

# **THE TOOMBS COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

## **COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

December, 2008

# **The Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan**

## **Community Assessment Executive Summary**

A Comprehensive Plan for Toombs County, the City of Lyons, the City of Santa Claus, and the  
City of Vidalia, Georgia  
in accordance with the Georgia Planning Act of 1989

Prepared By:

The Toombs County Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee

Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center

December, 2008

## Table of Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	I-1
Purpose	I-1
Format	I-1
Community Participation Program	I-3
<b>Existing Development Patterns and Land Use</b>	LU-1
Existing and Future Development	LU-1
Existing Land Use	LU-2
Areas Requiring Special Attention	LU-5
Recommended Character Areas	LU-6
<b>Analysis of Consistency with Quality Community Objectives</b>	CQ-1
<b>List of Potential Issues and Opportunities</b>	CIO-1
<b>Population</b>	P-1
<b>Economic Development</b>	ED-1
Major Findings of Economic Development Assessment	ED-1
<b>Natural and Cultural Resources</b>	NCR-1
<b>Community Facilities and Services</b>	CF-1
Transportation	CF-1
Water Supply and Treatment	CF-1
Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment	CF-2
Solid Waste	CF-2
Public Safety	CF-3
Hospital and Other Public Health Facilities	CF-4
Recreation	CF-4
General Government	CF-5
Educational Facilities	CF-5
Library and Other Cultural Facilities	CF-6

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Intergovernmental Coordination</b>	IC-1
<b>Housing</b>	H-1
<b>TABLES</b>	
LU-1 Existing Land Use Distribution, Toombs County, 2008	LU-4
<b>MAPS</b>	
LU-1 Toombs County Existing Land Use	
LU-2 City of Lyons Existing Land Use	
LU-3 City of Santa Claus Existing Land Use	
LU-4 City of Vidalia Existing Land Use	
LU-5 Toombs County Recommended Character Areas	
LU-6 City of Lyons Recommended Character Areas	
LU-7 City of Vidalia Recommended Character Areas	

# INTRODUCTION

## Purpose

*The Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan* is a comprehensive plan prepared under the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning (Local Planning Requirements) of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. It is a joint plan for Toombs County and its municipalities of Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia. The plan was designed to meet the legislation's requirements for each local government to have a plan for its future growth and development in accordance with the state standards. It is a full update of the previously joint comprehensive plan first adopted in 1992, but is basically a new plan, prepared under new standards.

As a comprehensive plan, *The Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan* is a critical self-examination of Toombs County and its municipalities in the areas of population, economic development, natural and cultural resources, community facilities and services, housing, land use, intergovernmental cooperation, and service delivery; and a path for the community's future growth and development. The plan is truly a reflection of the community's concerns and desires for the future.

## Format

The plan is organized by the two main components required by the Georgia Planning Act and the "Local Planning Requirements:" the *Community Assessment* and the *Community Agenda*. The plan does address the elements recommended for a comprehensive plan, an inventory and assessment to determine where the community was and had been, what are the current trends, and to help delineate and define issues and opportunities facing Toombs County and its municipalities. The first section of the comprehensive plan, the *Community Assessment*, provides foundation and context to decide what the community desires for its future growth and development, and how it plans to achieve its vision.

This *Community Assessment* component and its examination of the community is organized by element and the requirements of the "Local Planning Requirements." It is an objective inventory and analysis to illustrate existing conditions, issues, needs and opportunities.

It is written in executive summary format to provide an overview of major findings, to illustrate current conditions and trends, and to help frame the context of identified issues and opportunities. This Executive Summary provides a concise and easily reviewed foundation for consideration by the community and its decision-makers as they proceed to develop the comprehensive plan's second, and truly most important section, the *Community Agenda*.

The *Community Agenda* will delineate an overall community vision as well as specific policies, implementation strategies for the community and its differing character areas. It outlines the implementation program and activities which the community will utilize to achieve its vision and address identified issues and opportunities. It will specify the pathways for achieving the desired patterns of growth and development and realizing the community's vision of a better place to live, work, and recreate.

This *Community Assessment* Executive Summary includes the following:

- An analysis of existing development patterns and land use, including an identification of areas requiring special attention and recommended character areas for consideration in developing the *Community Agenda*;
- An evaluation of current community policies, activities, and development patterns for consistency with DCA's Quality Community Objectives;
- A list of potential issues and opportunities which the community may wish to address; and
- A summary of key findings by planning element which helps illustrate identified needs, issues and opportunities and provides context for the *Community Assessment*.

A separate *Community Assessment* Technical Addendum and Data Appendix provides supporting data and information uncovered in the staff level inventory and analysis. Most data tables can be found in this more detailed document. It contains more exhaustive background information similar to the detailed inventory and analysis of the old comprehensive plan. This data may be of potential interest to those wanting more specific information about the community and its jurisdictions.

## **Community Participation Program**

A Community Participation Program as required by the Local Planning Requirements to identify the scope and techniques of planned public participation of the plan (most importantly, the *Community Agenda*) is also included. The final components of the plan will include the *Community Agenda* as well as other appendices to address the Toombs County Service Delivery Strategy. The Service Delivery Strategy is being updated concurrently in accordance with Georgia Department of Community Affairs' requirements and to insure consistency and coordination.

## **EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS AND LAND USE**

### **Existing and Future Development**

Toombs County remains a rural county despite continuing economic growth especially as a retail trade center for the surrounding rural area. Its 2007 population estimate is 27,820 persons, almost 1,800 persons above its 2000 population of 26,067. Toombs County continues slow but steady growth, having increased population size by about 2,000 persons in the 1990s despite economic setbacks as most of its apparel manufacturing jobs were lost. The county has continued to be successful in economic diversification, and continues to exhibit progressive leadership.

Despite this continued growth, Toombs County remains a county with a landscape dominated by agricultural and forestry uses (over 77 percent of total land area), as is shown by the existing land use maps. Toombs County grew rapidly after its establishment in 1905 in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, because of local leadership and railroad development, when population grew from 11,206 in 1910 to 17,165 in 1930. The Great Depression and then World War II took a toll on the county, but it began to grow again in the 1960s because of the Vidalia Onion, economic diversification and development of the Plant Hatch Nuclear Plant in neighboring Appling County. Growth has been relatively steady since 1970. Toombs County continues to be an important agricultural/forestry producer because of the Vidalia Sweet Onion and vegetable production as well as timber production and pine straw.

Most current growth is concentrated in the Greater Vidalia/Lyons Area in and mostly south and west of Vidalia, and between Vidalia and Lyons. There is some growth east and south of Lyons in rural Toombs County. Commercial growth is concentrated in Vidalia along U.S. 280 East, and between U.S. 280 and Georgia 292 between Vidalia and Lyons. Industrial growth is concentrated in/near Vidalia near the Airport, and north of Lyons in the U.S. 1 corridor north to



I-16. Residential growth has been scattered across the county, but has been particularly concentrated south and west of Vidalia/Lyons between Center Road and Georgia 130. There has also been some growth north of Vidalia near the Vidalia Country Club and east to Lyons.

Growth momentum in Toombs County can trace its life to its location along U.S. 280 and U.S. 1; its proximity to I-16; ongoing economic and job growth; the availability of services and infrastructure; its current position as a rural retail trade/service center; its existing population and size; quality of life; and ample land availability for all uses. These same factors will continue to spur future growth particularly because of I-16; the existing economic opportunities, services, and diversity; the availability of infrastructure; the Vidalia Regional Airport; Meadows Regional Medical Center and other quality medical services; Southeastern Technical College; the abundant natural resources and the Altamaha River; the community's vibrant downtowns and available cultural resources; and the overall excellent quality of life. Future growth will likely continue to concentrate in the Greater Vidalia/Lyons Area, and along the U.S. 1 North corridor, as it has recently.

## **Existing Land Use**

The existing land use patterns of Toombs County and its municipalities were examined by the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) staff in 2008 by analyzing previous land use studies, tax maps, and other available sources. A generalized land use map digitized as a layer to an existing digital base map meeting DCA requirements resulted. Standard land use classifications identified in the "Local Planning Requirements" were utilized as categories, except that "agriculture" and "forestry" were separated because of the dominance of these uses within Toombs County. The descriptions of these land use classifications are defined and detailed in the Technical Addendum and Data Appendix.

The generalized land use maps were provided to the local governments for review and correction. The local governments utilized local knowledge by a number of staff and elected officials to note corrections to the initial GIS maps. RDC GIS staff then revised the digital information. The

resulting existing land use maps are shown on Map LU-1 for Toombs County; Map LU-2 for the City of Lyons; Map LU-3 for the City of Santa Claus; and Map LU-4 for the City of Vidalia.

The GIS system is also able to determine acreages for the various land use classifications in each jurisdiction. Table LU-1 provides the existing land use acreages for Toombs County as a whole and for its unincorporated and incorporated areas. Land use acreages for each of the county's municipalities can be found in the Technical Addendum and Data Appendix. Combined, agriculture and forestry land uses account for about 77 percent of the land area of the county, with forestry accounting for over half (51 percent) of all land use by itself. Despite the growth and development within the county, its rural, undeveloped and green forested landscape is evident through these land use statistics. Less than seven percent of all county lands lie in the county's municipalities. Only two land use categories, residential and transportation/communications/utilities account for more than one percent of urban land uses within the unincorporated area. Commercial and industrial uses are almost totally concentrated within the county's municipalities, principally Vidalia. Even within municipalities, almost one-sixth (16 percent) of incorporated land use is agricultural.

**TABLE LU-1**  
**Existing Land Use Distribution, 2008**  
**(Acres)**  
**Toombs County**

<u>Land Use Category</u>	<b>Total County</b>	<b>% of Total County</b>	<b>Unincorporated County</b>	<b>% of Unincorporated County</b>	<b>Incorporated County</b>	<b>% of Incorporated County</b>
<b>Agriculture</b>	60,416	25.62	57,892	26.36	2,524	15.60
<b>Forestry</b>	120,864	51.25	120,793	54.99	71	0.44
<b>Residential</b>	42,135	17.87	34,159	15.55	7,976	49.28
<b>Commercial</b>	1,399	0.59	20	0.01	1,379	8.52
<b>Industrial</b>	2,366	1.00	1	0.00	2,365	14.61
<b>Public/Institutional</b>	593	0.25	172	0.08	421	2.60
<b>Park/Recreation/ Conservation</b>	3,662	1.55	3,541	1.61	121	0.75
<b>Transportation/ Communications/Utilities</b>	4,401	1.87	3,074	1.40	1,327	8.20
<b>Total</b>	235,836	100.00	219,652	100.00	16,184	100.00

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100.0 because of rounding. These are only estimates, and are not 100 percent accurate because of data assumptions (see text) and computer system peculiarities.

Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC Geographic Information System, 2008.

## **Areas Requiring Special Attention**

The evaluation of the existing land use patterns and trends within Toombs County and its municipalities resulted in the following identification and analysis of areas requiring special attention in accordance with state guidelines.

### **Areas of significant natural or cultural resources, particularly where these are likely to be intruded upon or otherwise impacted by development**

Altamaha and Ochoopee Rivers  
Lyons and Vidalia Downtowns  
Regional Reservoir Area (Toombs/Montgomery/Treutlen Merge Area – Pendleton Creek)

### **Areas where rapid development or change of land uses is likely to occur**

I-16/U.S. 1 North Corridor  
U.S. 280 in Vidalia and to Lyons  
Georgia Highway 292 between Vidalia and Lyons  
Residential growth east and south of Vidalia and Lyons

### **Areas where the pace of development has and/or may outpace the availability of community facilities and services, including transportation**

U.S. 1 North Corridor, especially sewer and rail  
Vidalia Airport area sewer  
Between Vidalia and Lyons sewer  
Ezra Taylor Road  
Rocky Creek Area along Georgia Highway 130  
Sewer north of Lyons along Georgia 152 and east of Lyons along Georgia 292

### **Areas in need of redevelopment and/or significant improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness (including strip commercial corridors)**

Georgia Highway 292 East in Lyons  
U.S. 280 East Entrance into County and into Lyons

Georgia Highway 292 West in Vidalia from McIntosh Street to city limits  
 Georgia Highway 297 North in Vidalia past the Middle School

**Large abandoned structures or sites, including those that may be environmentally contaminated**

Warehouse in Lyons along U.S. 1 across from Partin Park  
 Old Brick Tobacco Warehouse along U.S. 280 West in Vidalia  
 Old Pennington Seed Building along U.S. 280 East in Vidalia  
 Old Federal Pacific Building along Georgia 292 in Vidalia  
 Possibly old Meadows Memorial Hospital, when abandoned  
 Piggly-Wiggly Store, when abandoned  
 Old Piggly-Wiggly Distribution Center (non-DOT Foods part)  
 Old Fred's Store in Vidalia

**Areas with significant infill development opportunities (scattered vacant sites)**

Behind Pineland Paper East of U.S. 1 in Lyons  
 Abandoned recreation area along Bay Street in Vidalia

**Areas of significant disinvestment, levels of poverty, and/or unemployment substantially higher than average levels for the community as a whole.**

Vidalia

Grand Street  
 East MLK Street  
 North 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Lyons

Mimosa Drive  
 Columbia Street

## Recommended Character Areas

The preliminarily identified and recommended character areas (and subareas) include the following parts of the county and its municipalities because of special areas of concern, their uniqueness, as well as differing expectations of, and stimuli for, growth and development. They are listed below by jurisdiction. Each municipality is considered a separate character area on its own, although Santa Claus does not have a subarea. The cities of Vidalia and Lyons both have a significant number of recommended character areas/subareas. The Greater Vidalia/Lyons

Character Area is the principal growth area of the county and encompasses all of the community's municipalities. Future growth and development should be focused here because of infrastructure investment and help to protect quality of life and rural character. All of the recommended character areas have unique or special characteristics which need to be preserved or enhanced, or will require special attention and guidance. Special visions for these areas under the umbrella of the overall community vision, as well as appropriate implementation policies and strategies, will be developed as part of the *Community Agenda* for those formally selected.

The recommended character areas are also depicted graphically on maps to better delineate the specific geographic areas which are recommended for special attention. These maps include Map LU-5 for Toombs County; Map LU-6 for the City of Lyons; and Map LU-7 for the City of Vidalia. The Technical Addendum and Data Appendix has more discussion on these recommended character areas.

### **Toombs County**

- Conservation/Natural Resources
  - Altamaha River Corridor
  - Ochoopee River Corridor
  - Pendleton Creek

- Greater Vidalia/Lyons

- U.S. 1 Gateway Industrial Corridor

- Rural Village Centers
  - Cedar Crossing
  - Johnson Corner
  - Normantown

- Rural Toombs

### **Lyons**

- Historic Downtown
- Downtown Commercial
- U.S. 280/GA 292 West Commercial Corridor
- Georgia 292 East Commercial Corridor
- U.S. 1 North Gateway Corridor
- U.S. 1 South Gateway Corridor

U.S. 1 Gateway Industrial Corridor  
Toombs Corporate Center at U.S. 1  
Educational Complexes Area  
Northeast Neighborhood Redevelopment Area  
Southeast Neighborhood Redevelopment Area  
Lyons Urban  
Greater Vidalia/Lyons

**Santa Claus**

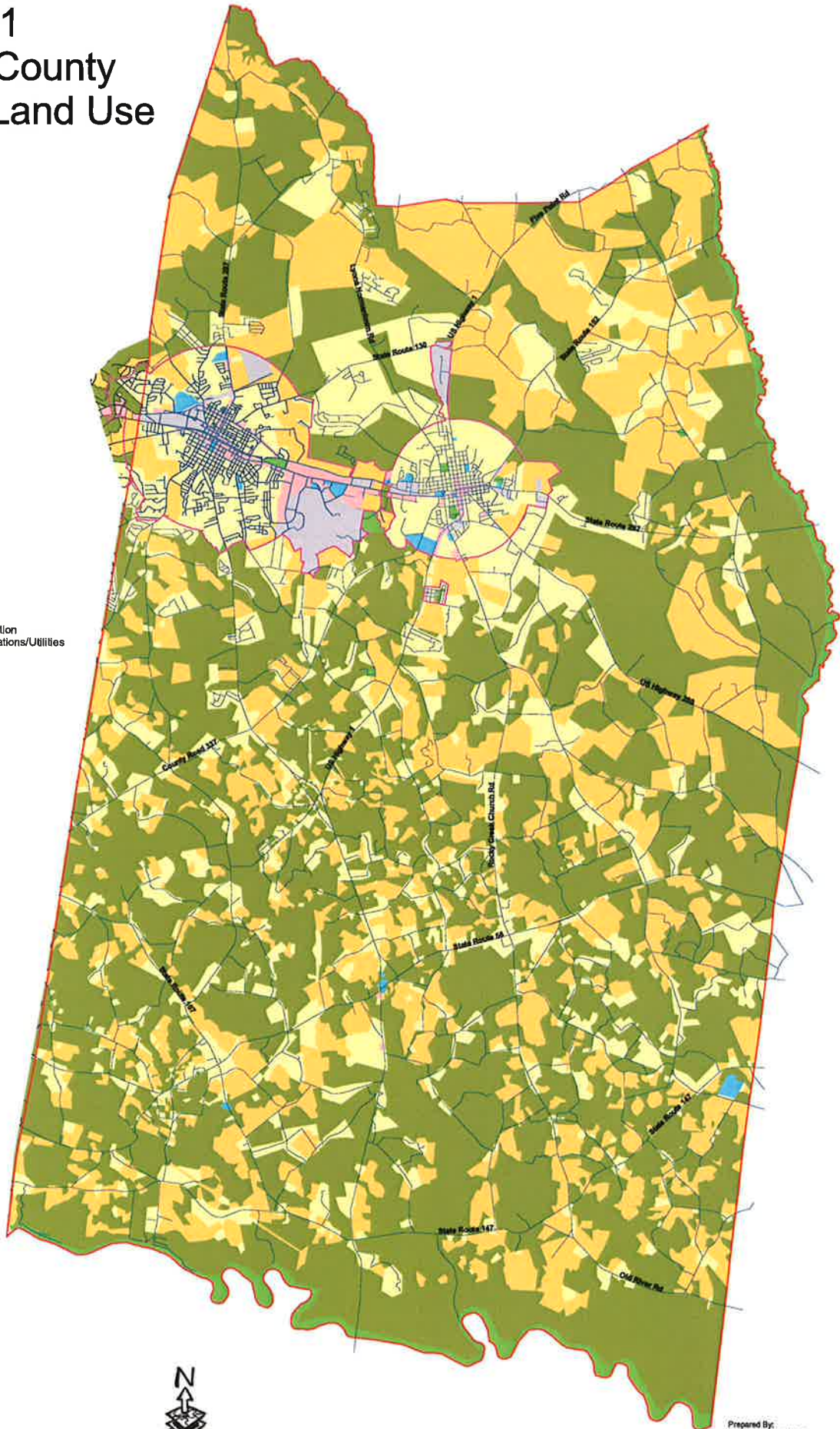
Santa Claus Proper  
Greater Vidalia/Lyons

**Vidalia**

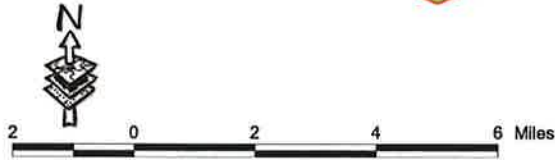
Historic Downtown  
Downtown Commercial East  
Downtown Commercial West  
U.S. 280/Georgia 292 East Growth Area  
Airport Industrial  
Meadows Medical Complex Area  
U.S. 280 West Gateway Corridor  
Georgia 292 Gateway Corridor  
Georgia 297 Gateway Corridor  
Georgia 15 Gateway Corridor  
South Vidalia Historic Residential Area  
Northside Redevelopment Area  
Third Street Redevelopment Area  
Vidalia Urban  
Greater Vidalia/Lyons

# MAP LU-1 Toombs County Existing Land Use

- Vidalia City Limits
- Santa Claus City Limits
- Lyons City Limits
- Roads
- County Boundary
- Land Use
- Forestry
- Agriculture
- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Park/Recreation/Conservation
- Transportation/Communications/Utilities
- Public/Institutional



Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008

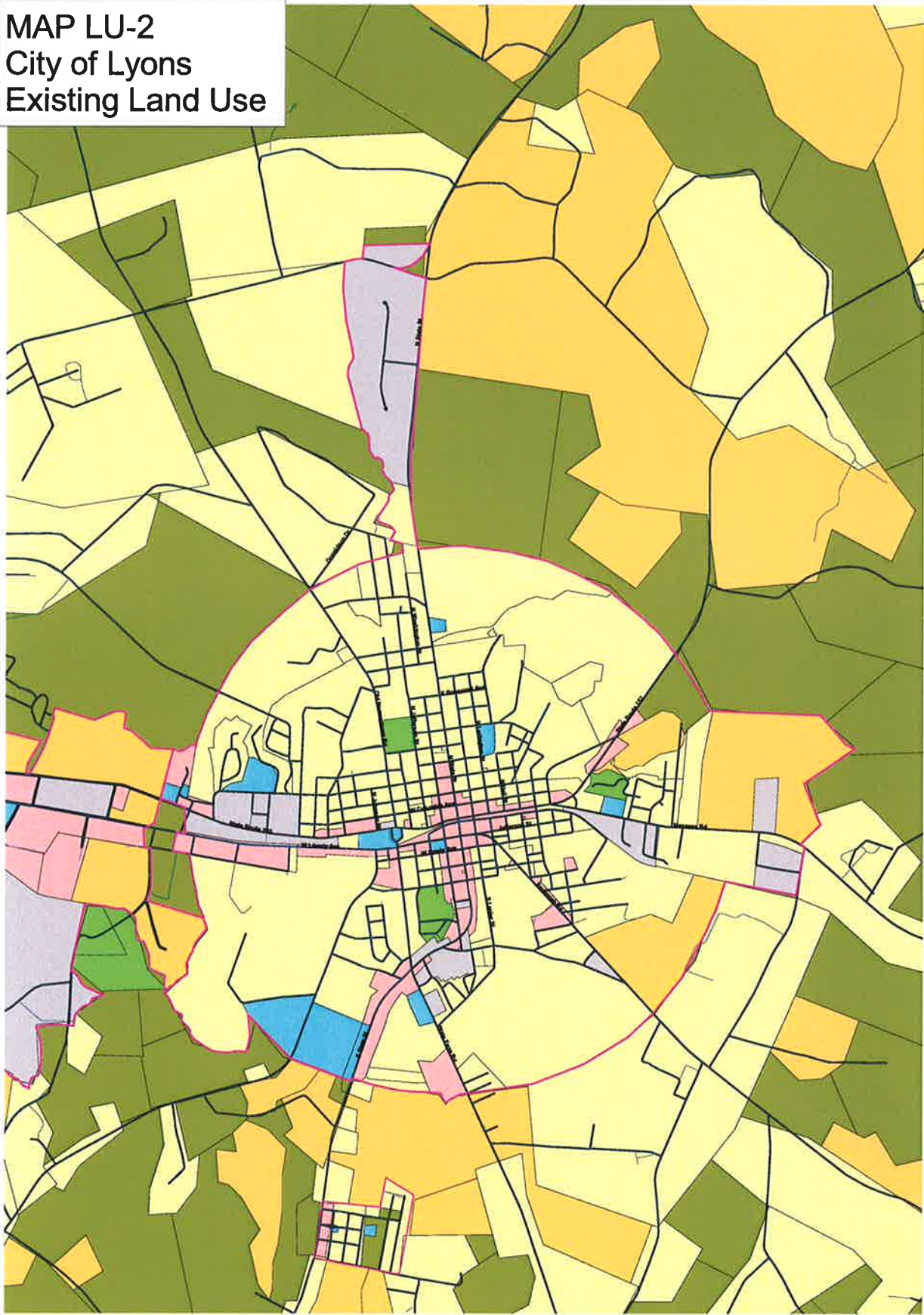


Prepared By:  
Scott Jackson, GIS Planner  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC  
5405 Oak Street  
Eastman, Georgia 31023  
(478)374-4771  
Source: Y:2004/ToombsLU08.apr  
Printed: OCT. 2, 2008





