater, the Floridian aquifer, it is important that additional measures be taken to protect these highly sensitive areas.

To assist with the protection of most significant groundwater recharge areas, examples of opportunities include:

- Wellhead protection program;
- Limit impermeable surfaces (e.g. maximum building footprints);
- Require sewer services instead of septic systems; and
- Zoning overlay district (e.g. types of development allowed, increased minimum lot size, incentives for recharge – sensitive cluster development)

Protected River Corridors

The Georgia General Assembly passed the "Mountain and River Corridor Protection Act" in 1991, which requires local governments to adopt river corridor protection plans for certain designated rivers affecting or bordering their jurisdiction. In Greater Tift County, the only river affected by this Act is the entire stretch of the Alapaha River along the county’s northeastern border. Map D-10 depicts the *Greater Tift County Protected River Corridor*. This portion of the Alapaha River floodplain is very wide and field survey indicates only natural vegetation associated with the floodplain to be located within the minimum 100’ wide protection corridor. There are no other land uses currently within the corridor.

Under the Mountain and River Corridor Protection Act, Tift County is required to adopt a "Corridor Protection Plan" for these river segments in accordance with the minimum criteria contained in the Act and as adopted by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Tift County has reviewed the provisions of the Act and proposes implementation of its provisions by adoption of amendments to its erosion and sedimentation control ordinances, zoning ordinances, building permit requirements, and a septic tank permitting program, as appropriate.

⁴ Georgia Department of Community Affairs
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Map D-10
Greater Tift County Protected River Corridor

Protected Mountains

Not applicable.

Community Facilities

The City of Tifton and Tift County have consolidated their water and sewer services into a joint Utilities Department that provides water, sewer, and natural gas services to its customers. The City of Tifton Water and Wastewater plants are open to the public for tours and personnel are available for lectures on environmental subjects. Persons wishing to view the plants are requested to call the Wastewater Treatment Complex (229) 386-2115 during normal office hours to schedule a tour. Groups of up to 20 people may be accommodated at one time if notice is given. The Cities of Ty Ty and Omega have their own Water and Sewer infrastructure systems.

Water

The joint Water Department is responsible for providing water services to over 10,000 customers throughout Greater Tift County through eight municipal groundwater wells, which draw water from the Floridian Aquifer. The system is comprised of some 280 miles of distribution mains and 12 production wells. The system can also provide approximately 20 million gallons per day of water for both domestic and fire protection needs. The City of Tifton has an active "Wellhead Protection Plan" with a State Susceptibility Ranking of low.

With water being such a valuable and precious resource, it is important to encourage ways to conserve. Here are a few examples:

- Offer credits/incentives to local water providers/companies/farmers that hold permits and do not withdrawal the maximum amount that their permit allows;
- Promote water conservation programs and funding opportunities with agencies such as USDA – NRCS for irrigation retrofits, construction of catchment ponds, etc.; and
- Provide education opportunities as to ways that homeowners and businesses can conserve water through low-flow fixtures, xeriscaping, etc.

Wastewater

The City of Tifton operates one wastewater treatment facility, the Tifton Regional Wastewater Treatment Complex (TRWTC), which has a capacity of 8,000,000 gallons per day. The City is responsible for an Industrial Pre-treatment Program that is administered by the Water/Wastewater Superintendent and works with various industries to control the discharge of metals and other harmful pollutants into the treatment plant. The program goal is to cooperate with industries to keep their raw material out of the sewer system and utilize them as products. This helps the industries while preventing damage to the treatment system and the environment. All industrial customers discharging water used for industrial processes, large volumes of cooling water, and/or other material into the sanitary sewer system must obtain a permit for such discharge.

Stormwater

Stormwater is a term used by engineers to describe precipitation. Stormwater that does not soak into the ground becomes runoff, which either flows into surface waterways or is channeled into storm sewers. Impervious surfaces like driveways, sidewalks, and streets prevent stormwater runoff from naturally soaking into the ground. Stormwater can pick up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants and flow into a storm sewer system or directly to a lake, stream, river, or wetland. Anything that enters a storm sewer system is discharged untreated into our local water bodies.

All communities are faced with stormwater issues; however, not all are required to address them. In 1990, the Phase I stormwater program was created under the Clean Water Act (CWA) and required a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for (1) "medium" and "large" municipal separate storm sewer

systems (MS4s) generally serving populations of 100,000 or greater, (2) construction activity disturbing 5 acres of land or greater, and (3) ten categories of industrial activity. In 1999, the Phase II stormwater program was created to further expand the Phase I program by requiring additional operators of MS4s in urbanized areas and operators of small construction sites, through the use of NPDES permits, to implement programs and practices to control polluted stormwater runoff⁵.

Even though there are no Phase II communities in Greater Tift County, in 1998 a stormwater master plan was developed to address stormwater issues. This plan is actively used and implementation projects include:

- Installed detention/retention devices;
- Evaluated and identified problem areas of the system; and
- GPS'ed all stormwater inlets and outlets.

Total water consumption in Tift County averages approximately 6.3 million gallons per day. Approximately 4.9 million gallons (78 percent) comes from groundwater and the remaining 1.4 million gallons (22 percent) comes from surface water. Table D-6 depicts the *Greater Tift Average Daily Water Consumption*.

Table D-6, Greater Tift Average Daily Water Consumption (# Of Gallons)

User Category	Groundwater		Surface Water		Total Consumption	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Crop Irrigation	2,620,000	52.6	1,190,000	85.6	3,810,000	59.8
Livestock	5,000	0.1	200,000	14.4	205,000	3.2
Public Water Supply --- Domestic	1,600,000	32.1	----	----	1,600,000	25.1
Public Water Supply --- Other	100,000	2.0	----	----	100,000	1.6
Self-Supplied --- Domestic/Commercial	660,000	13.2	----	----	660,000	10.3
Self-Supplied --- Industrial	----	----	----	----	----	----
TOTAL CONSUMPTION	4,985,000	100%	1,390,000	100%	6,375,000	100%

Source: Georgia Water Use by County, 2000.
 (Numbers are translated from "millions of gallons per day (MGD)" calculations)

Assessment

- Current policies/ordinance meets state standards. Education outreach and enforcement should be implemented and/or continued.
- Offer credits/incentives to local water provides/companies/farmers that hold permits and do not pump the maximum amount of their permit in a given year.
- Depending on the size of an irrigation system, work with agencies such as NRCS and UGA to encourage/promote programs to construct or renovate irrigation water catchments, Variable Rate Irrigation Systems, etc.
- There are a number of things to do with homeowners to conserve water in their showers, toilets, faucets, and outdoor water use.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

Steep Slopes

Not applicable.

Coastal Resources

Not applicable.

⁵ United States Environmental Protection Agency
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Floodplains

Flood hazards along the major rivers and streams typically occur in late winter and early spring. In 1982, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) prepared a Flood Boundary and Floodway Map (Floodway) for Tift County and a Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) for the City of Tifton. However, as of May 2007, the municipalities of Omega has not been mapped by FEMA. Based off this information, approximately 8% of Greater Tift County is located in a flood zone. Maps D-4 and D-5 depict the *Greater Tift County Mapped Floodplains*.

The major flood prone areas in Tift County are found along Arnold Creek, Gum Creek, Little River and several of its tributaries, New River, and a small stream identified as Channel A. As for the City of Tifton, the flood prone areas include New River and several small channels identified as A, B, C, D, E, F, and G in the FIRM maps. Table D-7 outlines the floodplains within each targeted land use study area.

Table D-7, Floodplains

Location	Acreage and Percentage in Target Area
Carpenter Road, Davis Road, Hwy 82, and Whiddon Mill Road	913 acres (9%)
Highway 41 Corridor	60 acres (1%)
Hospital / High School Study Area	213 acres (6%)

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency and the South Georgia Regional Development Center

Soils

Soils are considered to be a region's most basic and fragile natural resource, combined with such variable resources as air and water. In 1983, the United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service published the Soil Survey of Tift County Georgia in cooperation with the University of Georgia, College of Agriculture – Agricultural Experiment Stations, and Tift County. A general soil association map was also developed as a result of the study that includes nine (8) soil associations. Map D-11 depicts the *Greater Tift County Generalized Soil Associations*. Table D-8 provides a general description of the 8 soil associations found in Greater Tift County.

Greater Tift County Generalized Soil Associations

Table D-8, Soil Associations

Soil Association	Soil Description
Kinston – Osier (12%)	Poorly drained soils that are loamy or dominantly sandy throughout.
Ocilla – Stilson – Pelham (5%)	Moderately well drained to poorly drained soils that have a thick sandy surface and subsurface layer and a loamy subsoil.
Lakeland – Pelham (3%)	Excessively drained soils that are sandy throughout, mainly on ridgetops; and poorly drained soils that have a thick sandy surface layer and a loamy subsoil, in depressions and along drainageways.
Tifton – Alapaha – Fuquay (5%)	Well drained soils that have a sandy surface layer or a thick sandy surface and subsurface layer and a loamy subsoil, mainly on ridgetops; and poorly drained soils that have a thick sandy surface layer and a loamy subsoil, in depressions and along drainageways.
Tifton – Alapaha – Dothan (46%)	Well drained soils that have a dominantly sandy surface layer and a loamy subsoil, mainly on ridgetops; and poorly drained soils that have a thick sandy surface layer and a loamy subsoil, in depressions and along drainageways.
Tifton – Alapaha (19%)	Well drained soils that have a dominantly sandy surface layer and a loamy subsoil, on smooth ridgetops and irregular hillsides; and poorly drained soils that have a thick sandy surface layer and a loamy subsoil, in depressions and along drainageways.
Tifton – Alapaha – Cowarts (4%)	Well drained soils that have a dominantly sandy surface layer and a loamy subsoil, on ridgetops and irregular hillsides; and poorly drained soils that have a thick sandy surface layer and a loamy subsoil, mainly along drainageways.
Cowarts – Alapaha – Fuquay (5%)	Well drained soils that are loamy throughout and poorly drained and well drained soils that have a thick sandy surface and subsurface layer and a loamy subsoil.

Source: USDA – Soil Conservation Service, 1983 Soil Survey of Tift County Georgia

Table D-9 outlines the soil associations found within in each targeted land use study areas.

Table D-9, Soil Associations

Location	Soil Association	Acreage and Percentage
Carpenter Road, Davis Road, Hwy 82, and Whiddon Mill Road	- Kinston – Osier	- 346 acres (3%)
	- Lakeland – Pelham	- 745 acres (7%)
	- Tifton – Alapaha	- 2,150 acres (21%)
	- Tifton – Alapaha – Dothan	- 7,012 acres (68%)
Highway 41 Corridor	- Cowarts – Alapaha – Fuquay	- 207 acres (4%)
	- Ocilla – Stilson – Pelham	- 388 acres (8%)
	- Tifton – Alapaha – Cowarts	- 29 acres (0.6%)
	- Tifton – Alapaha – Dothan	- 4,076 acres (80%)
	- Tifton – Alapaha - Fuquay	- 385 acres (8%)
Hospital / High School Study Area	- Cowarts – Alapaha – Fuquay	- 91 acres (3%)
	- Kinston – Osier	- 25 acres (0.7%)
	- Ocilla – Stilson – Pelham	- 333 acres (10%)
	- Tifton – Alapaha – Dothan	- 2,916 acres (87%)

Source: USDA – Soil Conservation Service, 1983 Soil Survey of Tift County Georgia and the South Georgia Regional Development Center

Assessment

- Current policy/ordinance meets state standards. Education outreach and enforcement should be implemented and/or continued (E&S ordinance).

Land Capability

For purposes of this Comprehensive Plan, the eight general soil associations have been arbitrarily classified in terms of land development capability for both agricultural and urban uses. Table D-10 depicts these classifications. The terms "good", "fair", and "poor" have been used to describe their relative capabilities. Agricultural yields per acre were used in determining agricultural capacity, and limitations on building site development were used in determining urban capability. Map D-12 depicts the county's land capability for agriculture, and Map D-13 depicts the county's land capability for urban development. As can be seen by these maps, Greater Tift County's best agricultural land is located in the higher areas of the southwestern portion of the county west of the Little River, and in the northwestern and southeastern extremes of the county. The City of Omega lies entirely within this area.

Table D-10, Summarized Land Capability for Greater Tift County

Soil Type Association	Agricultural Uses			Urban Uses		
	Good	Fair	Poor	Good	Fair	Poor
Kinston-Osier			X			X
Ocilla-Stilson-Pelham		X				X
Lakeland-Pelham			X		X	
Tifton-Alapaha-Fuquay	X				X	
Tifton-Alapaha-Dothan		X			X	
Tifton-Alapaha	X				X	
Tifton-Alapaha-Cowarts		X			X	
Cowarts-Alapaha-Fuquay		X		X		

Source: Soil Survey of Tift County, Georgia, 1983; U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soil Conservation Service.

It should be noted that each soil association consists of individual soil types with varying degrees of capability for agricultural or urban uses. For example, a soil association containing soil types with a particularly high agricultural production may also contain soil types with a particularly low production. Therefore, the land capability ratings are generalized on the total composition of the soil association. For agricultural capability, it should be noted that Tift County's soil associations were compared only amongst themselves (within the county) and the ratings do not reflect a true regional comparison. The soil associations that are rated as "good" are exceptional for agricultural production in that they produce high yields for a wide variety of crops. The soil associations that are rated as "fair" are actually good for agricultural production in that they produce high yields, but are typically used for a slightly smaller range of crops. When considering a regional comparison, most of Tift County's soil associations would be rated as good for agriculture.

Land Capability For Cultivated Crops

MAP D-13
Land Capability For Urban Development

Table D-11 depicts the various individual soil types and their proportionate share of the county. It also depicts those soils identified by the USDA as being "prime farmland" or "farmland having statewide importance" which are based on underlying soil types. Prime farmland is defined as land that is best suited to producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high crop yields if acceptable farming methods are used. Prime farmland produces the highest yields with minimal inputs of energy and money. The use of prime farmland for agricultural purposes results in the least damage to the environment. The supply of high quality farmland is limited and should be used with wisdom and foresight. Farmland of "statewide importance" consists of soils that are important to agriculture in the county but are considered to be marginal cropland. These soils do not meet the requirements for prime farmland and are typically less productive.

Consideration of septic tank percolation fields was also included in the determination of land capability for urban uses. Although most soil associations appear to be at least "fair" for overall urban usage, none are considered "good" for septic tanks and all but two are considered "poor". Table D-12 depicts the soil association ratings for septic tank usage. Map D-14 depicts generalized locations of land capability for septic tanks in Tift County.

Table D-12, Land Capability For Septic Tank Absorption Fields

Soil Type Association	Septic Tank Percolation Fields		
	Good	Fair	Poor
Kinster-Osier			X
Ocilla-Stilson-Pelham			X
Lakeland-Pelham			X
Tifton-Alapaha-Fuquay		X	
Tifton-Alapaha-Dothan		X	
Tifton-Alapaha			X
Tifton-Alapaha-Cowarts			X
Cowarts-Alapaha-Fuquay			X

Source: Soil Survey of Tift County, Georgia 1983; U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soil Conservation Service.

When evaluating individual soil types, only Dothan, Fuquay and Tifton soils have a marginally "fair" rating and these comprise only 46.2% of the county. All other soils (53.8%) are considered "poor" and none have a favorable rating. The use of septic tanks in "fair" soils requires expensive modifications to the drain field. The use of septic tanks in "poor" soils is cost prohibitive. Therefore, the effective use of septic tanks in Tift County is not compatible with natural soil conditions and the use of municipal sewers should be required in developing areas.

Existing Land Use

Natural land use classifications include wildlife areas, forests, and other open or undeveloped areas. Human land uses include residential, commercial, industrial, utilities, agricultural, recreational, and other developed uses. Management plans, policies, ordinances and regulations determine the types of uses that are allowable, or the types of uses that protect specially designated or environmentally sensitive uses.

MAP D-14
Greater Tift County Land Capability for Septic Tanks

The attributes of land use include general land use patterns, land ownership, land management plans, and special use areas. General land use patterns characterize the types of uses within a particular area. Existing land use patterns have a direct impact on a county or city’s future growth. The preparation and analysis of existing land use maps and data are important in understanding land use relationships within and between Tifton and Tift County. The following chapter provides an inventory of existing land uses within five (5) target areas identified by community leaders as regions of concern that need improvement and protection of environmental resources.

The target areas under the Comprehensive Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) in Tift County are:

1. Carpenter Road Corridor beginning at U.S. Highway 319 north to Zion Hope Road/Carrington Drexler Road.
2. U.S. Highway 82 Corridor from Ray Taylor Road to U.S. Highway 319.
3. Whidden Mill Corridor from Interstate 75 to Earle Hutchinson Road.
4. U.S. 41 from the Cook County line north to the Turner County line.
5. Kent Road and the area surrounding the Tift County High School and the Tift Regional Medical Center.

During April and May of 2007, planning staff from the South Georgia Regional Development Center (SGRDC) conducted a land use inventory of the aforementioned target areas. The method included fieldwork, consultation with officials, and research of county tax parcel and aerial maps.

Plant and Animal Habitats

River corridors, wetlands, and lakes provide natural habitat for a variety of rare and common plant and animal species. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – Wildlife Resources Division – Georgia Natural Heritage Program has worked with a number of groups to compile a list of Georgia’s rare species. The most recent data on threatened or endangered plant and animal species in Tift County is from 2006. Table D-13 lists the *Endangered or Threatened Plant Species in Tift County* and Table D-14 lists the *Endangered or Threatened Animal Species in Tift County*.

Table D-13, Endangered Or Threatened Plant Species In Tift County

SPECIES Common Name – (<i>Species Name</i>)	GEORGIA		FEDERAL
	Threatened	Endangered	Endangered
PLANTS			
Bog Bluestem – <i>Andropogon mohrii</i>	X		
Purple Honeycomb Head - <i>Bauduina atropurpurea (GA)</i>	X		
Pan- American Balsamscale - <i>Elyonurus trisacoides</i>	X		
Rush Quillwort - <i>Isoetes junciformis</i>		X	
Savanna Cowbane – <i>Oxypolis ternate</i>	X		
Georgia Beaksedge - <i>Rhychospora culixa</i>	X		
Autumn Beakrush - <i>Rhynchospora solitaria</i>		X	
Yellow Flytrap - <i>Sarracenia flava (GA)</i>		X	
Hooded Pitcherplant - <i>Sarracenia minor (GA)</i>		X	
Parrot Pitcherplant – <i>Sarracenia psittacina (GA)</i>	X		
Purple Pitcherplant – <i>Sarracenia purpurea (GA)</i>		X	
Wire-leaf Dropseed – <i>Sporobolus teretifolius</i>		X	

Source: Georgia Department of Natural Resources – Wildlife Resources Division – Georgia Natural Heritage Program, 2006.

Table D –14, Endangered Or Threatened Animal Species In Tift County

SPECIES Common Name – (<i>Species Name</i>)	GEORGIA		FEDERAL
	Threatened	Endangered	Endangered
ANIMALS			
No threatened or endangered species			

Source: Georgia Department of Natural Resources – Wildlife Resources Division – Georgia Natural Heritage Program, 2004.

Impaired Streams

In 1994, a lawsuit was filed in the United States District Court against the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) by the Sierra Club, Georgia Environmental Organization, Inc., Coosa River Basin Initiative Inc., Trout Unlimited, and Ogeechee River Valley Association for the failure to prepare Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), under provisions under the Clean Water Act, for the State of Georgia.

A TMDL is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a river, stream, or lake can receive and still be considered safe and healthy. A TMDL is a means for recommending controls needed to meet water quality standards, which are set by the state and determines how much of a pollutant can be present in a waterbody. If the pollutant is over the set limit, a water quality violation has occurred. If a stream is polluted to the extent that there is a water quality standard violation, there cannot be any new additions (or “loadings”) of the pollutant into the stream until a TMDL is developed. Pollutants can come from point source and non-point source pollution. Examples of “pollutants” include, but are not limited to: Point Source Pollution- wastewater treatment plant discharges and Non-point Source Pollution- runoff from urban, agricultural, and forested area such as animal waste, litter, antifreeze, gasoline, motor oil, pesticides, metals, and sediment.

In 2007, the SGRDC entered into a contract with the GA Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – Environmental Protection Division (EPD) to prepare seven (6) local TMDL Implementation Plans for stream segments in the Suwannee Basin that had been identified as impaired water bodies due to high fecal coliform (FC). Of the seven (6) TMDL Implementation Plans located in the Suwannee Basin, one of the streams were located within Tift County.

The Georgia 2006 305(b)/303(d) draft list of waters was prepared as a part of the Georgia 2004-2005 assessment of water quality prepared in accordance with Sections 305(b) and 303(d) of the Federal Clean Water Act and guidance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Assessed water bodies are classified according to a comparison of water quality monitoring results to water quality standards and other pertinent information. Table D-15 depicts the 2006 list of impaired streams located within Tift County. Map D-15 shows the impaired stream segments in Tift County.

Table D-15, The Tift County 2006 305(B)/303(D) List

Waterbody Name	Location	County(s)	Impairment	Miles Impacted
Westside Branch	Tributary to Little River	Tift	Elevated FC	2
Ty Ty Creek	Little Cr. near Ty Ty to Tucker Cr. near Omega	Tift, Worth	Low DO, elevated FC	10
Southside branch	Tributary to New River	Tift Brooks	Elevated FC	1
New River	Westside Branch to Gum Cr. downstream Tifton	Tift	Elevated FC	5
Little River	Ashburn Branch W. of Sycamore to Big Branch	Tift, Turner	Low DO	4

Source: Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division, 2006

MAP D-15
Tift County 2004 Impaired Stream Segments

Other Significant Natural Resources

Scenic Areas

Not applicable.

Prime Agricultural Land

Prime farmland is of major importance in satisfying the nation's short- and long-range needs for food and fiber. The supply of high quality farmland is limited and therefore should be used with wisdom and foresight. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines prime farmland as:

Land that is best suited to producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops.

In 1983, there were 81,560 acres that met the soil requirements for prime farmland in Greater Tift County. Based off USDA – NRCS, the acreage of prime farmland remains the same today. In 1983, there were 20,150 acres identified as marginal cropland. This is farmland that consists of soils that are important to agriculture, but do not meet the requirements for prime farmland. These soils tend to be more erodible, droughty, seasonally wet, difficult to cultivate, and less productive than prime farmland soils⁶.

Farmland not only provides food and fiber, but pays more in taxes than it requires in service expenditures as well as environmental benefits. As development pressures continuing to rise in Greater Tift County, it is important to incorporate measures that will protect this limited resource and preserve farmland for future generations. Examples of opportunities include:

- Purchase Development Rights (PDR) / Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (AEPP);
- Conservation Easements;
- Local Tax Incentives;
- Agricultural Security Areas; and
- Agricultural Overlay Districts.

Major Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Areas

The Georgia Agrirama, located at 1392 Whiddon Mill Road in Tifton, is the official state museum of agriculture. There are no federal or state owned recreation or wildlife management areas within Tift County; however, efforts should be taken to maintain the current park inventory and possibly explore areas where parks and natural habitats could be incorporated into Greater Tift County. Table D-16 lists the *State Parks and Historic Sites Within 70 miles of Tift County*.

⁶ USDA – Soil Conservation Service, 1983 Soil Survey of Tift County Georgia.
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Table D-16, State Parks & Historic Sites Within 70 Miles Of Tift County

STATE PARK AND / OR HISTORIC SITE	ADDRESS	FACILITIES/ACTIVITIES	DISTANCE
Georgia Veterans State Park (1,308 acres)	2459 U.S. Highway 280 W Cordele , GA 31015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 77 Tent, Trailer, RV Campsites • 4 Picnic Shelters • Group Shelter • Pioneer Campground • 10 Cottages • The Lake Blackshear Resort and Golf Club • Memorial Golf Course (18-Holes) • The Marina at Lake Blackshear Resort • Beach • R/C Model Airplane Flying Field • Disc Golf Course 	49 miles
General Coffee State Park (1,511 acres)	46 John Coffee Rd Nicholls , GA 31554-9246 (912) 384-7082	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-Acre Lake • Tent, Trailer, RV Campsites • 5 Cottages • Group Lodge • 7 Picnic Shelters • Pioneer Campground • Swimming Pool • Heritage Farm • Outdoor Amphitheater 	54 miles
Jefferson Davis Memorial Historic Site	338 Jeff Davis Park Rd Fitzgerald, GA 31750 (229) 831-2335	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil War Museum: film and artifacts • Monument, 1/3-Mile Nature Trail • 13 Picnic Sites, Group Shelter (seats 100) • Gift Shop 	18 miles
Reed Bingham State Park (1,613 acres)	542 Reed Bingham Rd Adel, GA 31620 (229) 896-3551	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46 Tent, Trailer, RV Campsites • Cable TV hookups • 375-Acre Lake, Swimming Beach • 3 Boat Ramps, Playground • Pioneer Campground, 6 Picnic Shelters • 4 Group Shelters (seat 40–150) • Accessible Fishing Pier • Hiking: 4 miles of trails, Boating • Fishing: dock, boat rental • Miniature Golf, Bird Watching 	28 miles

Source: Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites, 2007, www.gastateparks.org

CULTURAL RESOURCES

A comprehensive historic resources survey has not been undertaken for all of Greater Tift County. The purpose of such a survey is to identify and inventory what historic resources exist in order to take further actions to protect and preserve them. Because a historic resources survey has not been done, it is difficult to assess completely Greater Tift County’s historic resources. However, based upon several windshield surveys of the area, the National Register of Historic Places inventory, and several surveys for Tifton and one for Ty Ty, it is obvious that there are numerous historic and cultural resources in Greater Tift County.

Tift County Registered Historic Places

Tift County has a rich heritage that is evidenced by its historic sites. One historic site and one historic district have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the Georgia Register of Historic Places (GARHP). Another historic district has been placed on the GARHP and is pending official listing on the NRHP.

Table D-17, Tift County Properties Listed On The National Register Of Historic Places

SITE	ADDRESS	CITY	DATE LISTED
Tift County Courthouse	Courthouse Square	Tifton	September 18, 1980
Tifton Commercial Historic District	Roughly Bounded by Second and Third Streets, Love and Central Avenues	Tifton	March 4, 1986
Tifton Commercial Historic District Boundary Increase	Roughly Bounded by Third St., Tift Ave., Ninth St., and Commerce Way	Tifton	April 21, 1994
Tifton Residential Historic District		Tifton	Pending

Source: National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, 2007

The site and districts referenced in Table D-17 are shown on Map D-16.

Tifton is the only community with any sites listed on the NRHP to date. Omega and Ty Ty contain sites that have cultural and historic value for their community. While some of these are vacant buildings, others are still being used. There are also a multitude of properties throughout unincorporated Tift County that are regionally significant and may be eligible for inclusion in the NRHP.

Inventory

Tift County

Although a comprehensive, countywide historic resources survey has not been conducted, a cursory inspection along the major corridors in Tift County revealed many significant historic residential, religious, public, and agricultural buildings located throughout. A large percentage of the historic houses are of the folk Victorian style (wooden vernacular houses with applied ornamentation) which is often associated with rural communities or farms. The historic houses of Tift County also include vernacular Craftsman and bungalow styles, and cottages and farmhouses of no particular style. Barns and outbuildings older than 50 years are also considered historic and contribute to the overall historic character of the county.

Tift County has many mature agricultural landscapes, which significantly contribute to the historic and aesthetic character of the county. Another significant feature which is important to the rural character of Tift County is the existence of tree canopies over several of the historic rural roads.

For a map of historic places in Tift County, please see Maps D-17 through D-18.

MAP D-16

Tift National Registered Historic Places & Districts

MAP D-17
Tift County Historic Churches

Map D-18
Tift County Historic Schools

Tifton

Tifton is the county seat of Tift County and its largest city. In 2003, a historic resources survey of Tifton was sponsored by the Tifton Heritage Foundation and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Resources Division and conducted by Tracy M. Dean. The purpose of this survey was to identify and inventory historic resources in Tifton for protection and use in planning. This survey identified 537 historic properties, the majority of which date from circa 1885 to 1929. The 2003 survey added to the 41 historic properties identified on a 1994 survey completed by David Cullison on behalf of the Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division. The historic resources identified in Mr. Cullison's survey are located within the Department of Agriculture in Tifton, The Georgia Peanut Commission in Tifton, the Georgia Agrirama, the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College Station, and the Coastal Plain Experiment Station at the University of Georgia, Tifton Campus.

Tifton has been very proactive in historic preservation efforts. The city became a Main Street Community, as designated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, in 1986. In 1988, the city adopted a historic preservation ordinance and subsequently became a Certified Local Government two years later. In 2007, Tifton was named a Preserve America Community by First Lady Laura Bush, a program of the National Parks System.

Per requirements outlined in Tifton's historic preservation ordinance, the Historic Preservation Commission of Tifton oversees the city's Local Historic District (See Map D-19). Design Guidelines for the Local Historic District were first created in 1988, and redrafted in 2003. In 2006, Tifton was awarded a grant by the Historic Preservation Division to create a heritage tourism guidebook for the city. The guidebook, "Living in a Landmark," was completed in 2007 and highlights Tifton's historic downtown and nearby historic neighborhoods through walking and driving tours.

Map D-20 shows Tifton's historic areas.

Omega

A historic resources survey for Omega has not been performed. Primarily of late 19th and 20th century construction, the historic building stock in Omega is centered in the downtown commercial area. The downtown historic buildings are comprised mainly of one- and two-story masonry construction, and appear to be in good to fair condition. Omega has an active business district due in large part to the agricultural business and plant sheds located downtown. Some of these agricultural/commercial structures appear to be historic. Most of the residential buildings date to the early 20th century and are constructed of masonry and/or wood. Omega's houses are vernacular in style, with late Victorian and bungalow architectural elements.

Ty Ty

Tift County's oldest community is Ty Ty. A historic resources survey was conducted in 2003 by Tracy M. Dean. The Ty Ty survey, like the Tifton survey, was sponsored by the Tifton Heritage Foundation and the Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division. 72 historic properties were identified in this survey, with the majority dating from 1895 to 1920. Historic structures in Ty Ty's commercial area along the North and Railroad Streets are predominantly masonry construction. Generally, these historic resources are in poor condition; there are few in good condition, and several that are dilapidated. Along Highway 82 in Ty Ty, there are several examples of mid-twentieth century roadside commercial architecture.

Ty Ty's historic residential neighborhoods consist of masonry and wooden structures dating from the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. Architectural styles include Victorian Eclectic and vernacular interpretations of Craftsman, bungalow, and classical revival.

One public building of particular note is the old Ty Ty School, now used as City Hall. It is constructed of textured masonry blocks in the classical revival style.

MAP D-19
City Of Tifton Local Historic District

MAP D-20
City Of Tifton Historic Churches

Archaeological Sites

The earliest known human inhabitants of the region now known as Tift County came into the area approximately 11,500 years ago, towards the end of the last Ice Age. European settlers began to enter the area in the early eighteenth century. Over the 11,500 years, humans have left a substantial material record of their lives. The study of this material record forms the basis of **archaeology** and the basic unit of this record is the **archaeological site**. To date, there have been thirty eight (38) archaeological sites recorded in Tift County. Archaeological sites in Tift County can range from locations where hunters manufactured stone tools 11,500 years ago to small late nineteenth/early twentieth century farmsteads.

Archaeological sites, like historic buildings, are considered **cultural resources** and, if they meet eligibility requirements set forth in the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), **historic properties**. Unlike historic buildings, however, archaeological sites are not always evident to the untrained eye. While some archaeological sites have obvious above ground indicators such as earth mounds, or chimney remnants, most consist of **artifacts** (object made or modified by humans such as stone tool, pottery, bottle glass) and **features** (post holes, trash pits, stone hearths, human burials, etc.) that are **underground**.

How do you know if an area contains an archaeological site? The only sure way to know is to have a professional archaeologist sample, or **survey**, the area. There are, however, some general criteria you can apply to help prioritize areas. Prehistoric (Indian) sites are most commonly located near water sources such as streams, springs, or lime sinks. Historic (Euro/Afro-American) sites are commonly located close to old/historic roads. Both prehistoric and historic sites are generally located on level to gently sloping ground and on well-drained soils. Previous disturbance can also affect a location's potential to contain archaeological sites. For example, road/utilities right-of-way has usually been subjected to heavy disturbance and is not likely to contain any intact archaeological deposits. Cultivation, however, does not necessarily destroy archaeological sites and does not, by itself, indicate a low potential area. Such criteria, even when developed into a formal predictive model, should only be used as a tool at the most basic planning level. Hiring a professional archaeologist/consultant is an effective way of streamlining the compliance process and insuring that archaeological resources are being treated according to the law.

While cultural resources work is most often done in response to Section 106 of the NHPA, meaning that there is some federal involvement (i.e., federal funds, permits, etc.), it is important to remember that there are also state laws to consider. Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA) 12-3-621 states that a person who is **not** operating under Section 106 must have written landowner permission to conduct archaeology on private property and must provide notification to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Other code sections apply more generally to human remains, but are relevant because of the possibility of discovering such remains at archaeological sites. OCGA 31-21-6 requires notification of local law enforcement upon the discovery of human remains. If law enforcement determines that it is not a crime scene, DNR is notified of the discovery. OCGA 36-72-1 addresses development on property where a known cemetery is located.

Key points to remember when considering archaeology in development and compliance:

- Humans have been in the area now known as Tift County for at least 11,500 years, so the potential for finding evidence of past human activity (i.e., archaeological sites) is generally high.
- Unlike historic buildings, archaeological sites often have no above ground components that would indicate their presence.
- While factors such as distance to water and/or old roads, slope, soil drainage, and previous disturbance can help prioritize areas of archaeological concern, the only sure way to know whether an area contains archaeological sites is to conduct an archaeological survey.
- Most archaeology is done in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and regulations implementing that act (36 CFR Part 800). These laws insure that projects receiving federal funds (CDBG/EIP grants, FDIC loans, etc) or requiring federal permits (e.g., Section 404 of Clean Water Act) take affects to archaeological resources into account.
- In addition to federal laws, there are state laws to consider as well. Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA) 12-3-621 requires written landowner permission and DNR notification of intent to conduct **non-**

Section 106 archaeology on private property. OCGA 31-21-6 requires notification of local law enforcement upon discovery or disturbance of human remains. OCGA 36-72-1 addresses development on property where a known cemetery is located.

Due to staff and budget constraints, the Historic Preservation Division cannot offer more extensive or specific information for your region of the state. We suggest that you contact the Georgia Archaeological Site File (GASF) at (706) 542-8737 for an updated total of recorded sites. For a more in-depth cultural overview of Tift County, contact the UGA Department of Anthropology at (706) 542-3922 and inquire about the Georgia Archaeological Research Design Paper series. Included in this series of papers are several volumes of general prehistoric context for the different periods (e.g., Archaic, Woodland, etc.) and different regions (e.g., Piedmont, Ridge and Valley, etc.) of the state. It may be to your advantage to hire a professional archaeologist to compile updated archaeological information appropriate for a comprehensive plan. Archaeological consultants are generally skilled in archival research as well as field investigations and regularly synthesize cultural contexts at the local and regional levels.

Historic Preservation

Historic communities and historic areas within communities represent a unique collection of resources, connected by time, place, and feeling. Historic preservation planning provides communities with the tools to protect these resources and their settings for future generations to appreciate and learn from. Historic preservation planning is also a thriving economic development tool. There are several historic preservation opportunities that communities in Tift County could take advantage of in order to promote the county, preserve its heritage and foster economic development.

The goal of historic preservation planning is to identify, evaluate, register and treat the full range of properties representing each historic context, rather than only one or two types of contexts. Historic context includes history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Historic preservation planning is a process that organizes activities (identification, evaluation, registration and treatment of historic properties) in a logical sequence for the protection of historic contexts.

The first step in any historic preservation planning initiative is a Historic Resource Inventory. A Historic Resource Inventory is a listing of all historic resources in the county supported by photographs, maps, a brief history, and a condition assessment of each site. Historic Resource Inventories enable local governments and groups to quantify the number of historic resources and their current condition. This information can be used to prioritize resources for preservation as well as planning for Local Historic District boundaries. It is recommended that Tift County undertake a countywide historic resources survey in order to complete previous surveys done for Tifton and Ty Ty. A possible resource for completing such a survey is the FindIT! program at the Center for Community Design and Preservation at the College of Environment and Design at the University of Georgia, which utilizes graduate students to perform historic resources surveys. This survey should be included in the Comprehensive Plan.

The next component of a historic preservation program is the drafting and adoption of a Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Preservation Design Guidelines. The Ordinance should include provisions for the creation of a Historic Preservation Commission, for the establishment of Local Historic Districts, and for the designation of individual properties and sites as Local Landmarks. The Ordinance should require a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission prior to any new construction, alteration or demolition to a building or site located in the Local Historic District.

The Historic Preservation Commission should be comprised of citizens who are business or property owners in the Local Historic District(s), citizens with design expertise, such as architects and landscape architects, citizens with knowledge of the history and culture of the community, and citizens with a desire to protect and promote the community's historic resources.

Following completion of these steps, the county or local government is eligible to apply to the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (GASHPO) to participate in the Certified Local Government Program (CLG). The Certified Local Government (CLG) program extends the federal and state preservation partnership to the local level. Any city, town, or county that has enacted a historic preservation ordinance, enforces that ordinance through a local historic preservation commission, and has met requirements outlined in the Procedures for Georgia's Certified Local Government Program is eligible to become a CLG.

Benefits to becoming a CLG:

1. Eligibility for federal historic preservation grant funds
2. Opportunity to review local nominations for the National Register of Historic Places prior to consideration by the Georgia National Register Review Board
3. Opportunities for technical assistance
4. Improved coordination and communication among local, state, and federal preservation activities

The Georgia SHPO also administers state and federal tax incentive programs for the rehabilitation of historic structures. More information can be obtained from the State Office of Historic Preservation or the Regional Development Center.

Other programs and organizations, such as the Main Street/Better Hometowns program, or the National Trust for Historic Preservation Centennial Farms initiative, could also be beneficial to Tift County. Main Street and its counterpart, Better Hometowns, are programs that specialize in economic development using preservation and revitalization.

Zoning ordinances also contribute to the preservation of historic communities. Zoning ordinances can be crafted to ensure that the character of a community is protected by making provisions for the regulation of land uses. Zoning ordinances may also require that properties within a designated historic district or properties that have been given landmark status comply with any design guidelines that the county, city and/or historic preservation commission adopts.

Tourism

The rich history of Tift County is a tremendous cultural asset, but can also become a financial asset. The county's location on Interstate 75 and Highway 82, major transportation corridors, gives it many tourism opportunities that should be pursued. Other aspects of Tift County's heritage that would be of interest to tourists include agricultural heritage (Tift County is known as the "Plant Capital of the World" for its varied agricultural product base including cotton, peanuts, watermelon, bell peppers, and turf grass), railroad heritage (many of Tift County's communities developed in conjunction with the railroad), and Tifton's commercial and residential areas (both include many fine examples of Victorian and early twentieth century architecture).

Tift County could also consider the development of a countywide driving tour which would highlight areas of interest to both residents and tourists.

APPENDIX E
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

APPENDIX E: COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The location and quality of community facilities and services is as important to a community's well being as the traditional development of commercial, residential, and industrial uses. Community facilities include schools, parks, government administration offices, libraries, hospitals and fire and police protection. Community services also include public or semi-public water and sewer systems. Included in this appendix is the inventory and assessment of each category of community facilities grouped by jurisdiction. Services are described for joint services and for each individual municipality.

Water Supply And Treatment

The City of Omega is responsible for providing water service to approximately 525 customers. The system is comprised of three groundwater wells which draw water from the Floridian Aquifer. There are two elevated storage tanks with the capacity to hold 160,000 gallons of water. The City of Ty Ty is also providing its own water service.

The joint Tifton-Tift County Water and Wastewater department is responsible for providing water services to over 10,000 customers throughout Tift County through nine municipal groundwater producing facilities, which draw water from the Floridian Aquifer. The system is comprised of some 310 miles of distribution mains and has the capacity to pump 20 million gallons of water per day for fire protection and is permitted to pump and distribute up to a maximum of 11 million gallons of water per day by EPD. The water department has an active "Wellhead Protection Plan" with a State Susceptibility Ranking of low.

With water being such a valuable and precious resource, it is important to encourage ways to conserve. Here are a few examples:

- Promote water conservation programs and funding opportunities with agencies such as USDA – NRCS for irrigation retrofits, construction of catchment ponds, etc.
- Provide education opportunities as to ways that homeowners and businesses can conserve water through low-flow fixtures, etc.

Sewer System And Wastewater Treatment

The City of Omega operates a sewer system and one wastewater treatment facility with four lift stations. The City has recently purchased additional land to enlarge the spray field and retention pond. The City of Ty Ty is also operating its own sewer system and treatment facility.

The Tifton-Tift County water and wastewater department operates one (1) Wastewater Treatment facility, 18 lift stations, and 145 miles of mains. The Tifton Regional Wastewater Treatment Complex (TRWTC) is an activated sludge facility and has a capacity of treating 8,000,000 gallons of wastewater per day. Currently Tifton-Tift County Water and Wastewater department is supplying service to 6,500 customers at an average rate of 4.5 million gallons of wastewater treated per day. Tifton-Tift County has an active Industrial Pre-Treatment program in concert with EPD to regulate the amount of harmful contaminants that enter into the Wastewater Treatment facility.

Stormwater Management

Stormwater is a term used by engineers to describe precipitation. Stormwater that does not soak into the ground becomes runoff, which either flows into surface waterways or is channeled into storm sewers. Impervious surfaces like driveways, sidewalks, and streets prevent stormwater runoff from naturally soaking into the ground. Stormwater can pick up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants and flow into a storm sewer system or directly to a lake, stream, river, or wetland. Anything that enters a storm sewer system is discharged untreated into our local waterbodies.

All communities are faced with stormwater issues; however, not all are required to address them. In 1990, the Phase I stormwater program was created under the Clean Water Act (CWA) and required a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for (1) “medium” and “large” municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) generally serving populations of 100,000 or greater, (2) construction activity disturbing 5 acres of land or greater, and (3) ten categories of industrial activity. In 1999, the Phase II stormwater program was created to further expand the Phase I program by requiring additional operators of MS4s in urbanized areas and operators of small construction sites, through the use of NPDES permits, to implement programs and practices to control polluted stormwater runoff¹.

The City of Tifton is currently making plans for a storm water utility fee to pay for storm water infrastructure maintenance and has adopted the State model ordinance for erosion and sedimentation control. Tifton’s building codes require new construction to provide for onsite detention if the run off of storm water will increase by more than 1% after construction. The environmental ordinance addresses many issues regarding storm water discharge.

The City of Tifton is enrolling in the Community Rating System for flood insurance credits and has to demonstrate efforts directed toward reducing the affects of flooding within the flood plain.

Solid Waste Management

The City of Omega provides curbside solid waste collection in Omega.

The combined Tifton- Tift County Solid Waste Department provides Sanitation, Landfill, and Recycling services to its citizens county-wide.

The Sanitation Division located at 1000 Armour Road provides once a week curbside garbage collection and yard debris pick-up to approximately 4,800 residential customers inside the city limits. In addition, the city provides a weekly curbside collection of residential garbage only to approximately 3,200 customers in the unincorporated areas of Tift County. Regular scheduled commercial dumpster service is also provided to approximately 975 customers county-wide.

The Tifton-Tift County Subtitle “D” Landfill located at 445 Mitchell Store Road is a state-of-the-art facility for the disposal of approximately 51,000 tons of municipal solid waste annually: burying the most waste in the least amount of space, in the most efficient and safe manner while complying with all local, state and federal regulations. We also provide an Inert Landfill facility located at 601 Armour Street where wood waste is processed into mulch. Concrete, asphalt, and similar materials are processed into crushed materials to be used throughout the city and county. The Landfill Division provides for the collection of waste produced by industrial and commercial waste generators through a roll-off container service county-wide.

The Tifton-Tift County Recycling Division located at 7750 Magnolia-Industrial Blvd. is an environmentally conscious organization providing residential collection of recyclable materials at manned sites throughout the county. Locations of sites are as follows: South Central Site is located at 9 Pecan Street just off South Central Ave. and right behind the Community Center. Its hours of operation are

Monday thru Thursday from 7:00am until 7:00 PM, Friday and Saturday from 7:00am until 8:00pm, and Sunday from 1:00pm until 6:00pm, Whiddon Mill/Carpenter Road Site located at 1949 Whiddon Mill Road on the south west corner of Whiddon Mill and Carpenter Roads. Its hours of operation are Saturday from 8:00am until 6:00pm, Northside Site is located on Hwy 125 north behind the Northside Fire station (4117 Hwy 125 N (Look for the water tower). Its hours of operation are Saturday from 8:00am until 6:00pm; Inert Landfill Site is located at 601 Armour Street just off Hwy 82 East. Its hours of operation are

¹ United States Environmental Protection Agency

Monday thru Friday from 8:00am until 5:00pm and Saturday from 8:00am until 6:00pm, and Tifton-Tift County Recycling Center is located at 7750 Magnolia-Industrial Blvd. Its hours of operation are Monday

through Friday from 7:00am until 3:30 pm. Additional benefits for offering recycling to residents include the space saved at the Tifton –Tift County Landfill Site. Regularly scheduled recyclable collection service is available throughout the county. In addition, the Recycling Division processes and markets approximately 2900 tons annually to offset the costs of operation. Items received for recycling include steel or tin cans, aluminum cans, all glass, plastics (PET, HDPE , LDPE, and PP) cardboard, and all paper which includes newspaper, magazines, brochures, photocopy paper, envelopes, phone books, writing paper construction paper, junk mail, wrapping paper, register tapes, manila folders, invoices, and books. Basically anything that will tear that is not of a hygienic nature. See Map E-1 for locations of hazardous waste sites.

Fire Protection

The Tifton-Tift County Fire Department provides a high level of quality fire protection to the citizens of Tifton & Tift County. The Fire Department's jurisdiction covers a 270 square-mile area. Serving a population of 38,407, the Fire Department delivers a full range of fire protection including fire prevention and education, fire suppression, dive rescue and recovery, and hazardous materials response. Currently, the Tifton/Tift County Fire Department operates three fire stations fully staffed with seven volunteer fire stations throughout the county. See Maps E-1 for 5 mile Fire Service Areas.

Public Safety

Sheriff's Department Tift County

The Tift County Sheriff's Office serves all areas of Tift County. The Sheriff's department is located at 500 Morgan Street and contains 8 separate divisions: Office of the Sheriff, Road Patrol, Investigations, Court Services, MSNTF, Support Services, Training and Detention.

Police Department City of Tifton

The Tifton Police Department consists of 51 full-time, sworn men and women and 10 civilian personnel allowing the capability to provide the City of Tifton with Police protection services. The Tifton Police department is a state certified agency that was awarded recertification in July 2004. State certification helps to insure the Tifton Police Department is prepared to meet the challenges of the future.

Police Department City of Omega

The City of Omega consists of one chief and four full time police officers. The offices are located in the Omega City Hall. The department operates with five patrol vehicles, and answers an average of 150 calls per month. All detention cases are transported to the Tift County Jail and Municipal Court is held once a month.

Tift County Jail

The Tift County Sheriff's Office Jail is a 260 bed facility which houses inmates for Tift County, the City of Tifton, US Marshalls, and surrounding agencies.

Emergency Medical Services

The Tift County EMS consists of 37 employees who are both ALS (Advanced Life Support) and BLS (Basic Life Support) certified. Tift County EMS is provided countywide and answers approximately 8,300 calls

per year, both emergency and non-emergency in nature. Tift County EMS maintains six (6) ambulances and one (1) rescue unit to respond to calls as needed and has 4 units operational daily. They operate out of two different stations strategically located in the county to minimize response times on calls. Tift County EMS works very closely with Tift County Regional Medical Center, Tift County Fire Department, City of Tifton Police Department and the Tift County Sheriff's Office to ensure that our patients and public receive the best care and service available.

911 / Emergency Management Center

Tift County E-911 is the central answering point for all Tift County emergency and non-emergency calls. It consists of twenty-two fulltime staff and five thirty-two hour per week staff. E-911 has four twelve hour shifts. Two shifts are staffed with five forty hour per week employees and two are staffed with four forty hour employees. The E-911 center provides 24 hour dispatching and other support services for the following Tift area Public Safety Agencies:

- Tifton Police Department
- Tift County Sheriff's Office
- Tift County EMS
- Tifton-Tift County Fire Department
- Tift County Code Enforcement
- Tift County Animal Control
- Omega Police Department
- ABAC Public Safety

Additionally, the E-911 center maintains a residential and commercial alarm data base for the citizens and businesses of the county. Utilize and maintain a state of the art mapping system that uses aerial photos and GPS coordinates to help locate addresses when emergencies arise. E-911 is also tasked with the responsibility of maintaining and activating our Reverse 911 phone system. Currently, E-911 has one fulltime employee tasked with the task of addressing and mapping all new Tift County residential and commercial locations.

E-911 Needs Assessment

The E-911 center is currently located within the Tift County Sheriff's Office. There is no longer adequate space to expand to meet the growing population of Tift County. Additionally, the amount of public safety agencies E-911 supports has doubled over the last decade. To adequately meet the demands of our citizens E-911 needs space to grow, train, and conduct in house meetings. Currently, the Emergency Operations Center is located on the second floor of the main fire station. There is a need for the EOC to be co-located with 911 Center to ensure it is capable of withstanding adverse weather. Our staff is in need of more line level supervision. Currently each shift has only one supervisor. Supervisors are routinely out for training, meetings, vacation, holiday time, etc. When these supervisors are out, there is no official replacement or compensated supervisor to fill the role on that particular shift. Therefore, an Assistant Shift Supervisor is needed to fill in, assist the supervisor, and training new personnel assigned to their shift. Finally, with the growth over the last decade, there is a need to equally staff the four dispatch shifts with five forty hour per week personnel. Currently, two shifts have five forty hour employees and two shifts have four forty hour employees.

Emergency Management Agency (EMA)

The Tift County Emergency Management Agency consists of two part time personnel: One Director and One Deputy Director. The primary purpose of EMA is to coordinate between local elected officials, public safety agencies and State Assets during large scale emergencies and disasters. Tift County EMA also maintains and tests Tift County's outdoor siren system, conducts and coordinates annual disaster training, and coordinates local disaster drills. Additionally, Tift County EMA funds and supports the all volunteer Tift County (all hazard) Rescue Team.

EMA Needs Assessment

Tift County EMA currently needs an adequate EOC as stated above. EMA lacks secure storage areas to house disaster response equipment. EMA also has an aging fleet of sirens with over half thirty plus years old. With the population growth over the last thirty years, replacement and new strategic locations need to be examined to cover as much target populations as possible. EMA has one rescue vehicle in its fleet. It is a 1984 Chevy Suburban with serves many roles from towing rescue equipment trailers, dive boats, and emergency response. The vehicle is aged and is currently unreliable.

Parks And Recreation

Tift County Recreation Department

The Tift County Recreation Department traces its history back to 1955 and over the past 52 years has blossomed into one of the top departments in Georgia. Under the direction of four recreation directors, Tift County Recreation has grown from pick-up games and meager facilities to a full range of programs taking place in more than 125 acres of modern facilities.

The Tift County Recreation Department is a part of the consolidated government of Tift County and is supported by county taxes, activity fees, rentals, sponsorships and special events proceeds. The staff of TCRD consists of full-time personnel and a part-time and seasonal staff of more than 50. The main offices of the department are located at 401 N Victory Drive near downtown Tifton and only a few blocks from I-75 Exit 63a. From the early days of ball and bat team sports, TCRD has branched out into all forms of recreation and leisure services.

The Recreation Department offers local Athletic Programming, Individual Special Programs, and Senior Adult Activities. We also facilitate several private youth sports associations: Tiftarea Select Baseball and the Tiftarea Soccer Association. TCRD operates two gymnasiums, public swimming pool, fun pool, outdoor basketball courts, numerous individual programs relating to Fitness and Quality of Life Issues.

Our department collaborates with many local organizations serving Children and Youth through our association with the Tift County Commission on Children and Youth as well as the Kid's Advocacy Coalition and South GA Resource and Referral Center.

Senior Adults are an important group of citizens recognized and served by TCRD through the coordination of May is Older American's Month and programming exercise and fitness opportunities at the Senior Center known as the LeRoy Rogers Senior Citizen Center on Second Street.

Large Civic/Community events are co-sponsored by our department along with numerous other community groups for various Festivals and Special Events

MISSION STATEMENT:

TCRD strives to provide Comprehensive year-round recreational experiences, which contribute to the physical, social, emotional, creative and educational growth and development of Tift County Citizens.

Guiding Program And Service Goal:

A. To provide a comprehensive year-round recreational program which meets the needs of the individuals that compose the neighborhood, community and city, and which makes the public a partner in the process.

B. To provide positive recreational experiences which contribute to the individual's physical, social, emotional, creative, cultural, and educational growth and development in order to enrich the quality of life.

C. To provide continuing support for strengthening cooperative efforts with other community agencies.

D. To develop qualified staff to promote and expand interest in leisure time programs.

Hospitals And General Public Health**Tift Regional Medical Center**

With a reputation as an innovative provider of quality care, Tift Regional Medical Center (TRMC) is a not-for-profit, 191-bed regional hospital serving 12 counties in South Central Georgia. Located in Tifton, the hospital's medical staff includes more than 95 physicians with the majority board-certified in over 30 specialties. Tift Regional provides a wide-range of services, including six Centers of Excellence offering advanced, expert care in oncology, cardiology, neurology, surgery, women's health and emergency medicine.

Tift Regional Medical Center is under the direction of the Tift County Hospital Authority, a nine-member board of volunteer trustees appointed by the Tift County Board of Commissioners. Though guided by a government-appointed entity, TRMC provides charitable care for the community without a single tax levied on local taxpayers.

Tift County Health Department

The South Health District provides services to protect the health & well-being of citizens in the Southern Georgia Counties of Ben Hill, Berrien, Brooks, Cook, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, Tift, & Turner. South Health District is one of 18 districts that comprise the Georgia Department of Human Resources Division of Public Health.

The Tift County Health department is located at 305 East 12th Street, Tifton, Georgia. Key Programs include:

- Adolescent Care
- Prenatal Care—Babies Can't Wait
- Children's Medical Services
- Chronic Disease
- Emergency Preparedness
- Environmental Health
- Epidemiology
- Infectious Disease
- Oral Health
- Perinatal Care
- Stroke & Heart Attack Prevention (SHAPP)
- Women, Infants, & Children Services (WIC)

Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS)

DFCS's mission is to promote and protect the well-being of children, adults, families and the community through a comprehensive and coordinated social services program, and to seek a safe and responsible environment in which the achievement of family and individual goals is possible. A variety of services are offered through the department:

Adoption Services

Foster Care Program

Home Evaluation and Supervision

Home Management/Functional Educational Services

Information and Referral

Protective Services for Adults

Recreational Services

Services to Expectant Parents

Aid to Families with Dependent Children

Transportation

Libraries And General Cultural Facilities

The Tifton/Tift County Public Library is the largest branch of the Coastal Plain Regional Library System which covers Tift, Turner, Cook, Berrien, and Irwin Counties. The library is temporarily located at 163 South Virginia Avenue. Library collections include popular fiction and non-fiction, magazines, books on tape, videocassettes DVDs, and reference materials. As a member of PINES, (Public Information Network for Electronic Services), materials can be easily borrowed between member libraries.

Many programs for children are offered throughout the year. Thursday morning story hour for the 2 to 4 year olds is held every week from Labor Day through Mother's Day and Vacation Reading Programs are held during school holidays. Tours and group visits are encouraged and may be arranged by calling in advance. As of January 16, 2008, the library had 16,031 registered patrons-- 38.9% of Tift County has a library card.

The Coastal Plains Regional Library headquarters are also located in Tifton. The Regional Library is a smaller facility than the local Public Library, but it supervises the five libraries that make up the CPRL system.

Educational Facilities

All educational facilities within Greater Tift County are depicted on Map E-14. These facilities are definite benefits to the economic development of our community by providing jobs, preparing future employees, and attracting regional attention. However, both collective and individual planning is important to ensure each facility is surrounded by appropriate uses, has sufficient infrastructure, and does not cause a negative impact to the surrounding properties. The following is a listing and brief description of educational facilities in Tift County. See Map E-3 for locations of educational facilities

University of Georgia: The Tifton Campus lies in the heart of south Georgia agriculture. Located in Tifton, Georgia, the campus is the home of the Coastal Plain Experiment Station and the Rural Development Center. Scientists on the Tifton campus primarily focus their projects toward traditional agriculture. These projects include but are not limited to research on Georgia's main row crops: cotton, peanuts, tobacco, small grains, soybeans and vegetables. Tifton campus researchers also conduct leading research in the field of irrigation and global information systems. UGA graduate students work closely with Tifton campus researchers to complete their graduate studies. UGA undergraduate students can earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriscience and Environmental Systems or Agricultural Education on the Tifton campus.