**MAP LU-2**  
**City of Lyons**  
**Existing Land Use**



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="border: 1px solid pink; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Vidalia City Limits</li> <li><span style="border: 1px solid red; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Santa Claus City Limits</li> <li><span style="border: 1px solid pink; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Lyons City Limits</li> <li><span style="border: 1px solid red; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> County Boundary</li> <li><span style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Roads</li> </ul> | <p><b>Land Use</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #90EE90; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Forestry</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #FFD700; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Agriculture</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #FFFFE0; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Residential</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #FFC0CB; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Commercial</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #FFB6C1; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Industrial</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #90EE90; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Park/Recreation/Conservation</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #ADD8E6; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Transportation/Communications/Utilities</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #4682B4; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Public/Institutional</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

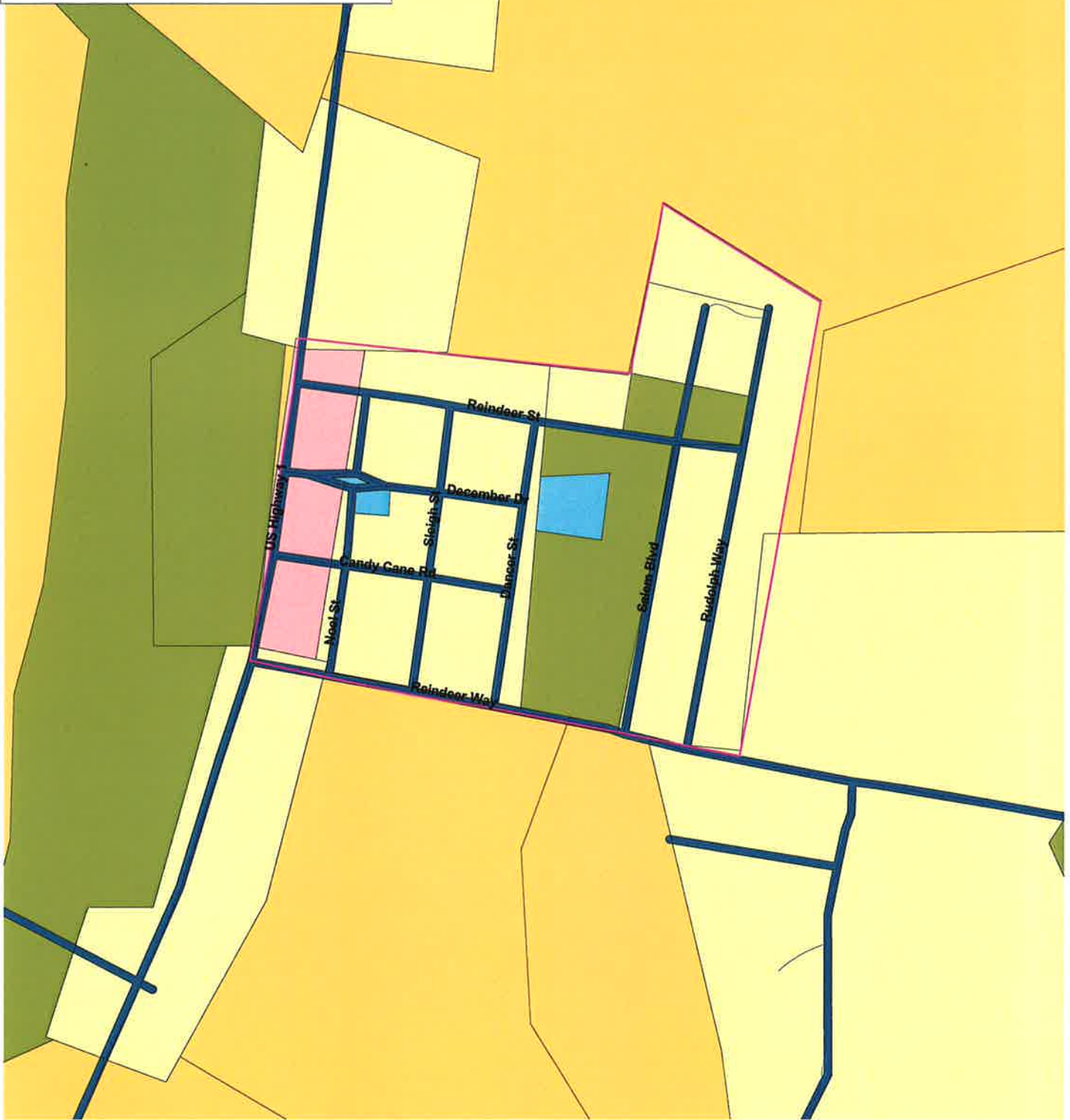


2000 0 2000 4000 Feet

Prepared By:  
 Scott Jackson, GIS Planner  
 Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC  
 5405 Oak Street  
 Eastman, Georgia 31023  
 (478)374-4171  
 Source: Y2004/Toombs/LU08.apr  
 Printed: OCT. 2, 2008



# MAP LU-3 City of Santa Claus Existing Land Use



- Santa Claus City Limits
- County Boundary
- Roads
- Land Use**
- Forestry
- Agriculture
- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Park/Recreation/Conservation
- Transportation/Communications/Utilities
- Public/Institutional



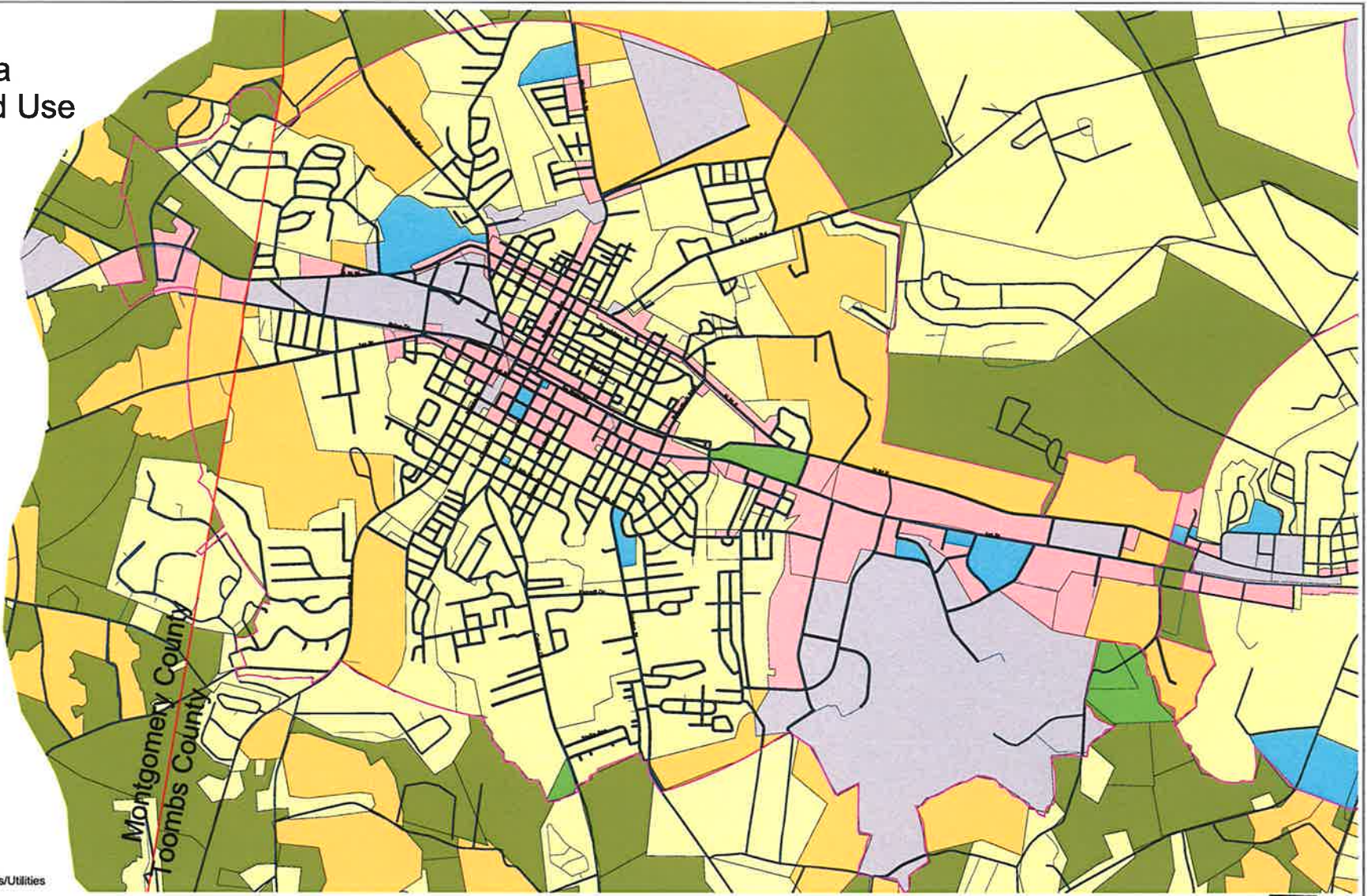
600 0 600 Feet

Prepared By:  
Scott Jackson, GIS Planner  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC  
5405 Oak Street  
Eastman, Georgia 31023  
(478)374-4771  
Source: Y:2004/Toombs/LU08.apr  
Printed: OCT. 2, 2008



# MAP LU-4 City of Vidalia Existing Land Use

-  Roads
-  Vidalia City Limits
-  Lyons City Limits
-  County Boundary
- Land Use
-  Forestry
-  Agriculture
-  Residential
-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Park/Recreation/Conservation
-  Transportation/Communications/Utilities
-  Public/Institutional



Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008

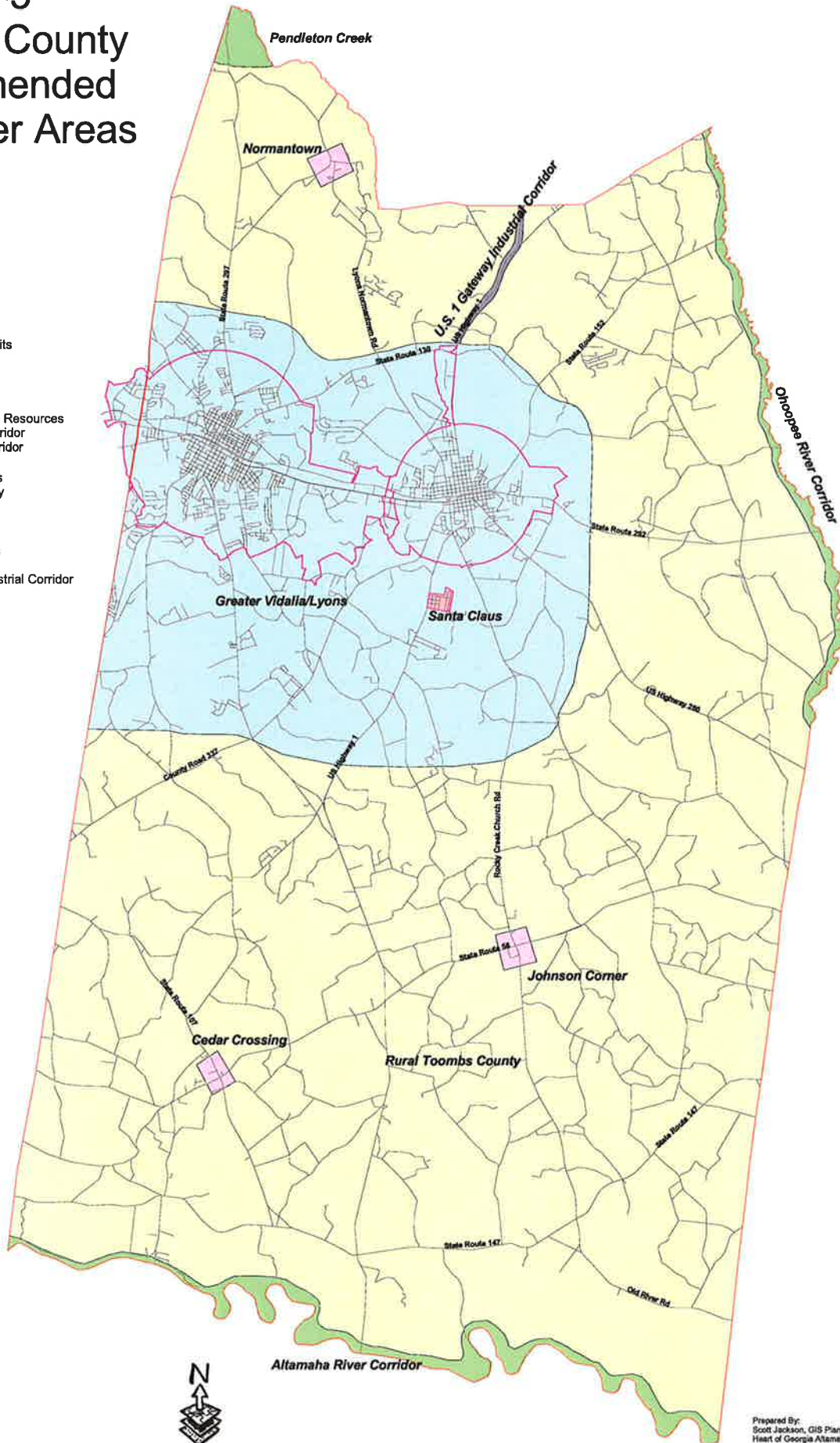


Prepared By:  
Scott Jackson, GIS Planner  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC  
5405 Oak Street  
Eastman, Georgia 31023  
(478) 374-4771  
Source: Y:2004/Toombs/LU08.apr  
Printed: OCT. 2, 2008

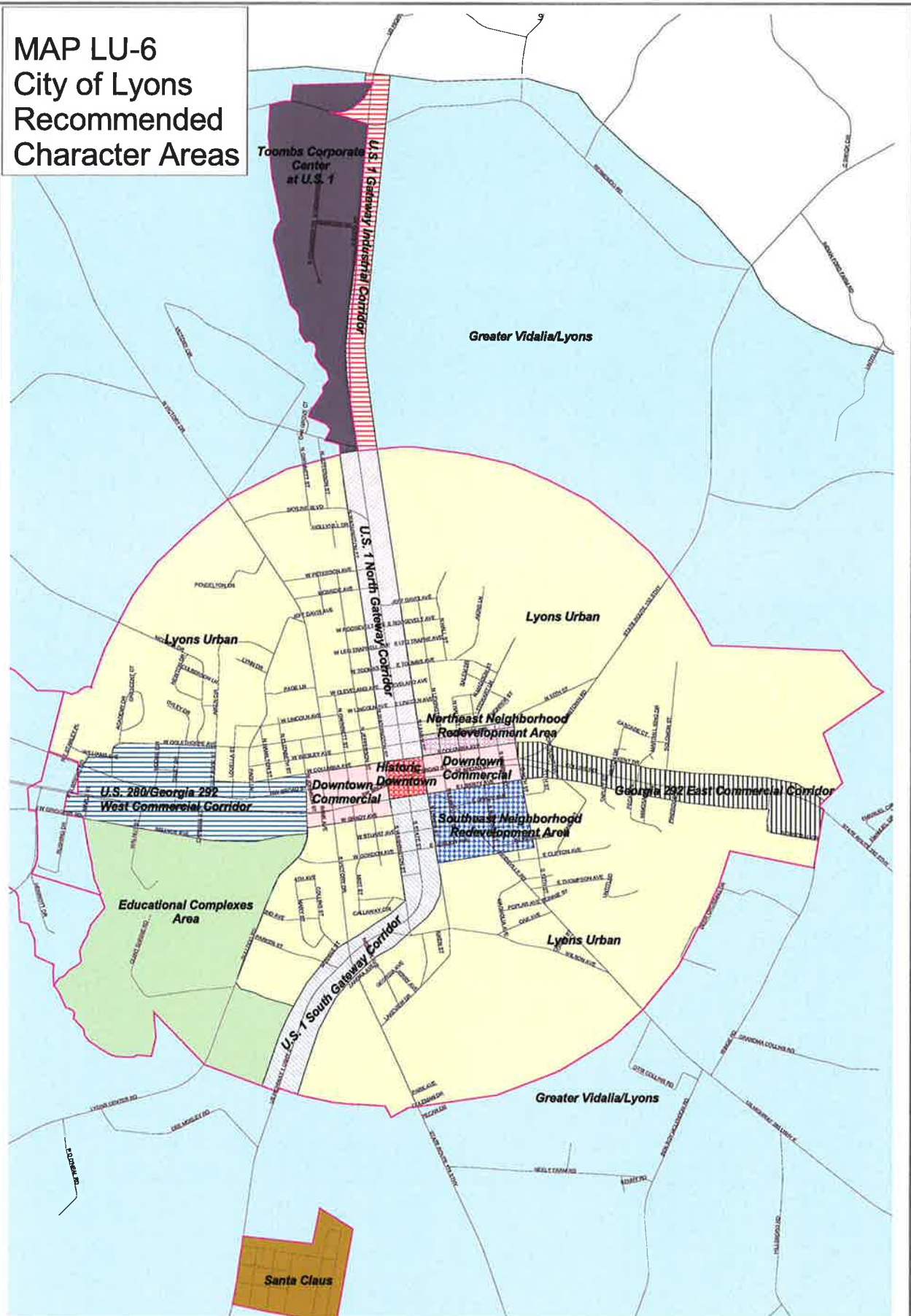


# MAP LU-5 Toombs County Recommended Character Areas

- Vidalia City Limits
- Santa Claus City Limits
- Lyons City Limits
- County Boundary
- Roads
- Character Areas**
- Conservation/Natural Resources
  - Altamaha River Corridor
  - Ochopee River Corridor
  - Pendleton Creek
- Greater Vidalia/Lyons
- Rural Toombs County
  - Cedar Crossing
  - Johnson Corner
  - Normantown
- Rural Village Centers
- Santa Claus
- U.S. 1 Gateway Industrial Corridor



# MAP LU-6 City of Lyons Recommended Character Areas



**Lyons Character Areas**

Vidalia City Limits	Educational Complexes Area	Santa Claus
Santa Claus City Limits	Georgia 292 East Commercial Corridor	Southeast Neighborhood Redevelopment Area
Lyons City Limits	Greater Vidalia/Lyons	Toombs Corporate Center at U.S. 1
Roads	Historic Downtown	U.S. 1 Gateway Industrial Corridor
	Lyons Urban	U.S. 1 North Gateway Corridor
	Northeast Neighborhood Redevelopment Area	U.S. 1 South Gateway Corridor
		U.S. 280/Georgia 292 West Commercial Corridor

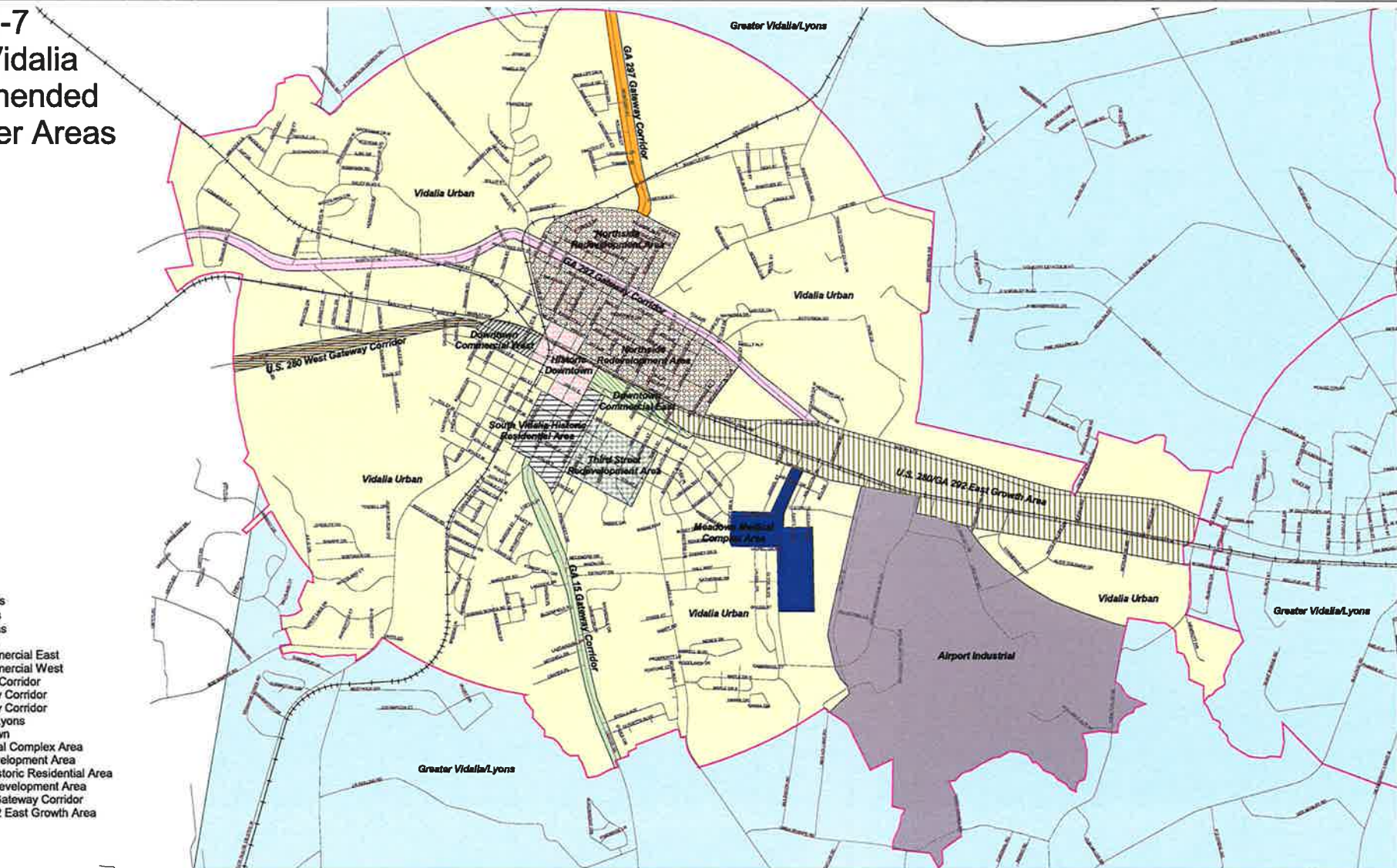
Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008

2000 0 2000 4000 Feet

Prepared By:  
Scott Jackson, GIS Planner  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC  
5405 Oak Street  
Eastman, Georgia 31023  
(478)374-4771  
Source: Y2004/Toomba/LU06.sor  
Printed: JAN. 12, 2009

# MAP LU-7 City of Vidalia Recommended Character Areas

-  Roads
-  Rail Road
-  Vidalia City Limits
-  Lyons City Limits
- Vidalia Character Areas**
-  Airport Industrial
-  Downtown Commercial East
-  Downtown Commercial West
-  GA 15 Gateway Corridor
-  GA 292 Gateway Corridor
-  GA 297 Gateway Corridor
-  Greater Vidalia/Lyons
-  Historic Downtown
-  Meadows Medical Complex Area
-  Northside Redevelopment Area
-  South Vidalia Historic Residential Area
-  Third Street Redevelopment Area
-  U.S. 280 West Gateway Corridor
-  U.S. 280/GA 292 East Growth Area
-  Vidalia Urban



Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008



Prepared By:  
Scott Jackson, GIS Planner  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC  
5405 Oak Street  
Eastman, Georgia 31023  
(478)374-4771  
Source: Y:\2004\Toombs\LU08.apr  
Printed: JAN. 12, 2009



## **ANALYSIS OF CONSISTENCY WITH QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES**

The Quality Community Objectives are guidance mechanisms to champion sound, smart growth established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for the preparation and implementation of local comprehensive plans. The fifteen objectives are elaborations of the identified statewide planning goals of DCA for each of the planning elements.