Moultrie Technical College (MTC): Moultrie Technical College is a unit of the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education. The college provides learning opportunities which meet the needs of our four-county service delivery through quality technical education programs and services. Today, Moultrie Technical College has grown to a staff of over 140 full-time and 110 part-time employees. A variety of

degree, diploma, and certificate programs are offered. Credit enrollment is now over 2000 students and continues to grow. Moultrie Tech serves Colquitt, Tift, Turner and Worth counties with facilities in all four counties.

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC): ABAC provides a curriculum that includes 57 different programs of study. Students can choose to transfer after two years to a university to continue a four-year degree or students can complete one of ABAC's 15 career technological programs and immediately enter the job market. ABAC now offers brand new Bachelor of Applied Science degrees in Diversified Agriculture and Turfgrass and Golf Course Management. Students can also stay on campus and get a four-year degree from the University of Georgia, Valdosta State, Georgia Southwestern, or Macon State.

Troy University: Troy University serves a broad range of students on four campuses in Alabama and on more than 60 campuses outside of Alabama in 17 U.S. states and 11 nations. Troy University also serves thousands of students who choose to study through distance-learning methods, primarily the Internet.

The main campus is in Troy. The other Alabama campuses are located in Dothan, Montgomery, and Phoenix City, as well as the TROY campuses outside Alabama, such as the one in Tifton, primarily focus on the needs of the adult learner. In addition, Troy University has served the men and women of the U.S. military for more than 50 years.

Georgia SouthWestern: The main campus of Georgia SouthWestern University is located in Americus, about 135 miles south of Atlanta. Georgia South-Western offers some courses co-located at the ABAC campus in Tifton.

Tift County Public School System: Tift County's Public School System includes 13 schools that currently serve more than 7,500 students in Grades Pre-K through 12. The schools include Tift Co. Pre-K Center,

Annie Belle Clark (K-3), G.O. Bailey (K-3), Len Lastinger (K-3), Northside (K-3), Omega (K-6), Charles Spencer (4-6), J.T. Reddick (4-6), Matt Wilson (4-6), Eighth St. Middle School (7-8), Northeast Campus, TCHS (9), and Tift County High (10-12).

Tiftarea Academy: Tiftarea Academy is a private tuition based K-4-12 school located in Chula, Georgia, north of Tifton west of I-75 along Hwy 41.

Grace Baptist School: This school is located in Tifton and is of a "Baptist" affiliation and teaches coed Pre-Kindergarten through 12th Grade.

Map E-1
Tift County Hazardous Sites

Map E-2
Tift County 5-Mile Fire Service Areas

**Map E-3
Greater Tift County Educational Facilities**

APPENDIX F
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

APPENDIX F: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

The number of activities, issues and services addressed by local governments to effectively plan for a community's future is immense. Increasing complexity is the fact that the actions of other local governments, governmental entities, and local authorities can have profound impacts on the implementation of a local government's comprehensive plan. A comprehensive review of the existing intergovernmental coordination facilities allows our community to identify weakness in communication and cooperation, which are vital to ensuring quality planning on a regional level.

Adjacent Local Governments

Tift County is bounded by Berrien County to the south-east, Irwin County to the north-east, Turner County to the north, Worth County to the west, and Colquitt and Cook Counties to the south.

School Systems

Tift County Schools Mission Statement:

In its pursuit of educational excellence, the Tift County School System will provide learning opportunities for all students, will accommodate the needs of all students, will challenge all students to use their innate abilities, and will assist all students to live responsible, productive, and meaningful lives.

Tift County Board of Education Goals:

- Student achievement in the core academic areas will improve annually in accordance with State and Federal accountability benchmarks.
- The high school graduation rate will increase annually in accordance with State and Federal accountability benchmarks
- Continue to improve fiscal practices and procedures to maintain a strong financial base.
- Foster a safe and orderly learning environment.
- Implement the Standards for the Local Board of Education.

Increased communication and collaboration between all educational entities and the Greater Tift County Planning Commission would aid in addressing area work force and economic development issues. A more detailed description of educational facilities is provided in Appendix E.

Independent Authorities And Districts

Tifton/Tift County Housing Authority
Hospital Authority
Airport Authority

Development Authorities

Tift County Development Authority
Development Authority of Tift County
Downtown Development Authority
Tifton Development Authority

Service Delivery Strategy

As required by House Bill 489, a Service Delivery Coordinating Committee was put in place to discuss and coordinate all services provided by and within Greater Tift County. The following are areas where joint service agreements have been put into place:

The following are jointly funded services administered by Tift County:

- **E911**
- **Animal Control**
- **Building Inspections**
- **Code Enforcement**
- **Mosquito Control**
- **Voter Registration**
- **Election Services** Ty Ty and Omega administer theirs independently
- **Zoning** Ty Ty and Omega administer theirs independently

The following are jointly funded services administered by the City of Tifton:

- **Keep Tift Beautiful** (Enterprise Fund)
- **Fire Protection**
- **Solid Waste Disposal** (Enterprise Fund)
- **Garbage Collection-Residential**, Tifton and Tift County only; (Enterprise Fund)
Service is provided county wide; Ty Ty and Omega have contracts with another provider.
- **Garbage Collection-Industrial**, Tifton and Tift County only (Enterprise Fund)
Service is provided county wide; Ty Ty and Omega have contracts with another provider.
- **Recycling**
- **Water** Tifton and Tift County only (Enterprise Fund); Ty Ty and Omega have independent systems.
- **Sewer** Tifton and Tift County only (Enterprise Fund); Ty Ty and Omega have independent systems.

The following services are provided by Tift County via Interlocal Agreement:

- **EMS**
- **Jail/ Sheriff**
- **Public Transit**
- **Recreation**
- **Tax Assessment**

The following services are provided by the City of Tifton:

- **Natural Gas**
- **Telecommunications**
- **Parks and Cemetery** Omega provides cemetery space independently
- **Police** Omega provides police services independently

Tifton and Tift County provided financial support to the following services:

- **ABAC Arts Connection**
- **Tifton/Tift County Chamber of Commerce**
- **Library**
- **Tourism**

The following services are provided independently by each government, Tift County, City of Tifton, Ty Ty, and Omega:

- **Business License**
- **Courts**
- **Engineering**
- **Maintenance Shop**
- **Purchasing/Inventory**
- **Road Construction**
- **Street Maintenance**
- **Tax Collection**

The following Services are provided by Authorities:

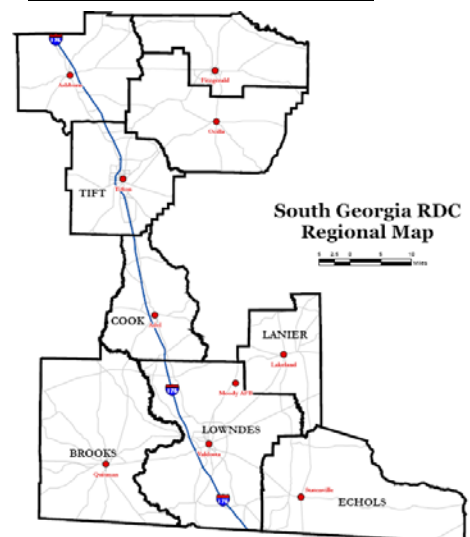
- **Airport** Airport Authority
- **Hospital** Tift County Hospital Authority
- **Industrial** Development Authority of Tift County
- **Main Street** Downtown Development Authority
- **Performing Arts/Tift Theater** Downtown Development Authority
- **City of Tifton Economic Development** Tifton Development Authority
- **Housing** Housing authority of Tifton

SERVICE SOURCE:			
Countywide	Joint Tifton / Tift County	Individual Government	Authority
Animal Control	Recreation	Business Licensing	Airport
Board of Elections	Solid Waste	Cemetery	Hospital
Building Inspections Code Enforcement (except Tifton)	Utilities Zoning/Planning	Data Processing Municipal Courts	Tift County Housing Authority Tifton/Tift County Arts Council
Coroner		Police (Omega, Tifton)	Tifton/Tift County Tourism Association
Courts		Public Works	Downtown Development Authority
EMA		Solid Waste (Omega, Ty Ty)	Tift County Development Authority
Fire/EMS		Street Lighting	Tift County Community Development Authority
Jail		Utilities (Omega, Ty Ty)	
Mosquito Control		Zoning (Omega, Ty Ty)	
Planning Commission			
Public Housing			
Recycling Center			
Tax Assessor			
Tift County Extension Services			

PLANNING PROGRAMS and ACTIVITIES:

South Georgia Regional Development Center (SGRDC): Lowndes County and its municipalities are members of the South Georgia Regional Development Center (SGRDC), which serves 9 counties and 22 municipalities. All counties bordering Lowndes County, with the exception of Berrien, are members of the SGRDC. (See Figure 1) As a regional planning and advisory organization to the South Georgia Region, the SGRDC strives to improve cross-jurisdictional communication and coordination. To this affect, and as required by State law, in 1997 the SGRDC adopted a Regional Comprehensive Plan encouraging inter-jurisdictional, long term planning among the South Georgia Region. This plan was recently updated in 2004 and is not scheduled for update or revision again until 2014. However, the associated Regional Short Term Work Program is updated on annual basis.

Figure 1: SGRDC Region



APPENDIX G
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

APPENDIX G: TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

Transportation systems have one of the greatest impacts on a community's growth and development, its established land uses, and the quality of life of its residents. Understanding the general regional impact of traffic facilities, the following traffic related elements are reviewed from a countywide perspective. However, understanding that individual communities certainly have their own unique transportation issues, any specific issues or opportunities are noted separately.

Road Network

Every roadway within Tift County receives a Functional Classification according to the character of traffic service intended for the roadway. There are two systems of classifications: Urban and Rural. Additionally, there are four functional classifications:

Interstate: The original Interstate System was developed to serve national defense access and mobility needs, personal travel, commercial freight movements and economic development (called the National Defense Highway System), Identified during the 1950's by then President Eisenhower, this bold and ambitious vision has created perhaps one of the most impressive public works project in U.S. history.

The National Highway System (NHS) is the next evolutionary phase of the interstate system as mandated under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and subsequent Transportation Equity Act for the twenty-first Century of 1998 (TEA-21) creating an integrated system of highways for long distance travel within and between states.

Arterial: These roadways are designed to carry relatively large traffic volumes throughout the community and to major trip-generating destinations such as centers of employment and large shopping districts

Collector: Collector roads are, as the name implies, designed to collect traffic from the local street system and carry it to the arterial roadway system. While experiencing greater volumes than the local road network, these roadways also provide access to abutting properties.

Local: These are low volume streets whose primary function is to provide access to abutting properties.

Interstate-75, which runs is a north/south interstate, runs directly through Tift County with 11 exits in the county and 5 in Tifton. I-10, which travels south of Greenville Florida and goes into Tallahassee Florida, is another close Interstate Highway.

U.S. Highway 82 is the most active highway within Tift County. It traverses Tift County on an east-west axis and connects the Cities of Brunswick, Waycross, and Albany and runs through Tifton in Tift County. According to 2003 data, the busiest section of Highway 82 is in between I-75 Exit 62 and South Carpenter Road which sees an annual average daily traffic count of 32,060 automobiles. The GDOT Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) outlines plans, with preliminary engineering underway, to widen I-75 to 6 lanes from North of Tifton City Limits to Turner County, GA. Also the STIP identifies a project that will widen US 319 to 4 lanes from US 82 to SR 32 in Irwin County, GA. The Southern Truck Route will be a new two-lane roadway with a turn lane from US 82 west of Tifton to US 319 east of the Tifton City Limits. Another project identified in the STIP is the widening of Carpenter Road to a 4-lane divided facility from US 82 to Davis Road. Another project in the STIP involving I-75 will widen the interstate to 6 lanes from the Cook County, GA county line to Davis Road.

Four state routes provide access to and within Tift County; State Route 125 provides a north-south route through Tift County, providing access between Nashville, Georgia and Fitzgerald, Georgia. Georgia 35 provides access between Thomasville, GA and Ocilla, GA and also runs through Tifton. Highway 520 provides connects Albany, GA through Tifton, to Brunswick, GA. Georgia Highway 7 connects Valdosta, GA to Macon, GA, also going through Tifton.

Road Network Assessment

TIFT COUNTY:

Map G-1 shows the federal and state highways in Tift County as well as a range for the Average Annual Daily Traffic Count for each of the highways shown. It also shows the traffic volumes for Tift County. Map G-2 shows the functional classifications of roads throughout the county.

CITY OF TIFTON:

Map G-3 illustrates the functional classifications of roads throughout the City of Tifton. Map G-4 shows the Average Annual Daily Traffic Count for roads inside the city limits of the City of Tifton.

CITY OF TY TY:

Map G-5 illustrates the functional classifications of roads throughout the City of Ty Ty.

CITY OF OMEGA:

Map G-6 illustrates the functional classifications of roads throughout the City of Omega.

Alternative Modes

Bicycle Facilities:

Tift County has only one designated state bicycle route, the Central, traverses north-south along US 41 and then SR 319, passing through both Tifton and Omega. There are bicycle lanes and shoulders being added to the roadway as part of GDOT road widening and/or reconstruction projects. At the time, countywide, 28 percent of roadways demonstrate the best conditions for bicyclists, 70 percent medium conditions, two percent difficult conditions, and less than one percent show very difficult conditions for bicycling.

In Tifton there is only one bicycle lane on a State highway. This lane runs along US 41, starting at 7th Street and continuing south to Martin Luther King Drive. In addition the City of Tifton has several local bike routes which are shown on Map G-8.

Within the Greater Tift community, there is a growing trend towards bicycling as a viable form of transportation, recreation, and exercise thus a concentrated effort should be made by each local government to install a connected network of bicycle facilities. To aid in this effort, the South Georgia RDC has prepared and adopted a Regional Bike and Pedestrian Plan, which examined existing conditions and goals to promote bicycle and pedestrian needs, and provides an integrated system of proposed routes. See Map G-7 for a depiction of the proposed routes within Greater Tift County.

Map G-1
Tift County DOT Traffic Counts

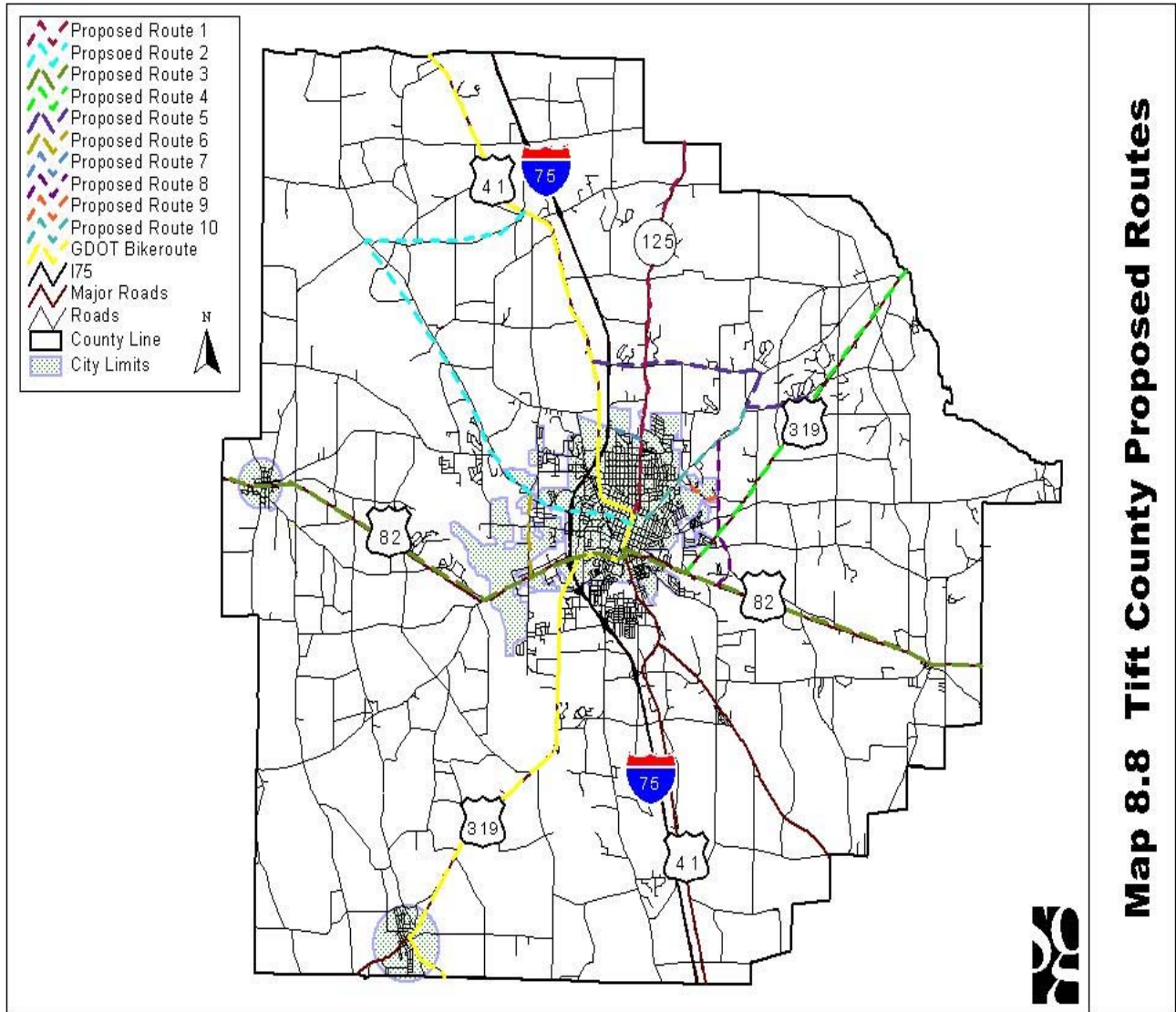
Map G-2
Tift County Road Classification

Map G-3
City of Tifton Road Classification

Map G-4
City of Tifton DOT Traffic Counts

Map G-5
City of Ty Ty Road Classification

Map G-6
City of Omega Road Classification



Map 8.8 Tift County Proposed Routes

**MAP G-7 TIFT COUNTY
PROPOSED BIKE ROUTES**

Sidewalks

Currently, Tift County has 35.8 miles of sidewalks. The majority of this pedestrian friendly area is in the City of Tifton.

According to spatial analysis done by Carter-Burgess in the compilation of the Tifton/Tift County Long Range Transportation Plan, GIS was used to assess pedestrian facility needs based on safety, crash rate, and existing inventory data. Areas that generate significant pedestrian traffic are high priority locations for pedestrian facility improvement and include schools, downtown districts, and activity centers. Tift County's most pressing pedestrian facility need according to Carter-Burgess' assessment is the lack of sidewalks along residential roadways, especially within city limits.

Map G-8 shows the existing bike and pedestrian facilities for Greater Tift County.

Public Transportation

Tift Lift began operating around twenty-five (25) years ago and has provided an affordable source of transportation for many citizens throughout Tifton/Tift County. Tift Lift operates Monday—Friday between the hours of 8:00 am to 5:00 pm on a call and demand basis. Currently there are two vehicles in service one is a 2003 fifteen (15) passenger Ford van that is wheelchair equipped and the other vehicle is a 2004 Ford, fifteen (15) passenger shuttle bus. Both vehicles now in service have met the required DOT criteria for new vehicles. Two new vehicles are ordered and should be in service around May '08. The fares are \$2.00 for the first three (3) miles, \$3.00 from 3 to five (5) miles and \$4.00 from 5 miles to the county line. The Georgia Department of Transportation provides a substantial part of the annual Tift Lift capital and operating budget. Currently there are five (5) employees in the Tift Lift Transit Program, three (3) are fulltime and two are (2) are part-time. Ridership for the system is approximately 11,000 annually; the system does not provide social service transportation – only public transportation operations. Funding for Tift Lift is provided from Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 and local match. MID's, Inc. another transit service in Southern Georgia does all social service trips in Tift County. They provide service to Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) and Medicaid patients.

Railroads, Trucking, And Airports

Rail Transportation

Rail freight traverses the county from north to south on rail owned by Norfolk Southern. This line carries approximately 28 million gross tons of materials each year. There is also an inactive CSX line that runs from west to east along US 82.

Trucking

According to the Carter-Burgess assessment, truck traffic is an issue in the County and the City of Tifton. With I-75 on the west side of Tifton, US 82 and US 319 running east to west through town, and SR 125 (Tift Avenue) serving as the main street, truck traffic is high in the city. All of the above mentioned routes are designated truck routes designed to handle longer vehicle types. With all of these roadways converging on downtown Tifton, a bypass could be a viable option. A bypass would collect traffic from SR 125, US 82 and US 319 and direct it around the eastern side of the city. Until a bypass can be constructed, SR 125 traffic coming through the historic downtown could be re-directed to I-75 via Brighton Road in the north and Southwell Boulevard in the south. SR 125 is currently designated as a truck route; any change in the route direction must be coordinated with GDOT.

Aviation

The Henry Tift Meyers Airport has been designated as a Level III airport by Georgia's Aviation System Plan, according to the Carter-Burgess group. This classification means that it is expected to maintain a

Map G-8
Greater Tift Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities

high level of service. The facility should be able to accommodate single engine, twin engine, and business jets. Improvements required for the airport to meet the minimum standards set forth by the state include: increasing runway lighting to high intensity, adding parking facilities, updating the Master Plan and Airport Layout Plan, and adoption land use and zoning controls.

Land Use Connection

Communities that integrate transportation and land-use policies are better able to manage growth, improve the efficiency of travel, and contain infrastructure costs. Highways have shaped America's growth—and will continue to do so—but highways have a big problem: congestion. Building more roads rarely solves this problem, at least, not for long, but changes in the way we approach transportation and land-use planning might.

The major areas of concern in Tift County are as follows:

Highway 82 through Tifton, a major commercial corridor which serves as the gateway into town. Hwy 82 is dominated by strip centers, big boxes, and vast amounts of pavement, power lines and signs. This corridor is in need of beautification and an overlay zone to prevent further development of unsightly strip centers, increase landscaping and provide continuous and contiguous sidewalks.

Another area of concern is Whidden Mill Road where development activity has far outpaced the capacity available on the road. Concerns of improvements occurring in step with land development, providing for commuters, school traffic, and neighborhood traffic need to be aligned with the financial obligations to construct these improvements and have them in place by the time the development occurs. Whidden Mill Corridor is also located in a groundwater recharge area.

Carpenter Road Corridor is experiencing high levels of development and increased traffic and has a high number of curb cuts which increases congestion and conflicting movements. Carpenter Road is also bisected by a groundwater recharge area and is close to several wetlands. These natural features need to be carefully considered when evaluating proposed new development or improvements to the roadway in order to avoid any negative impacts on the environment.

Highway 319 and Highway 41 are corridors through predominantly agricultural and rural areas. There is some indication of developing sprawl especially on the west and south side consuming precious natural and agricultural areas without adequate services or zoning controls in place.

Any transportation and land use decisions need to clarify the powerful interaction between several factors: the car and the highway; the natural environment, which often defines corridors; the relationship of transportation infrastructure to more compact and sustainable urban forms; and the ways we have institutionally separated highway and transportation infrastructure development from land stewardship. Proper land stewardship and close scrutiny of transportation decisions are two cornerstones for achieving sustainable growth and quality of life and should therefore be on top of every agenda and land review process.

4. ISSUES and OPPORTUNITIES

In order to be a realistic and implemental document, the Comprehensive Plan must identify and provide Tift County and its municipalities with workable goals, objectives and policies (= strategies) which will address the issues facing the communities and embrace opportunities that present themselves to Greater Tift County. The Technical Addendum of this document was the first step taken towards identifying these issues and opportunities. The quantitative information detailed in the addendum is summarized in the Community Assessment in a series of concise issue and opportunity statements. However, this series of statements is only a preliminary list of potential issues. The list will be further studied, refined and prioritized during subsequent local public and technical planning efforts and a final list of locally defined issues and opportunities for Greater Tift County will be included and published in the Community Agenda, which is the third and final portion of the Comprehensive Plan.

The following issues and opportunities are organized according to the elements of the Comprehensive Plan:

- Population
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Facilities and Services
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Intergovernmental Coordination

The issues and opportunities statements included here will be presented and discussed with the Steering Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee which were formed to guide the development of the Comprehensive Plan. These statements will also be presented during public participation workshops in the planning process. Through these discussions and the resulting feedback the final list of issues and opportunities to be presented in the Community Agenda will be developed as well as a series of strategies and implementation programs. These strategies and implementation programs will be the basis for the Short Term Work Program component of the Comprehensive Plan.

4.1 Population Change

Trend:

Past and current population trends show an annual net gain of approximately 6.5 % for Tift County and its municipalities. Like most areas in the region, its population is aging, but apparent is also that the younger population is stabilizing instead of increasing with an increase in the population segments of 0 – 13 year old. This indicates that the area will continue to have a considerable segment of younger families.

Issues:

- **Sustainability:** Development of traditional sub-urban style single family developments are among the most costly and least sustainable types of housing developments to provide in terms of infrastructure, fire/EMS, police and other services and in terms of impacts to the natural environment.
- **Competing Needs:** Young families and “empty-nesters” may compete for the same segment in housing and therefore create an even tighter supply of smaller, affordable and entry-level housing.
- **Population Diversification:** The tax impacts of a change to an overall older population are not entirely clear and need to be understood before a concentration or marketing to that population segment will be made a priority.
- **Ethnic Diversity:** Greater Tift County, as many other counties across the country, has been

experiencing an influx and greater diversity of residents from different ethnic backgrounds. Different housing needs, educational needs, family needs and workforce skills need to be addressed to achieve a seamless integration into society and neighborhoods.

Opportunities:

- The Greater Tift County area already has shown commitment to managing growth and development pressures through thoughtful and pro-active planning. Recent planning efforts such as the Comprehensive Environmental Management Plan, the on-going revision of the City of Tifton's Unified Land Development Code, the designation of "Signature City", the Brownfield Initiative and the recent designation as "Water First" Community are examples of such pro-active planning that needs to be supported and continued.
- The projected growth of older households may also create a market for other more sustainable housing alternatives from the currently dominating single family subdivisions.
- The rise in elderly population may enhance a community's economic base and provide a largely untapped knowledge and experience base for the labor market.
- A greater ethnic diversity in the population will contribute to a greater diversity in workforce skills and cultural backgrounds which can contribute to create a more well-rounded society with a higher quality of life for all.

4.2. Economic Development

Trend:

Greater Tift County is losing manufacturing industry that was more evenly distributed throughout the County, but is gaining on service sector jobs and health care and education jobs due to the concentration of several institutions of higher education in the area north of Tifton and the growth and development of the Tift County Regional Medical Center. Despite this growth job opportunities for professional jobs are still lacking, recruitment of more industry, especially agriculturally related, is needed in combination with education programs to produce a sufficiently sized workforce with the appropriate skills to be marketed.

Issues:

- **Return on investment for Ag Businesses:** Find opportunities for the agricultural businesses and operations to receive a return on their investment in order to preserve agriculture in the area.
- **Opportunities for Young People:** Private/public partnerships need to be established to provide summer jobs and internships for the younger population segments to attract and retain younger people and increase workforce pool and expertise, not just in commercial and industrial areas, but also in the agricultural area.
- **Lack of local Area Jobs:** The area lacks local employment opportunities.
- **Low average wages:** The area lacks high paying jobs; the average wage is still below Georgia's state average.
- **Low local Workforce Education Level:** The area lacks a qualified workforce with sufficient education. Educational level of the workforce is an issue in Tift County, as those who do not have high school diplomas are not ready skill-wise to embrace opportunities at MTC, ABAC, etc. Tift County eliminated its support of Literacy Volunteers last year. Literacy Volunteers is a key player in the Adult Literacy arena, but had to cut the director's position to half-time because of Tift County's cut. MTC's adult literacy program is the largest player, but it is not able to expand its

program in Tift County because of funding limitations. Next year is expected to be even tighter because of federal reductions in funding to adult programs. Educating the adult population remains key to educating the school-aged population.

- **Community Identity:** Tifton/Tift County does not have a discernable character or identity. The development of an identity or “brand” for the area could help economic development initiatives and provide a tool to promote the Greater Tift County area as a quality community in which to live and do business in.
- **Lack of Utilization of I-75 Interchanges:** Tift County has seven interchanges with I-75, of which only two are fully utilized. Tift County needs to exploit its location and transportation infrastructure including the airport, to attract new distribution centers and possibly create an inland port.
- **Relocate Recycling Center to property across from Heatcraft.** The Recycling Center occupies desirable industrial location and this way would still be kept in the industrial park.
- **Vacant Buildings.** Vacant buildings could be purchased and refurbished and made available for potential prospects.
- **Lack of first-class offices buildings.**
- **Lack of Marketing Materials.** Develop marketing materials to distribute to developers, potential prospects, trade associations, etc and develop and budget for an advertising program. Also continue to work with state and power company project officials to keep the area in the eye of potential prospects.
- **Permitting Process:** The permitting processes are often inconsistent and do not provide sufficient guidance and flexibility to allow for sustainable development and consistency for developers.