An evaluation of policies, activities, and development patterns currently in place by the governments of Toombs County for consistency with the state planning goals and quality community objectives finds general support and consistency, particularly with the Statewide Planning Goals. Variations of all the statewide goals are espoused in the currently adopted comprehensive plan, and this is expected to continue to be the case in this new comprehensive plan update which is currently being prepared.

As to the Quality Community Objectives, the 15 objectives of Regional Identity, Growth Preparedness, Appropriate Business, Educational Opportunities, Employment Options, Heritage Preservation, Open Space Preservation, Environmental Protection, Regional Cooperation, Transportation Alternatives, Regional Solutions, Housing Opportunities, Traditional Neighborhood, Infill Development, and Sense of Place are also professed, practiced, and supported to an extent in the Toombs Community by its local governments, and particularly by the City of Vidalia. However, this support is not to the level and detail defined in DCA's Quality Community Objectives Local Assessment survey tool. Its adherence to quality growth as envisioned by the tool is severely compromised by the lack of comprehensive land use regulation by Toombs County and Santa Claus, and the rather basic land use regulation of Vidalia and Lyons. This prevents detailed consistency with many of the survey tool's questions/statements beneath the overall objective. Vidalia and Lyons zoning ordinances remain traditional ordinances separating uses by design with no special overlays for environmental or other areas.

The Statewide Planning Goals and Quality Community Objectives are therefore generally supported by Toombs County and its municipalities' policies, activities, and development patterns, but not exactly in the manner and detail espoused by the Local Assessment. The abundant existing open space in the county, provided by the large percentage of agricultural and forest lands, has helped continuance of an attractive landscape and quality of life despite the lack of comprehensive land use regulation. The lack of comprehensive land use regulation is the greatest threat and conflict to continued, future quality growth in the county.



## **LIST OF POTENTIAL COMMUNITY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Economic Development**

- Education level/job skills improvement
- New Regional Charter School
- High drop-out rate
- Jobs for local college graduates
- Attraction of new economic development
- Regional Entrepreneur Friendly Community
- Georgia Ready for Accelerated Development
- Certified Industrial Park
- Vidalia Regional Airport
- Airport related economic development
- Recruit additional retail businesses
- Recruiting green businesses
- Local, regional, and state cooperation
- Marketing of agriculture uses, including value-added agribusiness
- Exporting of agribusiness
- Regional Tourism promotion/development
- Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Explore marketing strategies for the Vidalia Onion and agri-related export
- Business and industry retention, expansion, growth
- Local Revolving Loan Funds (2)
- Regional Trade Center
- Retail trade market erosion
- Downtown revitalization
- Lyons Better Hometown
- Vidalia Main Street
- Vacant shopping center space
- Active Regional Chamber/Development Authority
- Southeastern Technical College and expansion
- New Meadows Regional Hospital
- High unemployment rate
- Marketing strategy/materials repackaging
- Support/enhance agriculture/agribusiness, including exporting
- Marketing of location/Savannah Port related business
- Work Ready Community Certification
- Signature Community status

### **Natural and Cultural Resources**

- Natural resources conservation/protection
- Promote National Register of Historic Places, listed structures
- Encourage ongoing historic downtown revitalization
- Altamaha/Ohoopee rivers
- Valuable agricultural lands and timberlands
- Public education/awareness
- County-wide planning/land use regulation
- Regional reservoir

### **Housing**

- Diversity of housing mix
- Need for starter homes
- Utilization of state/federal programs
- Need for additional affordable housing
- Need for subdivision/manufactured housing ordinances and code enforcement
- Ample land availability
- Housing rehabilitation

### **Land Use**

- Need for coordinated land use/subdivision/mobile home regulation and code enforcement
- Improved beautification/aesthetics
- Preserve land used for agriculture/forestry
- Transportation facilities improvement
- Infrastructure expansion to guide growth
- Development of industry and rail services
- Develop solid waste management services and facilities

### **Community Facilities and Services**

- Enhance services/provide capacity for regional center growth
- Upgrade water/sewer facilities
- Developmental highways/four-lane connectors
- “State of the art” landfill
- More county road/city street improvements
- Vidalia Regional Airport
- City of Vidalia Railroad
- Railroad expansion to Emanuel County
- Georgia Central Railway
- Norfolk Southern Railroad

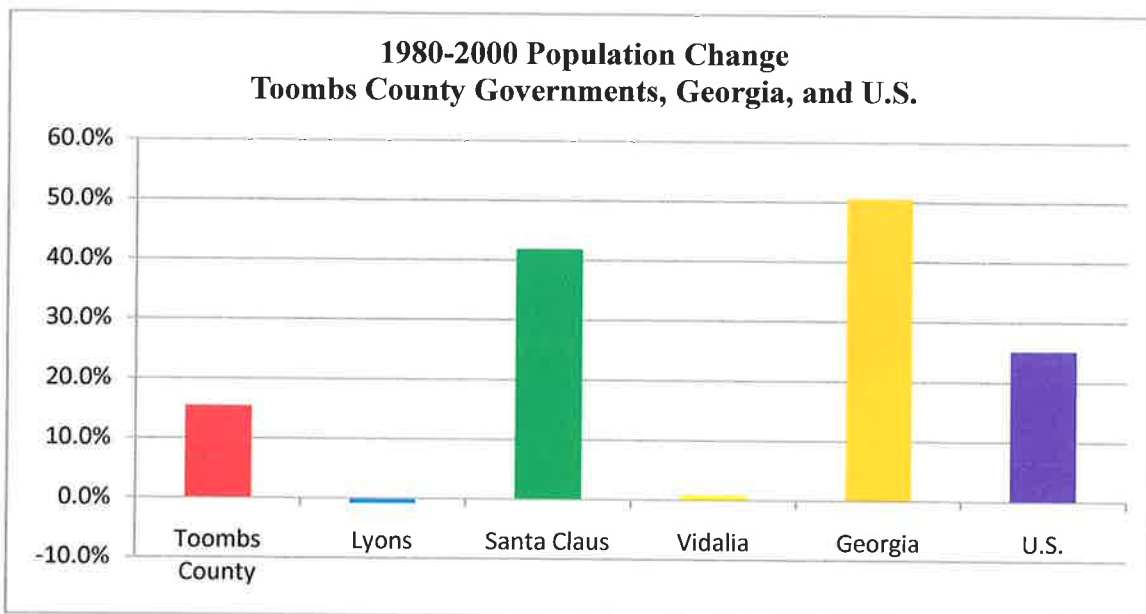
- Public safety facilities improvements/expansion
- Adequate training for public safety personnel
- Fire service enhancement/equipment maintenance/improvements
- Need for additional fire stations
- New Meadows Regional Hospital
- Health care services/equipment improvement
- Stanley Health Clinic in Lyons
- Improved recreational facilities/parks
- Enhanced governmental services/facilities
- Education facilities/programs/services improvements
- Expand cultural opportunities
- 

**Intergovernmental Coordination**

- Local, regional, and state cooperation
- Services sharing/cooperation/consolidation/joint delivery
- Coordinated planning/growth management

## POPULATION

From 1980 to 2000, Georgia's population growth (50.6%) was twice the rate of the U.S. (25.2%) and slightly more than triple the rate of Toombs County (15.4%). The City of Santa Claus (41.9%) was the only municipality to experience overall population growth significantly greater than the county as a whole over the last two decades, although this percentage growth is somewhat skewed due to a much smaller population base than the other two municipalities. The City of Lyons (-0.8%) was the only municipality to lose population overall during the last two decades. The City of Vidalia (0.9%) experienced minimal population growth, although this was more a factor resulting from a slight decline in population during the 1990s that nearly equaled the gains made during the 1980s. Also playing an important factor is the significant subdivision growth over the last decade or so near Vidalia particularly within Montgomery County, but located just outside the city limits. As is the case with many areas currently, the vast majority of population growth is occurring in the unincorporated areas as people are leaving more urbanized areas in search of more land and open space, in addition to areas near or adjacent to significant crossroad nodes in the unincorporated area.



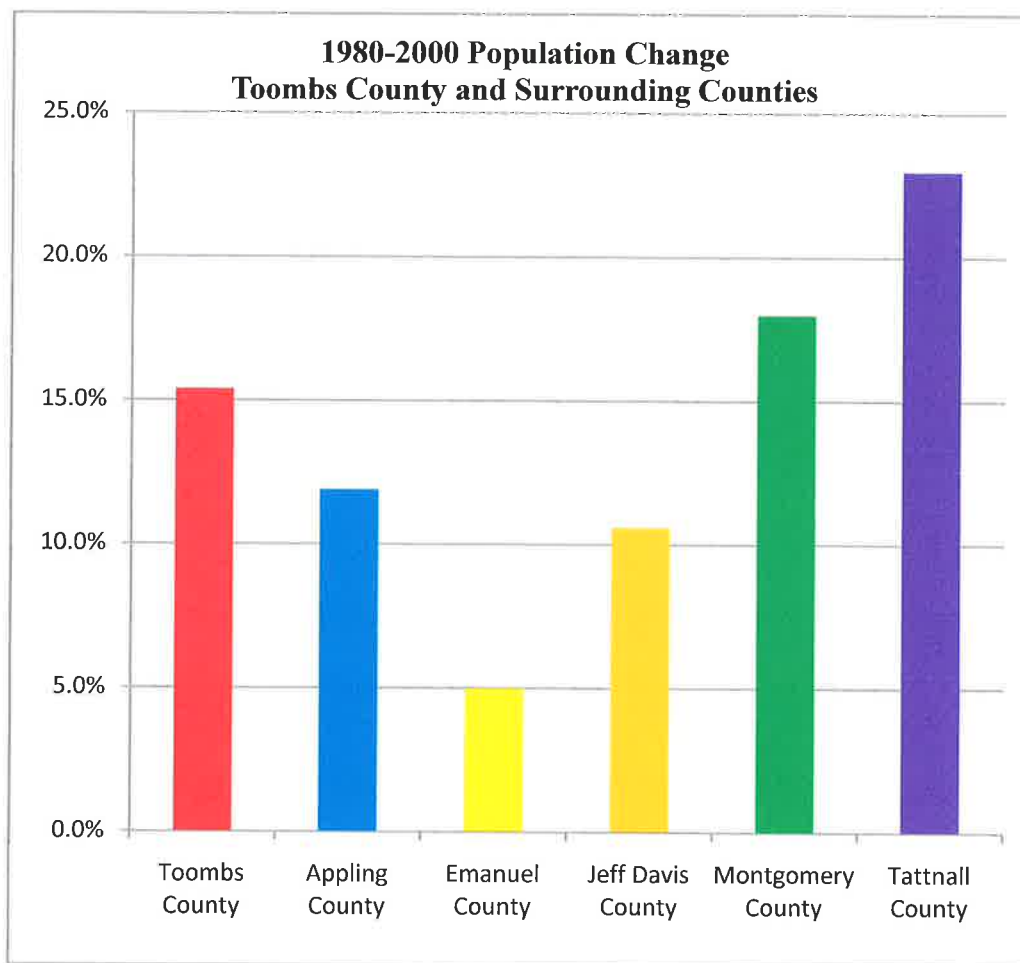
Sources: US Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1980, 1990, and 2000; [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008.

The majority of Toombs County's growth over the last two decades occurred during the 1990s (8.3%), which was about three-fourths that of the nation as a whole (13.2%) and slightly less than one-third that of Georgia (27.0%). The City of Santa Claus' growth over the last decade (53.9%, more than making up for the percentage lost during the 1980s) outpaced that of both the state and the nation. All three of the county's municipalities experienced growth in one decade only to lose population during the next decade, or vice versa. The cities of Lyons and Vidalia both experienced population growth during the 1980s, only to decline during the 1990s.

Since 2000, Toombs County's population is estimated to continue to have grown at a rate (6.7%) of less than one-half that of Georgia (16.0%) and just below that of the U.S. (7.2%). All of the county's municipalities have experienced some growth since 2000, with the largest growth having occurred in Lyons (7.5%), just surpassing the U.S. Growth in Vidalia is also estimated to have nearly tracked that of the U.S. (7.0%), while Santa Claus is only estimated to have grown somewhat less than the other municipalities (4.2%). All jurisdictions are projected to continue growth over the next two upcoming decades.

Toombs County experienced greater population growth than any of its surrounding counties, with the exception of Montgomery and Tattnall counties, affirming its place as a regional growth center. Population growth in Montgomery County (18.0%) is largely attributable to residential spillover growth from Vidalia during the 1990s, as most of the county's growth has occurred on that side of the county. Tattnall County's growth (23.0%) is mainly due to an expanding prison population at several state correctional facilities that are located there. The next closest counties to Toombs were Appling County (11.9%) and Jeff Davis County (10.6%), followed by Emanuel County (5.0%). All of these counties grew much less than the state as a whole, and only Tattnall County closely approached the national growth rate.

The projected growth for Toombs County from 2005-2030 is 25.28%, with a projected 2030 population of 33,735. 2030 population projections for the municipalities and projected growth rates from 2005-2030 are: Lyons – 5,675 (29.6%); Santa Claus – 283 (18.41%); and Vidalia – 14,013 (28.49%).



Sources: US Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1980, 1990, and 2000; [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008.

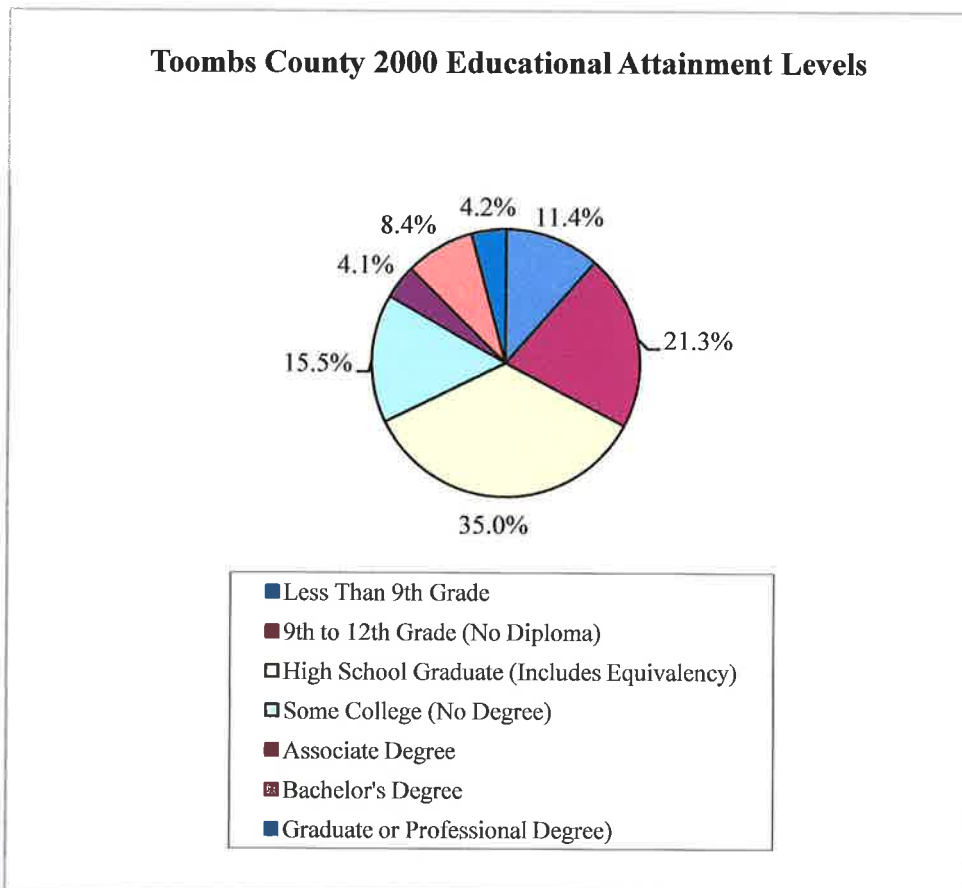
Between 1980 and 2000, the growth rate in total households for Toombs County was slightly less than one-half that of the state as a whole (28.7% vs. 60.9%) and was nearly double that of overall population growth. Santa Claus (54.9%) had the largest household percentage growth among the municipalities, again skewed somewhat due to a smaller population base, followed by Vidalia (15.1%) and Lyons (6.4%). Household growth in Santa Claus was only somewhat higher than overall population growth, while in both Lyons and Vidalia it was significantly higher. From 2000 to 2030, the state as a whole is projected to have a growth rate in total households that is somewhat lower than Toombs County (38.6% vs. 49.5%).

Those persons age 65 and older in Toombs County in 2000 (12.2%) was higher than Georgia (9.6%) and nearly equal to the U.S. as a whole (12.4%). Just over one-fifth of Toombs County's 2000 population (21.7%) is age 55 or older, compared to 17.7 percent of Georgia and

21 percent of the U.S. The county's percentage of the 2000 population that was less than 25 (37.8%) was greater than both the U.S. (35.3%) and Georgia (36.7%), while there were noticeably fewer persons between the age of 25-54 locally (40.5%) than either Georgia (45.6%) or the U.S. (43.6%).

The percentage change in the county's population among whites and blacks between 1980 and 2000 was relatively slight (8.0% and -8.0%, respectively), although the slight decline in the population among blacks is somewhat unusual and atypical of most areas in the Region. The percentage change among the local minority population was substantially less than Georgia (60.6%) and the U.S. (31.6%) as a whole. The local percentage change among the white population was well below that for Georgia (35.1%), but was about three-fourths that of the U.S. (13.2%). In 2000, the percentage of the white population in Toombs County (69.2%) was slightly higher than Georgia as a whole (65.1%) but considerably less than the nation as a whole (75.1%). The percentage of the black population in the county (24.2%) was slightly lower than Georgia (28.7%) but was almost double that of the U.S. (12.3%). The Hispanic population in Toombs County in 2000 was 8.9 percent (up from 0.77 percent in 1980). By 2030, that is projected to approximately double to 17.62 percent, or some one-sixth of the total population.

Toombs County educational attainment levels in 2000 were less overall than the State of Georgia. Just over 1 in 10 of the county's population age 25 and older had less than a high school level education, while another 21 percent had only a high school level education. Only 16.7 percent of the population has a post-secondary degree (Associate's Degree or higher).



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1983, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008 (STF 3 data was used to obtain 1990 figures. SF 4 data was used to obtain 2000 figures.).

Among its surrounding counties in 2000, only Montgomery County (28.6%) and Appling County (32.7%) had either a smaller or equal portion of the population with less than a high school level education than that of Toombs County (32.7%). Only Montgomery (17.7%) had a greater percentage of those with a post-secondary education than Toombs (16.7%). Toombs County’s percentage of those with a Bachelor’s Degree (8.4%) was higher than the other counties, with the exception of Montgomery (8.9%).

In 2000, Toombs County’s per capita income (\$20,151 in current dollars) was 72 percent of Georgia’s (\$27,987) and 67.5 percent of the U.S. (\$29,845). The percentage change in the county’s per capita income over the last two decades (215.8%) was somewhat lower than that of Georgia (232.4%) but was higher than the U.S. (195.1%). Toombs County’s 2000 median household income (\$26,811 in actual dollars) was some 63 percent (63.2%) of Georgia’s and the U.S. (63.8%).