Opportunities:

- Development of Agricultural Small Business, agriculture related business and niche farming would build on the existing agricultural culture, expand the business and take advantage of developments, expertise and support at the local higher educational institutions. This would include forming Co-ops for commodities such as vegetables or bio-energy and ethanol.
- Private/public partnerships need to be established to provide summer jobs and internships for the younger population segments to attract and retain younger people and increase workforce pool and expertise, not just in commercial and industrial areas, but also in the agricultural area.
- Public/private partnerships need to be established to provide education of the workforce for higher paying jobs and assist in training and placement. Continue to work with Moultrie Tech and Quick Start as a valuable recruiting tool. Continue to work with the Adult Literacy programs in the area to provide necessary basic skill levels in the workforce.
- Improved quality of life will attract more residents, a better workforce and better employment opportunities by attracting industries that will rely on these residents.
- Increase and encourage research to find viable solutions to our energy problems and to produce food and fiber more efficiently by working with more efficient farming methods, utilizing more effective irrigation and finding natural (without chemicals or pesticides) ways for disease control, and possibly put a model into place for others to follow as an example in Tift County.
- Local educational institutions such as ABAC, Moultrie Tech, Troy University, and the University of Georgia Tifton Campus need to be recognized as providing a great base for a workforce and a

great asset for economic development and attraction and retention of industry. USDA and UGA need to expand their research efforts in Tifton.

- Pursue the designation of Greater Tift County as a Center of Excellence in Agriculture for the Southeastern United States. The area currently hosts the Agricultural Innovation Center, leads the world in turf grass development and other innovative agricultural research.
- The health care industry in the area needs to be recognized as a basis for higher paying jobs and a potential regional growth industry.
- Greater Tift County needs to utilize ag-businesses, the educational institutions and the health care sector as a basis to attract other, related clean industry.
- Tourism efforts should be strengthened to create a Convention and Visitor's Bureau, and create opportunities for tourists to stay overnight. This could be achieved by attracting sporting events that would attract visitors and families, encouraging agri-tourism and eco-tourism as well as other cultural-heritage events.
- Assist in the development of hotel and conference facilities across from the Conference Center to take advantage of first-class conference facilities. Assist the Agrirama and its committee in pursuing these goals.
- Strengthen retail opportunities through tax allocation districts and other tools that aid retail development. Tifton is ranked ninth in the State in retail pull power with 1.57. A pull factor greater than 1.00 indicates that a community is capturing more retail sales from consumers in other communities than it is losing.
- Strengthen Greater Tift County's reputation as a place for government offices, corporate headquarters and data processing centers.
- Implement Tax Allocation Districts.
- Develop a high-quality business park to attract back-office headquarters.
- City of Ty Ty is home to the Ty Ty Nursery and Smith's Nursery. The nurseries are a destination for tourists and should be promoted to encourage more visitors. Proposed commercial main street character area could tie into the theme.
- The extension of the airport runway to 7,000 feet may contribute significantly in the ability to attract businesses that rely on general aviation activities for employees and their business.
- Streamline and coordinate the permitting processes in Greater Tift County to provide consistency and incentives for developers to provide high quality development while also guaranteeing sustainable and quality development for Greater Tift County without undue tax burden or burden on the natural and social environment.
- Develop a comprehensive marketing plan to develop a community identity with strategies on how to implement the marketing plan.

4.3 Housing

Trend:

Greater Tift County has many areas that consist of older housing stock which require maintenance and repair, but which remain affordable for many of the residents. New housing is being built and proposed, however, much of it does not address the need for additional affordable, but good quality housing stock for younger families and retirees. Mobile Homes now fulfill the need for affordable housing and some communities consist

of as much as 60% of Mobile Homes as their housing stock. Programs need to be developed to address housing needs for quality affordable housing. These new programs would be in addition to existing programs administered by the Community Development Authority.

Issues:

- **Older Housing Stock:** Many areas in Greater Tift County consist of older housing development; while many are stable neighborhoods, there are some instances of maintenance issues. To ensure the continued stability of these neighborhoods, continued code enforcement, community policing and property maintenance support programs are needed. This applies to all areas of Tift County including Tifton, Ty Ty, and Omega.
- **Lack of Affordable, Good Quality Housing:** Greater Tift County must adopt a strategy to accommodate the anticipated increase in need for affordable housing.
- **Location and lack of maintenance of Mobile Home Parks specifically and rental properties in general often result in low-quality housing:** strategies need to be adopted to encourage maintenance of existing Mobile Home Parks. Mobile Homes are for many residents in the low and very low income groups the only option to own their home and possibly the land it is placed on.
- **Segregation of Housing Stock:** Mix of higher priced and affordable housing has not been proven and successfully implemented.
- **Vacant Lots:** vacant lots need to be maintained instead of being neglected and can serve as infill development locations.
- **Lack of opportunities and lack of knowledge to attain homeownership:** of quality affordable housing by working poor and even “middle” income families.

Opportunities:

- Construction of quality housing tailored for retirees can attract more retirees to the area.
- Continued and joint implementation of the Georgia Initiatives for Community Housing.
- Greater Tift County needs to take advantage of the opportunity to promote a more sustainable growth that addresses the community’s desire for a greener environment.
- Develop mechanisms to maintain the value of the existing and future housing stock, while also providing diverse, affordable and quality housing. This can be done by taking advantage of the downtown mixed use character, where urban lofts and condominiums can be included or by incorporating incentives or requirements for developers to provide a certain amount of affordable housing either by contributing to a fund or providing them on-site or off-site.
- Old neighborhoods are also perceived as providing quality character to the area and should be maintained and preserved in high quality.
- A major chain grocery store located close to residential neighborhoods would certainly help attract more building of houses.
- Provide a menu of incentives for affordable housing such as allowing a mix of housing sizes while maintaining the same quality of housing, funding contributions for off-site construction of affordable housing in exchange for incentives, off-site or on-site construction of affordable housing in exchange for pre-determined incentives.
- Jointly adopt and implement the International Property Maintenance Code to give Code Enforcement the abilities and tools to encourage proper maintenance and clean-up of

properties.

- Provide educational workshops, seminars and other support for potential homeowners to achieve homeownership.
- Develop partnerships to build and market affordable infill housing in urban areas of Greater Tift County.

4.4 Natural Resources

Trend:

Pressures from new development have been negatively impacting environmental resources, especially groundwater recharge areas and existing native habitat, be it upland or wetland habitat. Development proposals are being submitted and approved without the appropriate safeguards in place to protect existing natural resources from these development pressures and to assure sufficient mitigation. The desire is strong among residents and elected officials to provide such safeguards and ensure continued quality of life through sufficient greenspace, open space and protection of natural resources.

Issues:

- **Water Resource:** Water in general and groundwater specifically are becoming a resource in high demand and low supply. No development should decrease in any way the carrying capacity of drainage basins.
- **Groundwater Recharge Areas:** existing groundwater recharge areas need to be protected from direct impacts (draining) by development and need to be protected from pollution to keep drinking water safe and clean.
- **Green and Open Space Conservation & Development:** Trees and other natural resources are not protected enough.
- **Parks and Recreation Space Creation:** facilities that promote fitness and social, outdoors gatherings including recreation facilities and bike routes in greenways need to be expanded.
- **Existing Parks improvements to function as social gathering spaces.** Existing parks need to be improved with facilities such as gazebos, picnic areas etc. to be utilized more fully as social gathering spaces.
- **Pressures from agricultural and development communities** continue to impede on the sensitive wetlands environments, especially along I-75 and Hwy 82.

Opportunities:

- Create a vision for quality and sustainable growth in the Greater Tift County Area.
- Create preservation opportunities for wetlands such as using docks or boardwalks to cross a wetland rather than filling it in; lay-out of access paths along high ground; preserve existing drainage and minimize diverting water to or from wetland areas; avoid clearing or replacing natural native vegetation along the wetland edge (create a buffer); control exotic/invasive plant species; and follow State/Federal wetland regulations.
- To protect groundwater recharge areas, the following protection opportunities include: wellhead protection program; limit impermeable surfaces with maximum building footprints and maximum paving areas; require sewer service instead of septic systems, especially for non-residential; establish zoning overlay districts; and provide incentives for recharge sensitive design.

- Designate the location of a regional water reservoir for Tift County if applicable.
- Develop implementation measures for conservation to protect existing and especially mature trees and other natural resources including wetlands and native upland habitat by allowing credits for wetland and upland preservation, mitigation or rehabilitation including on-site and off-site, other mitigation alternatives and requiring a certain minimum amount of existing native habitat for landscaping purposes.
- Open Space and Green Space are viewed by residents as part of the attractiveness of Greater Tift County. Encourage and expand the protection of those resources.
- Open Space and Green Space requirements need to be made part of the approval process for site plans and subdivision early on to ensure that sufficient, contiguous and quality land is set aside and not left-over parcels under power lines. No site plan or subdivision plan approval should be given without meeting these criteria.
- Requirements shall be established that all residential subdivisions and site plans provide sufficient and contiguous passive and active recreation space for its residents. The quantity (acreage) of recreation land to be set aside shall be tied to a threshold dependent on the number of dwelling units.
- Requirements shall be established to preserve and protect all existing and future water recharge areas.
- Include the recommendations of the CEMP into the Comprehensive Plan and incorporate the CEMP itself by reference.
- Provide incentives to utilize existing native vegetation to satisfy landscaping requirements. This will also promote water conservation and be more cost effective.
- Match trees and spaces.
- Protect and preserve farmland by developing programs such as Transfer or Purchase of Development Rights Programs, Agricultural Easement Purchase Programs; Conservation Easement Programs; giving Local Tax Incentives; or providing for Agricultural Overlay Districts.
- Incorporate the development and maintenance of stormwater and flood control plans into Open Space and Green Space preservation through incentives or design alternatives.

4.5 Cultural Resources:

Trend:

Identification, preservation, and promotion of Greater Tift County's cultural resources have been fueled by public and private efforts, such as historic societies, museums, and the Georgia Museum of Agriculture (Agrirama). In fact, since the adoption of the Georgia Historic Preservation Act in 1980, only the City of Tifton has enacted a local historic preservation ordinance and been active in promoting their cultural and architectural heritage. Omega, Ty Ty, and unincorporated Tift County are lacking in historic preservation efforts.

Issues:

- **Identification of Historic and Cultural Resources:** A comprehensive historic resource survey for Greater Tift County has not been completed. Detailed surveys for the historic downtown of the City of Tifton are available however at the library, the City Clerk's office and other locations.

- **Protection for Historic and Cultural Resources:** Local historic preservation programs are either inadequate or do not exist for areas outside of the existing designated historic districts.
- **Abandoned, Dilapidated, and/or Contaminated Buildings:** Historic buildings that are empty, in poor repair, or contaminated by lead paint and/or asbestos are a frequent occurrence throughout Greater Tift County.
- **Citizens are Unaware of Historic and Cultural Resources:** Due to the lack of local preservation programs and the lack of funding for cultural programs, many of Greater Tift County's citizens are unaware of historic and cultural resources or their benefits.
- **Development Encroaching on Historic Property:** The high rate of growth Greater Tift County is experiencing may threaten historic resources and cultural landscapes.

Opportunities:

- The first step in protecting historic and cultural resources is identifying what resources exist. Greater Tift County should undertake a county-wide, comprehensive historic resources survey, as a survey of this type would aid in creating a locally-based historic resources inventory that could be used in both statewide and local planning processes.
- Tift County, Omega, and Ty Ty have the opportunity to adopt proactive regulations, such as historic preservation ordinances or character area plans before continued insensitive development results in a permanent loss of their historic and cultural resources.
- Underutilized historic buildings and structures throughout Greater Tift County should be adaptively used.
- Develop a joint Greater Tift County local incentive or assistance program to encourage local building owners to take advantage of the voluntary historic designation process for their buildings. Such local incentives could be tax incentives, cash or in-kind.
- Greater Tift County's cultural resources could be promoted and used to market the area, increasing economic and tourism opportunities in its communities.
- Develop a comprehensive Cultural Heritage Plan to identify cultural gaps and needs for Greater Tift County and identify fiscal needs and possible resources as well.
- Public education programs about Greater Tift County's cultural resources and historic preservation, such as recently developed brochures, could be created to inform citizens about their importance. Educational programs could also be developed for school-age children promoting local history and heritage.

4.6 Community Facilities and Services

Trend:

Developments have been approved and built without taking into consideration the cumulative impact on the existing infrastructure and any capacity improvements necessary to accommodate those impacts. Local governments have been planning reactively to address the impacts and taxpayers have shouldered the burden. Local governments are starting to require that all infrastructure improvements for developments have to be in place ahead of development and should be partly, if not completely financed by the developers. The City of Tifton and Tift County have been recognized for their commitment to protection and stewardship of their water resources with their "Water First Community" designation by the State of Georgia.

Issues:

- **Increasing Demand for Services:** Greater Tift County is growing with a more diverse population and industry and with that growth comes an increasing demand for services. Careful planning and coordination is required to ensure that adequate services are available for the next 20 years.
- **Litter Removal:** Funding needs to be provided for an efficient and effective litter removal throughout the County.
- **Provision and Timing of Services:** Residential and commercial developments are approved and constructed without ensuring that the proper services (water, sewer, roads) are in place when the impacts occur. Projected capacity needs and funding sources for the provision of capacity for water, sewer, roads, fire/EMS and police have to be established prior to any approvals of subdivisions or site plans.
- **Lack of Curbside Recycling.** Efforts should be made to bring back curbside recycling and put into effect county-wide.
- **City of Omega Sewer Capacity:** The City of Omega is at capacity of accepting new permits because the capacity of the existing sludge fields has been exhausted. New sludge fields have been purchased and are in the process of being readied for acceptance of sewer. It is anticipated that the new capacity will last for 20 years based on existing growth.
- **City of Omega Groundwater Wells.** Omega's groundwater wells are located within the City and are surrounded by residential or commercial development. Sufficient safeguards need to be established that no contamination or degradation of the water quality occurs by limiting the types of uses within a certain distance of the wells to prohibit any kind of hazardous substances within the cone of influence of the wells.
- **City of Ty Ty Groundwater Wells.** Ty Ty's groundwater wells are also located within the City and are surrounded by residential or commercial development. Sufficient safeguards need to be established that no contamination or degradation of the water quality occurs by limiting the types of uses within a certain distance of the wells to prohibit any kind of hazardous substances within the cone of influence of the wells.
- **City of Omega lack of local EMS service.** The City of Omega is building a new Fire station and needs to work with Greater Tift County Fire Department to locate an EMS service and vehicle at that fire station.
- **Lack of EMS services for the unincorporated area of Brookfield.** Brookfield also is in need of an EMS service and needs to work with Greater Tift County Fire Department to locate an EMS service in that area.
- **City of Ty Ty lack of local EMS service.** The City of Ty Ty is in need of an EMS Service and needs to work with Greater Tift County EMS to locate an EMS service in that area.
- **City of Ty Ty:** needs to provide additional capacity for water system improvements, including improvements and repairs to elevated water storage tank, upgrading water and sewer lines, and expansion of water treatment facility.
- **Lack of requirements for treatment of Stormwater.** Requirements need to be established to provide proof and detail on provision of adequate on-site and off-site retention and detention of stormwater concurrent with development. Such proof needs to be established prior to approval of residential and non-residential subdivisions or site plans
- **Cumulative impacts of approvals are not taken into account.** Requirements need to

be established to account for cumulative impacts of development on existing and proposed facilities.

- **Infrastructure constructed without meeting City/County/State Standards.** Often local governments are asked to take ownership of infrastructure once that infrastructure needs major repairs or maintenance, but it doesn't meet the local government's standards.
- **Lack of funding for Library Operations and Programs:** The library has struggled to serve Tift County while undergoing a renovation of its facilities. It considered building a new building which would better address future needs, but was unable to find enough funding to proceed. Now, the board is renovating a facility which allows for no new programs.
- **Veterans Park and Track Park in the City of Omega** need improvements such as shelters, gazebos, Picnic Areas and other active recreational amenities to be more fully utilized for social gatherings.

Opportunities:

- Plan and guide the growth via the provision of water and sewer lines and tie the services into the appropriate land use.
- Tie the timing of development approvals to the construction of water and sewer services and roads. Services need to be part of the development.
- Shared cost of providing public services and facilities for new development – The developers need to bear the cost of providing public services and facilities. Improved planning could ensure services and facilities are used most efficiently as development occurs.
- Establish a joint Capital Improvement Program for all the communities which would be updated annually and would aid in planning future investments.
- Fire and Police Services need to be maintained at excellent quality of service standards.
- The Strategic Water Plan needs to be part of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Develop education programs and identify fiscal resources for implementation to teach the importance of litter control and water conservation to the new generations from K-12 in public and private schools.
- Develop strategies to conserve and limit water use by offering credits or incentives to local water providers/farmers/companies that hold permits and do not withdraw the maximum amount that their permit allows; promote water conservation programs and funding opportunities for irrigation retrofits, use of grey water; construction of catchment ponds; provide education opportunities for homeowners and businesses on low-flow fixtures, xeri-scaping etc.
- Develop a 5-year Capital Improvements Program for construction of Public Facilities not just limited to water, sewer and roads, but also include public services such as parks, libraries and other public buildings.

4.7 Land Use and Development

Trend:

Redevelopment of the downtown area, providing cohesiveness and integration with the interchange areas,

and attraction and expansion of targeted industries offer new opportunities for greater Tift County to find itself as a unique destination and more sustainable community that supports a healthy quality of life for its residents and businesses alike.

Issues:

- **Threat to Rural Character:** Maintain the rural character of the area despite growth and development pressures.
- **Threat to existing Farmland:** Encroaching development poses a threat to existing farmland, not only by turning existing farmland into residential subdivisions, but also by endangering neighboring farmland through perception of incompatible uses.
- **Uncontrolled Growth:** Slow the uncontrolled growth of traditional housing areas or subdivisions to control impacts and assure that services are available before or at the same time as the houses.
- **Urban Sprawl:** Land Use is not defined enough to avoid urban sprawl and to provide a balance between housing, commercial demand and the environment.
- **Community Identity:** Tifton/Tift County does not have a discernable character or identity. The development of an identity or “brand” for the area could help economic development initiatives and provide a tool to promote the Greater Tift County area as a quality community in which to live and do business.
- **Lack of Cohesiveness in Planning:** There is no integration of the areas around the interchanges and downtown which would provide a cohesive use of land and architecture.
- **Inappropriate Lot Sizes:** Residential developers expect to buy agricultural properties and develop them to suburban standards with small lots which are out of character with the area. Lot sizes need to be appropriate to the area.
- **Use of Resources:** Traditional suburban development designs contribute to increase and excess in energy use.
- **Aid to struggling areas:** Opportunities for reinvestment and redevelopment of declining residential and commercial areas need to be created.
- **Approval of Subdivision with sufficient available service capacity for water, sewer and roads.** Subdivisions should only be approved when sufficient capacity is available for them and no development should be approved that would decrease the capacity of drainage basins.
- **Lack of Scrutiny of Developments before approval.** Development review needs to hold all developments to the same standards of development review to provide consistency and certainty for all parties involved.
- **Lack of quality Grocery Stores and more high-end retail.** Many people will travel out of town to find more diversity in retail and groceries.
- **Lack of Recreation Amenities.** There is a perceived lack of activities for the evening hours including quality movie theatre, restaurants and other entertainment activities.
- **Flexibility to Implement Mixed Uses.** All current zoning regulations in the area lack the flexibility to implement a mixed use development, both vertically and horizontally. Zoning Districts should not be based on lot sizes but on gross density per acre.
- **Lack of Medical Emergency Facility in Omega, Ty Ty and Brooksville:** Omega, Ty Ty

and Brooksville do not have a medical emergency facility; residents have to drive to Tifton for emergency treatment. A facility such as the one on the south side of Tifton needs to be established in Omega and Ty Ty.

- **Many non-conforming structures and uses exist.** Most of these non-conforming uses and structures suffer from lack of maintenance and aesthetics and need to be phased out as soon as possible or renovated or replaced.
- **Lack of affordable housing.** Smaller lot sizes with smaller houses need to be available throughout the community where appropriate and where sustainable with water and sewer in order to provide good quality entry level housing.

Opportunities:

- Improved quality of life will attract more residents, a better workforce and better employment opportunities by attracting industries that will rely on these residents.
- Protect existing farmland from development by developing incentives to keep farmland agricultural and make it productive for farmers to do so and require sufficient buffers or transitional areas to protect existing farm operations from perception and complaints about incompatible farming uses next to newer residential subdivisions.
- Develop incentives for developers to incorporate more than minimum required green space, open space and conservation areas into their subdivision designs.
- Land Use needs to be defined to avoid urban sprawl and to provide a balance between housing, commercial demand and the environment. Certain areas of the County should incorporate the possibility for high density development where appropriate.
- Develop a cost sharing mechanism where developers bear the cost of infrastructure and services to support their development.
- Develop regulations that will require that utilities in all new subdivisions be located underground.
- Develop and create opportunities for mixed-use communities integrating housing and commercial.
- EMAG needs to be utilized as a Land Use Steering Committee to help implement the Comprehensive Plan after it is adopted.
- Greater Tift County needs to adopt the vision of developing into a “Green Community” and take action to implement that vision. A “Green Community” development goal would give greater Tift County the tools to distinguish itself from any other community. Develop a comprehensive plan to outline and implement a cohesive identity and community.
- Develop an overlay zone or zoning district to develop the interchange and downtown areas into a cohesive and integrated area.
- Coordinate with the School Board on Future Land Use designations to locate schools in areas where residential development is desirable.
- Tie development approvals to the provision of appropriate roads, sidewalks and green spaces (open space and conservation). Developments need to define their set asides for roads, water, sewer and green space up front prior to review and approval.
- Designate minimum lot sizes to maintain character of an area, e.g. large minimum lot size of 5

acres for agricultural/rural areas. Lot sizes need to be tied to land use.

- Designate minimum requirements for set-asides such as open space/green space and landscaping.
- Protect natural resources within developments by promoting the use of conservation subdivision designs. Create a conservation subdivision ordinance and provide incentives for creating those and providing greenway connections.
- Future energy needs and cost need to be included in the design of development.
- Encourage quality sustainable growth by encouraging more traditional neighborhood developments. They may not be viable in every situation, but they should be required when developing adjacent or within the more urban areas.
- Encourage regulation of rental properties for proper maintenance and limit number of occupants for safety.
- Provide regulations that will ensure that existing and proposed uses are compatible and to ensure that proposed uses are appropriate and compatible with natural and cultural uses surrounding it.
- Provide regulations that ensure that any proposed zoning will be compatible with the underlying “Future Land Use” as shown in the Comprehensive Plan. No zoning shall be approved that is not consistent with the comprehensive plan. A compatibility matrix shall be established to provide an easy overview at which “Future Land Use Designations” and zoning categories are allowed. The Unified Code shall determine appropriate permitted uses, special exceptions and accessory uses for each zoning category.
- Develop regulations that will provide more flexibility in zoning and uses, provide for decentralized nodes (like mini-communities), provide links from there to the educational institutions and provide corridors (including bike and pedestrian) from one node/mini-community to another.

4.8 Transportation

Trend:

Existing roads are falling behind in carrying capacity due to faster than anticipated growth of residential and non-residential development in fringe areas; congestion, delays and increased traffic accidents occur as a result. Cross-connectivity and access management is needed to manage existing and future traffic. Bicycle and pedestrian planning in general has not kept up with development and lack of these facilities is sorely evident in non-motorized vehicles using major roadways.

Issues:

- **Increase Safety for School Children:** Providing safe walkways for children walking to school.
- **Creating a Safe Bicycle and Pedestrian Friendly Community:** The opportunity for increasing bicycling and pedestrian activity should be considered as part of road improvement projects. Paving shoulders or providing bike lanes can be accommodated as part of road maintenance or widening improvements. Such implementation measures will make bike and sidewalk projects more economical and part of a “complete road” concept. Throughout the

county, there is a lack of sidewalks along residential roadways; this is a problem especially within the city limits. Safety is also an issue as bicycles and increasingly motorized wheelchairs utilize traffic lanes.

- **Competing Business Areas:** A proposed truck route around Tifton may jeopardize the redevelopment of downtown by luring businesses to the truck route, however, it may also provide for easier access to the downtown by eliminating heavy truck traffic in that area. Appropriate zoning districts will need to be put into place along the truck route so not to provide competition for downtown businesses.
- **Parking:** Any revitalization of downtown areas needs to take into consideration the often competing needs of number and location of parking spaces. A sufficient number and distribution of parking spaces is needed to ensure viability of the businesses without detracting from the attractiveness of the area, siting a parking structure into the middle of a block, or covering a large expansive area with asphalt instead of attractive green space.
- **Highway 82 Corridor and other Entry Roads into Tifton lack landscaping and beautification.** The Hwy 82 corridor specifically, but all entry roads coming from the interchanges need to be cleaned up and beautified to serve as an entrance statements to and throughout the community. Beautification and landscaping standards should be adopted for all major highways and collectors.
- **Lack of road maintenance.** Many roads in Greater Tift County lack a sufficient maintenance program to fix pot holes, dirt roads need to be paved.
- **Traffic safety in rental areas** – rental areas appear to have a larger problem with residents speeding on roads, parking in inappropriate areas and engine noise. Traffic calming measures should be stepped up in rental areas as well as increased maintenance of roads.
- **Widening of Moore Hwy.** The widening including the addition of turn lanes for Moore Hwy/8th Street/Baldwin Avenue would greatly increase traffic flow and safety for adjacent areas.
- **Provide an alternative road from the Holiday Inn to Wal-Mart other than Hwy 82.** The proposed truck route in the southern part of Tifton would address this issue.
- **Multiple Access Points and Increased Connectivity.** Requirements need to be established for the approval of residential and non-residential subdivisions and site plans to provide for multiple access points to the surrounding roadway network to distribute the traffic more evenly, to avoid congestion, and to provide more access points for emergency services and vehicles.
- **Major Transportation Corridors are too centered and concentrated.** Encourage that major transportation corridors will be developed concurrent with growth to provide better east-west and north-south access where desired for growth.
- **Lack of Public Transportation.** Lack of public transportation was specifically noticed in areas of higher education and areas medical facilities.

Opportunities:

- Any truck route around Tifton would have to be carefully planned in conjunction with future land use and development to provide complementary uses and not jeopardize revitalization of downtown.
- Accelerate widening Carpenter Road and other roadways improvements to provide sufficient capacity for existing and proposed development.

- Develop an access management plan for all major corridors throughout the County to maximize traffic flow and safety.
- Lobby State and federal officials for support to accelerate funding for the truck route.
- Requirements need to be established that all public or private roads meet subdivision standards including right-of-way dedications as part of the residential and non-residential site plan and subdivision approval process. No site plan or subdivision plan approval shall be given without meeting these criteria.
- Develop requirements for contiguous sidewalks and bike paths including the potential for overpasses or underpasses.
- Extension of the airport runway to 7,000 feet.