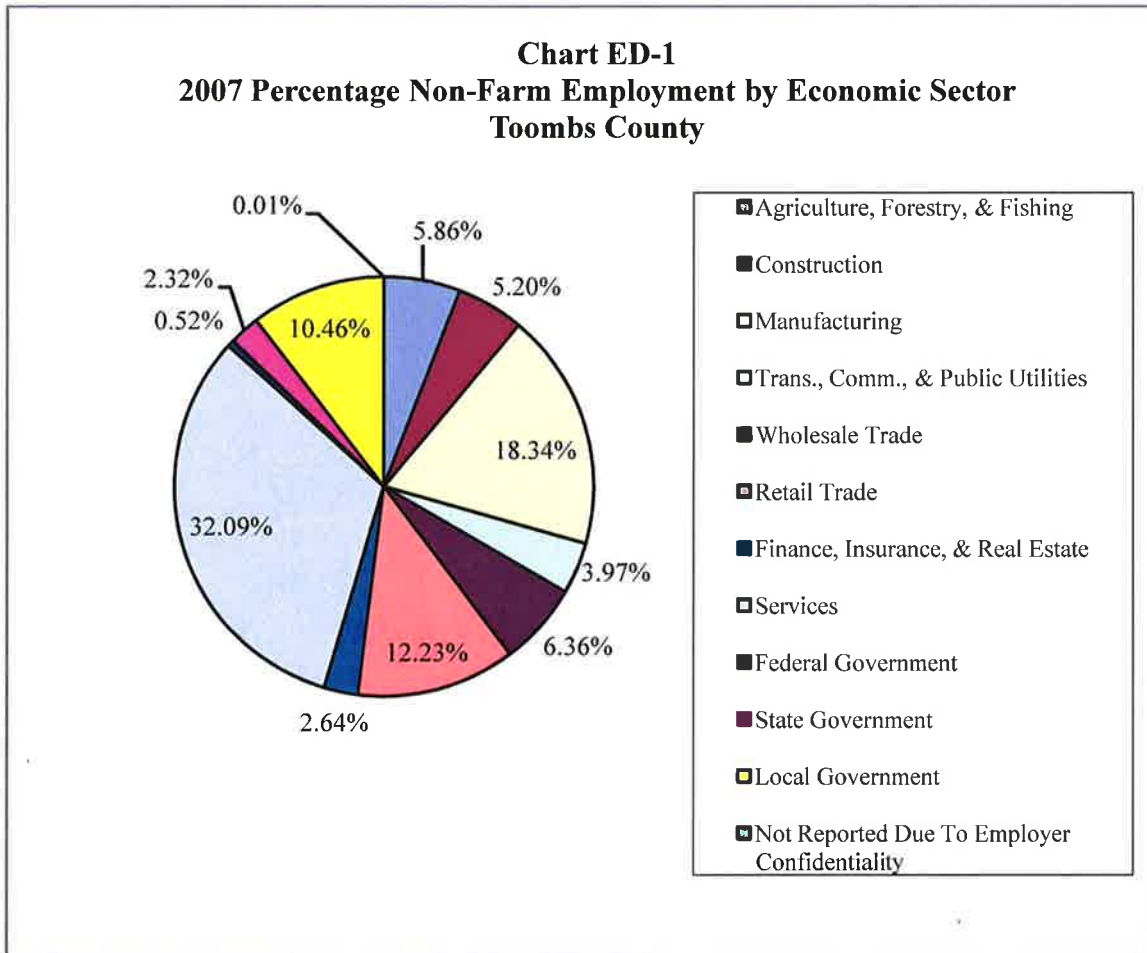
## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Toombs County is a rural county in southeast Georgia with a past and present intricately tied to transportation and agriculture. It is however a regional economic center whose population is approaching 30,000. Some 76 percent of its land area is in timberlands, despite its many jobs and services. The county's early development can be traced to its access to the Altamaha and Ochoopee rivers, its pine forests and abundant land for farming, and later development to railroads, U.S. 1, and U.S. 280. Toombs County's future economic development may similarly be tied to these features. Its biggest assets include the existing size of the community and its services, its agricultural and forestry land base and other natural resources, and its transportation access. The county has shown steady and incremental growth, at a rate much slower than that of the state but comparing more favorably to the U.S as a whole. The third most populated county in the Region (an estimated 27,820 as of 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau), the largest municipality of Vidalia is the Region's second largest city (an estimated 11,224 in 2007). The labor market is home to almost 60,000 people in an eight (8)-county area, with nearly one-fourth of the labor market belonging to employed residents of Toombs County. The county also contains some one-ninth of the Region's total labor force of over 122,000, making it a true regional growth center in Southeast Georgia. Toombs County continues to expand its job base and regional economic center status, even as it changes from a manufacturing economy to a more diversified government, service, and distribution center-based economy.

### **Major Findings of Economic Development Assessment**

In 2007, the four largest sectors of employment in Toombs County were the Services (32.09%), Manufacturing (18.34%), Retail Trade (12.23%), and Local Government (10.46%) sectors. These four sectors combined to make up more than seven out of every ten of Toombs County's total jobs. In 1990, Manufacturing (25.68%), Retail Trade (24.47%), Services (13.68%), and Local Government (13.22%) were the largest sectors in the county in terms of total employment. As is the case in many other areas and throughout the state as a whole, the local economy of Toombs County is becoming more service-oriented with less dependence on

the manufacturing jobs that were more dominant in earlier decades. Toombs County was once very reliant on apparel manufacturing, but has diversified this sector and compensated very well for the significant loss of apparel manufacturing jobs. The tremendous growth of the Vidalia Sweet Onion has allowed the local agricultural sector to become relatively larger, unlike most areas.



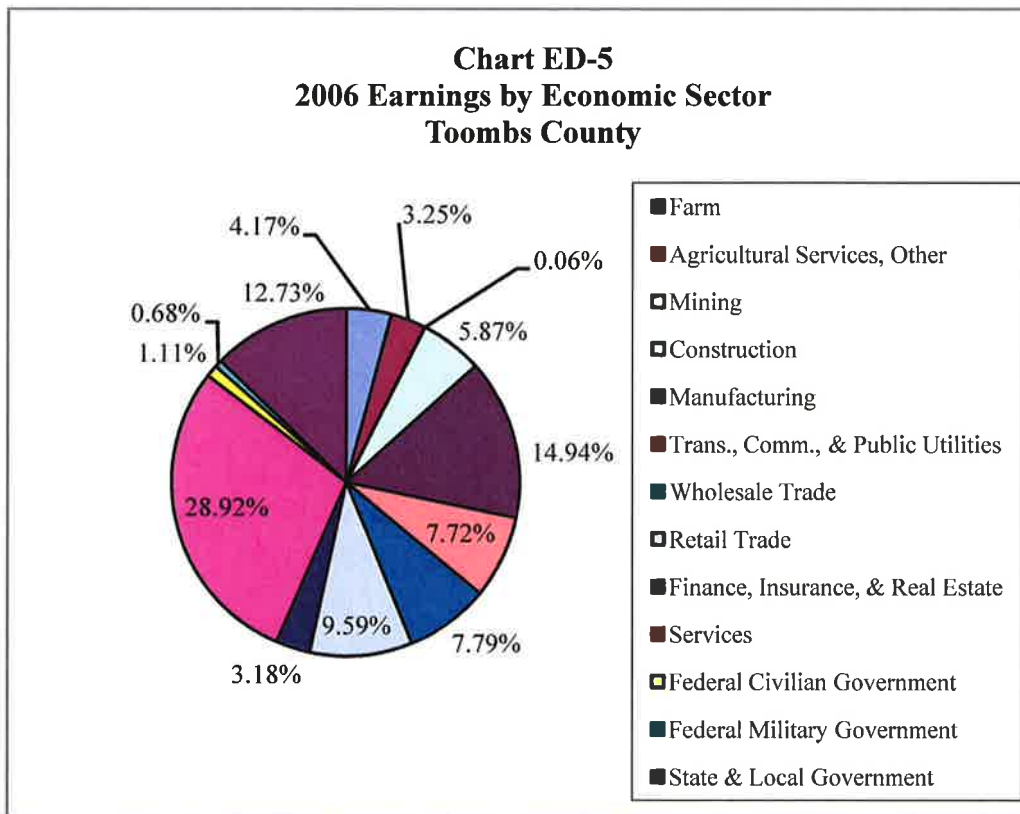
Source: Georgia Department of Labor, 2008.

Between 1990 and 2007, employment in the Services (13.68% vs. 32.09%) sector more than doubled, while substantial declines were found in the Manufacturing (25.68% vs. 18.34%), Retail Trade (24.47% vs. 12.23%), and Local Government (13.22% vs. 10.46%) sectors. The Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing sector also rose significantly in terms of percentages (0.59% vs. 5.86%), mainly because of the Vidalia Sweet Onion. The vast majority of the overall employment growth in the county in the last decade and a half has come in the Services sector, with some smaller growth occurring in agriculture/forestry and transportation/communication/

public utilities jobs. On the down side, employment has fallen quite noticeably in manufacturing and retail jobs.

In 2005, the largest sectors of employment in Georgia were in the Services (35.75%), Retail Trade (11.7%), Manufacturing (11.46%), and State & Local Government (10.15%) sectors; comprising more than two-thirds (69.06%) of the state’s total employment. The largest increase in the state’s employment between 1990 and 2005 was in the Services sector (19.97% vs. 35.75%), while the steepest decline was in the Manufacturing sector (19.00% vs. 11.46%). As is the case locally, growth in service jobs has dominated recent employment growth statewide, while historically strong manufacturing and retail jobs are on the downturn.

By far, the leading sectors in Toombs County in terms of earnings in 2006 were Services (28.92%), Manufacturing (14.94%), and State & Local Government (12.73%). Between 1990 and 2006, earnings in the Retail Trade sector decreased by roughly one-half as a percentage of total county earnings, while earnings for service employment almost doubled.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2008.

In 2006, the largest sector in terms of the percentage of total earnings in Georgia was the Services (30.84%) sector; comprising almost one-third of the state's total earnings. Approximately two-thirds (63.62%) of Georgia's total earnings came from four sectors: Services; Manufacturing; Transportation, Communications, and Public Utilities; and State & Local Government.

In 2007, the highest Average Weekly Wages in Toombs County were in the Utilities (\$1,031), Federal Government (\$938), and Transportation (\$834) sectors. Georgia's highest Average Weekly Wages were in the Communications (\$1,416), Utilities (\$1,410), Financial and Insurance (\$1,331), Wholesale (\$1,224), and Federal Government (\$1,223) sectors. Growth in Average Weekly Wages (All Industries) was slightly higher in Toombs County (48.17%) than in Georgia (45.34%) between 1997 and 2007. Still, Toombs County's Average Weekly Wages in 2007 were approximately 65 (64.86%) percent of Georgia's, with Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing, Transportation, Retail, and State Government wages being the only ones in Toombs County that remotely approach that of the state for those respective sectors, with wages in each of these sectors being just over 80 percent of the state's average.

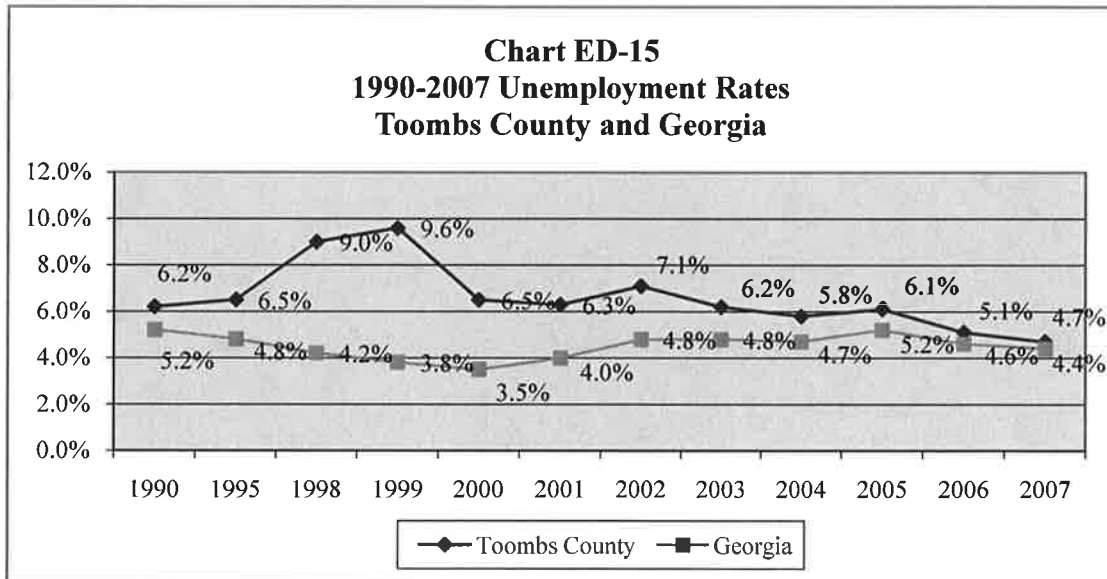
In 2000, the largest percentage of Toombs County's total personal income consisted of Wages and Salaries by Household (73.01%), which was slightly lower than that of Georgia (78.24%). The County's percentage of Transfer Payments to Households was more than double that of the state as a whole (8.36% vs. 4.04%), indicating that the presence of poverty is still more significant locally despite the growing local economy and thus symptomatic of the county's rural location.

From 1990 to 2000, employment by occupation increased countywide (9%), but each of the municipalities experienced a decrease, albeit very slight decreases in absolute numbers. The top occupations countywide in 2000 were Professional and Technical, Clerical and Administrative Support, Machine Operators, Assemblers, and Inspectors, and Precision Production, Craft, and Repair (combined some one-half of total occupations). In the municipalities, Professional and Technical jobs were the most common top occupation in

Vidalia, with Clerical the top occupation in Lyons and the more “blue collar” Machine Operators, Assemblers, and Inspectors the lead occupation in Santa Claus. Georgia’s highest percentage was in the Professional and Technical sector (18.68%). Slightly less than one-half of the state’s employment by occupation is in the Executive, Professional, and Clerical occupations, while countywide about four in ten of total employment was in these occupations.

Between 1990 and 2000, Toombs County’s total labor force grew at a rate that was about one-third that of Georgia as a whole (9.88% vs. 26.54%). In 2000, Toombs County had considerably more people in the labor force than those who were not (60.04% vs. 39.96%), although the percentage of those not in the labor force is significant. The same was true for the municipalities, with those in the labor force ranging from 50-60%. The highest percentage of those in the labor force was in Santa Claus (61.21 percent) while the lowest was in Lyons (50.76 percent). In 1990, over 72 percent of all males in Toombs County were in the labor force. By 2000, 71 percent of all males countywide were in the labor force. At the same time, the number of females in the county’s labor force decreased slightly (52% in 1990 to 51% percent in 2000). The total of all males and females not in the labor force countywide in 2000 was somewhat higher than Georgia as a whole (39.96% vs. 33.7%).

Between 1995 and 2007, Toombs County’s unemployment rates were higher than that of Georgia for each year, with a high of 9.6% in 1999 and a low of 4.7 % in 2007. Much of the higher local unemployment rate during the late 1990s can be attributed to the closing of several large apparel manufacturers in the county, decimating what once was the county’s largest source of employment. Georgia’s unemployment rate fluctuated from a high of 5.2% in 1990 and again in 2005 to 3.5% in 2000. From 1995 through 2004, Georgia’s unemployment rate was below 5.0% for each year, and again in both 2006 and 2007. Among its surrounding counties, Tattnall County, and at times Emanuel, Jeff Davis, and Montgomery counties have had lower unemployment rates throughout the period than Toombs County.



Source: Georgia Department of Labor, 2008.

In 1990 Appling County was the leading county among those commuting into Toombs County for work on a daily basis, while in 2000 Tattnall County was the leading county with Appling’s numbers dropping off substantially. Other leading counties, though to a lesser extent, were Tattnall, Montgomery, Chatham, and Emanuel in 1990 and Appling, Montgomery, Emanuel, and Laurens in 2000. For those in Toombs County commuting elsewhere to work, Montgomery, Tattnall, Treutlen, Emanuel, and Wheeler counties were the top destinations in both 1990 and 2000. Those commuting to Emanuel and Wheeler counties increased noticeably during the 1990s, while the number of Toombs Countians commuting to Treutlen County had decreased slightly. Those commuting to Montgomery and Tattnall counties also increased somewhat as well. During the 1990s, the percentage of Toombs County residents comprising the county’s workforce declined slightly from 73 percent in 1990 to 69.5 percent by 2000, meaning that a slightly higher percentage of residents are having to seek employment in nearby locales outside of the county.

The County’s lead economic development agencies are the Toombs-Montgomery Chamber of Commerce, the Toombs County Development Authority, the Middle Coastal Unified Development Authority, the Vidalia Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Downtown Vidalia Association, the Lyons Better Hometown Program, and Southeastern Technical College. Among the county’s economic development assets include two (2) current

industrial parks, both serviced with water, sewer, and electricity. There is also 100% Freeport exemption on various items countywide. Toombs County is a Tier One county as classified by the OneGeorgia Authority, making qualified industries locating to the county eligible for tax credits of up to \$3,500/job created.

Good education and training opportunities are available locally to improve skill levels of the local labor force through Southeastern Technical College (which also offers Quick Start training to industries), other nearby secondary institutions such as Brewton-Parker College, Georgia Southern, and East Georgia College, and Workforce Investment Act program services through the local One-Stop Center in Vidalia.

Ongoing economic trends locally within the last decade include the continuing development of the County's industrial parks and sites, the construction of the Toombs Corporate Center at U.S. 1 north of Lyons, the continued commercial/retail development of the U.S. 280 corridor in Vidalia and its one-way pairing through much of the city, the continuing expansion of Southeastern Technical College's facilities and services as well as a newly established Regional Charter School to be housed through STC, the attainment of the community as an Entrepreneur Friendly Community and the subsequent creation of the Tri-County Regional Entrepreneur Support Team through STC, the continued decline of manufacturing jobs as a mainstay of the local economy, the emergence of service jobs as a leading source of employment, the recent expansions at the Vidalia Regional Airport, the continued expansion of medical facilities and services and the planned future construction of a new Meadows Regional Medical Center, the ongoing continuation of the Vidalia Onion Festival, "Tales from the Altamaha," and the establishment of the Vidalia Area Convention and Visitors Bureau as a means of visitor attraction, and the sustained viability of state and local government jobs as a leading source of local employment and earnings.

## NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Toombs County is rich in natural and cultural (historic and prehistoric) resources. Its significant wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and the Altamaha and Ochoopee River Protected Corridors will be addressed through a local environmental conservation ordinance as required by DNR's Part 5 Environmental Planning Criteria. Toombs County and its municipalities utilize groundwater supplied primarily by the Upper Floridan Aquifer. Toombs County was one of 24 southeast Georgia counties which EPD required to prepare a comprehensive water supply plan (completed in 2000).

Agriculture (25.62 percent) and forestry (51.25 percent) are by far the county's major land uses, estimated at a total of approximately 77 percent based on the information collected during this plan's preparation. Roughly 36.3 percent of Toombs County soils are considered prime farmland. Toombs County ranks 37<sup>th</sup> in Georgia for its reported value of agricultural production, with vegetables as the top commodity followed by forestry and related products, then row/forage crops, and ornamental horticulture. The county ranks sixth in Georgia for vegetable production, second for onions, fourth for greens, fifth for sweet corn, eighth for cabbage, and tenth for squash. Toombs County is 22<sup>nd</sup> in the state for total forestry and related products, 16<sup>th</sup> for pine straw, and 28<sup>th</sup> for timber.

Seven animals and 11 plants identified in Toombs County are currently listed on DNR's list of Special Concern Animals and Plants. The two with federal protected status are the Eastern Indigo Snake and the Altamaha Spiny mussel.

Toombs County has no federal or state recreation areas or wildlife management areas; however, there are public landings on the Altamaha at Gray's Landing, McNatt Falls, and U.S. 1 Bridge. There are also local and regional parks, such as Partin Park (Lyons) and Vidalia's new Regional Park, which is currently under development. There are future plans for a regional reservoir near Pendleton Creek in Toombs, Montgomery, and/or Treutlen, Emanuel counties.



Most of the county's scenic areas are associated with its natural resources and areas, such as the Altamaha and Ochoopee rivers and the previously mentioned recreation areas.

The Vidalia Commercial Historic District; the Brazell House (now the Altama Museum of Art and History in Vidalia); Citizens Bank of Vidalia; Garbutt House (Lyons); Leader-Rosansky House (Vidalia); Lyons Womans Club House; McLemore-Sharpe Farmstead (near Vidalia); Peterson-Wilbanks House (Vidalia); and the Jim Smith House (near Lyons) are currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places. There are other eligible properties, including downtown Lyons and a large residential area south of downtown Vidalia, that have not yet been listed. 41 archaeological sites county-wide are presently recorded in the UGA State Archaeological Site File. A county-wide historic resources survey was completed in 1982 which documented approximately 695 historic properties; however, many more are now considered historic (at least 50 years old).

As Toombs County continues to grow, protection of its natural and cultural resources and the county's rural character is needed to maintain the community's overall quality of life now and in the future. This can best be achieved through controlled and planned growth and land use regulation designed to conserve these significant resources and encourage their sensitive development for compatible economic development, recreation, and tourism uses, as appropriate.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### Transportation

Toombs County and its municipalities have a good transportation system consisting of county roads, city streets, state highways (GA 292, GA 15, GA 130, GA 297, and GA 178) and federal highways (U.S. 1, U.S. 280). Interstate 16 runs east/west north of the county. The top priority is 4-laning U.S. 1 north of Lyons to I-16, but U.S. 1 South, including the Lyons Bypass, is also very important. The U.S. 1 Lyons Bypass appears to have been put on hold for the foreseeable future. There are other needs for highway multi-laning, including U.S. 280, GA 292, GA 15/29, and GA 297. U.S. 280 was one-way paired through Vidalia in the last several years. Lyons and Vidalia have in recent years had DOT Transportation Enhancement funds to assist with downtown streetscape improvements. The Vidalia Regional Airport is owned and managed by the City of Vidalia. It is a Level III state of the art facility which has recently extended its runway to 6,000 feet and upgraded its terminal. The City of Vidalia owns a recently improved regional railroad, and it is important for future economic development, particularly north to I-16. There is a continuing need for paving dirt and connector roads, as well as resurfacing others. Toombs County needs a new maintenance shop and road asset tracking system to report infrastructure capitalization. Vidalia needs additional equipment, including a motor grader and various trucks.

### Water Supply and Treatment

All three municipalities in Toombs County have public water systems. Water line extensions and upgrades may be needed within some jurisdictions and in their adjacent growth areas to help facilitate further growth, as needed. Residents of unincorporated Toombs County, who do not obtain water from a nearby municipal system, rely mainly on individual private wells which tap into the Upper Floridan or shallow aquifers. The county's municipalities draw water

from the Upper Floridan Aquifer. Lyons upgraded its system in 2001, but now needs to replace all old lines. Santa Claus needs a new water system, including an elevated storage tank, to replace its existing outdated system, although it did install a new ground storage tank in 2008. Vidalia has made water system improvements in recent years in the 7<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Street CDBG target area and along U.S. 280 West in conjunction with the one-way pairing project. There are continuing needs to serve expected growth areas.

## **Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment**

All three cities in Toombs County presently have sewerage systems. Currently, residents of Toombs County, who are not hooked onto sewer service in an adjacent community, must rely on septic tank systems. Those communities with existing systems may need to add lines to serve future growth within their jurisdiction and/or extend/expand service in the future to accommodate growth in their adjacent growth areas. Lyons made major upgrades to its system in 1988. The City will need to expand or increase its treatment facility in the future to accommodate industrial and other future growth. Santa Claus' system is in good shape as it was replaced 4 to 5 years ago, and its oxidation pond was upgraded about 3 years ago. Vidalia's system has won state and national plant of the year awards for its land application system. Sewer lines were upgraded in Vidalia as part of the 7<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Street CDBG project and U.S. 1 one-way pairing. Sewer service was also extended to the Tap Drive area behind Vidalia High School (2008) and Forest Lake Subdivision (2007). A new CDBG project will improve sewer, and possibly water, service in the Poe Street neighborhood. There will be needs to provide upgrades and extensions to accommodate expected growth.

## **Solid Waste**

Toombs County has its own Subtitle D Municipal Solid Waste landfill, which has an estimated remaining capacity of 16.7 years in its current cell. The County needs four new convenience centers, a new industrial bailer, additional land for top soil cover, and waste stream reduction programs, including gasification. The convenience centers will be in addition to the

one current one at Cedar Crossing, and are planned to replace the existing greenbox collection system.

## **Public Safety**

### Law Enforcement

There are three law enforcement agencies within Toombs County, which work cooperatively to protect and serve the citizens and the community. The Lyons Police Department currently occupies the lower level of the Lyons City Hall. The department lacks adequate space for personnel; additional space will be available once the construction of the new Lyons City Hall is complete in the fall of 2009. The Lyons Police Department will then occupy the entire facility, providing additional office space for personnel and additional services. The Vidalia Police Department is in need of a new facility and is pursuing funding sources. The current facility was constructed in 1973 and is in fair condition. A more technological advanced facility is needed to accommodate current and future changes. The Toombs County Sheriff's Department is responsible for patrolling the unincorporated areas of the county and Santa Claus. The Sheriff's Department needs vehicle improvements including vehicle upgrades, lights and sirens, and video equipment. Additional equipment improvements needed include tasers, video equipment, GIS equipment, and protective gear including vests for officers.

### Fire Protection/EMS/EMA

There are 10 organized fire departments located throughout Toombs County; efforts have been made to ensure that response is available to each municipality in a timely manner. The larger municipalities have at least two fire stations in their jurisdiction to reduce response time, Lyons has an average response time of four minutes, and Vidalia's is three to five minutes. The City of Santa Claus does not have a fire station; fire protection service is provided by Lyons' fire stations. The Lyons Fire Departments are in need of a training complex and fire engine upgrades. The Toombs-Montgomery County EMS is a collaborative agency between Toombs and Montgomery counties. Due to the type of services provided, additional trained staff and three

new ambulances are needed to accommodate the growing community. The Toombs County EMA needs interior and equipment upgrades to its facility. Due to the level of service provided and future services that will be offered to citizens, a concrete slab with cover and hookups is needed, to shelter the mobile command post.

## **Hospital and Other Public Health Facilities**

Meadows Regional Medical Center is a non-profit, 122 acute bed care facility. Continued upgrades and service improvements have been made to Meadows Regional since it opened in 1963. A new facility along U.S. 280 East is expected to open in the spring of 2010 that will provide the latest in advanced medical technology and equipment. The second floor of Meadows Regional is currently utilized as a transitional care facility; once the new facility is open the second floor will continue to be used for that purpose. The Toombs County Health Department provides public health services to the citizens of Toombs County. The clinic provided services to over 32 percent of Toombs County in the 2007 fiscal year. There are three nursing homes in Toombs County with a total of 347 beds and 6 licensed personal care homes with a total of 130 beds.

## **Recreation**

Recreational facilities in Lyons are operated by the Lyons Recreation Department, and are also used by the South Toombs Recreation Department; the recreational facilities in Vidalia are operated by the Vidalia Recreation Department. The Lyons and Vidalia Recreation Departments receive an annual \$150,000 allocation from the county. There are 11 recreational facilities county-wide. More than 5,200 participants utilize the recreational facilities yearly. Upgrades and renovations have been ongoing, in order to provide communities with efficient recreational facilities. Construction on a new regional recreational facility located on Ezra Taylor Road in Vidalia is planned to include softball fields, soccer/football fields, a control tower, and other active and passive facilities.

## **General Government**

The four governments of Toombs County work to ensure that the needs of their citizens are met. Each government offers services and maintains public facilities, which enhance the quality of life for their citizens. Necessary maintenance and upgrades to public facilities and infrastructure are conducted on an as needed basis. Construction of a new Lyons City Hall is expected to begin in the spring of 2009, with a projected completion date of fall 2009. The new facility will provide additional office space and offer amenities that will expedite services for citizens.

## **Educational Facilities**

Toombs County has two separate school systems, the County and the City of Vidalia. Toombs County School System is operated by the Toombs County Board of Education. A total of 3,020 students are enrolled in the five schools for the 2008-2009 school year. The Vidalia City Schools are operated by the Vidalia City Board of Education. A total of 2,445 students are enrolled in the four schools for the 2008-2009 school year. The facilities are in good condition, due to frequent equipment upgrades, maintenance, and service improvements. The Toombs County School System projects construction of a new high school and primary school within five years. Kiddie Kastle I is a Head Start program for children of seasonal and migrant farm workers in Lyons. Approximately 138 children attended the program for the 2008 school year. There are four private schools in Toombs County, with a total enrollment of 456. Several higher educational opportunities are available in Toombs County. Programs are available through East Georgia College, Georgia Southern University, and Brewton-Parker College. Southeastern Technical College is located in Vidalia, and Brewton-Parker in nearby Mount Vernon.

## Library and Other Cultural Facilities

The Vidalia-Toombs County Library serves as the headquarters for the Ochoopee Regional Library System. The Ladson Genealogical Library and the Nelle Brown Library in Lyons are branches of the Vidalia-Toombs County Library System. The Vidalia-Toombs County Library is 17,764 square feet and has 9,758 cardholders. The library has 60,865 printed materials, 4,314 non-printed materials, 36 printed subscriptions, and three electronic downloadable audio books. The Nelle Brown Memorial Library is 7,069 square feet and has 1,200 cardholders. The library has 14,648 printed materials, 804 non-printed materials, 12 printed subscriptions, and three electronic downloadable audio books. The Ladson Genealogical Library has more than 30,000 books and pamphlets covering the study of family and kinship, genealogical periodicals, and materials on heraldry. The Altama Museum of Art and History is a public art museum that displays antique prints and exhibits. Vidalia's historic Pal Theatre and the Franklania Playhouse are used for community events and social gatherings, as is Lyons' Pal Theatre. Southeastern Technical College has a 776 seating capacity auditorium that citizens utilize for meetings, performances, and conferences as well as a 236 seat auditorium. Festivals are a tradition in Toombs County; the festivals reflect the characteristics of the community. Toombs County is known for its Vidalia Sweet Onion Festival and both the "Tales from the Altamaha" regional play and the Southeast Georgia Soapbox Derby in Lyons.

Toombs County and its municipalities offer a wide variety of public facilities and infrastructure that are compatible with the continuous growth of the community. As Toombs County continues to grow consolidation of services is needed to provide effective and efficient service to its citizens. Continuous upgrades and maintenance of the current facilities and improvements to services offered to the citizens of Toombs County have aided in the efforts to support the growth of the community.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

There are no apparent conflicts among the four local governments in Toombs County. The County and the municipalities of Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia are included in the County's Service Delivery Strategy, and the Strategy appears to be working well at the present time. The Service Delivery Strategy is consistent with the local comprehensive plan. These governments meet on a regular basis to discuss and resolve issues that arise within the various components of the Strategy. The County and the City of Lyons work well with the Toombs County Board of Education. The City of Vidalia works well with its own separate city school system. The local government comprehensive plan is consistent with both school systems' Five-Year Facilities Plan, and the County and cities work with the school systems on any needed infrastructure improvements. The comprehensive plan also identifies the Toombs County Development Authority as the main organization to oversee economic development activities countywide.

Areas of ongoing coordination and cooperation among the County's local governments include cultural services, economic development, E-911, fire protection, jail, law enforcement, library, recreation, recycling, road/street maintenance, solid waste collection, voter registration, and water. Coordination mechanisms among one or more local governments and adjacent local governments include the Toombs-Montgomery Development Authority, the Vidalia Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Altamaha River Partnership, the Middle Coastal Unified Development Authority, a regional Entrepreneur Friendly Community collaborative with Montgomery and Tattnall counties, a joint E-911 system with Montgomery County, a regional EMS cooperative also with Montgomery County, the pending merger of Southeastern Technical College with Swainsboro Technical College, and a regional charter school involving Southeastern Technical College and school systems in Vidalia and Toombs and Montgomery counties, the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center, and the Region 9 Economic Development Academy. These mechanisms need to be maintained and strengthened as appropriate. Enhanced coordination among the County, the Development Authority, the Vidalia Downtown Development Authority, the Lyons Better Hometown Program, the Vidalia

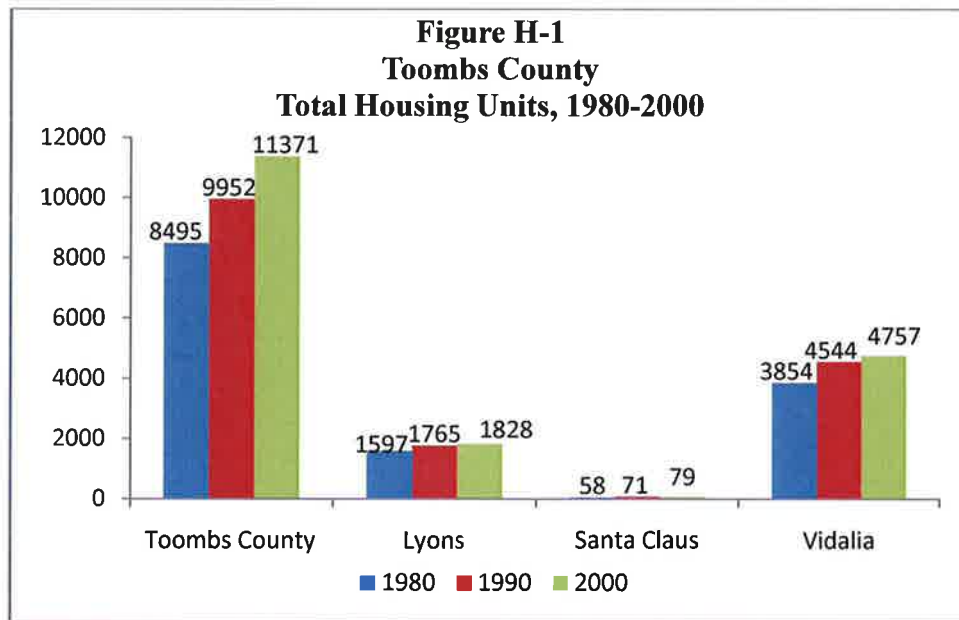


Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Toombs-Montgomery Development Authority could expand the resources available for consistent and steady economic development activities. The relationship between the local governments and the Toombs County and Vidalia City school systems, the Region 9 Workforce Investment Board, and Southeastern Technical College to improve facilities and services should be expanded as needed to help strengthen the educational and skill levels of the local labor force. Greater coordination of efforts and cooperation in the area of solid waste, through participation in the Keep Georgia Beautiful program and other means as appropriate, could provide additional resources to enhance and expand local recycling and other waste reduction efforts. Information sharing among the local governments should be enhanced as needed, and the potential for consolidation of services should be explored as appropriate. Coordinated efforts among the local governments in the area of land use planning and the coordination, establishment, and/or consolidation of land use regulations could also bring potential benefits.

Potential issues at this time arising from growth and development proposed in nearby governments or within any of the four local governments in the county include the recent commercial/retail growth along the U.S. 280 corridor in Vidalia and the recent completion of the one-way pairing of U.S. 280 through much of Vidalia, the proposed future construction of a new Meadows Regional Medical Center along U.S. 280 East and U.S. 292 East in Vidalia, and the recent construction of the Toombs Corporate Center at U.S. 1 north of Lyons. No land use conflicts are present along the county's jurisdictional borders with adjacent counties. The county's comprehensive plan does not conflict with those of its neighbors. The local plan is also consistent with the Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC's regional plan. Currently there are no service provision conflicts or overlaps in effect. The countywide Service Delivery Strategy is effective in addressing these issues. The Strategy addresses procedures for resolving land use issues and annexation issues, as well as infrastructure improvements.

# HOUSING

The amount of housing in Toombs County and its municipalities has increased with the rise in population. Total housing units increased by 28.8 percent from 1980 to 2000, while the population rose by 15.4 percent. There has been a steady increase of single and multi-family housing units; however, the number of manufactured homes (mobile homes) has increased rapidly by 2,506 units. While the number of manufactured homes continues to increase, Toombs County has a lower percentage of manufactured housing than the region, but a larger percentage than the state. Total other housing units have declined dramatically from 1980-2000, by 112 units. There are approximately 240 units of public housing available in Toombs County.



Source: Table H-1 (See Technical Addendum and Data Appendix).

The majority of the housing stock was built within the last 40 years; housing units in Toombs County and its municipalities are typically older than the state and Region 9. The number of housing units lacking complete plumbing has continued to decrease, while the number of housing units lacking complete kitchen facilities has increased. Santa Claus reported no units

lacking complete plumbing or complete kitchen facilities in 2000. Toombs County (5.5 percent) and Lyons (6.7 percent) have a significant amount of overcrowding; these percentages are higher than the state's 4.8 percent and the Region's 4.7 percent.

The majority of householders in the county are white, 73.1 percent, 22.8 percent are black, and 5 percent are Hispanic. Vidalia has the highest percentage of black householders at 34.4, while Lyons has the highest percentage of Hispanic with 9 percent. With the significant increase in population, the number of housing vacancies in Toombs County has diminished. About 87 percent of the housing units in the county are occupied, this compares to 86.6 percent for Lyons, 88.8 percent for Santa Claus, and 89.1 percent for Vidalia. Toombs County housing vacancies are less than the region, but more than the state. The housing units that are vacant are more likely to be available for rent than for sale.

The median owner value of housing in Toombs County (\$66,400) was slightly higher than that of four adjacent counties, Appling (\$63,700), Candler (\$62,700), Emanuel (\$50,800), and Treutlen (\$56,600). Montgomery (\$67,300) and Tattnall (\$67,300) counties median owner specified value was slightly higher than Toombs. The median mobile home value in Toombs County in 2000 was \$22,600, 33 percent less than Georgia's median manufactured home value of \$33,600. Although housing costs for Toombs County are lower than the state, homeowners and renters in the county are more likely to live in poverty than others throughout Georgia. Homeowners within the county were more than twice as likely to live in poverty as those in Georgia as a whole (16.6 percent for the county, 21 percent for Lyons, 22.7 percent for Santa Claus, and 11 percent for Vidalia).

Toombs County and its governments do not have any critical housing issues; however, there are matters that need to be addressed in order to prevent additional or worsening of current situations. Availability of housing is relatively low, and lower incomes do pose some affordability issues. With over 17 percent of the county's renters and 21 percent of homeowners cost-burdened, affordable housing is an issue for a significant number of households. Manufactured homes are not as major a concern as elsewhere in the Region, but their significant numbers do still raise some issues, especially as they age. Due to the lower cost of manufactured housing as opposed to the traditional home, it is expected that the number of manufactured

homes will continue to increase. There continues to be a need for more elderly housing, additional low income housing units, starter homes, housing rehabilitations, quality development, more apartments, and a need for subdivision and manufactured housing ordinances and code enforcement.

## RESOLUTION

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

**WHEREAS**, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs has established new "Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning (Local Planning Requirements)" under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 for coordinated and comprehensive planning, including standards and procedures for the preparation of local comprehensive plans and implementation thereof, public participation, and coordinated review; and

**WHEREAS**, Toombs County, Georgia is participating with the municipalities of Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia in a coordinated and comprehensive planning process under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 and the Local Planning Requirements, currently through the Toombs County Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee and with the assistance of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center, to update its existing adopted comprehensive plan with a new full plan update; and

**WHEREAS**, this coordinated and comprehensive planning process thus far has resulted in the development of the first phases of a new comprehensive plan, a draft *Community Assessment* and a draft *Community Participation Program*, for Toombs County; and

**WHEREAS**, requirements for public participation in the development of these comprehensive plan components as mandated by the Local Planning Requirements have been met, including a joint public hearing held on December 22, 2008 in part to brief the public on the draft *Community Assessment* and *Community Participation Program* plan components, and to receive further input prior to submission of these plan components for review and comment; and

**WHEREAS**, Toombs County has participated in the development, reviewed, and approved both its *Community Assessment* and *Community Participation Program* as part of its local comprehensive plan update under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Toombs County Board of Commissioners certifies that public participation and other requirements of the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning have been met, and that the *Community Assessment* and *Community Participation Program* components of *The Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan* are hereby authorized to be submitted to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for formal review, comment, and recommendation before formal preparation of its *Community Agenda* and finalization of its local comprehensive plan update as mandated by Georgia law and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

**SO RESOLVED**, this 10<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2009.

BY: James B. West

ATTEST: [Signature]

**RESOLUTION**

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

**WHEREAS**, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs has established new "Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning (Local Planning Requirements)" under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 for coordinated and comprehensive planning, including standards and procedures for the preparation of local comprehensive plans and implementation thereof, public participation, and coordinated review; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Lyons, Georgia is participating with Toombs County and the municipalities of Vidalia and Santa Claus in a coordinated and comprehensive planning process under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 and the Local Planning Requirements, currently through the Toombs County Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee and with the assistance of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center, to update its existing adopted comprehensive plan with a new full plan update; and

**WHEREAS**, this coordinated and comprehensive planning process thus far has resulted in the development of the first phases of a new comprehensive plan, a draft *Community Assessment* and a draft *Community Participation Program*, for the City of Lyons; and

**WHEREAS**, requirements for public participation in the development of these comprehensive plan components as mandated by the Local Planning Requirements have been met, including a joint public hearing held on December 22, 2008 in part to brief the public on the draft *Community Assessment* and *Community Participation Program* plan components, and to receive further input prior to submission of these plan components for review and comment; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Lyons has participated in the development, reviewed, and approved both its *Community Assessment* and *Community Participation Program* as part of its local comprehensive plan update under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Lyons certify that public participation and other requirements of the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning have been met, and that the *Community Assessment and Community Participation Program* components of *The Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan* are hereby authorized to be submitted to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for formal review, comment, and recommendation before formal preparation of its *Community Agenda* and finalization of its local comprehensive plan update as mandated by Georgia law and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

**SO RESOLVED**, this 6<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2009.

BY: John E. M... ..

ATTEST: Sybil Burford

**RESOLUTION**

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

**WHEREAS**, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs has established new "Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning (Local Planning Requirements)" under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 for coordinated and comprehensive planning, including standards and procedures for the preparation of local comprehensive plans and implementation thereof, public participation, and coordinated review; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Santa Claus, Georgia is participating with Toombs County and the municipalities of Lyons and Vidalia in a coordinated and comprehensive planning process under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 and the Local Planning Requirements, currently through the Toombs County Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee and with the assistance of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center, to update its existing adopted comprehensive plan with a new full plan update; and

**WHEREAS**, this coordinated and comprehensive planning process thus far has resulted in the development of the first phases of a new comprehensive plan, a draft *Community Assessment* and a draft *Community Participation Program*, for the City of Santa Claus; and

**WHEREAS**, requirements for public participation in the development of these comprehensive plan components as mandated by the Local Planning Requirements have been met, including a joint public hearing held on December 22, 2008 in part to brief the public on the draft *Community Assessment* and *Community Participation Program* plan components, and to receive further input prior to submission of these plan components for review and comment; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Santa Claus has participated in the development, reviewed, and approved both its *Community Assessment* and *Community Participation Program* as part of its local comprehensive plan update under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Santa Claus certify that public participation and other requirements of the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning have been met, and that the *Community Assessment and Community Participation Program* components of *The Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan* are hereby authorized to be submitted to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for formal review, comment, and recommendation before formal preparation of its *Community Agenda* and finalization of its local comprehensive plan update as mandated by Georgia law and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

**SO RESOLVED**, this 6<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2009.

BY Bernard Haenren

ATTEST: W.H. Powell

**RESOLUTION**

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

**WHEREAS**, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs has established new "Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning (Local Planning Requirements)" under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 for coordinated and comprehensive planning, including standards and procedures for the preparation of local comprehensive plans and implementation thereof, public participation, and coordinated review; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Vidalia, Georgia is participating with Toombs County and the municipalities of Lyons and Santa Claus in a coordinated and comprehensive planning process under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 and the Local Planning Requirements, currently through the Toombs County Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee and with the assistance of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center, to update its existing adopted comprehensive plan with a new full plan update; and

**WHEREAS**, this coordinated and comprehensive planning process thus far has resulted in the development of the first phases of a new comprehensive plan, a draft *Community Assessment* and a draft *Community Participation Program*, for the City of Vidalia; and

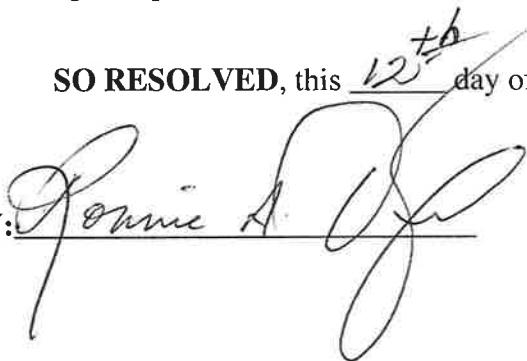
**WHEREAS**, requirements for public participation in the development of these comprehensive plan components as mandated by the Local Planning Requirements have been met, including a joint public hearing held on December 22, 2008 in part to brief the public on the draft *Community Assessment* and *Community Participation Program* plan components, and to receive further input prior to submission of these plan components for review and comment; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Vidalia has participated in the development, reviewed, and approved both its *Community Assessment* and *Community Participation Program* as part of its local comprehensive plan update under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Vidalia certify that public participation and other requirements of the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning have been met, and that the *Community Assessment and Community Participation Program* components of *The Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan* are hereby authorized to be submitted to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for formal review, comment, and recommendation before formal preparation of its *Community Agenda* and finalization of its local comprehensive plan update as mandated by Georgia law and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