4.9 Intergovernmental Coordination

Trend:

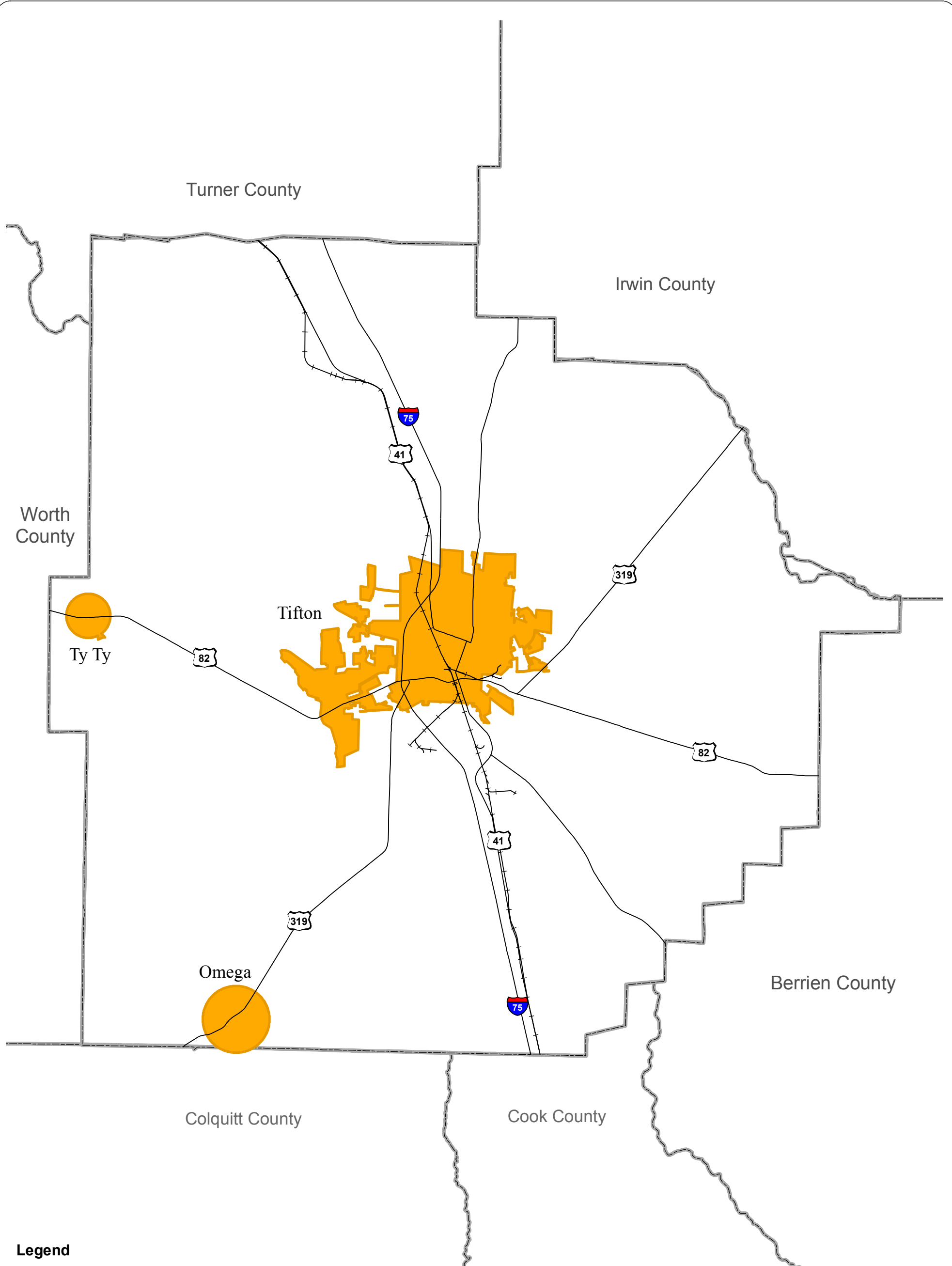
The decreasing availability of state and federal funds require that Omega, Ty Ty, Tifton and Tift County maintain a high level of coordination with each other and with regional and state officials.

Issues:

- **Coordination to provide effective and efficient services:** as the cities and Tift County increasingly rely on each other to provide services, all entities need to ensure that proper agreements are in place to ensure adequate delivery of public services to its citizens across jurisdictional boundaries.
- **Reactivate the Citizens:** There is a feeling that local citizens are more reactive than proactive. Local governments should maintain strong communication links with citizens and civic organization to encourage all to become active participants in the local civic life.
- **Lack of public notice and transparency of approval process.** All agendas and minutes shall be published on the governments' websites for public review.
- **Lack of coordination with long-term School Board planning** and location of major schools jeopardizes long-term planning for infrastructure and cohesive land use planning and designation of appropriate zoning districts.

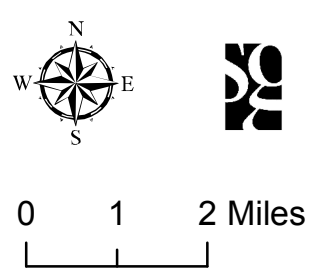
Opportunities:

- The population at large and specifically the older population segment provide a significant pool of volunteers, resources and expertise that needs to be tapped into for the good of the community.
- Provide more coordination between the jurisdictions by adopting unified, if at a minimum, consistent codes and standards.
- Appoint a School Board member to the Greater Tift County Planning & Zoning Commission, voting or non-voting, to provide input and feedback on all development items before the Commission and to improve coordination with the School Board on all planning issues.
- Involve the Hospital Authority in all major planning efforts and issues coming before the Planning & Zoning Commission.

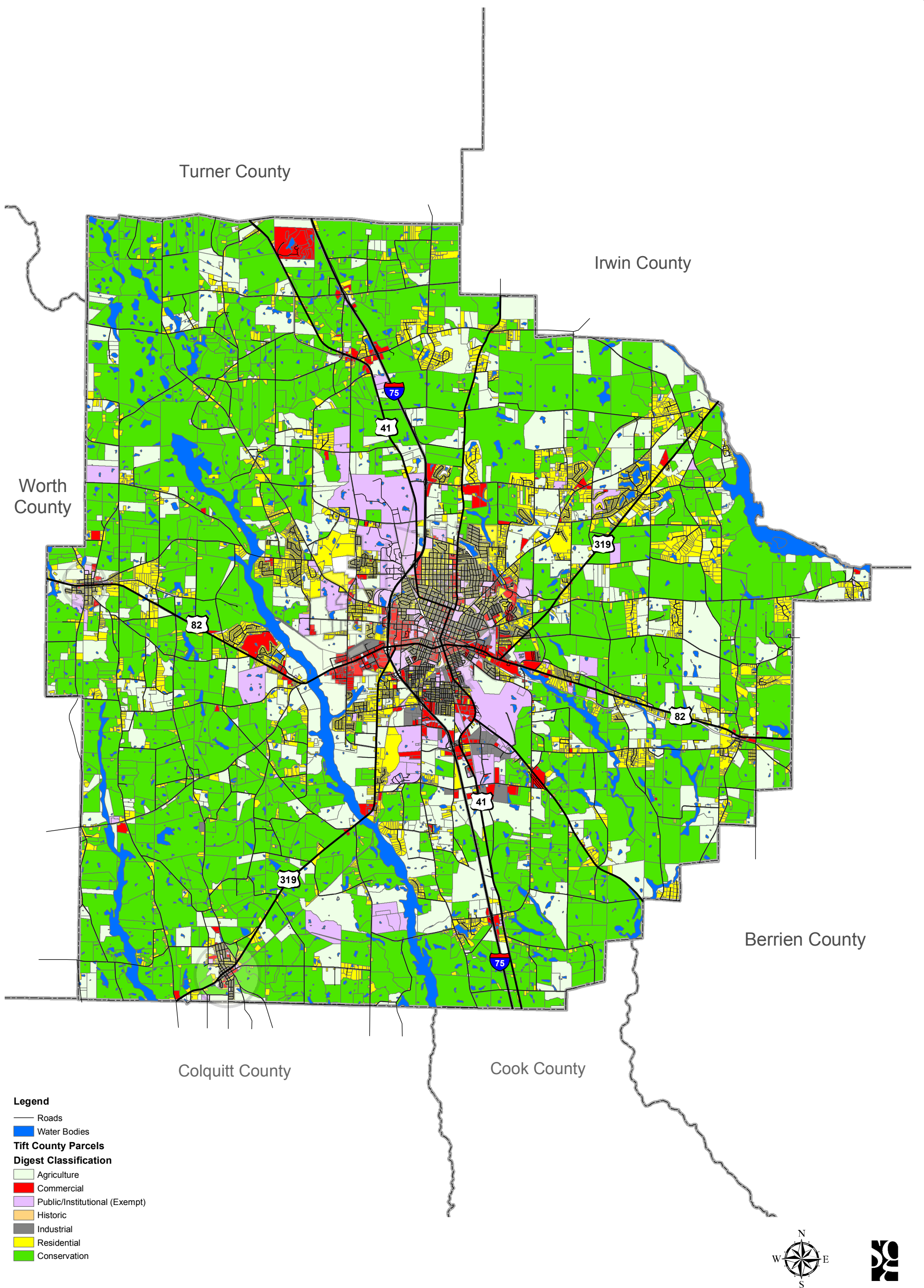


- Legend**
- State Roads
 - +— Railroad
 - City Limits
 - County Boundary

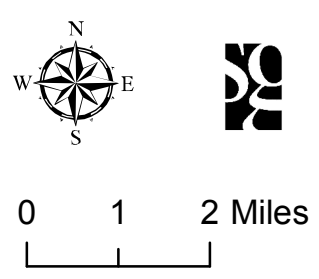
Source: Omega, Tift County, Tifton, TyTy
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007



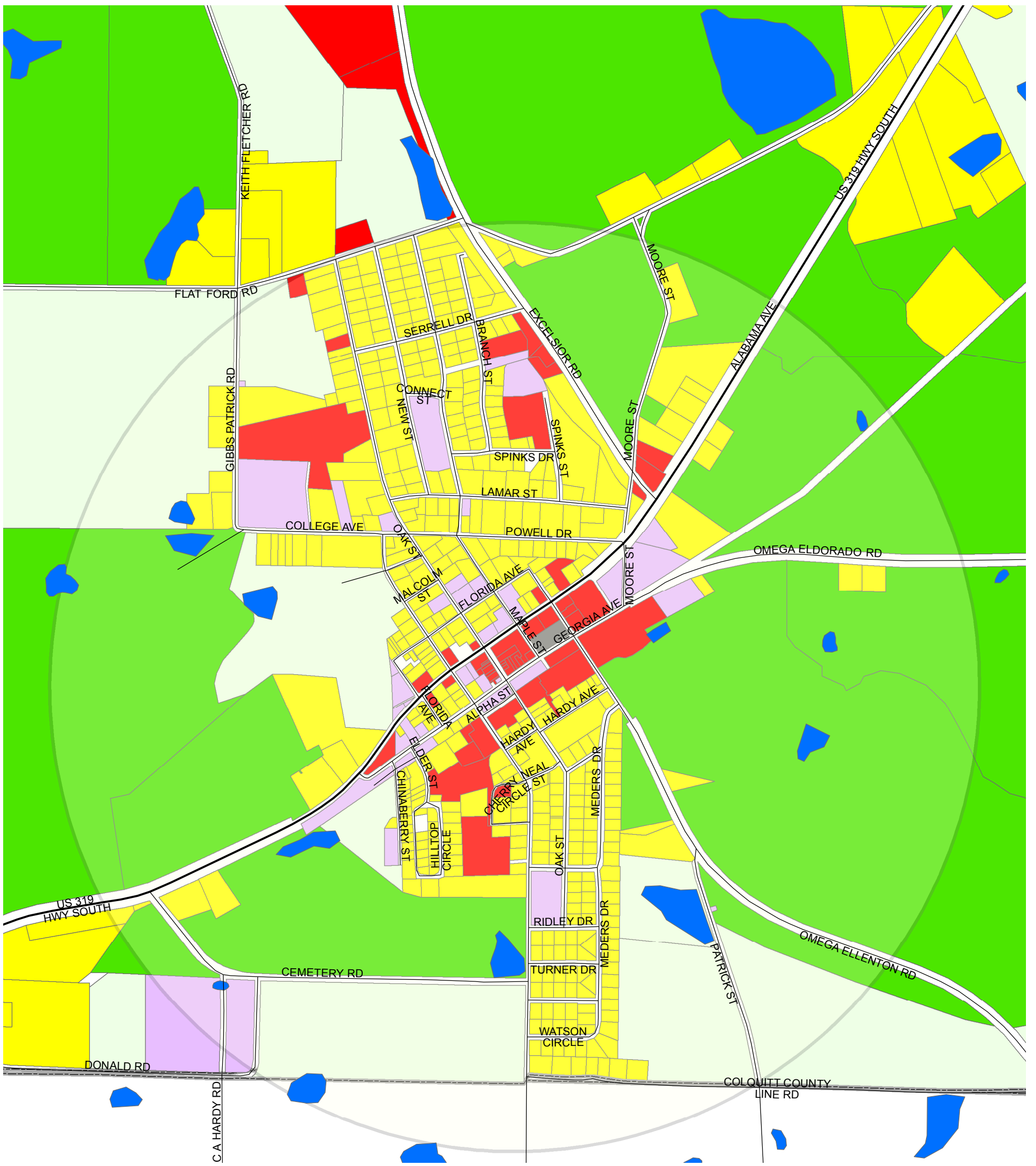
MAP 3-1 GREATER TIFT COUNTY LOCATION MAP



Source: Tift County Tax Parcels, 2007
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007

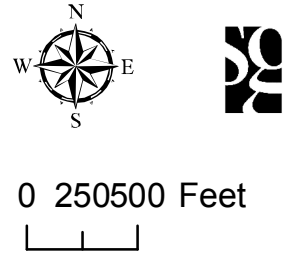


MAP 5-1 TIFT COUNTY CURRENT LAND USE

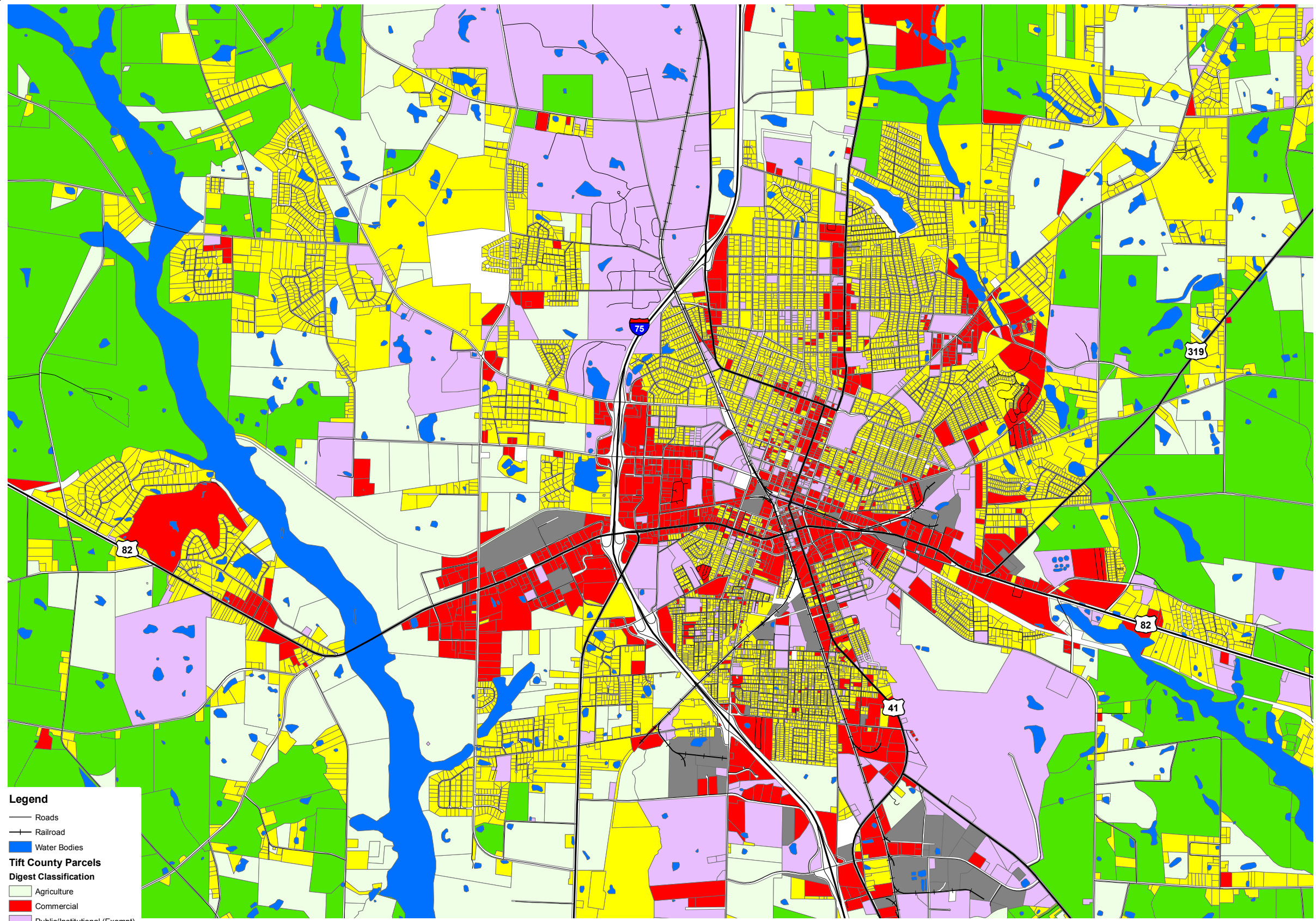


- Legend**
- Roads
 - Tift County Parcels**
 - Digest Classification**
 - Agriculture
 - Commercial
 - Public/Institutional (Exempt)
 - Historic
 - Industrial
 - Residential
 - Conservation

Source: Tift County Tax Parcels, 2007
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007

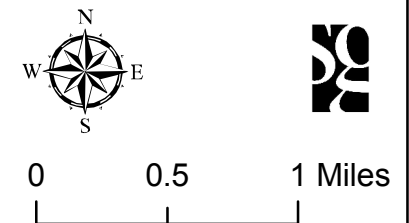


MAP 5-2 CITY OF OMEGA CURRENT LAND USE

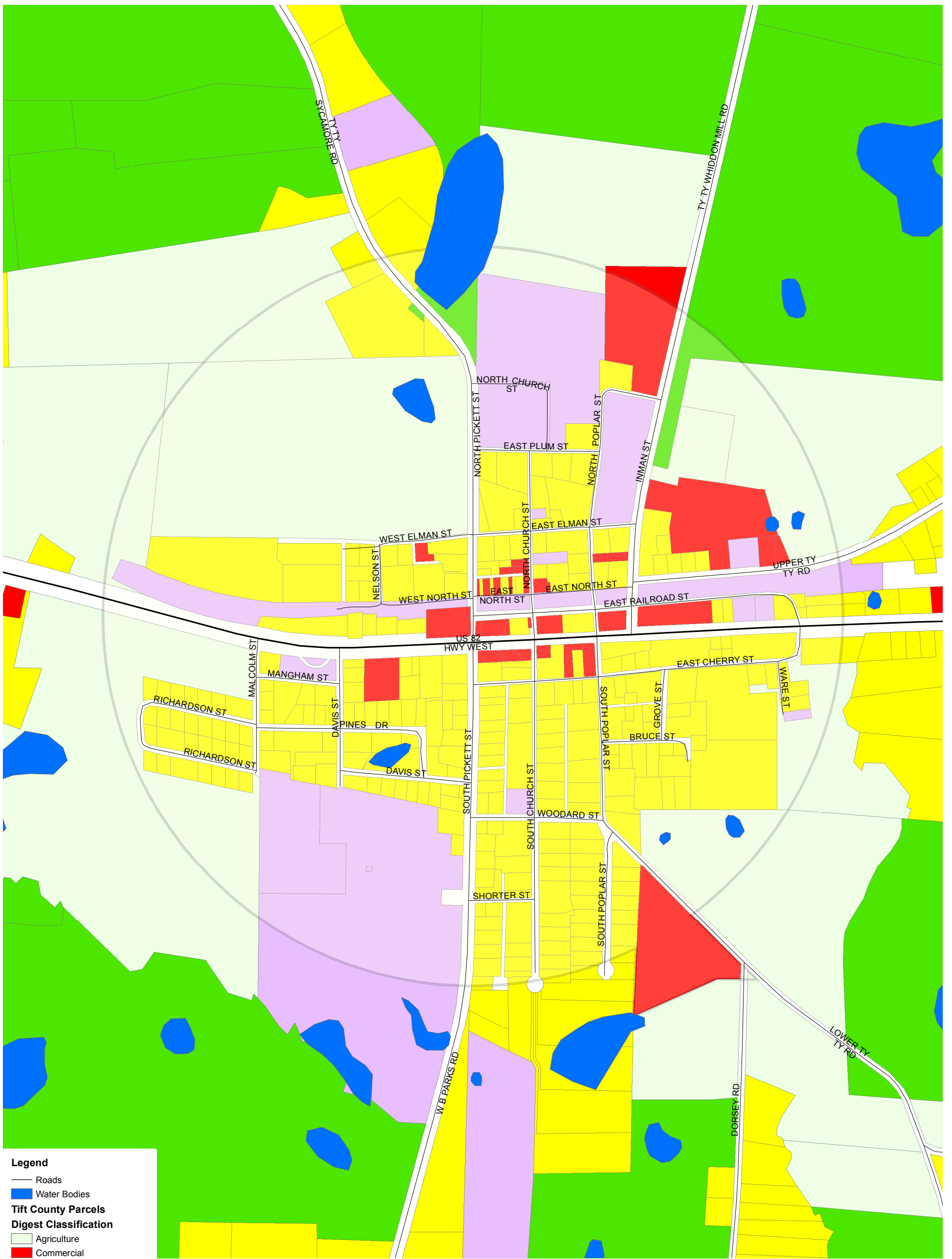


- Legend**
- Roads
 - +— Railroad
 - Water Bodies
 - Tift County Parcels**
 - Digest Classification**
 - Agriculture
 - Commercial
 - Public/Institutional (Exempt)
 - Historic
 - Industrial
 - Residential
 - Conservation

Source: Tift County Tax Parcels, 2007
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007



MAP 5-3 CITY OF TIFTON
CURRENT LAND USE

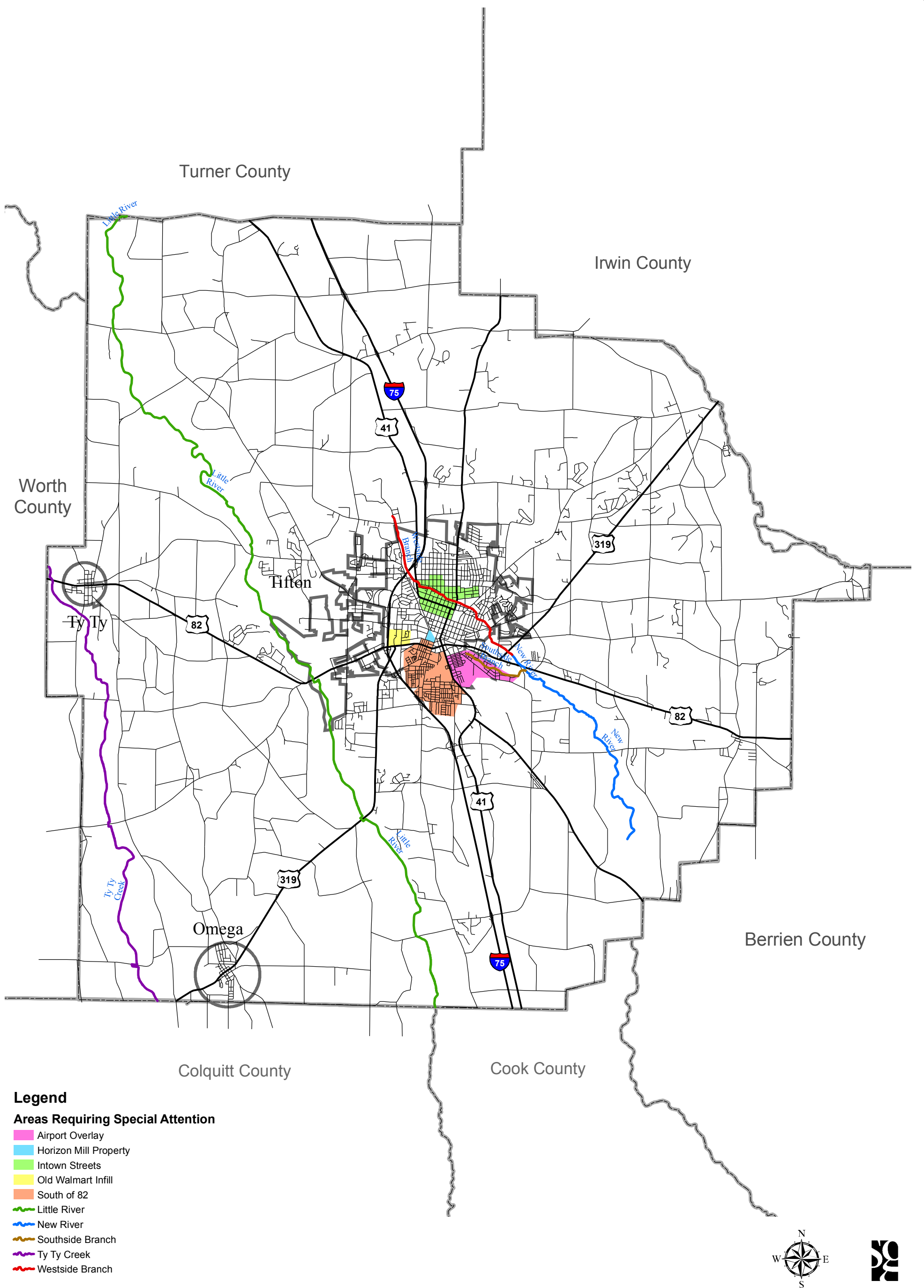


- Legend**
- Roads
 - Water Bodies
 - Tift County Parcels**
 - Digest Classification**
 - Agriculture
 - Commercial
 - Public/Institutional (Exempt)
 - Historic
 - Industrial
 - Residential
 - Conservation

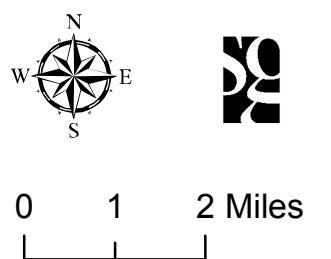
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Source: Tift County Tax Parcels, 2007
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007

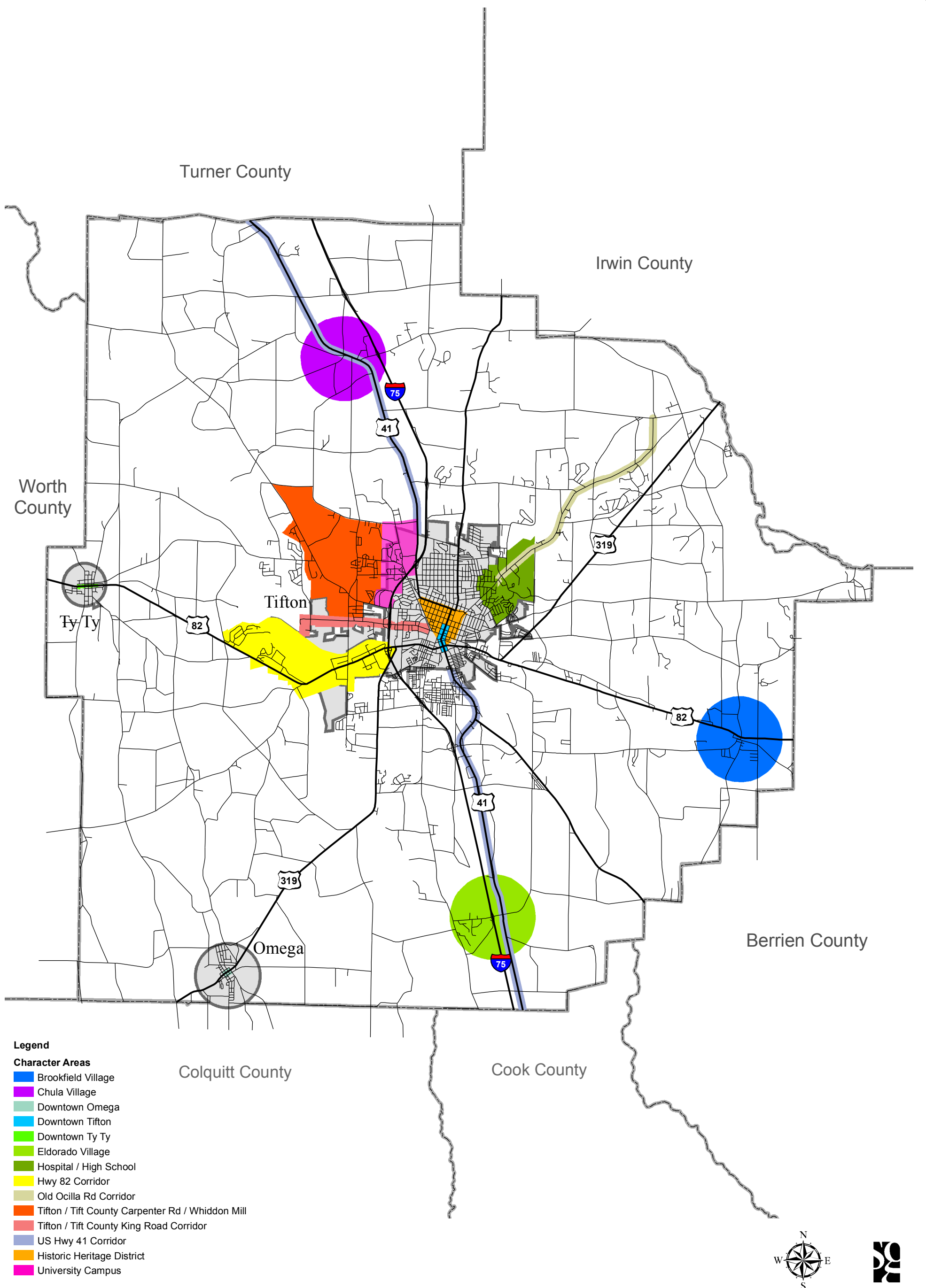
MAP 5-4 CITY OF TY TY CURRENT LAND USE



Source: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2007
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007



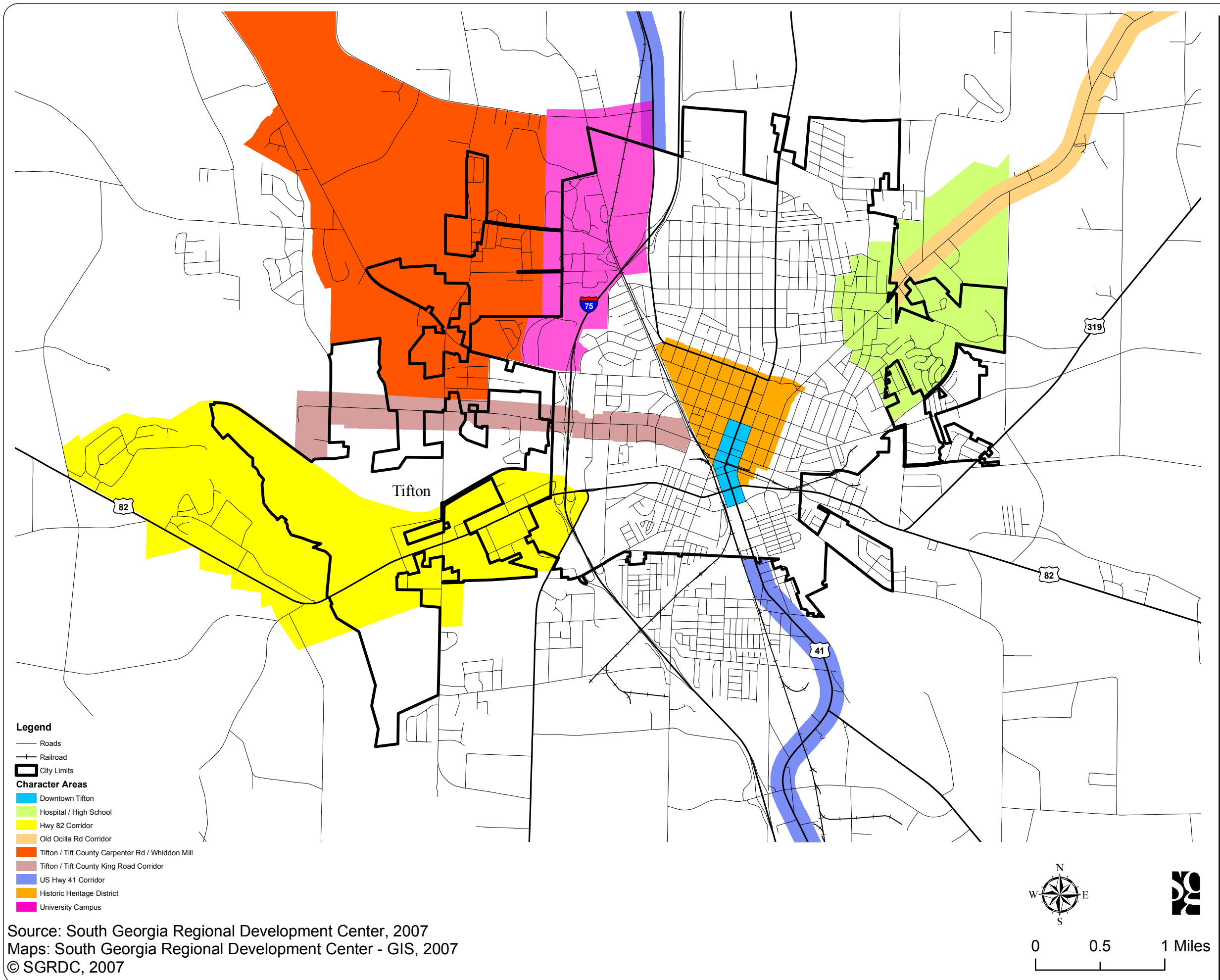
MAP 5-5 GREATER TIFT COUNTY AREAS REQUIRING SPECIAL ATTENTION



Source: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2007
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007



MAP 5-6 GREATER TIFT COUNTY CHARACTER AREAS



Legend

- Roads
- Railroad
- ▭ City Limits

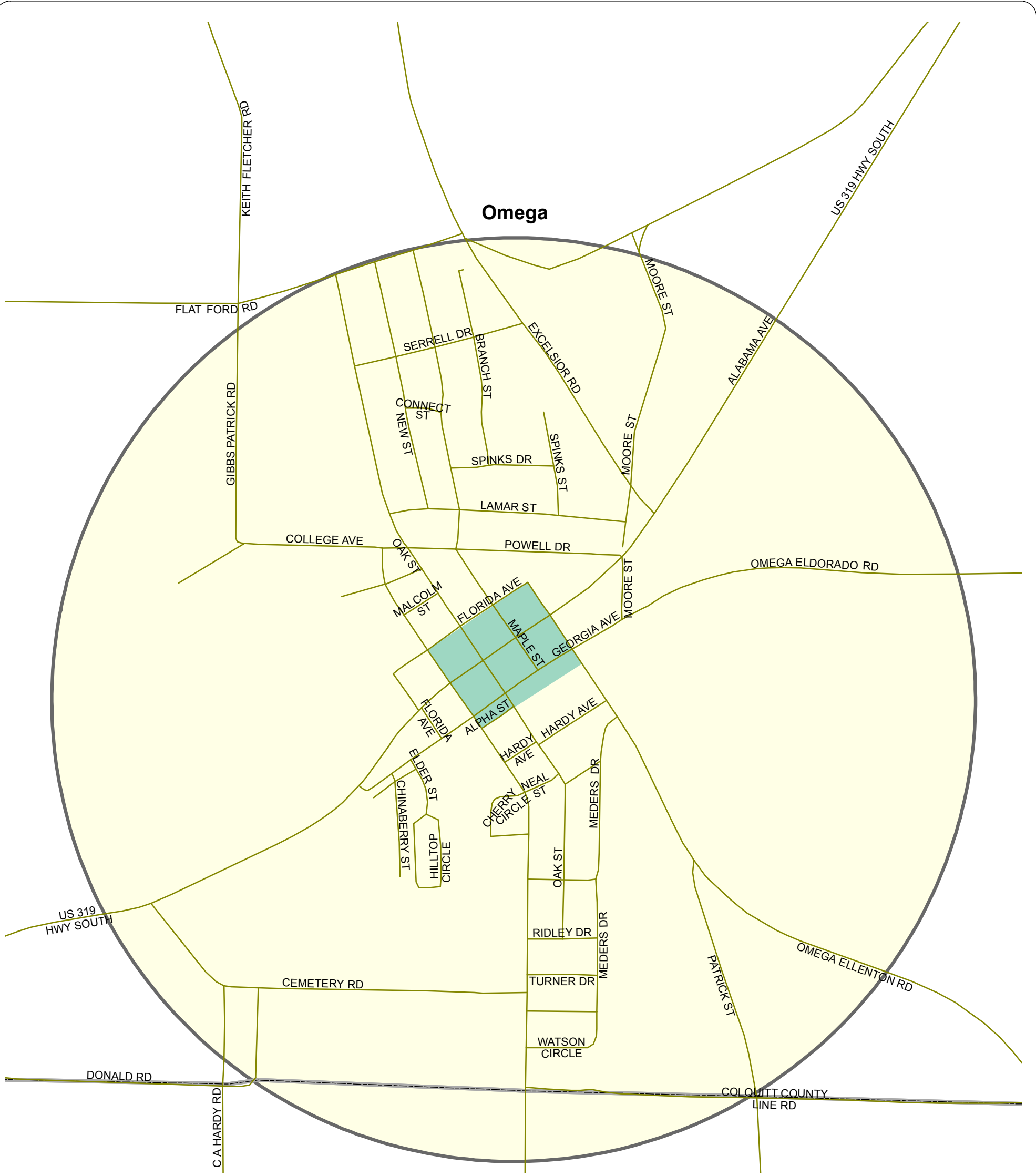
Character Areas

- Downtown Tifton
- Hospital / High School
- Hwy 82 Corridor
- Old Ocilla Rd Corridor
- Tifton / Tift County Carpenter Rd / Whiddon Mill
- Tifton / Tift County King Road Corridor
- US Hwy 41 Corridor
- Historic Heritage District
- University Campus

Source: South Georgia Regional Development Center, 2007
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007

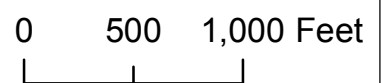


**MAP 5-7 TIFTON AREA
 CHARACTER AREAS**

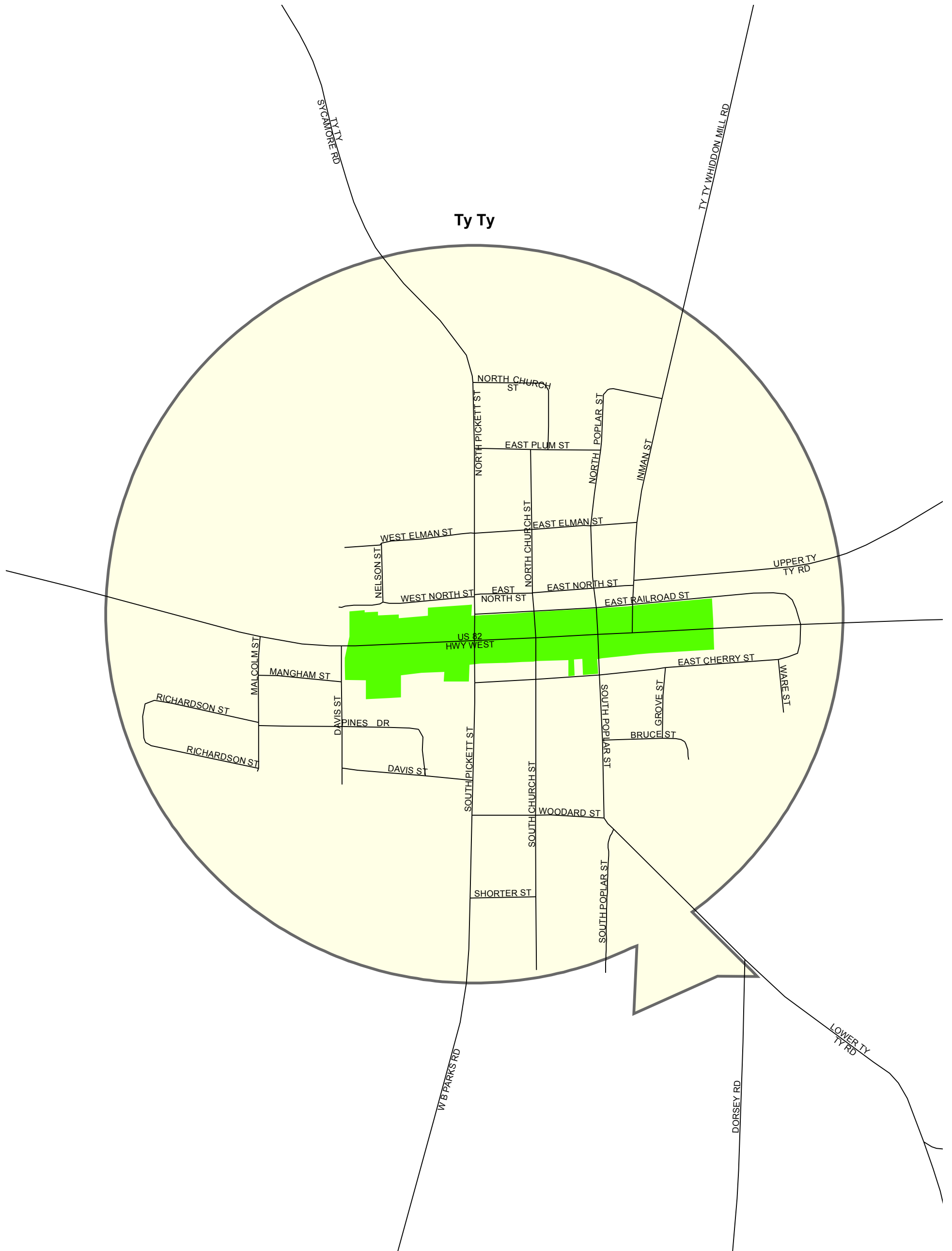


Legend
Character Area
 Downtown Omega

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation, 2007
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007

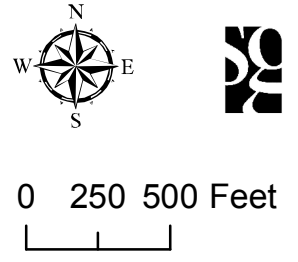


MAP 5-8 CITY OF OMEGA CHARACTER AREA

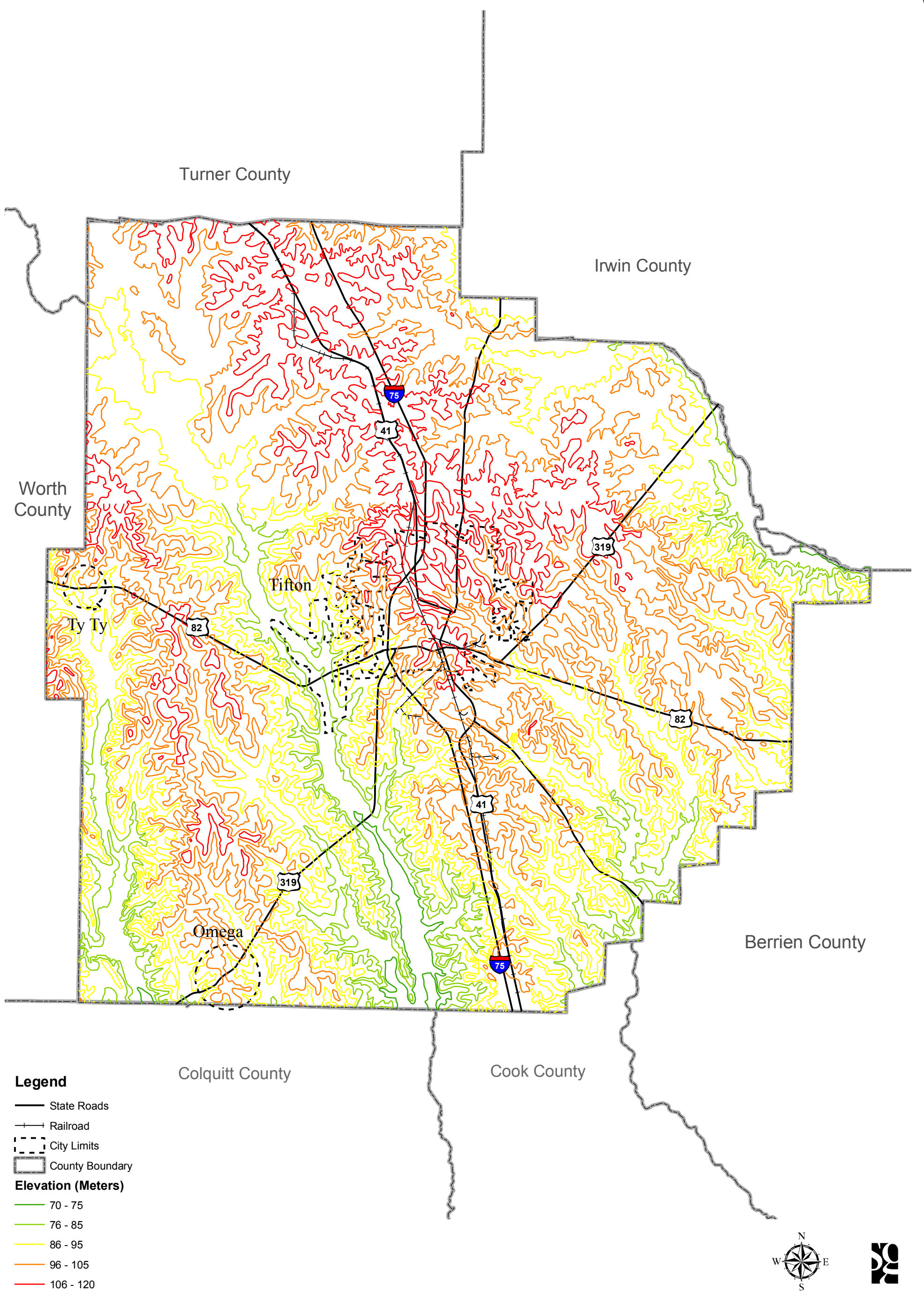


Legend
Character Area
 Downtown Ty Ty

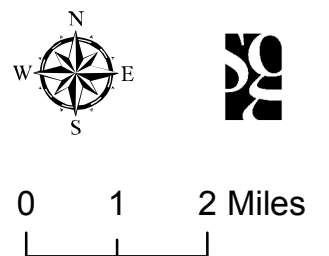
Source: Tift County Tax Parcels, 2007
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007



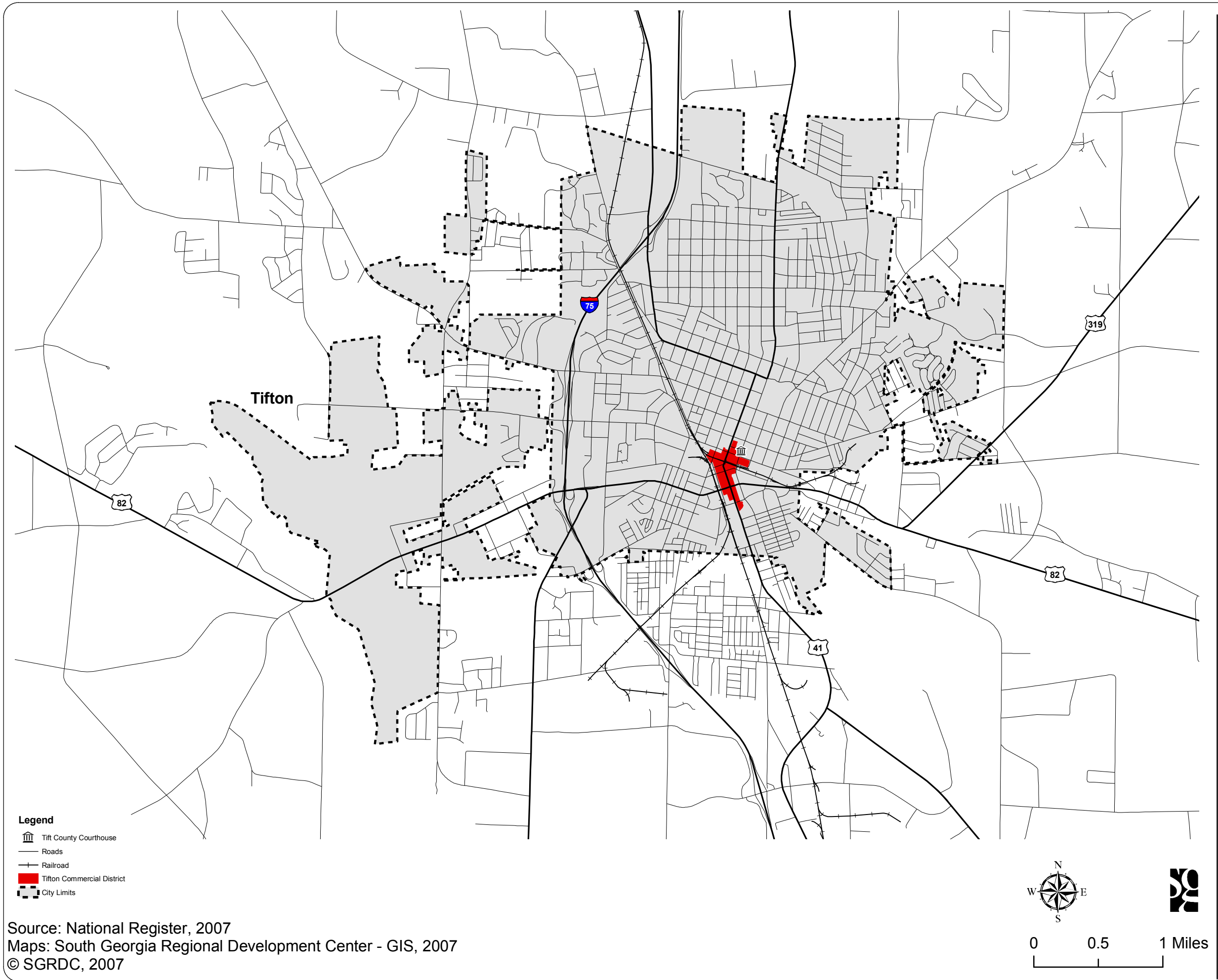
MAP 5-9 CITY OF TY TY CHARACTER AREA






Source: USGS, 2007
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007





MAP D-1 GREATER TIFT COUNTY TOPOGRAPHY

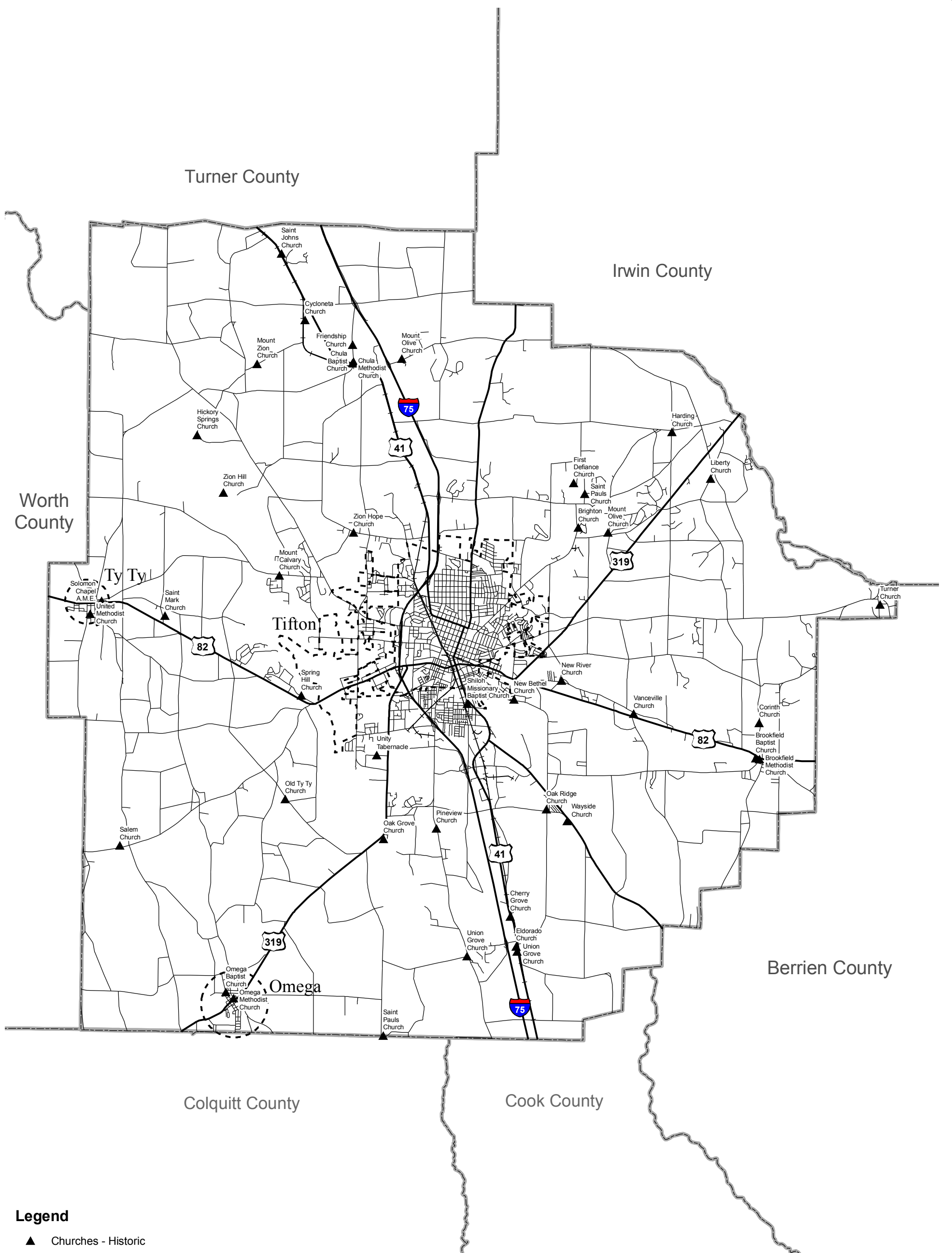


Legend
 Tift County Courthouse
 — Roads
 —+— Railroad
 Tifton Commercial District
 City Limits

Source: National Register, 2007
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007


 0 0.5 1 Miles


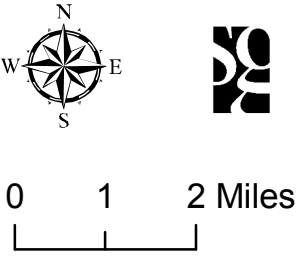
MAP D-16 TIFT COUNTY
 NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC PLACES AND DISTRICTS



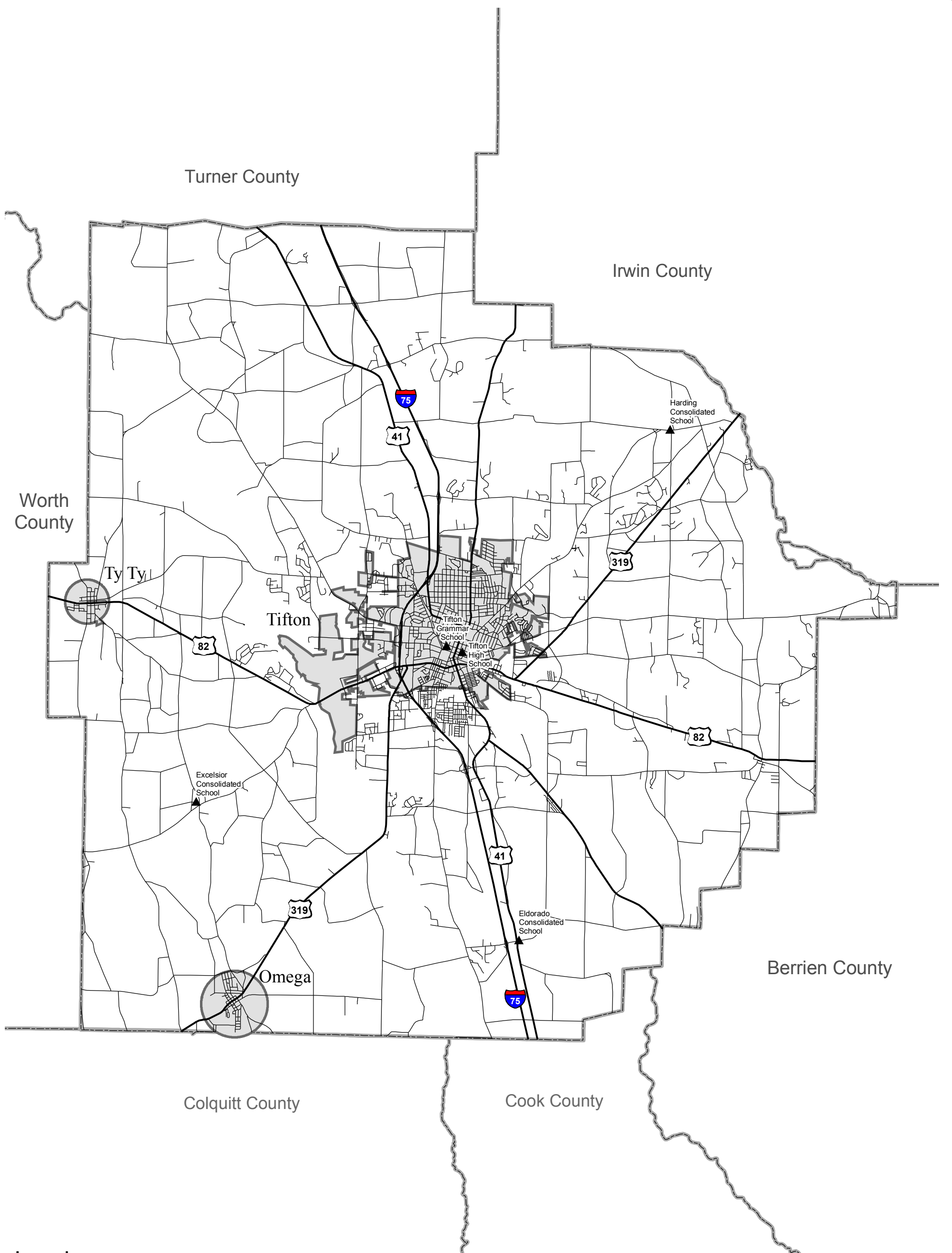
Legend

- ▲ Churches - Historic
- Roads
- +— Railroad

Source: GNIS Data
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007



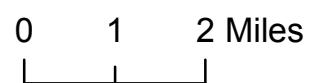
**MAP D-17 TIFT COUNTY
 HISTORIC CHURCHES**