**SO RESOLVED**, this 12<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2009.

BY:



ATTEST:





# **THE TOOMBS COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

## **COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT TECHNICAL ADDENDUM AND DATA APPENDIX**

December, 2008

# **The Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan**

## **Community Assessment and Technical Addendum and Data Appendix**

A Comprehensive Plan for Toombs County, the City of Lyons, the City of Santa Claus, and the  
City of Vidalia, Georgia  
in accordance with the Georgia Planning Act of 1989

Prepared By:

The Toombs County Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee

Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center

December, 2008

## Table of Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	I-1
Background	I-1
Format	I-2
Purpose	I-3
Plan Development	I-4
<b>Existing Development Patterns and Land Use</b>	LU-1
Existing Land Use	LU-1
Areas Requiring Special Attention	LU-7
Recommended Character Areas	LU-8
<b>Analysis of Consistency with Quality Community Objectives</b>	CQ-1
Introduction	CQ-1
Statewide Planning Goals	CQ-1
Quality Community Objectives	CQ-4
QCO Local Assessment Survey	CQ-11
<b>Population</b>	P-1
Introduction	P-1
Total Population	P-2
Households	P-9
Age Distribution	P-12
Racial Composition	P-16
Educational Attainment	P-19
Income	P-26
<b>Economic Development</b>	ED-1
Introduction	ED-1
Economic Base	ED-2
Labor Force	ED-14
Local Economic Development Resources	ED-28
Economic Trends	ED-37
Summary Needs Assessment	ED-41

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Natural and Cultural Resources</b>	NCR-1
Introduction	NCR-1
Natural Setting	NCR-1
Environmental Planning Criteria	NCR-2
Other Environmentally Sensitive Areas	NCR-5
Significant Natural Resources	NCR-11
Cultural Resources	NCR-13
Summary Needs Assessment	NCR-21
<b>Community Facilities and Services</b>	CF-1
Introduction	CF-1
Transportation	CF-1
Water Supply and Treatment	CF-7
Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment	CF-10
Solid Waste	CF-13
Public Safety	CF-15
Hospital and Other Public Health Facilities	CF-19
Recreation	CF-20
General Government	CF-22
Educational Facilities	CF-25
Library and Other Cultural Facilities	CF-28
<b>Intergovernmental Coordination</b>	IC-1
Relationship of Governmental Entities and Programs to Local Government	IC-1
Comprehensive Plan	
Existing Coordination Mechanisms	IC-2
Joint Planning and Service Agreements	IC-5
Special Legislation and Joint Meetings or Work Groups for the Purpose of	IC-6
Coordination	
Local Government Parties or Offices with Primary Responsibility for Coordination	IC-6
Issues Arising from Growth and Development Proposed in Nearby Governments	IC-7
Specific Problems and Needs Identified Within Each of the Comprehensive	IC-8
Plan Elements that Would Benefit from Improved or Additional	
Intergovernmental Coordination	
Adequacy of Existing Coordination Mechanisms with Related State	IC-9
Programs and Goals and Implementation Portions of the Local	
Comprehensive Plan	

<b>Housing</b>	H-1
Introduction	H-1
Housing Types and Mix	H-1
Condition and Occupancy	H-5
Householder Characteristics	H-9
Cost of Housing	H-11
Cost Burdened Households	H-13
Special Housing Needs	H-15
Jobs-Housing Balance	H-17

## TABLES

LU-2	City of Lyons Existing Land Use Distribution, 2008	LU-3
LU-3	City of Santa Claus Existing Land Use Distribution, 2008	LU-4
LU-4	City of Vidalia Existing Land Use Distribution, 2008	LU-5
P-1	Historic Population and Percent Change, Toombs County Governments, Georgia, and U.S., 1980-2007	P-3
P-2	Current and Historic Population and Percent Change, Toombs County and Surrounding Counties, 1980-2006	P-36
P-3	Population Projections, Toombs County and Georgia, 2005-2030	P-37
P-4	Population Projections, Toombs County Governments, 2005-2030	P-38
P-5	Commuting Patterns, Toombs County, 1990 & 2000	P-38
P-6	Total Number of Households, Toombs County Governments and Georgia, 1980-2000	P-10
P-7	Average Household Size, Toombs County, Georgia, and U.S., 1980-2030	P-39
P-8	Current and Projected Number of Households, Toombs County and Georgia, 2000-2030	P-40
P-9	Historic, Current, and Projected Number of Households and Average Household Size, Municipalities, 1980-2030	P-41
P-10	Historic Population Age Distribution, Toombs County, Georgia, and U.S., 1980-2000	P-13
P-11	Detailed Age Distribution, Toombs County, Georgia, and U.S., 2000	P-42
P-12	Historic Population By Age Distribution, Toombs County Governments, 1980-2000	P-14
P-13	Projected Population By Age, Toombs County, 2000-2030	P-43
P-14	Projected Population By Age, Lyons, 2000-2030	P-44

P-15	Projected Population By Age, Santa Claus, 2000-2030	P-45
P-16	Projected Population By Age, Vidalia, 2000-2030	P-46
P-17	Projected Population Age Distribution, Toombs County Governments, 2000-2030	P-47
P-18	Population By Race, Toombs County Governments, Georgia, and U.S., 1980-2000	P-48
P-19	Percent of Population By Race, Toombs County, Georgia, and U.S., 2000	P-17
P-20	Projected Percent of Population By Race, Toombs County, Georgia, and U.S., 2000-2030	P-50
P-21	Projected Percent Change in Population By Race, Toombs County, Georgia, and U.S., 2000-2030	P-51
P-22	Projected Population By Race, Toombs County, 2000-2030	P-52
P-23	Projected Population By Race, Lyons, 2000-2030	P-53
P-24	Projected Population By Race, Santa Claus, 2000-2030	P-54
P-25	Projected Population By Race, Vidalia, 2000-2030	P-55
P-26	Educational Attainment, Toombs County Governments and Georgia, 1980-2000	P-20
P-27	Educational Attainment, Toombs County, Surrounding Counties, and Georgia, 1980-2000	P-22
P-28	Educational Graduation Statistics, Toombs County, Surrounding Counties, and Georgia, 2001-2007	P-56
P-29	Per Capita Income, Toombs County, Georgia, and U.S., 1980-2000	P-27
P-30	Per Capita Income, Toombs County Governments, Georgia, and U.S., 1980-2000	P-27
P-31	Median Household Income, Toombs County Governments, Georgia, and U.S., 1980-2000	P-59
P-32	Household Income Distribution, Toombs County Governments, 1980-2000	P-60
P-33	Household Income Distribution By Percentage, Toombs County and Georgia, 1980-2000	P-29
P-34	Household Income Distribution By Percentage, Municipalities, 1980-2000	P-30
ED-1	Employment by Economic Sector (Non-Farm), Toombs County, 1990-2007	ED-44
ED-2	Employment by Economic Sector, Toombs County, 1990-2006	ED-45
ED-3	Percentage Employment by Economic Sector (Non-Farm), Toombs County, 1990-2007	ED-46
ED-4	Percentage Employment by Economic Sector, Toombs County, 1990-2006	ED-47

		<b>Page</b>
ED-5	Percentage Employment by Economic Sector (Non-Farm), Georgia, 1990-2007	ED-48
ED-6	Percentage Employment by Economic Sector, Georgia, 1990-2006	ED-49
ED-7	Percentage Employment by Economic Sector, U.S., 1990-2006	ED-50
ED-8	Earnings by Economic Sector, Toombs County, 1990-2006	ED-51
ED-9	Percentage Earnings by Economic Sector, Toombs County, 1990-2006	ED-52
ED-10	Percentage Earnings by Economic Sector, Georgia, 1990-2006	ED-53
ED-11	Percentage Earnings by Economic Sector, U.S., 1990-2006	ED-54
ED-12	Average Weekly Wages, Toombs County, 1997-2007	ED-55
ED-13	Average Weekly Wages, Georgia, 1997-2007	ED-56
ED-14	Toombs County Average Weekly Wages As a Percentage of Georgia Average Weekly Wages, 1997-2007	ED-58
ED-15	Personal Income by Type, Toombs County, 1990-2000	ED-60
ED-16	Percent Personal Income by Type, Toombs County, 1990-2000	ED-60
ED-17	Percent Personal Income by Type, Georgia, 1990-2000	ED-61
ED-18	Employment by Occupation, Toombs County Governments, 1990 & 2000	ED-61
ED-19	Percentage Employment by Occupation, Toombs County Governments, 1990 & 2000	ED-63
ED-20	Percentage Employment by Occupation, Georgia, 1990 & 2000	ED-65
ED-21	Percentage Employment by Occupation, U.S., 1990 & 2000	ED-66
ED-22	Labor Force Participation, Toombs County Governments, 1990 & 2000	ED-67
ED-23	Labor Force Participation by Percentage, Toombs County Governments, 1990 & 2000	ED-69
ED-24	Georgia Labor Force Participation by Percentage, 1990 & 2000	ED-71
ED-25	U.S. Labor Force Participation by Percentage, 1990 & 2000	ED-72
ED-26	Toombs County Labor Statistics, 1990-2007	ED-73
ED-27	Unemployment Rates, Toombs County, Surrounding Counties, Georgia, and U.S., 1990-2007	ED-74
ED-28	Georgia Labor Statistics, 1990-2007	ED-75
ED-29	U.S. Labor Statistics, 1990-2007	ED-75
ED-30	Place of Residence of Workforce by County, Toombs County, 1990 & 2000	ED-76
ED-31	Place of Work of County Residents, Toombs County, 1990 & 2000	ED-76
ED-32	Toombs County Commuting Patterns, 1990 & 2000	ED-77
CFS-1	Deep Wells, City of Lyons	CF-7
CFS-2	Elevated Storage Tanks, City of Lyons	CF-8

CFS-3	Deep Well, City of Santa Claus	CF-8
CFS-4	Elevated Storage Tank, City of Santa Claus	CF-8
CFS-5	Deep Wells, City of Vidalia	CF-9
CFS-6	Elevated Storage Tanks, City of Vidalia	CF-9
CFS-7	Lift Stations, City of Lyons	CF-11
CFS-8	Lift Stations, City of Vidalia	CF-12
H-1	Toombs County Types of Housing Units, 1980-2000	H-18
H-2	Toombs County Percentage of Types of Housing Units, 1980-2000	H-19
H-3	Current and Projected Occupied Housing Units by Type, Toombs County Governments, 2000-2030	H-20
H-4	Toombs County Age of Housing by Percentage	H-21
H-5	Toombs County Condition of Housing, 1980-2000	H-22
H-6	Toombs County Occupancy Status of Housing Units, 1980-2000	H-23
H-7	Toombs County Vacancy Status of Housing Units, 1980-2000	H-26
H-8	Toombs County Owner Cost of Housing, 1980-2000	H-28
H-9	Toombs County Renter Cost of Housing, 1980-2000	H-31

## CHARTS

P-1	Percentage Change in Total Population, Toombs County Governments, Georgia, and U.S., 1980-2007	P-4
P-2	Percentage Change in Total Population, Toombs and Surrounding Counties, 1980-2000	P-6
P-3	Projected Percentage Change in Population, Toombs County Governments, 2005-2030	P-7
P-4	Percentage Change in Total Number of Households, Toombs County Governments and Georgia, 1980-2000	P-10
P-5	Projected Percentage Change in Number of Households, Toombs County and Georgia, 2000-2025	P-12
P-6	Percentage of Age Distribution in 2000, Toombs County, Georgia, and U.S.	P-15
P-7	Percent of Population By Race in 2000, Toombs County, Georgia, and U.S.	P-18
P-8	Toombs County 2000 Educational Attainment Levels	P-21
P-9	2000 Educational Attainment Levels, Toombs County, Surrounding Counties, and Georgia	P-24
P-10	Toombs County Per Capita Income as a Percentage of Per Capita Income of Georgia and the U.S., 1980-2000	P-28



P-11	Percentage Change in Per Capita Income (In Current Dollars), Toombs County, Georgia, and the U.S., 1980-2000	P-28
P-12	2000 Percentage Household Income Distribution, Toombs County Governments and Georgia	P-32
ED-1	Percentage Non-Farm Employment by Economic Sector, Toombs County, 2007	ED-4
ED-2	Percentage Employment by Economic Sector, Toombs County, 2006	ED-5
ED-3	Percentage Non-Farm Employment By Economic Sector, Georgia, 2007	ED-6
ED-4	Percentage Employment By Economic Sector, Georgia, 2006	ED-7
ED-5	Percentage Earnings By Economic Sector, Toombs County, 2006	ED-12
ED-6	Percentage Earnings By Economic Sector, Georgia, 2006	ED-13
ED-7	Average Weekly Wages By Economic Sector, Toombs County, 2007	ED-15
ED-8	Percent Change in Average Weekly Wages, Toombs County and Georgia, 1997-2007	ED-16
ED-9	Percent Personal Income By Type (In Actual Dollars), Toombs County, 2000	ED-17
ED-10	Percent Change in Total Personal Income, Toombs County and Georgia, 1990-2000	ED-18
ED-11	Percentage Employment By Occupation, Toombs County, 2000	ED-20
ED-12	Percentage Employment By Occupation, Georgia, 2000	ED-20
ED-13	Percentage Change in Total Employment By Occupation, Toombs County Governments and Georgia, 1990-2000	ED-21
ED-14	Percentage Change in Total Labor Force Participation, Toombs County and Georgia, 1990-2000	ED-23
ED-15	Unemployment Rates, Toombs County and Georgia, 1990-2007	ED-24
ED-16	Percentage Change in Total Labor Force and Number of Employed, Toombs County and Georgia, 1990-2000	ED-25
ED-17	Place of Work of Toombs County, Residents, 1990	ED-26
ED-18	Place of Work of Toombs County Residents, 2000	ED-27
ED-19	Toombs County Workforce Place of Residence by County, 1990	ED-27
ED-20	Toombs County Workforce Place of Residence by County, 2000	ED-28

**FIGURES**

H-2	Percent of Net Change in Housing Types, 1980-2000	H-2
-----	---	-----

H-3	Percent of Housing Units by Type, 1990-2000	H-3
H-4	Percent of Housing Units by Type, Toombs County, Region, and Georgia, 2000	H-4
H-5	Age of Housing by Percentage, 2000	H-6
H-6	Condition of Vacant Units, 2000	H-7
H-7	Occupancy Status of Housing Units, 2000	H-8
H-8	Vacant Units For Sale or Rent as Percent of Total Vacant, 2000	H-9
H-9	Race/Origin of Householder, 2000	H-10
H-10	Householder Age 65 & Over, 2000	H-10
H-11	Owner Cost of Housing, 2000	H-11
H-12	Median Monthly Gross Rent, 2000	H-12
H-13	Percent Owners Below Poverty Level, 2000	H-13
H-14	Percent Renters Below Poverty Level, 2000	H-14

**MAPS**      **Note: Maps are located at the end of their respective section.**

NCR-1	Toombs County National Wetlands Inventory
NCR-2	Toombs County Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas
NCR-3	Toombs County Altamaha and Ochoopee River Protected Corridors
NCR-4	Toombs County Flood Zones
NCR-5	Toombs County Soils with Development Limitations
NCR-6	Toombs County Prime Farmland
NCR-7	Toombs County Archaeological Resources
NCR-8	Toombs County Cultural Resources
NCR-9	City of Lyons Cultural Resources
NCR-10	City of Vidalia Cultural Resources
CFS-1	Toombs County Facilities
CFS-2	Toombs County Facilities (In Lyons)
CFS-3	City of Lyons Facilities
CFS-4	City of Lyons Water System
CFS-5	City of Lyons Sewer System
CFS-6	City of Santa Claus Facilities
CFS-7	City of Santa Claus Water System
CFS-8	City of Santa Claus Sewer System
CFS-9	City of Vidalia Facilities
CFS-10	City of Vidalia Water System
CFS-11	City of Vidalia Sewer System

# INTRODUCTION

## Background

Toombs County is a rural, progressive community in Southeast Georgia located just south of I-16 interchanges along U.S. 1 and Georgia 297 about 100 miles from the Atlantic Ocean. It encompasses approximately 236,000 acres, or 269 square miles, and is the 69<sup>th</sup> largest county in the state. Toombs County has a current population of about 28,000 persons (27,820 in 2007 Census estimate), approximately 2,000 persons more than its 2000 population of 26,067. It also increased population about 2,000 persons in the 1990s despite economic setbacks accompanied by the loss of many apparel manufacturing jobs. There continues to be success locally with economic diversification, and expanding community facilities and services. The community is home to an expanding Southeastern Technical College, an airport with a 6,000 foot runway, and will soon construct a new regional medical center.

The county seat is the City of Lyons with a current population of about 4,500 persons, but the larger City of Vidalia with a current population of 11,200 persons lies immediately west (partly sharing city limit boundaries). The county is home to the world famous Vidalia Sweet Onion, and it continues to be an important agriculture/forest producer because of the Vidalia Sweet Onion and other vegetable production as well as timber and pine straw production. While almost 77 percent of the county's landscape remains in verdant southern yellow pines and pastoral agriculture use, the county is a regional retail and service center.

Toombs County's growth today because of transportation, agriculture, commerce, and progressive leadership parallels its history and establishment. Early settlers to the county were primarily farmers and stockmen of Scotch Highland descent who were attracted to fertile fields and forests after the American Revolution. The great pine forests later attracted timber and naval stores entrepreneurs in the mid-1800s. The advent of railroads in the penultimate and last decades of the 1800s brought exploding growth and the creation of the municipalities of Vidalia

and Lyons. The county itself is one of Georgia's youngest (142<sup>nd</sup>) and was created in 1905 from portions of Emanuel, Montgomery, and Tattnall counties, primarily through local political outcry. Toombs County grew rapidly because of local leadership, and railroad and agricultural commerce in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. After the Great Depression and then World War II took a toll on the county, it remained relatively stable from 1930 to 1960. The County began to grow again in the 1960s because of the Vidalia Onion, economic diversification, and development of the Plant Hatch Nuclear Plant in neighboring Appling County. Growth has been relatively steady since 1970 because of progressive leadership capitalizing on the Vidalia Sweet Onion, diversifying its economic base beyond apparel manufacturing, and utilizing its location near I-16 and along U.S. Highway 1 and U.S. Highway 280.

Growth and development in Toombs County is likely to continue to enjoy steady growth and momentum from these same strengths of location, progressive leadership, existing economic strengths and position as a rural retail/service center, existing and planned infrastructure improvements, and available and expanding education, health, and airport resources. These factors will be highlighted and enhanced by the Altamaha River, the community downtowns and other cultural resources and the overall excellent quality of life.

## **Format**

The plan is organized by the two main components required by the Georgia Planning Act and the "Local Planning Requirements:" the *Community Assessment* and the *Community Agenda*. The plan does address the elements recommended for a comprehensive plan, an inventory and assessment to determine where the community is and has been, what are the current trends, and to help delineate and define issues and opportunities facing Toombs County and its municipalities. The first section of the comprehensive plan, the *Community Assessment*, provides foundation and context to decide what the community desires for its future growth and development, and how it plans to achieve its vision.

This *Community Assessment* component and its examination of the community is organized by element and the requirements of the "Local Planning Requirements." It is an

objective inventory and analysis to illustrate existing conditions, issues, needs and opportunities. It is written in executive summary format with accompanying detailed addendum to provide an overview of major findings, to illustrate current conditions and trends, and to help frame the context of identified issues and opportunities. The Executive Summary provides a concise and easily reviewed foundation for consideration by the community and its decision-makers as they proceed to develop the comprehensive plan's second, and truly most important section, the *Community Agenda*.

The *Community Agenda* will delineate an overall community vision as well as specific policies, implementation strategies for the community and its differing character areas. It outlines the implementation program and activities which the community will utilize to achieve its vision and address identified issues and opportunities. It will specify the pathways for achieving the desired patterns of growth and development and realizing the community's vision of a better place to live, work, and recreate.

This *Community Assessment* Technical Addendum and Data Appendix provides supporting data and information uncovered in the staff level inventory and analysis. Most data tables can be found in this more detailed document. It contains more exhaustive background information similar to the detailed inventory and analysis of the old comprehensive plan. This data may be of potential interest to those wanting more specific information about the community and its jurisdictions. The reader can refer to the *Community Assessment* Executive Summary for a quick glance and summary of major findings and appropriate analysis of existing conditions. The Executive Summary also provides a listing of potential issues, needs and opportunities which the community may address.

## **Purpose**

*The Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan* is a comprehensive plan prepared under the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning (Local Planning Requirements) of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. It is a joint plan for Toombs County and its municipalities of Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia. The plan was designed to meet the legislation's requirements

for each local government to have a plan for its future growth and development in accordance with the state standards. It is a full update of the previously joint comprehensive plan first adopted in 1992, but is basically a new plan, prepared under new standards.

As a comprehensive plan, *The Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan* is a critical self-examination of Toombs County and its municipalities in the areas of population, economic development, natural and cultural resources, community facilities and services, housing, land use, intergovernmental cooperation, and service delivery; and a path for the community's future growth and development. The plan is truly a reflection of the community's concerns and desires for the future.

## **Plan Development**

As stated, *The Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan* is being developed in accordance with the guidelines of the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning. It is being prepared with considerable community and public involvement, even at the *Community Assessment* stage. The Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee was comprised of elected and appointed members appointed by the Toombs County Board of Commissioners and the municipalities. This Executive Committee was responsible for policy direction and direct local government input and supervision. A Local Plan Coordination Committee will be formed to seek wide community stakeholder input and help develop the *Community Agenda*. It will be comprised of the Executive Committee members and other representatives from public and private agencies, entities, and stakeholders important to the planning process. This process will involve even more citizens. Representatives are planned to include those from the Chamber of Commerce/Development Authority, school systems, public agencies, environmental and cultural groups, social organizations, and other business and community leaders, as well as interested citizenry. This will allow for better coordination and a wider range of community input, both public and private, while insuring direct liaison and representation of a steering committee.

The public hearing required after the draft *Community Assessment* is prepared and prior to its submittal was held on a joint basis December 22, 2008 at the Vidalia City Council Chambers. The Joint Plan Executive Committee met a number of times to review and help identify any potential issues and opportunities and to delineate potential character areas. There was extensive interaction. A final meeting to review the entire *Community Assessment* in draft was also held. The Community Participation Program was reviewed and identified additional planned public and community involvement.