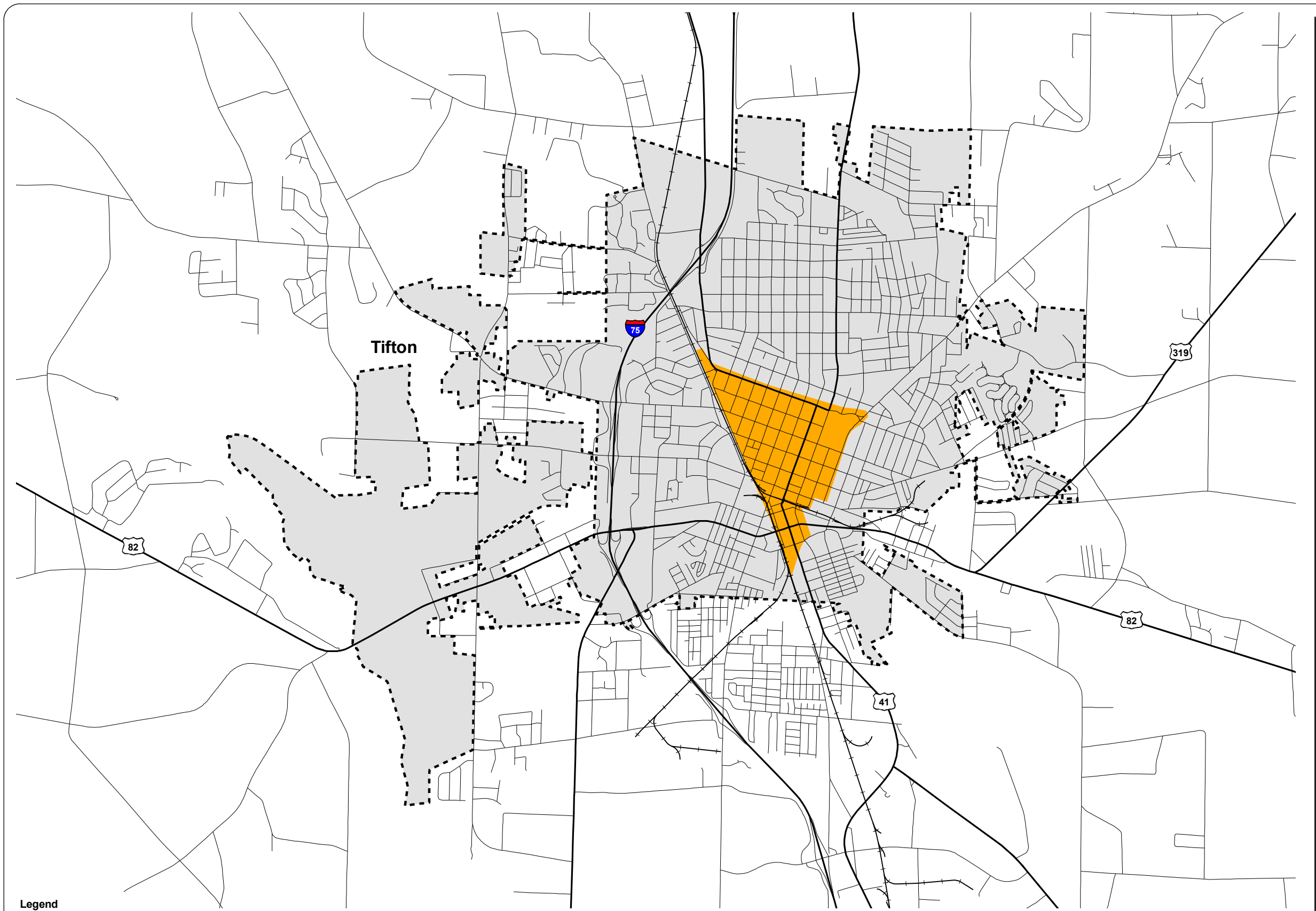
Legend

▲ Historic Schools

Source: GNIS Data
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007

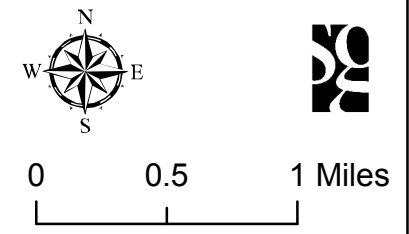


MAP D-18 TIFT COUNTY HISTORIC SCHOOLS

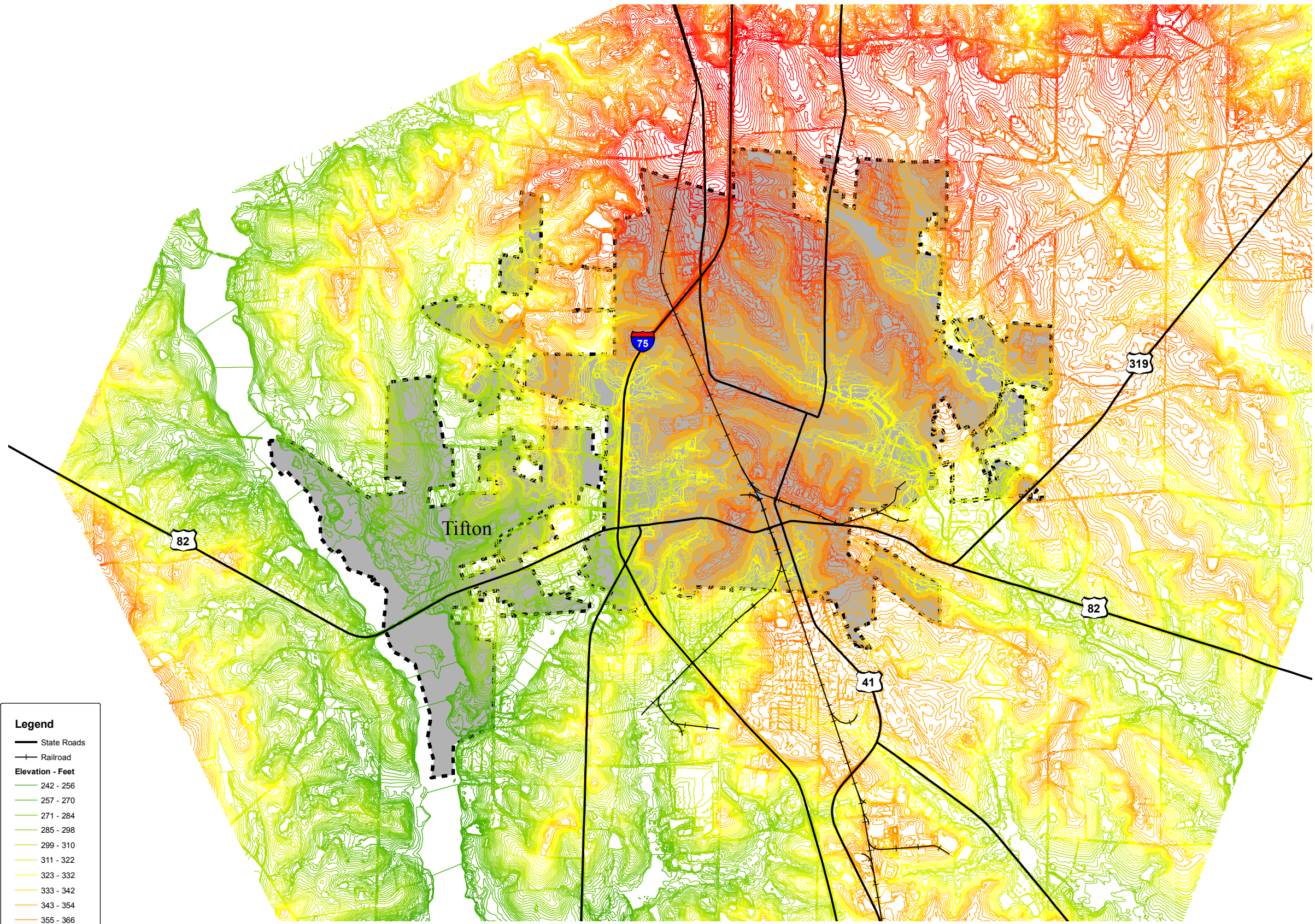


- Legend**
- Roads
 - +— Railroad
 - Local Historic District
 - City Limits

Source: National Register, 2007
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007



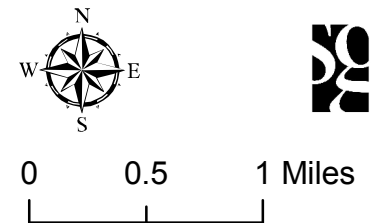
**MAP D-19 CITY OF TIFTON
 LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT**



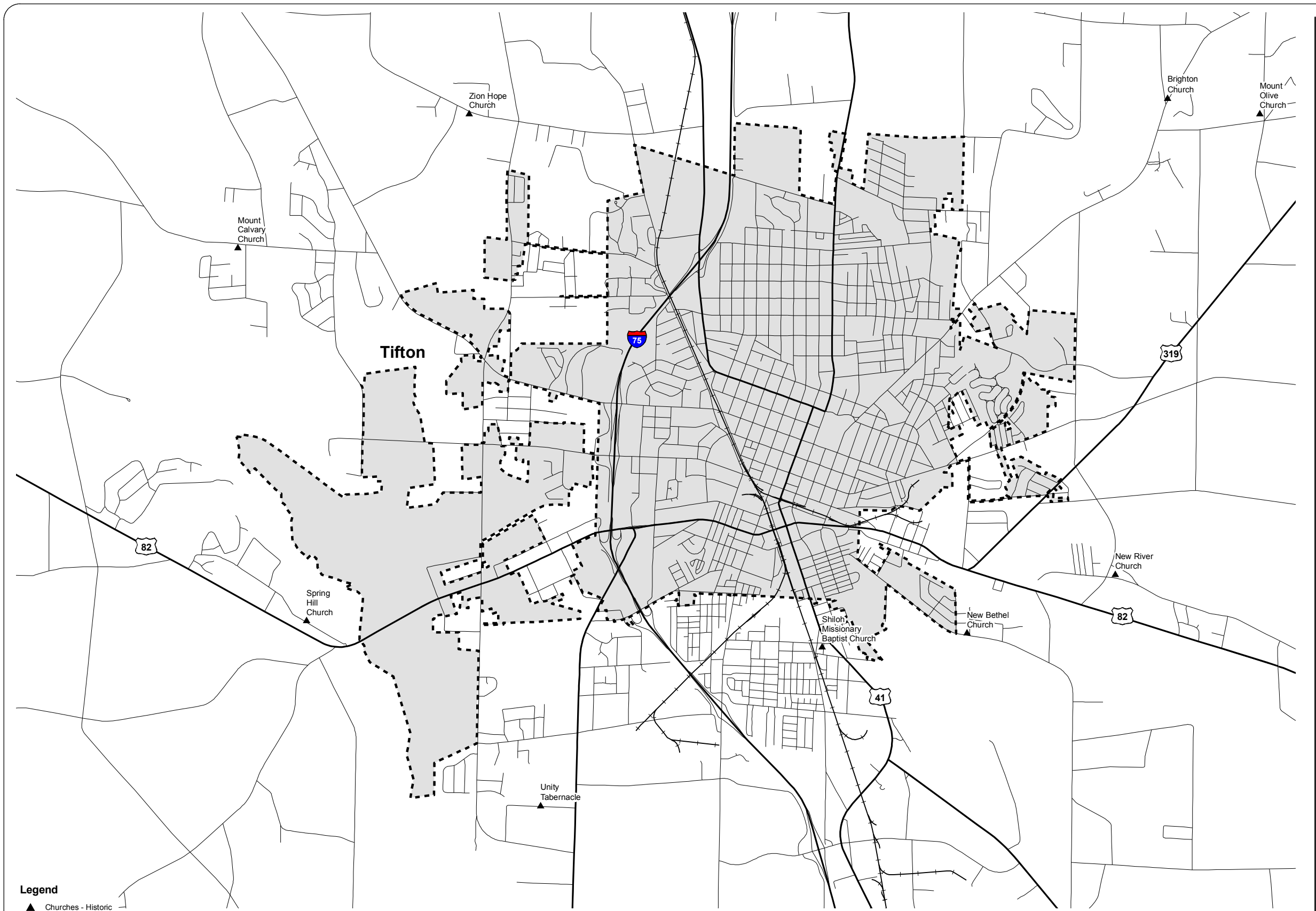
Legend

- State Roads
- +— Railroad
- Elevation - Feet**
- 242 - 256
- 257 - 270
- 271 - 284
- 285 - 298
- 299 - 310
- 311 - 322
- 323 - 332
- 333 - 342
- 343 - 354
- 355 - 366
- 367 - 378
- 379 - 392
- 393 - 416
- ▣ City Limits

Source: MarkHurd Inc., 2005
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007



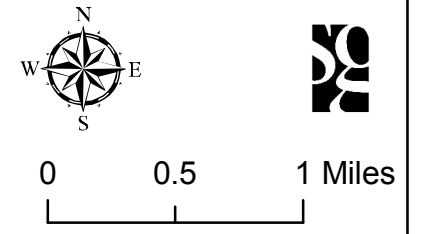
**MAP D-2 CITY OF TIFTON
 TOPOGRAPHY**



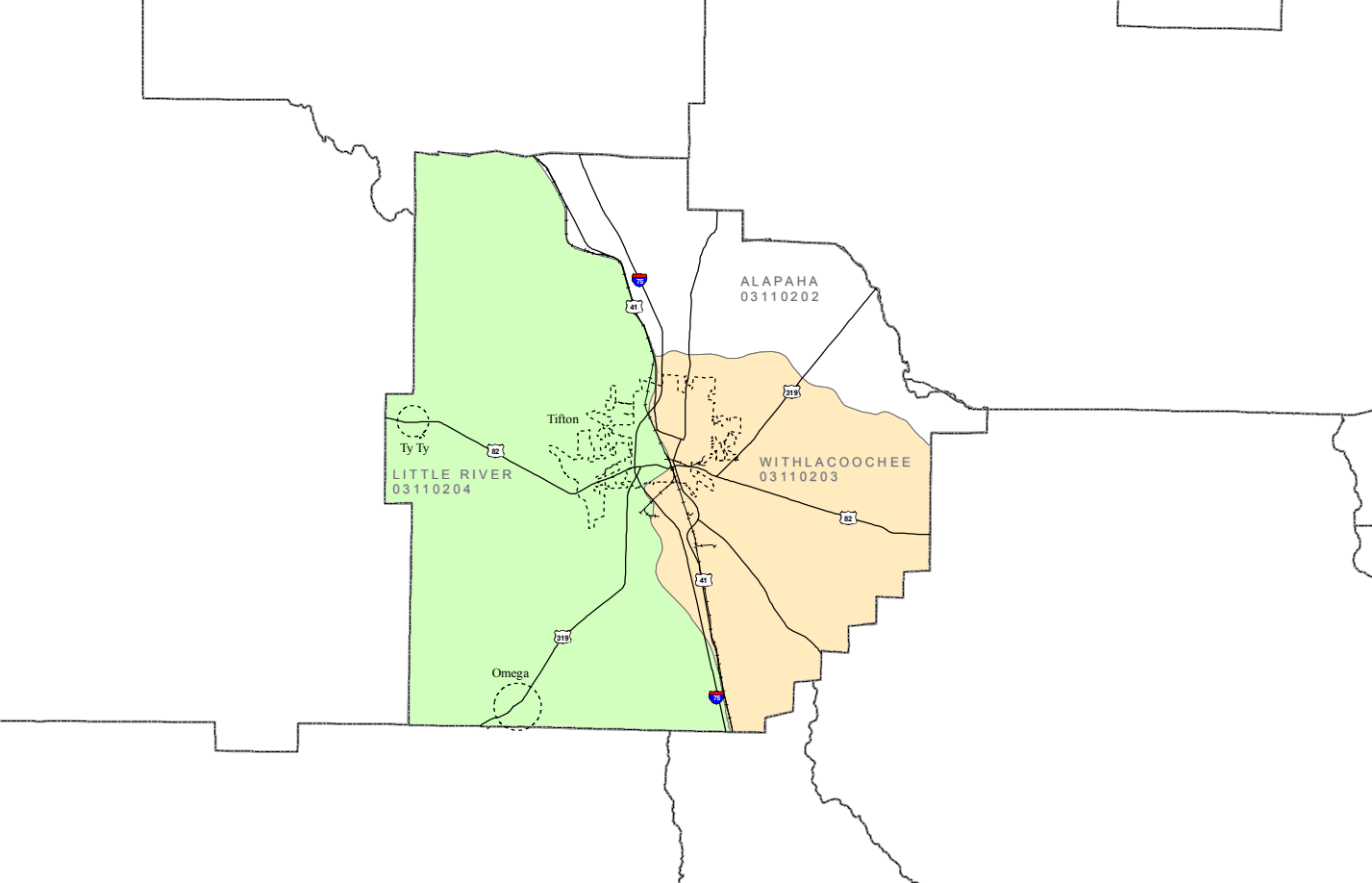
Legend

- ▲ Churches - Historic
- Roads
- State Roads
- + Railroad
- ▭ City Limits

Source: GNIS Data
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007



**MAP D-20 TIFTON AREA
 HISTORIC CHURCHES**



ALAPAHA
03110202

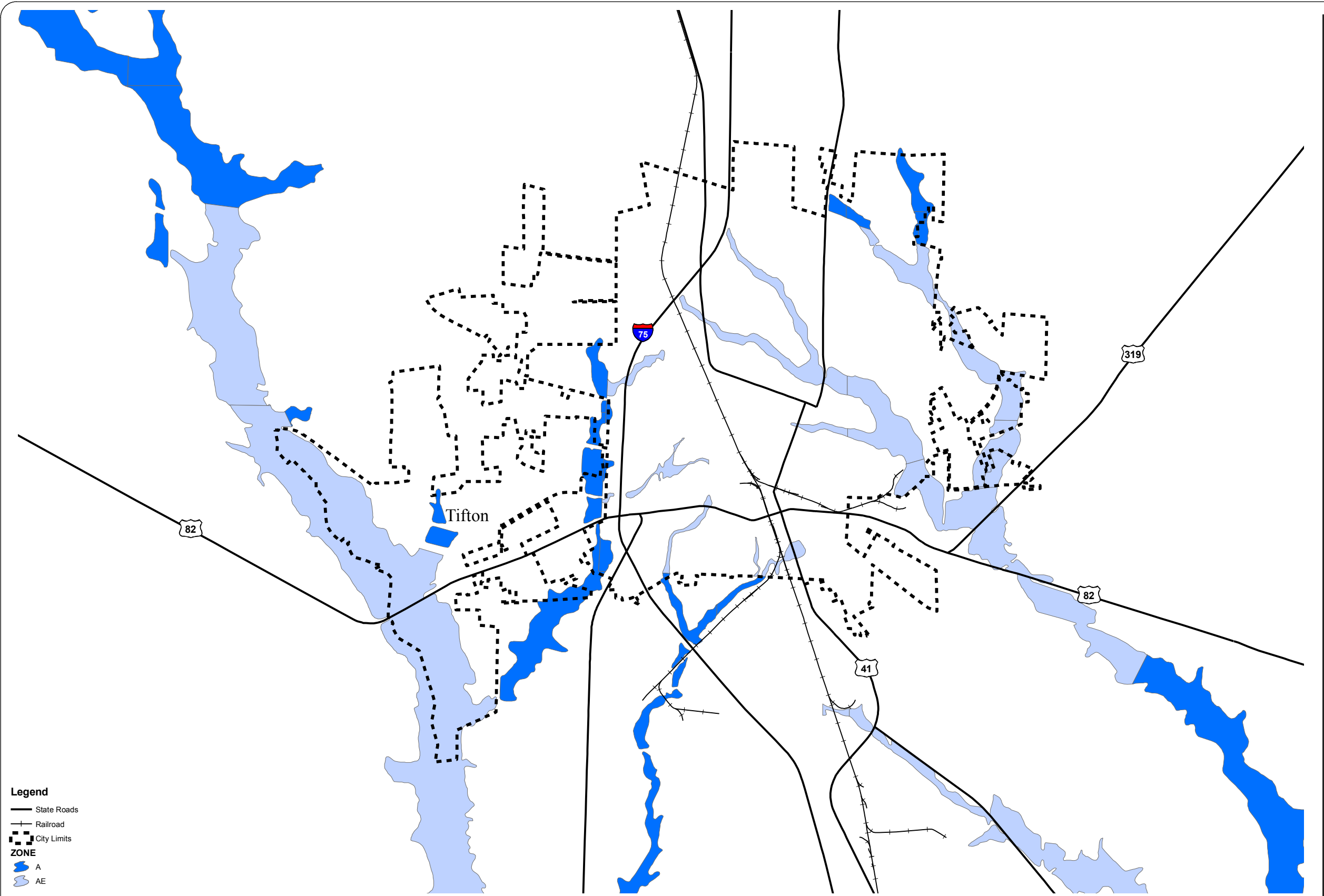
LITTLE RIVER
03110204

WITHLACOOCHEE
03110203

Tifton

Ty Ty

Omega



Legend

- State Roads
- +— Railroad
- - - City Limits
- ZONE**
- A
- AE

Zone A - Areas with a 1% annual chance of flooding and a 26% chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage. Because detailed analyses are not performed for such areas; no depths or base flood elevations are shown within these zones.

Zone AE - Areas with a 1% annual chance of flooding and a 26% chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage. In most instances, base flood elevations derived from detailed analyses are shown at selected intervals within these zones (on official FIRM maps).

Source: USGS, 2007
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007

0 0.35 0.7 Miles

**MAP D-5 CITY OF TIFTON
 FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAP**




Legend

 Wetlands

Source: Wetlands - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007



0 1 2 Miles



MAP D-7 GREATER TIFT COUNTY GENERALIZED WETLANDS



Legend

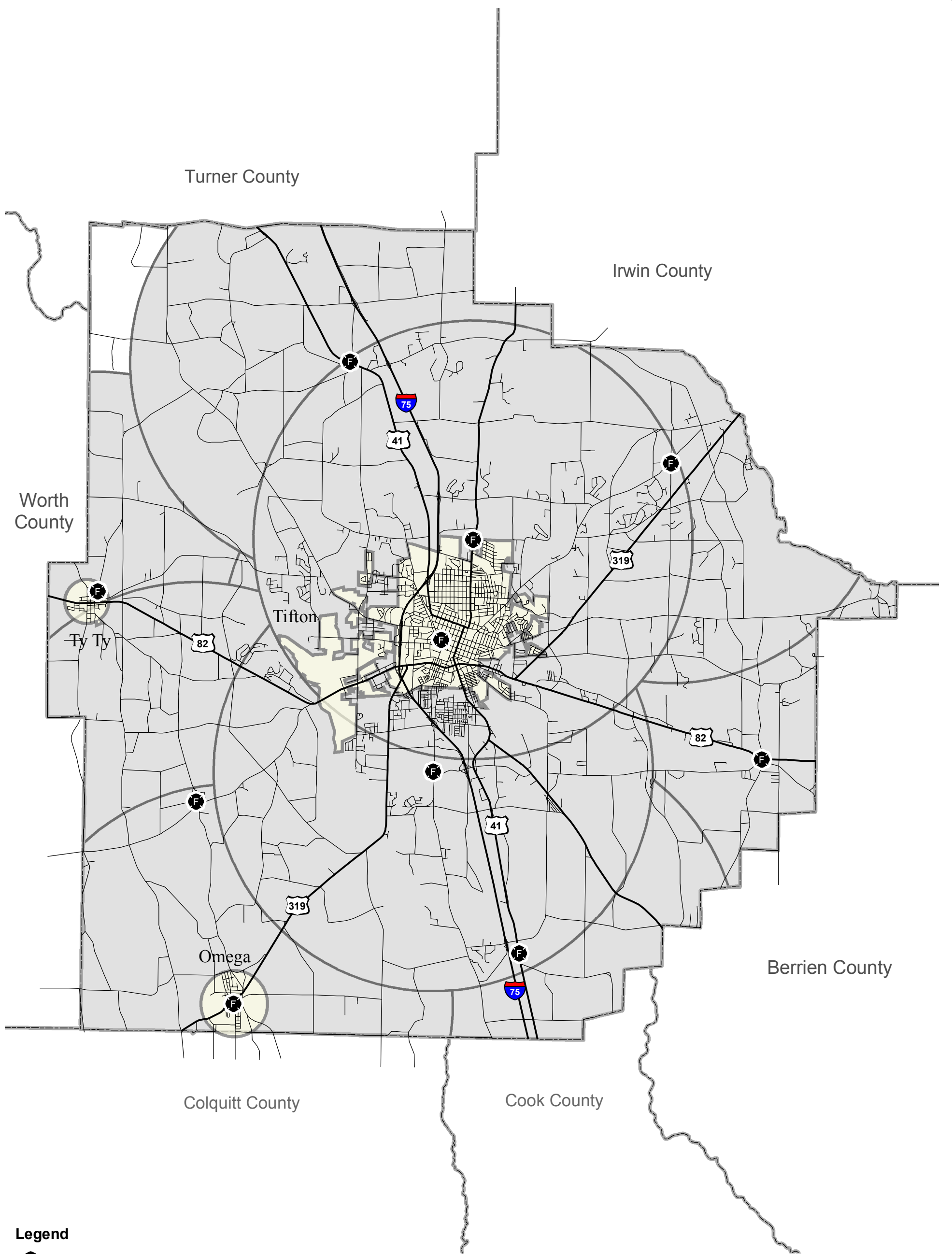
* Hazardous Sites

Source: GA EPD, 2004
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007





0 1 2 Miles

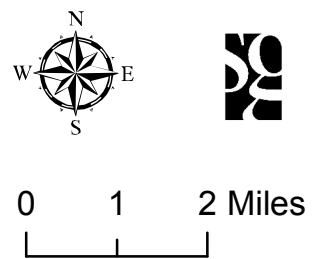
**MAP E-1 TIFT COUNTY
 HAZARDOUS SITES**