Staff from the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center provided general technical assistance, guidance, synthesis, analysis, mapping, writing, and editing assistance in development of this plan. However, ***The Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan*** is a plan being prepared by and for the people of Toombs County and its municipalities in the true spirit and intent of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. Ownership of this plan rests with the citizens and governments of Toombs County. The overriding concern throughout the plan's development is the idea, "What can be done to make our community a better place to live and work in the future?" It is the local citizenry who will benefit from plan implementation, and whose actions are necessary to carry out the plan and bring about their desired future.

## **EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS AND LAND USE**

### **Existing Land Use**

The existing land use patterns of Toombs County and its municipalities were examined by the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) staff in 2008 by analyzing previous land use studies, tax maps, and other available sources. A generalized land use map digitized as a layer to an existing digital base map meeting DCA requirements resulted. Standard land use classifications identified in the "Local Planning Requirements" were utilized as categories, except that "agriculture" and "forestry" were separated because of the dominance of these uses within Toombs County. The descriptions of these land use classifications are defined as follows:

#### **Land Use Category Definitions**

Residential:	The predominant use of land within the residential category is for single-family and multi-family dwelling units organized into general categories of net densities.
Commercial:	This category is for land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities, organized into general categories of intensities. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building.



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

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

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

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

**Agriculture:** This category is for land dedicated to farming, such as fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock/poultry production, etc., or other similar rural uses.

**Forestry:** Land dedicated to commercial timber or pulpwood production/harvesting or other woodland use.

**Undeveloped/Vacant:** This category is for lots or tracts of land that are served by typical urban public 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.

The existing land use maps for each jurisdiction in Toombs County can be found in the Executive Summary. Table LU-1, also found in the Executive Summary, details the existing land use acreages for the various land use classifications for Toombs County as a whole and for its unincorporated and incorporated areas. The following tables display the land use acreages by the various land use classifications for each of the county’s municipalities. Tables LU-2 through LU-4 detail the municipal land use distribution for the City of Lyons, the City of Santa Claus, and the City of Vidalia, respectively.

**TABLE LU-2**

**City of Lyons  
Existing Land Use Distribution, 2008  
(Acres)**

<b>Land Use Category</b>	<b>City of Lyons</b>	<b>Percent of City of Lyons</b>	<b>Percent of Incorporated County Total</b>
<b>Agriculture</b>	462	8.65	18.30
<b>Forestry</b>	51	0.95	71.83
<b>Residential</b>	3,422	64.05	42.90
<b>Commercial</b>	337	6.31	24.44
<b>Industrial</b>	517	9.68	21.86
<b>Public/Institutional</b>	192	3.59	45.60
<b>Park/Recreation/Conservation</b>	63	1.18	52.07
<b>Transportation/Communications/Utilities</b>	299	5.60	22.53
<b>Total</b>	5,343	100.00	33.01

**NOTE:** Percentages may not add to 100.0 because of rounding. These are only estimates, and are not 100 percent accurate because of data assumptions (see text) and computer system peculiarities.

**Source:** Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC Geographic Information System, 2008.

**Lyons.** This is the county seat of Toombs County with an estimated population of 4,480 in 2007, up from 4,169 in 2000. Attesting to the impact of the county's agricultural base on Lyons, over 1 in 7 city residents were Hispanic in 2000. The City is located just east of Vidalia (sharing some city limits) and, while slowly growing, has lost much of its commercial/retail sector to Vidalia and the area between Lyons and Vidalia between U.S. 280 and Georgia 292. The proximity to Vidalia, the location of all but one Toombs County School System schools within the town, the location of the community along U.S. 1 and the U.S. 1 North Corridor to I-16, and the community's outstanding parks and recreational facilities will continue to facilitate growth. There is residential growth expected in and near current city limits especially east and south of town and north between Vidalia and Lyons and near Racketown Road/U.S. 1. The U.S. 1 Corridor north of Lyons to I-16 is expected to be an important industrial growth corridor for Toombs County. There are needs to improve and extend public facilities and infrastructure to both accommodate and facilitate growth and development.

Nearly two-thirds of Lyons' land area is in residential use, and almost 10 percent is in agricultural or forestry use, primarily agricultural. The community's downtown and commercial areas are in need of redevelopment and upgrade, as are its entrances, especially U.S. 280 East and Georgia 292 East.

TABLE LU-3

**City of Santa Claus  
Existing Land Use Distribution, 2008  
(Acres)**

Land Use Category	City of Santa Claus	Percent of City of Santa Claus	Percent of Incorporated County Total
<b>Agriculture</b>	0	0.00	0.00
<b>Forestry</b>	20	17.09	28.17
<b>Residential</b>	69	58.97	0.87
<b>Commercial</b>	10	8.55	0.73
<b>Industrial</b>	0	0.00	0.00
<b>Public/Institutional</b>	3	2.56	0.71
<b>Park/Recreation/Conservation</b>	0	0.00	0.00
<b>Transportation/Communications/Utilities</b>	15	12.82	1.13
<b>Total</b>	117	100.00	0.72

**NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100.0 because of rounding. These are only estimates, and are not 100 percent accurate because of data assumptions (see text) and computer system peculiarities.**

**Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC Geographic Information System, 2008.**

**Santa Claus.** This small municipality is located just south of the City of Lyons along U.S. 1. True to its beginnings as post - World War II subdivision development, the City of Santa Claus remains essentially a neighborhood bedroom community to Lyons and Vidalia. Its commercial concerns are limited to a convenience store, onion processor, and a tractor/agricultural supply business. The community does possess both water and sewer facilities to support and facilitate growth, but these are limited and would need upgrade for any major growth. The community will likely continue to see slow growth because of its location, but would require annexation and accompanying facility improvements to accommodate any major growth. Nearly one-fourth of the town's citizens were of Hispanic origin in 2000. The community did have the lowest median age and the lowest percentage of persons aged 65 or more in the County in 2000. These factors again support the expected continued slow growth of the community.

Nearly 60 percent of Santa Claus' land area is in residential land use, and over one-sixth (17 percent) is in forestry use. There were no recorded agricultural, industrial or park/recreational uses in the City of Santa Claus.

**TABLE LU-4**  
**City of Vidalia**  
**Existing Land Use Distribution, 2008**  
**(Acres)**

<b>Land Use Category</b>	<b>City of Vidalia</b>	<b>Percent of City of Vidalia</b>	<b>Percent of Incorporated County Total</b>	<b>Percent of Total County</b>
<b>Agriculture</b>	2,062	19.23	81.70	3.41
<b>Forestry</b>	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Residential</b>	4,485	41.25	56.23	10.64
<b>Commercial</b>	1,032	9.62	74.84	73.77
<b>Industrial</b>	1,848	17.23	78.14	78.11
<b>Public/Institutional</b>	226	2.11	53.68	38.11
<b>Park/Recreation/Conservation</b>	58	0.54	47.93	1.58
<b>Transportation/Communications/Utilities</b>	1,013	9.45	76.34	23.02
<b>Total</b>	10,724	100.00	66.26	4.55

**NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100.0 because of rounding. These are only estimates, and are not 100 percent accurate because of data assumptions (see text) and computer system peculiarities.**

**Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC Geographic Information System, 2008.**

**Vidalia.** The City of Vidalia has a population of almost 11,500 persons (significantly up from 2000's 10,491), and is clearly the economic, social, and health care center of Toombs County. The community is a regional economic center for jobs, services, and retail trade. The City of Vidalia has its own separate school system and is home to Southeastern Technical College, a Level III regional airport, and the county's hospital. This hospital, Meadows Regional Medical Center, is in process of being replaced by a newly constructed facility between Vidalia and Lyons (in Vidalia) along U.S. 280/Georgia 292. Much of the commercial and industrial growth of Toombs County will continue to be centered in or near Vidalia, especially the area east between Vidalia and Lyons along U.S. 280 and between U.S. 280 and Georgia 292. The community has ample water/sewer capacity to accommodate expected growth, although some improvements and extensions may be required, particularly near the airport and between Vidalia and Lyons. Residential growth for Toombs County will continue to concentrate in the Greater Vidalia/Lyons area, particularly south of Vidalia from Center Road in Lyons east to Rocky Creek, Georgia 130, and the Montgomery County line. Eastern Montgomery County is also experiencing residential growth fueled by the City of Vidalia's economic utility. There are a number of areas within Vidalia, particularly north of U.S. 280 and the railroad, the downtown area and its surrounding historic residential areas, and several large abandoned industrial/commercial buildings which need redevelopment/reuse, but the community has made progress and is a Main Street Program participating community, with an active and promoted downtown improvement effort. The community is supported by progressive leadership from both the public and private sectors, including a regional chamber of commerce and a regional convention and visitors bureau.

The City of Vidalia's economic engine status for the county is evident in its land use distribution. Nearly 10 percent of city lands are commercial and over 17 percent are industrial. These totals are nearly 74 percent of the county's total commercial acreage and over 78 percent of its total industrial acreage. Nearly 40 (38.1) percent of public/institutional acreage in the county is located within Vidalia's city limits, although the category is only just over 2 percent of city acreage. Transportation/Communications/Utilities uses account for nearly 10 (9.45) percent of the city's land area, but almost a quarter (23.02 percent) of total county lands used in that

category. Just in land area, incorporated Vidalia is less than 5 (4.55) percent of total county land area. Over 40 (41.25) percent of Vidalia's land area is in residential use (significantly less than Lyons or Santa Claus, despite Vidalia's much larger population). Despite the intensity of Vidalia's land uses, nearly one-fifth (19.23 percent) of its land area is in agricultural use. This is a testament both to the economic power of the Vidalia Sweet Onion, and to the ability of the city to accommodate growth.

## **Areas Requiring Special Attention**

These areas were listed in the Executive Summary. The significant natural and cultural resources of the County from the natural side are primarily those related to the Altamaha and Ochoopee rivers, the proposed Pendleton Creek reservoir area, and the abundant forested/agricultural lands. Significant cultural resources include the historic downtowns in both Lyons and Vidalia, as well as a large historic residential area surrounding downtown in Vidalia, particularly to the south.

The growth areas previously discussed under existing and future development patterns are primarily the areas of expected land use changes and areas needing infrastructure improvement. These include north of Lyons in the U.S. 1 North corridor and north along Georgia 152 and east of Lyons along Georgia 292, and the area between Georgia 292 and U.S. 280 between Vidalia and Lyons. Within and near Vidalia, these areas include the Vidalia Airport and Ezra Taylor Road areas as well as south of Vidalia near Rocky Creek/Georgia 15/Georgia 130, and north near the Country Club. The infrastructure most in need is sewer.

Areas in need of redevelopment are mainly the downtowns and commercial areas, and entranceways into the larger municipalities. Both Vidalia and Lyons do have residential areas where revitalization efforts are needed. Large abandoned structures or sites are not major problems in Toombs County, but a number of structures related to old commercial or manufacturing activities are listed. Again, most are in or near old industrial or commercial areas.

Areas with significant infill opportunities include some significant undeveloped agricultural acreages in both larger municipalities and the larger area between the two surrounding and between Georgia 292 and U.S. 280. The City of Lyons has an area behind Pineland Paper east of U.S. 1, while the City of Vidalia has a large area along Bay Street, which was a former recreation area, available and suitable for infill development.

In addition to the downtowns and surrounding historic residential areas, particularly in Vidalia, there are also several residential areas in each community in need of redevelopment. These are areas where low incomes have prevented proper home maintenance and where housing rehabilitation or other neighborhood improvement efforts would be beneficial. These include the Mimosa Drive and Columbia Street areas in Lyons, and the Grand Street, East MLK Street, and North 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue areas in Vidalia. While Santa Claus has some vacant forested areas suitable for infill, and a few empty lots, there is not an identified area in need of redevelopment.

## **Recommended Character Areas**

These areas are shown graphically and listed by jurisdiction in the Executive Summary.

### **TOOMBS COUNTY**

**Conservation/Natural Resources Character Areas.** The abundant natural resources of Toombs County are important to its environment, pastoral landscapes, existing and future economic development, and quality of life. These resources have played a great role in the past development of the county and its existing prosperity. The pine tree continues to be important to the county's development. The natural resources and scenic landscapes of the county are also keys to future economic prosperity and growth and development through resident attraction, traditional agriculture and forestry, alternative economic enterprises, recreational and leisure development, tourism, and other economic development. These resources and attributes will require protection, managed growth, and focused, compatible development. Important natural resources of the county which deserve special attention and character area focus include the

Altamaha River Corridor; the Ochoopee River Corridor; and Pendleton Creek area because of its potential and proposed use as a possible regional reservoir.

Almost by definition, these areas would be principally limited to predominate park/recreation/conservation uses, although compatible, limited public and other uses, even residential uses, could be allowed with proper control and regulation. Properties immediately adjacent to the actual public or privately controlled natural resource areas warrant special attention and focus to limit inappropriate encroachment, and ensure continued natural functioning. The lack of county land use regulation is a major impediment to sound utilization and protection.

**Greater Vidalia/Lyons Character Area.** The City of Vidalia is the largest municipality, and the site of most of the county's commercial, industrial, and other economic activity, especially combined with the adjacent county seat, the City of Lyons. As such, the City of Vidalia will continue to be the focus and stimulus for intense development, particularly general commercial, industrial, and multi-family residential growth. The expected growth and character area will include the surrounding environs and much of the county's residential growth area south of Vidalia and Lyons south to the area known as Center, west to Montgomery County, east to Pendleton Creek, and north to the Toombs Corporate Center at U.S. 1/Georgia 130. This area would also include most of the commercial and industrial growth expected in the county and excluding the U.S. 1 Gateway Industrial Corridor along U.S. 1 from the Toombs Corporate Center to the county line (and I-16). This Greater Vidalia/Lyons area is the likely principal growth area for intense land uses because of the availability of water/sewer and other services, and because it is the existing concentrated location of facilities, services, economic development, and existing growth.

The Greater Vidalia/Lyons Character Area is and would be characterized by a mixture of all land use types, but at a higher density and intensity customary for urban areas. Apartment complexes, shopping centers, industrial parks, hospitality businesses, office complexes, governmental buildings, schools, and large community recreation facilities are examples of uses that might be unique to this character area, or at least primarily and more concentrated within. This area will require unique, and intense, public investment, regulation, and other



implementation measures. Careful planning, attention, regulation and public investment of the gateway, Toombs Corporate Center, the remaining community entranceways, the airport, as well as the surrounding growth areas, particularly between Vidalia and Lyons, are important to preserving the uniqueness and attractiveness of Vidalia/Toombs County while keeping it a thriving, regional economic center. Special attention to new developments, downtowns, highway corridors, industrial/airport areas, and unincorporated residential developments can create new quality growth and development to transition to and enhance the existing special areas and characteristics of the community. Community guidance and land use regulation in the Surrounding Urban Fringe, Toombs Corporate Center, the U.S. 1 Gateway Industrial Corridor, other highway corridors, and other areas outside the incorporated limits of Vidalia and Lyons will require the coordination, planning and cooperation of Toombs County and the municipalities of Vidalia and Lyons. Growth within the individual city limits could be managed by the municipalities themselves, although the lack of coordination with the adjacent county areas and Santa Claus could pose problems and difficulties.

**U.S. 1 Gateway Industrial Corridor.** The U.S. 1 North Corridor from the Toombs Corporate Center at U.S. 1 (located at the intersection of U.S. 1 North and Georgia Highway 130) north to the Emanuel County line (and likely on to I-16) and also the unincorporated east side of U.S. 1 from the Corporate Center back to the City of Lyons is a recognized growth corridor, especially for commercial and industrial businesses. This potential for industrial growth has already been recognized by the community with the location of the Toombs Corporate Center at U.S. 1. This potential and probability exists because of the highway's access to I-16 just north of the county line and U.S. 1's planned upgrade to multi-lane status as a developmental highway. The community constructed one speculative building at Toombs Corporate Center after initial development of the park and actually attracted one manufacturing concern (Simonton Windows) to the park, although this business has now closed. Before this business closed, the community constructed another speculative building, and so the Toombs Corporate Center at U.S. 1 already has available services and buildings making it even more attractive to future prospects.

This corridor currently remains relatively undeveloped and principally in agriculture and forestry use with some light residential use outside of the Toombs Corporate Center, which as

noted before is presently not occupied. This offers the chance to influence the development of an attractive gateway with quality growth and nodal developments and to further add to the attractiveness of Toombs County for growth and development location.

This corridor will again be characterized by a mixture of all land use types, but increasingly will be changing to greater commercial/industrial and public use. It is this change that necessitates special attention for public infrastructure, land use regulation, and other implementation policies and strategies of public guidance. This special attention and guidance will require coordination and cooperation by Toombs County, the City of Lyons, the City of Vidalia, the Toombs County Development Authority, and other public and private agencies. Such cooperation and coordination will help assure that the desired pattern and quality of envisioned growth and development results. The current lack of regulation outside the incorporated areas of the corridor is an impediment and counteraction to this desired pattern and quality of growth.

**Rural Toombs County Character Area.** The vast majority of Toombs County with its stable forestry/agricultural/rural land uses will be the largest character area. The many agricultural fields, verdant pine forests, the Altamaha and Ochoopee rivers, Pendleton Creek, and other natural and cultural assets offer attractions for residential growth to take advantage of the atmosphere, open spaces, and quality of life. These intrinsic values are made even more attractive by the many services, economic and educational opportunities, and cultural activities offered by Vidalia and Lyons. There are also advantages and potentials for economic development in a broader sense including agriculture, forestry, tourism, recreational, and value added concerns.

**Rural Village Centers.** There are several areas in Toombs County located primarily at the intersection of principal county roads or along state routes where small, unincorporated communities, or historic rural villages, have developed often around a church, country store, or the like. These unincorporated communities are essentially small town residential neighborhoods with a sense of identity, but most often without community facilities, and certainly without incorporation. There is only limited public/institutional and limited, supportive commercial/service uses. This rural community setting and character may also require special

public investment and land use regulation to nurture, and protect, and to assure continued quality nodal development supportive of the existing identity and surrounding countryside vista. Three relatively well-developed current rural village centers are identified as recommended character areas, including Normantown Community at the intersections of old and new Normantown Roads in northern Toombs County, and Johnson Corner and Cedar Crossing communities along State Route Georgia 56 in southern Toombs County. Cedar Crossing is the most developed, including having an official public recreation area.

This remaining unincorporated area is primarily still characterized by forestry and agricultural (livestock and row/forage crops) uses. There is also scattered residential and neighborhood type commercial and public/institutional uses as well as transportation/communications/utilities uses, but in a rural setting. The future uses are envisioned with similar rural character land uses, although public park/recreation/conservation uses would need to be enhanced, especially along the Altamaha River and Ochoopee River corridors. There will be pockets of more intense residential growth, particularly near water bodies and existing residential developments. However, much of this residential development is expected south of Vidalia and Lyons surrounding Rocky Creek, Georgia 130, and Center Road in the Greater Vidalia/Lyons area. There is a need for supporting land use regulation, and for the community to proactively manage, guide, and direct growth and development, and to protect its landscape and natural and cultural resources. This could also be helped through careful, controlled community investment and location of facilities, including paved roads, as well as through appropriate, coordinated land use regulation.

### **CITY OF VIDALIA**

As noted before, the City of Vidalia is the center of urban activity and the economic engine for Toombs County. Given its size and importance, it is appropriate for the jurisdiction to have a number of character areas where differing objectives, types and intensity of public investment, special regulations, and other public guidance and unique implementation measures will likely be appropriate. Recommended character areas include Historic Downtown; Downtown Commercial, East and West; the U.S. 280/Georgia 292 Vidalia East Growth Area; the Meadows Medical Complex; the Airport Industrial Area; the South Vidalia Historic

Residential Area; the Northside and Third Street Redevelopment Areas; gateway corridors along U.S. 280 West, Georgia Highway 292, Georgia Highway 297, and Georgia Highway 15; as well as the urban remainder and urban fringe in the Vidalia/Lyons Area.

Historic Downtown Vidalia is an approximate 12-15 block area and a large concentration of commercial, governmental, and institutional buildings, most of which are historic, representing the heart and nerve center of community activity. It is bounded on the south by Third Street; on the north by the railroad, except for two blocks between the railroad and Pine Street; on the east by Durden Street; and on the west by Adams Street/Georgia 130. Historic Downtown Vidalia should have a focus to continue its vitality and mix of intense use of all types, including residential on upper floors. Strategies need to protect its historic nature, uniqueness of character, blend of uses, and a human, pedestrian oriented scale. The community has already made much progress in establishing more appropriate streetscapes and organizing public/private efforts. Community downtown efforts are currently focused and assisted by a Main Street Program and Downtown Development Authority.

Because of the recent one-way pairing through downtown Vidalia of U.S. 280 (First Street as U.S. 280 East and South Main Street as U.S. 280 West), an elongated downtown has been created. This has placed former adjacent and newer strip commercial developments in essentially downtown. This has been recognized through the recommendation for additional character areas for downtown Vidalia, Downtown Commercial East and Downtown Commercial West. These areas would have similar strategies and are the area within the one-way pairing area of U.S. 280, but are separated from each other by the aforementioned Historic Downtown. These areas need guidance, investment, redevelopment and streetscape improvements to better create a more attractive connectivity, better landscaped, environment which invites more human scale and pedestrian traffic while accommodating automobile traffic flow and viable economic activity.

To the south of Historic Downtown Vidalia is a large South Vidalia Historic Residential Area surrounding Jackson Street/Georgia 15 with a very large collection of historic residential structures recognized as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district. This again offers an interaction of commercial interests and economic

opportunities, as well as a chance to enhance the human scale and pedestrian activity downtown. Many of the homes directly along Jackson Street have been converted to attractive office, light commercial and institutional uses.

To the north of downtown, is the large Northside Vidalia Redevelopment Area where the City is already concentrating efforts to improve public infrastructure, upgrade and preserve private housing, and stimulate further investment to provide appropriate and affordable housing. There may also be the potential for another National Register residential historic district. At the same time, there is much opportunity to reenergize the City as a desired place to live and to further connect downtown on a human and pedestrian scale. East of the South Vidalia Historic Residential Area is the Third Street Redevelopment Area where older housing has not yet exhibited the needs of Northside Vidalia and where public focus has not yet been so intensely directed, but which warrants similar future public and private attention.

The Meadows Medical Complex Area recognizes the many health care facilities and services available in the community, and is the current location of the community's Meadows Regional Medical Center. Together, along with associated health care professionals, this institution allows the community to provide facilities and services rivaling larger population centers. These facilities and services add much to the quality of life and community attractiveness, as well as contributing substantially to the local community. This regional status and leadership needs to continue to be nurtured, protected and expanded. With the proposed construction of a new regional hospital at a location along U.S. 280 in the Vidalia U.S. 280 East Growth Area, there is more impetus to keep the current area vital and to reuse the old hospital when it is abandoned.

Connecting the Downtown Commercial East Area from the one-way pair area at U.S. 280 to Lyons is the U.S. 280/Georgia 292 Vidalia East Growth Area. This area has been noted as the coming location of new commercial and institutional growth, including the new regional hospital. The community wants to do more to continue to approve aesthetics and to connect this outlying development with the downtown of both Vidalia and Lyons. This will further the concept of human scale and interface and pedestrian connectivity. The strategy should be to

make a more unique and better landscaped community with identifiable charm and connectivity, while continuing to nurture desired economic activity.

The Airport Industrial Area includes the important Vidalia Regional Airport, a Level III facility with a 6,000 foot runway impressive for a community the size of Vidalia/Toombs County, the existing industrial park, the Toombs Corporate Center, and a newly acquired adjacent industrial site adjacent to the airport. This site needs to be fully developed with infrastructure and protected both internally and on surrounding lands through appropriate, coordinated regulation and public investment. This will enhance the attractiveness of the area for development and increase the need for prompt coordinated regulation, protection, and infrastructure preparation.

The gateway corridors of U.S. 280 West, Georgia Highway 297, Georgia Highway 292, and Georgia Highway 15 all are important for connecting local and through traffic as well as those traveling I-16 (Georgia 297), with Downtown Vidalia, the U.S. 280 East Growth Area, and Lyons. These entranceways need to be enhanced and made more attractive both to automobile and non-automobile modes of traffic. Georgia 292 is especially in need of redevelopment. They need to be calling cards inviting visitors to explore the community further. They also need to be arterials which are both visually appealing and ones which promote the human scale and connectivity sought and promoted elsewhere in the community. This will require public and private investment, proper and coordinated planning, and appropriate regulation and incentives.

The remainder of the urban area would be a mixture of uses, but with declining intensity and density as the distance increases from the downtown core. This area is primarily stable neighborhoods with varying residential use. Principal implementation measures needed are zoning protection and appropriate infrastructure maintenance or improvement. Pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and improvement may also be appropriate.

### **CITY OF LYONS**

As the second largest municipality in Toombs County and with Lyons' location immediately adjacent to the east of Vidalia along U.S. 280 and Georgia 292, it appropriately has

several recommended character areas. This is especially so given the spillover growth of the community from Vidalia and the location of all but one of the county's schools on a campus in the town's south. Recommended character areas include Historic Downtown Lyons, Downtown Commercial, the U.S. 280/Georgia 292 West Commercial Area, the Georgia 292 East Commercial Corridor, the Educational Complexes Area, the Toombs Corporate Center, the adjacent U.S. 1 Gateway Industrial Corridor, the urban U.S. 1 North and U.S. 1 South Gateway Corridors, and the Southeast and Northeast Neighborhood Redevelopment Areas.

Historic Downtown Lyons is a relatively small, approximately four block area surrounding the railroad and U.S. Highway 1. It is bounded on the south by Liberty Avenue, on the north by Columbia Avenue, on the east by Lanier Street, and the west by Washington Street. This commercial center needs continuing revitalization and aesthetic enhancement, as well as improved pedestrian/bicycle connectivity. The downtown already has seen ongoing public and private improvements and redevelopment. Lyons participates in the Better Hometown Program, a program of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for smaller communities similar to the Main Street Program, and has an active Lyons Merchants Association. The community also has created a "Tales of the Altamaha" play which is performed annually in a revitalized theater downtown.

To the east and west of the historic downtown core are developing commercial and mixed use areas, described as Downtown Commercial, with newer developments and transitioning land uses. These are essentially the downtown area with similar north/south boundaries (except the western area which drops one block further south to West Grady Avenue), but extending east to 10<sup>th</sup> Street and west to Johnson Street. The eastern part in particular is in need of aesthetic improvements and radical redevelopment. These areas need guidance, investment, redevelopment, streetscape improvements, and likely infrastructure upgrades because of age. This more intense attention will better create a more inviting and attractive environment for increased economic vitality. It should also increase landscaped and pedestrian connectivity to the historic downtown core and surrounding residential areas and nearby recreation parks.

The growth expected between Vidalia and Lyons along and between U.S. 280 and Georgia Highway 292 is recognized in the U.S. 280/Georgia 292 West Commercial Corridor

recommended character area. It is located immediately west of the western part of the Downtown Commercial Area. As noted throughout, the area east of Vidalia between U.S. 280 and Georgia 292 is the fastest growing area for new commercial/industrial and public/institutional uses. It directly connects to the Vidalia U.S. 280 East Growth Area. As noted under that recommended character area description, the community wants to continue to approve aesthetics and connectivity to the historic downtowns of both municipalities while nurturing economic activity with unique and identifiable charm. This calls for coordinated planning and guidance and directed, coordinated public investment, infrastructure, and landscaping. The eastern Downtown Commercial area is adjoined by the Georgia 292 East Commercial Corridor. This is a gateway area with older industrial and commercial uses interspersed with residential and open space uses. The area needs to be redeveloped with an eye to creating an attractive and inviting entranceway, with more coordinated and unified development. There should be improved landscaping and pedestrian/bicycle connectivity to downtown. Other intown entranceways with the need to be inviting to visitors and community calling cards are the U.S. 1 North and South Gateway Corridors. This is particularly so when U.S. 1 is finally multi-laned and becomes Toombs County's principal arterial connection to I-16 and the outside world. These entranceways need to be visually appealing and connective of mixed uses and human interaction as well as encouraging to pedestrian and bicycle use. This will require proper and coordinated planning, public and private investment, and appropriate regulation. The residential areas on U.S. 1 North need particular protection and improved connection, while connectivity to Partin Park on U.S. 1 South is particularly important.

The Educational Complexes Area is a large area between U.S. 1 South and surrounding Center Drive in southwest Lyons. It is home to the new Lyons High School, the Toombs County Middle School, and adjacent to U.S. 1 South, the Lyons Upper Elementary School completed in 2008. Only the Primary School is now located elsewhere in town, but likely will be replaced by a new school in the same "complexes area." Toombs Central School is located near Cedar Crossing. This school system location and adjoining lands suitable for expansion are recommended as a character area because of related special needs, including infrastructure improvement, traffic management, and special land use/zoning regulation issues.



North of the old city limits, and now annexed to the City of Lyons, is the Toombs Corporate Center at U.S. 1, the community's new business/industrial park in the anticipated corridor of future growth toward I-16. The adjacent lands along U.S. 1 on its eastern side are unincorporated areas not currently part of the City of Lyons, but are in the U.S. 1 Gateway Industrial Corridor. This Gateway Industrial Corridor and the Toombs Corporate Center itself and their importance and community needs were discussed previously under the Toombs County recommended character area descriptions. The community's desire to encourage quality growth and develop a calling card with an attractive, planned pattern of particularly well-developed and unified commercial/industrial growth is at risk because of the lack of appropriate and implementing land use regulation in the unincorporated areas.

The Southeast Neighborhood and Northeast Neighborhood Redevelopment Areas are older residential areas surrounding the Downtown Commercial East Area. As older residential areas, these neighborhoods are comprised of an aging housing stock which needs to be rehabilitated and improved to protect this intown residential use. Such protection of the intown housing supply and its continued human use protects the vitality of the city and the need for commercial and service uses to serve the resulting population. It takes people to make a neighborhood and a city, and they require a decent, safe, and sanitary place to reside within a surrounding stable neighborhood. The remainder of Lyons' incorporated area remains primarily residential, although with a mixture of urban uses, and a significant percentage of agricultural use. This area needs similarly to be protected for stable residential use. Stable neighborhoods need to be encouraged with proper attention to preserving the housing stock, encouraging increased density of residential use, providing for appropriate infill development, and maintaining appropriate municipal and private investment in infrastructure and public facilities. This would require planning, guidance, appropriate regulation, and further infrastructure investment.

### **CITY OF SANTA CLAUS**

The City of Santa Claus is a character area in and of itself, but is located within the Greater Vidalia/Lyons Character Area. As noted earlier, the City of Santa Claus is essentially a neighborhood created in the early years after World War II, although it does have both water and

sewer services available. This infrastructure is limited however, and would need expansion to accommodate much growth. Santa Claus' location near the City of Lyons and its county schools and along U.S. 1 is conducive to future growth. The location of a significant percentage of undeveloped forest lands also provides room for growth. Additional growth needs to protect the existing small town ambience, respect the existing scale and density, serve the population, and overall be compatible and enhance community attractiveness. This growth is likely to continue to be predominately low-density residential with possibly some supportive neighborhood commercial and new public/institutional uses. Nurturing and managing this desired growth will require coordinated planning, increased pedestrian/bicycle connectivity to Lyons and the public schools, guidance and protection through appropriate regulation, and additional public investment in supportive facilities and infrastructure.

# **ANALYSIS OF CONSISTENCY WITH QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES**

## **Introduction**

The Quality Community Objectives are guidance targets established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs in the “Local Planning Requirements” in preparation and implementation of a local comprehensive plan. They further elaborate the identified Statewide Planning Goals. A local government is required to evaluate the consistency of their policies, activities, and development patterns with these goals and objectives.

In general, Toombs County and its municipalities’ policies, activities, and development patterns are supportive of and consistent with the Statewide Planning Goals. Variation of the statewide goals were all espoused in the currently adopted joint comprehensive plan. Some of this consistency, however, is due to a lack of growth pressure in the small towns or outside the Greater Vidalia/Lyons area, and the county’s abundant forest and agricultural lands. The high incidence of poverty and low incomes, the fact that population levels have steadily grown rather rapidly, and the abundance of agricultural and forest lands have resulted in quality environments without much development threat. The lack of comprehensive, existing land use regulation, the fragmentation of the forest industry, and the existing quality of life and location could pose threats and conflicts to continuation of desired growth patterns as more growth and development, including residential, is attracted to Toombs County.

## **Statewide Planning Goals**

The following Statewide Planning Goals are generally supported by Toombs County and its municipalities’ policies, activities, and development patterns.

**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.

**Comment:** This is and has been a principal goal of all of Toombs County. Vidalia/Toombs County is a rural retail/service center, but continues to actively pursue a multi-faceted economic development strategy.

**Natural and Cultural Resources Goal:** To conserve and protect the environmental, natural and cultural resources of Georgia's communities, regions and the state.

**Comment:** This is important to all of Toombs County, especially because of the Altamaha River, the Ochopee River, other important creeks, the many agricultural/forestry lands, and its attractiveness to sportsmen. It was a key strategy in the community's first joint comprehensive plan, and has been consistently expressed as a public and community desire. The community is also trying to develop a regional reservoir for multi-purpose use.

**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.

**Comment:** Toombs County and its municipalities all strive to have adequate infrastructure to serve existing and future populations and to attract economic development, but they are limited by relatively small tax bases and low incomes. The community's attention to having available water, sewer, and technology services; in having and continuing to develop a Level III airport; in planning and developing a new regional hospital; and in keeping its industrial parks current all speak with evidence of careful attention and implementation of this goal.

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

**Comment:** This is a continuing desire for all of Toombs County, but is made more difficult by low incomes. Both the City of Vidalia and the City of Lyons have long histories of programs of community improvement, including Community Development Block Grant programs to improve housing.

**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.

**Comment:** The need for transportation infrastructure improvements and corridor development, especially the U.S. 1 Corridor, and the Vidalia Regional Airport, as well as the Georgia 15/29, Georgia 297, and Georgia 292 corridors, are keys to future growth and development in Toombs County, but there is currently almost no land use regulation outside of Vidalia and Lyons.

**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.

**Comment:** Toombs County's governments have long cooperated and worked well together in economic development and providing services, and in implementing, both within the county and with its neighbors. The community has a regional Chamber of Commerce and Convention and Visitors Bureau, and is cooperating with Emanuel County to provide rail service to the U.S. 1 North Corridor. This will be a continuing strategy.

## Quality Community Objectives

Consistency with these elaborations of the Statewide Planning Goals is more problematic since many do not seem to be especially applicable to a rural county, and since many also assume the existence of local land use regulation. The assessment tool survey of DCA was utilized in the initial draft assessment, but each Quality Community Objective is listed below with comment on Toombs County and its municipalities. The DCA Quality Community Objectives Local Assessment survey tool with the actual Toombs County responses is attached at the end of this section. There is more agreement with the actual objectives than with the survey.

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

**Comment:** Toombs County has always identified and cooperated in a regional identity of Georgia’s “Pine Belt” and Altamaha River Valley, as a part of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, and in joint projects with neighboring counties, such as Southeastern Technical College, the Toombs/Montgomery Chamber, and the Altamaha River Partnership. This is not an issue.

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

**Comment:** This is an objective which is a basic expression of the purpose of a comprehensive plan, was addressed in the old plan, and will be addressed in this plan. There are unmet needs and issues in all of these subareas within Toombs County and its municipalities. The City of Vidalia, in particular, has been proactive in its infrastructure planning, economic development preparation, addressing housing issues, and ordinance

development. There is only rudimentary land use/growth management regulation outside of Vidalia and Lyons.

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

**Comment:** Continued diverse economic development is a key to sustained future growth of Toombs County as a whole, and the maintenance of its status as a rural retail/service and economic jobs center. It is realized that current education levels/job skills somewhat limit economic development. The community is proud and supportive of its Southeastern Technical College. It is also desired that the existing quality of life and natural and cultural resources of the county be protected and be utilized in tourism and economic development attraction.

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

**Comment:** The community is proud of its secondary school programs, city and county schools, and the facilities/programs of Southeastern Technical College, but wants to continue to improve both programs and facilities. They are pursuing being a designated regional entrepreneur-friendly community as part of a multi-faceted economic development strategy. There are continuing needs.

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

**Comment:** This is a continuing issue within Toombs County, especially in the context of the global economy and current economic downturn. It is a strong community desire to

continue to be vigilant to retain and attract high paying jobs and to provide jobs for local educated youth. The community has been relatively successful in diversifying its economic base after the collapse of its strong apparel manufacturing presence since the 1990s.

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

**Comment:** This is an expressed desire of all of Toombs County, but would be made more difficult under increased growth pressure because of a lack of zoning and comprehensive land use regulation outside of Vidalia and Lyons. There is some growth pressure being felt in rural Toombs County because of location, the availability of services and jobs, and the rural quality of life. The City of Vidalia has made this a priority through its support of Downtown Vidalia, its reuse of its local historic homes for local business/offices and other means. The City of Lyons has similarly directed attention to its downtown, preservation and reuse of its old depot, and development of the cultural drama, "Tales of the Altamaha."

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

**Comment:** Toombs County has long prized its Altamaha River and Ochopee River corridors and their natural and scenic beauty. The community support is also evidenced through the advocacy of a regional reservoir near Pendleton Creek in its northwest corner. This has not been a pressing local issue because of the large existing amount of agricultural and forested lands which dominate existing land use, but there are no existing



mechanisms to achieve future set asides, especially given the lack of basic zoning and comprehensive land use regulation.

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

**Comment:** Environmental protection is not perceived as a strong local issue, but one for the state. However, there is recognition of the importance of the county's natural resources, and the need for their protection. There is minimal existing protection outside Vidalia and Lyons through solid waste and health department regulation. Again, there is a general local desire to protect natural and cultural resources and quality of life. Despite this expressed desire, there is a lack of supportive land use regulation.

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

**Comment:** There has been great success in Toombs County in local and regional cooperation as noted elsewhere. Some of these include economic development, education, service provision, and the Altamaha River Partnership. This is not an issue.

**Transportation Alternatives Objective:** Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.

**Comment:** This is not truly applicable to Toombs County as large scale alternatives to the automobile in such a large rural county are not realistic. There are some needs, especially given the age of the population and low incomes. There is no local public

general purpose transit system, although the county is served by DHR's Coordinated Transit. There is a desire to improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

**Regional Solutions Objective:** Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.

**Comment:** As noted earlier, there have been many successes in intergovernmental cooperation in Toombs County both within the county and with other counties. There are no serious Service Delivery controversies. This is not a serious issue.

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

**Comment:** Housing costs are relatively affordable in Toombs County, but there has been significant reliance on manufactured homes because of low incomes. All who work in Toombs County can afford to live there, but there are housing condition problems and some cost burdened household issues. The cities of Lyons and Vidalia have taken progressive steps in addressing housing improvement issues through use of CDBG programs and active housing authorities.

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

**Comment:** This is truly not applicable to Toombs County, especially since even Lyons could be considered a "traditional neighborhood." Vidalia and Lyons, as noted earlier, are both seeking to maintain neighborhood stability through a variety of means. There is no identified local market for neo-traditional developments at this time. People want to

live either in Vidalia, Lyons, or Santa Claus, near them on relatively large lots, or more likely, large lots (an acre or more) in Toombs County to preserve rural character.

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

**Comment:** There is some vacant land, particularly infill residential lots, and more in need of redevelopment, within all three municipalities, and there is a desire for more intense residential, commercial, and industrial developments to locate in or near Vidalia/Lyons, particularly between Vidalia and Lyons in the U.S. 280/Georgia 292 growth areas or near the Vidalia Regional Airport, or in the new Toombs Corporate Center at U.S. 1 north of Lyons. This is likely to happen in any event because the largest public sewerage in the county is operated by the City of Vidalia, because of the availability of lands and nearby service, transportation facilities, and because of sheer existing development size of Vidalia as an economic and service center. There are also some opportunities for development within all the municipalities as undeveloped lands (or agriculture/forestry use) constitute large percentages of their land area, and all have at least limited public sewerage systems available. However, past extensions of services outside incorporated areas, the availability of relatively cheap land and subdivisions on urban fringes, and the lack of coordinated land use regulations all work against this objective to some degree.

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

**Comment:** The development and redevelopment of the downtowns of both Vidalia and Lyons have been expressed as an important concern for the community and an important focal point for future growth and development. Downtown Vidalia remains a key community focal point for shopping, dining, government, meeting, cultural, and landmark uses at this point, and there is a desire that this continue. The community participates in the Main Street Program for downtown revitalization. There is also much attention to Downtown Lyons through the Better Hometown Program, the Lyons Merchants Association, and the City itself. Santa Claus doesn't have a traditional downtown, but there is a desire to encourage development appropriate and compatible with its historic residential character, and to preserve as much historic character and charm as possible.

*Quality Community Objectives  
Local Assessment  
Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus and Vidalia*

<b>Development Patterns</b>			
<b>Traditional Neighborhoods</b>			
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. If we have a zoning code, it does not separate commercial, residential and retail uses in every district.		X	Lyons and Vidalia do have zoning ordinances, but both do separate uses as desired by their residents. Toombs County and Santa Claus are unregulated.
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	This might be allowed through a "Planned Unit Development" in the Lyons/Vidalia ordinances
3. We have a street tree ordinance that requires new development to plant shade bearing trees appropriate to our climate.	X	X	Vidalia has a Greenspace Ordinance Lyons - No
4. Our community has an organized tree-planting campaign in public areas that will make walking more comfortable in the summer.	X		Neither community participates in the Tree City Program, but both have streetscape and tree planting improvements as part of downtown efforts
5. We have a program to keep our public areas (commercial, retail districts, parks) clean and safe.	X		Vidalia Beautification Committee Lyons – Public Works/Prison details.
6. Our community maintains its sidewalks and vegetation well so that walking is an option some would choose.	X		
7. In some areas several errands can be made on foot, if so desired.	X		
8. Some of our children can and do walk to school safely.		X	Safety concerns
9. Some of our children can and do bike to school safely.		X	Safety concerns
10. Schools are located in or near neighborhoods in our community.		X	Only Sally Meadows in Vidalia and Cedarwood Program in Lyons.

*Quality Community Objectives  
Local Assessment  
Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus and Vidalia*

<b>Infill Development</b>			
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has an inventory of vacant sites and buildings that are available for redevelopment and/or infill development.	X		Chamber/Development Authority overall for industry; the Main Street Program in Vidalia and Better Hometown Program in Lyons for downtowns
2. Our community is actively working to promote brownfield redevelopment.		X	None known
3. Our community is actively working to promote greyfield redevelopment.	X		Active Chamber and two local realtors concentrate on commercial infill
4. We have areas of our community that are planned for nodal development (compacted near intersections rather than spread along a major road).		X	
5. Our community allows small lot development (5,000 square feet or less) for some uses.		X	Smallest lot development in Vidalia is 8,000 square feet (R-3 zone) Smallest in Lyons is 5,000 square feet in R-2 zone for manufactured homes
<b>Sense of Place</b>			
<b>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.</b>			
	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		Because of downtowns and the Vidalia Sweet Onion
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		Historic downtowns and residential areas either on or in process of nomination to National Register of Historic Places
3. We have ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas.	X	X	Vidalia – Yes Lyons – No
4. We have ordinances to regulate the size and type of signage in our community.	X		Lyons limited

*Quality Community Objectives  
Local Assessment  
Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus and Vidalia*

5. We offer a development guidebook that illustrates the type of new development we want in our community.		X	
6. If applicable, our community has a plan to protect designated farmland.		X	Both Lyons and Vidalia zoning ordinances have Agricultural Zones
<b>Transportation Alternatives</b>			
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have public transportation in our community.		X	No general public transit, although do have DHR Coordinated Transit
2. We require that new development connects with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit.		X	
3. We have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.	X		
4. We have a sidewalk ordinance in our community that requires all new development to provide user-friendly sidewalks.		X	
5. We require that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks wherever possible.		X	Encouraged in Vidalia through site plan review process
6. We have a plan for bicycle routes through our community.		X	There is a regional plan. Lyons has proposed connection from Depot to downtown and Partin Park
7. We allow commercial and retail development to share parking areas wherever possible.	X		
<b>Regional Identity</b>			
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage.	X		

*Quality Community Objectives  
Local Assessment  
Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus and Vidalia*

2. Our community is connected to the surrounding region for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.	X		Vidalia Sweet Onion processing
3. Our community encourages businesses that create products that draw on our regional heritage (mountain, agricultural, metropolitan, coastal, etc.).	X		
4. Our community participates in the Georgia Department of Economic Development's regional tourism partnership.	X		Magnolia Midlands
5. Our community promotes tourism opportunities based on the unique characteristics of our region.	X		Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau; ORCA; "Tales of the Altamaha"
6. Our community contributes to the region, and draws from the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment and education.	X		See tourism above
<b><i>Resource Conservation</i></b>			
<b>Heritage Preservation</b>			
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have designated historic districts in our community.	X		Vidalia Downtown; Lyons in progress of downtown
2. We have an active historic preservation commission.		X	
3. We want new development to complement our historic development, and we