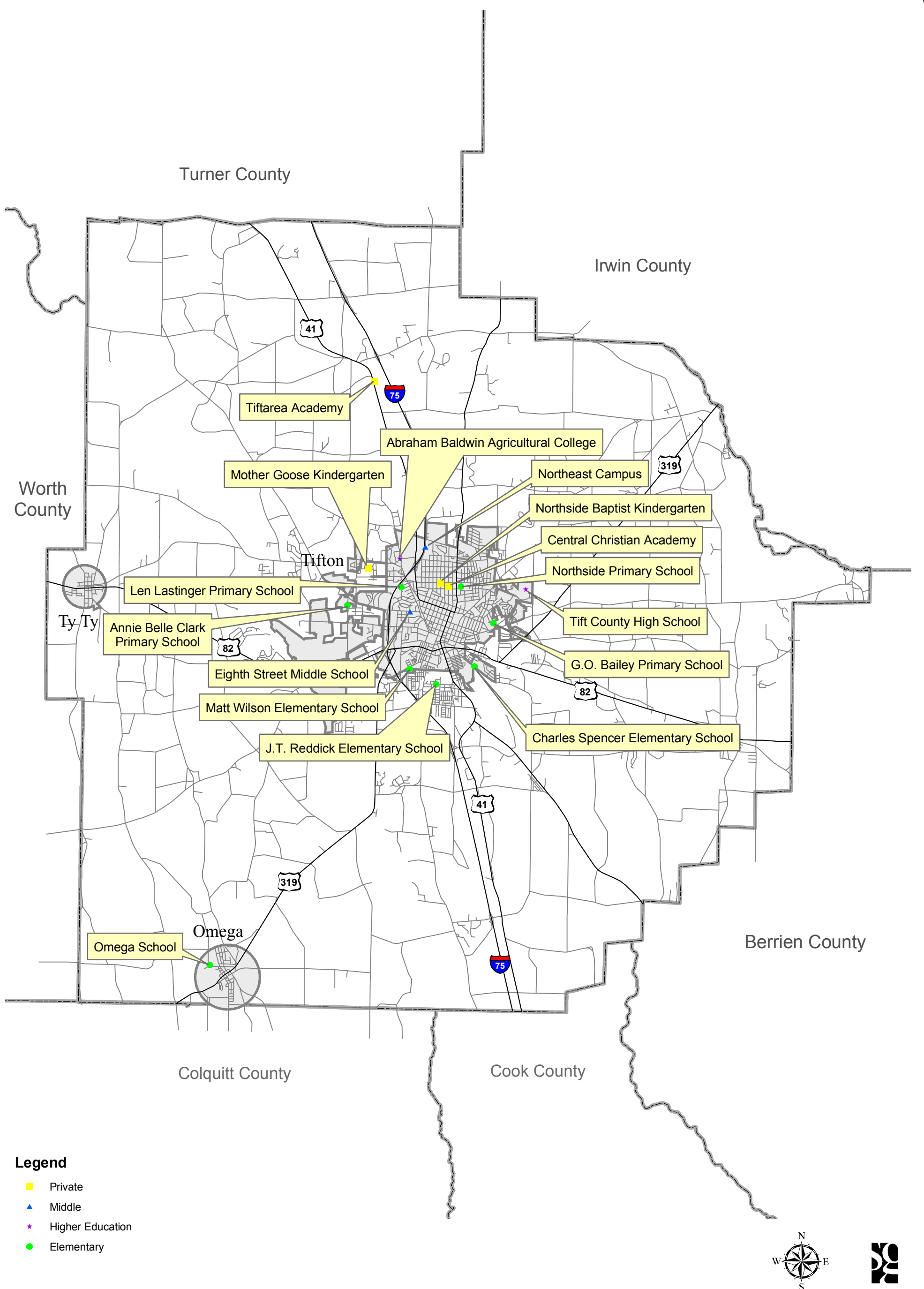
Legend

-  Fire Stations
-  5 Mile Service Area Radius

Source: Tift County Fire Departments, 2007
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007

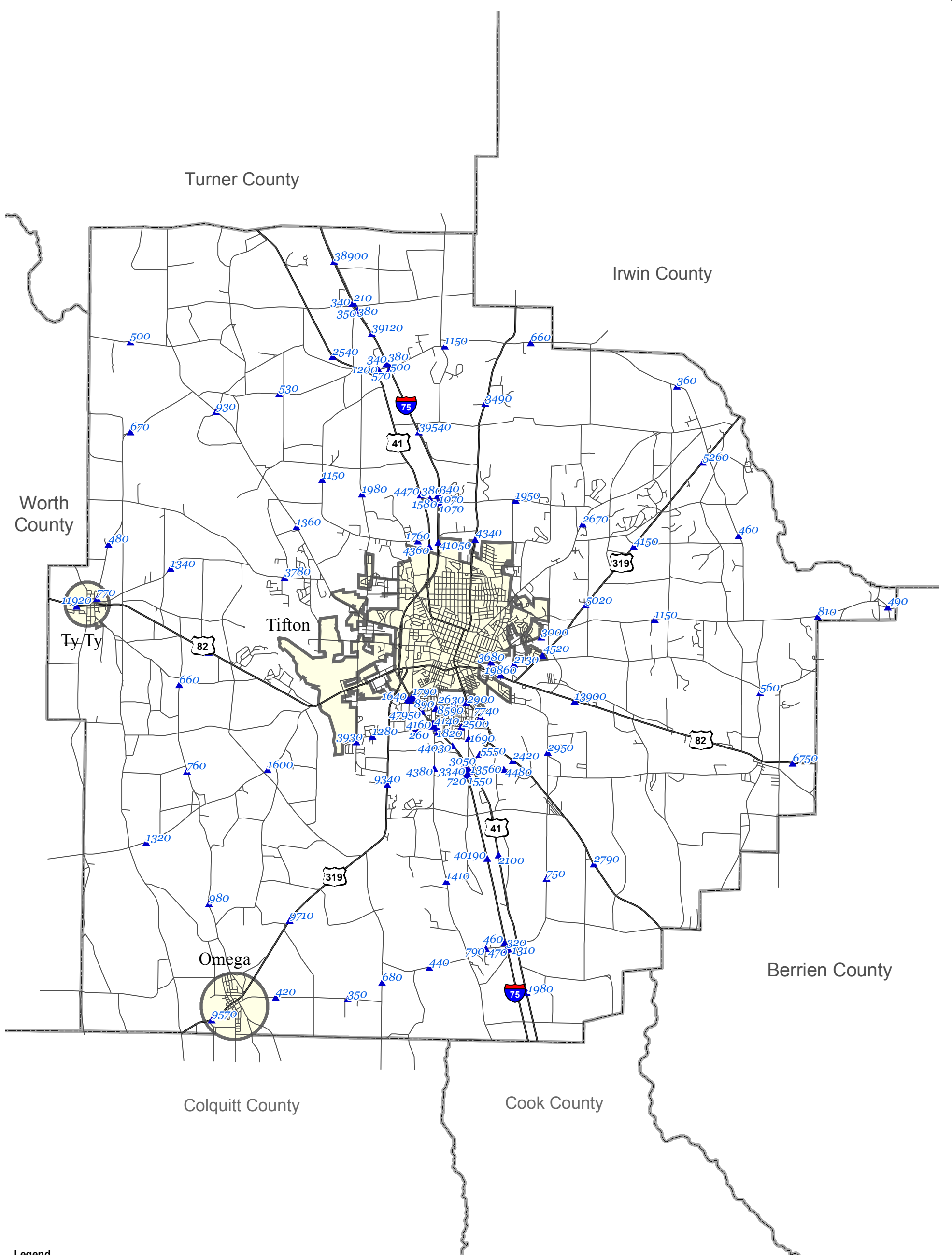


MAP E-2 TIFT COUNTY 5-MILE FIRE SERVICE AREAS



Source: Tift County Board of Education, 2007
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007

MAP E-3 GREATER TIFT COUNTY EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

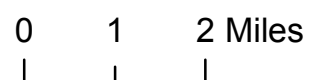


Legend

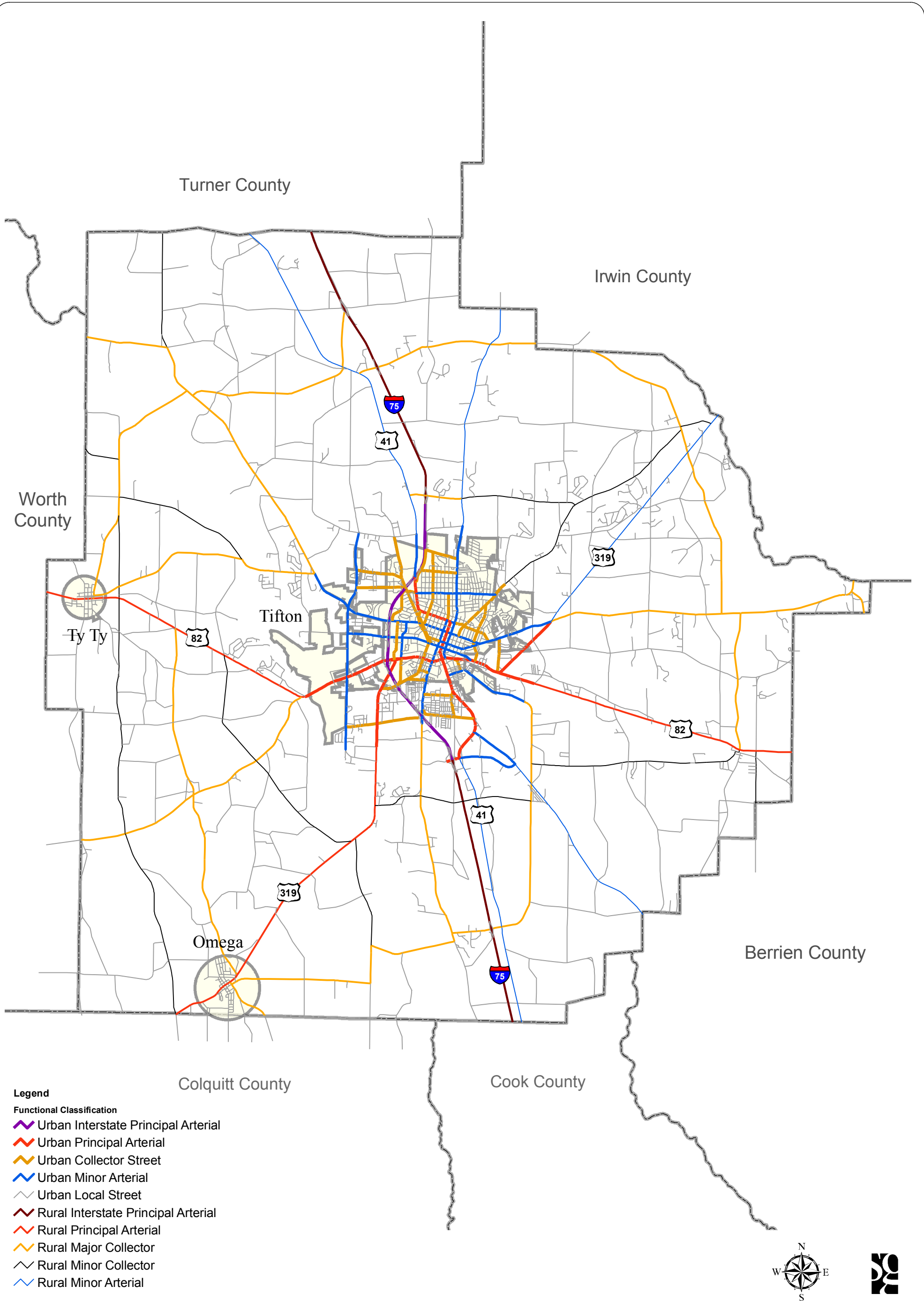
- ▲ GDOT Traffic Stations
- ∩ Our Roads
- City Limits

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation, 2006
Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts

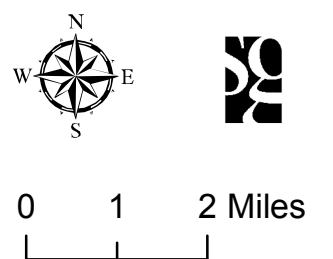
Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
© SGRDC, 2007



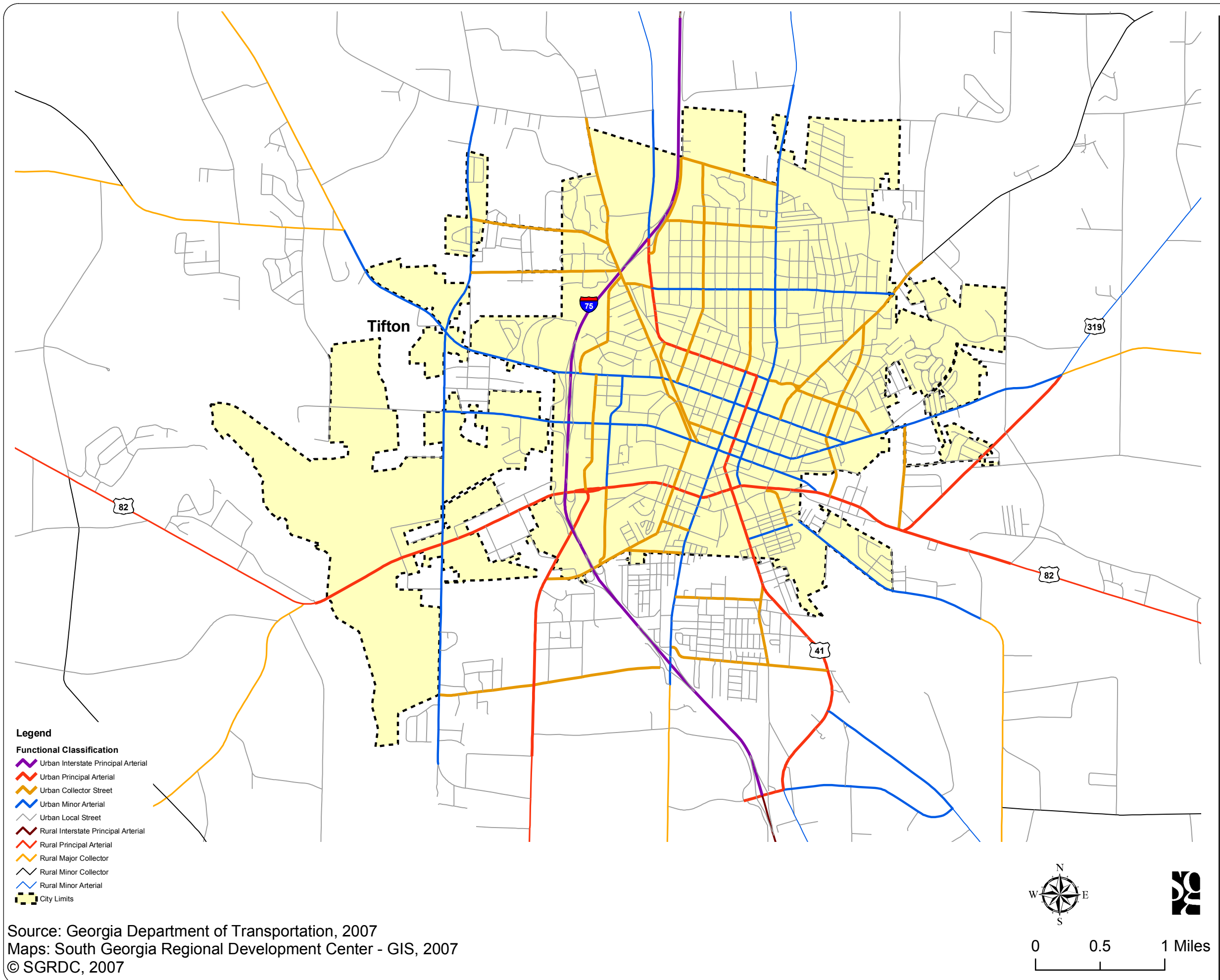
MAP G-1 TIFT COUNTY D.O.T. TRAFFIC COUNTS



Source: Georgia Department of Transportation, 2007
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007

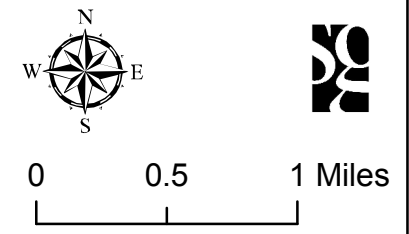


MAP G-2 TIFT COUNTY ROAD CLASSIFICATION



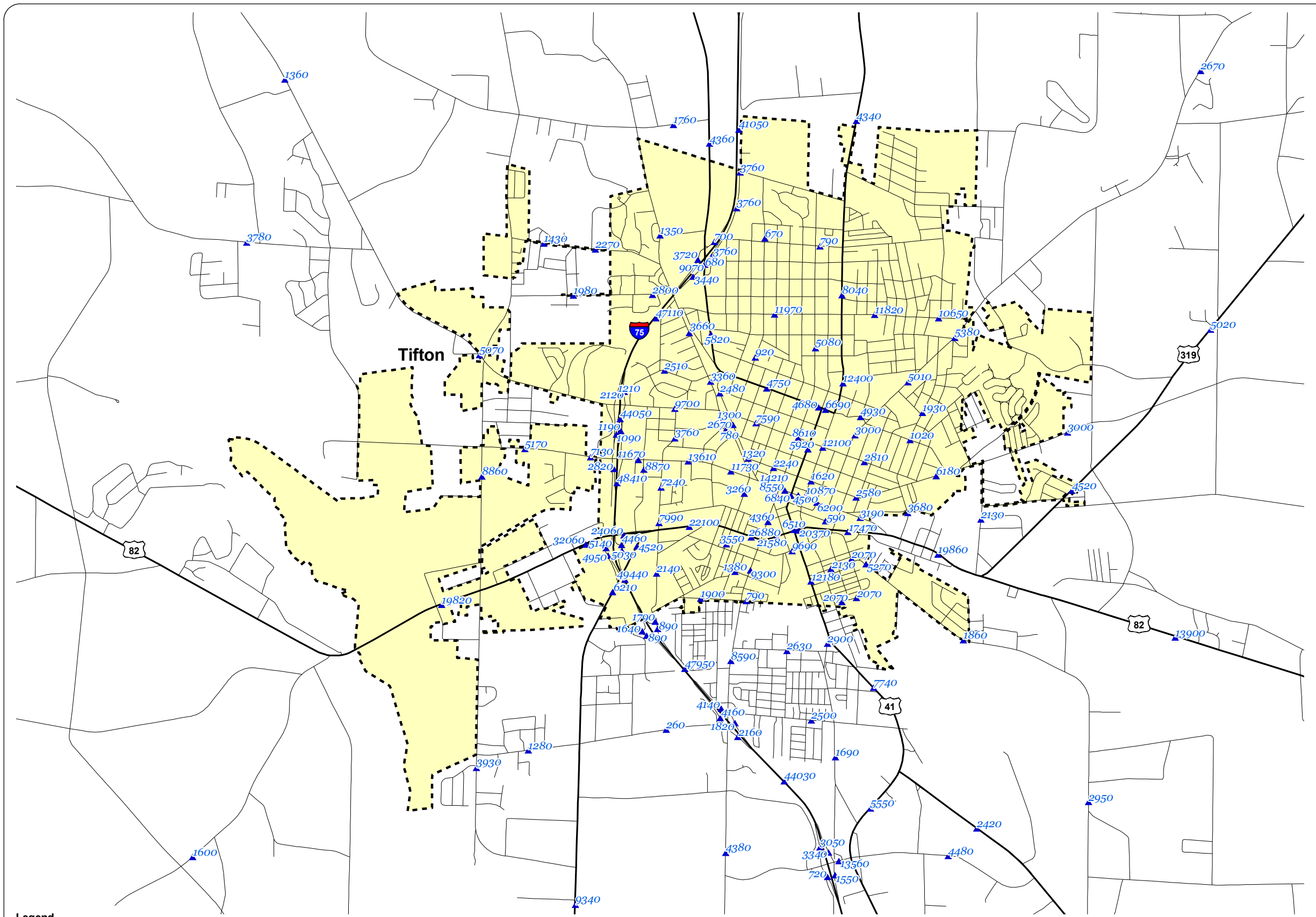
- Legend**
- Functional Classification**
- Urban Interstate Principal Arterial
 - Urban Principal Arterial
 - Urban Collector Street
 - Urban Minor Arterial
 - Urban Local Street
 - Rural Interstate Principal Arterial
 - Rural Principal Arterial
 - Rural Major Collector
 - Rural Minor Collector
 - Rural Minor Arterial
 - City Limits

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation, 2007
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007



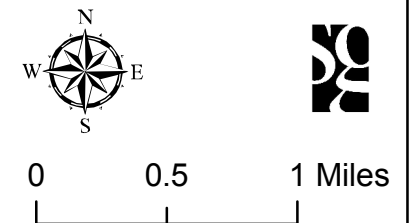
**MAP G-3 CITY OF TIFTON
 ROAD CLASSIFICATION**

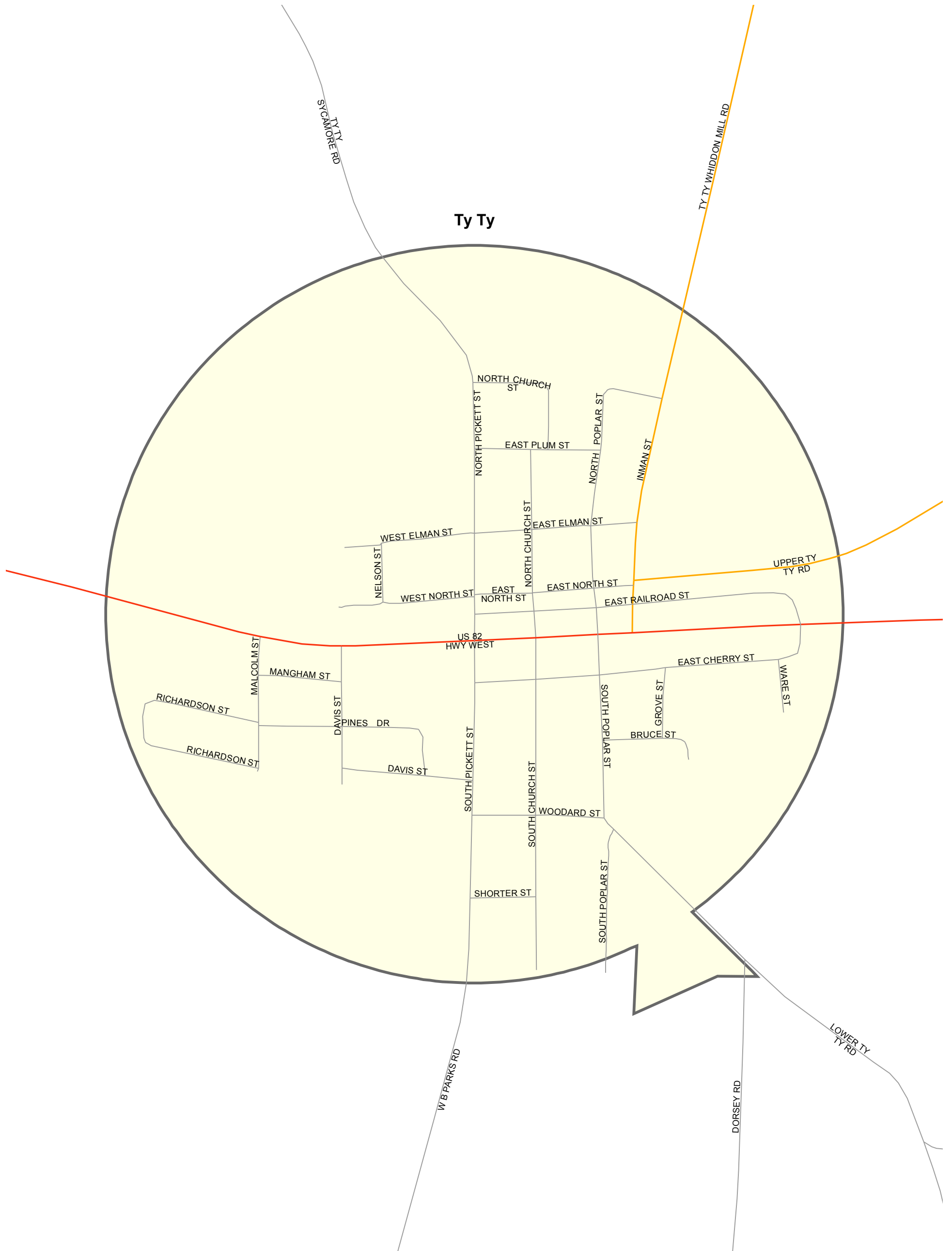
MAP G-4 CITY OF TIFTON D.O.T. TRAFFIC COUNTS



- Legend**
- ▲ GDOT Traffic Stations
 - Roads
 - City Limits

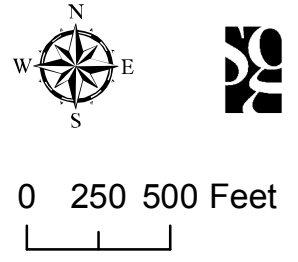
Source: Georgia Department of Transportation, 2006
Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts
Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
© SGRDC, 2007





Legend
Functional Classification
 Urban Local Street
 Rural Principal Arterial
 Rural Major Collector

Source: Tift County Tax Parcels, 2007
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007

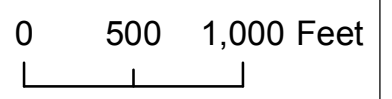


MAP G-5 CITY OF TY TY ROAD CLASSIFICATION

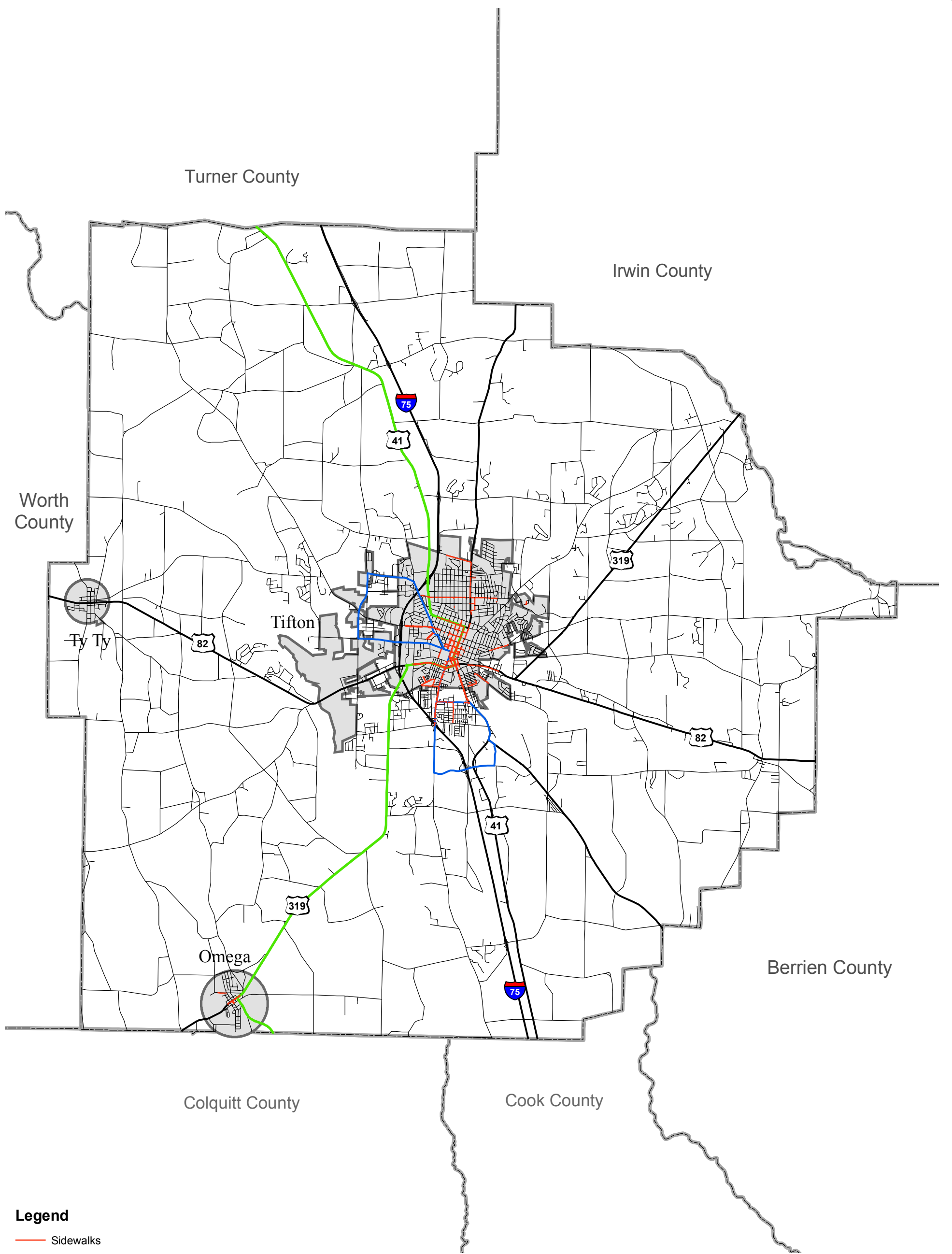


- Legend**
- Functional Classification**
- Urban Local Street
 - Rural Principal Arterial
 - Rural Major Collector

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation, 2007
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007



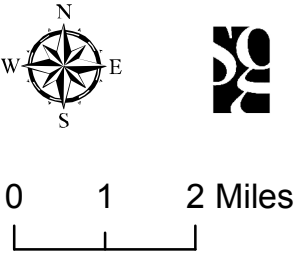
MAP G-6 CITY OF OMEGA ROAD CLASSIFICATION



Legend

- Sidewalks
- State Bike Rt 15
- Tift Co Local Bike Rt

Source: GDOT, Tifton
 Maps: South Georgia Regional Development Center - GIS, 2007
 © SGRDC, 2007



MAP G-8 TIFT COUNTY BICYCLE / PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES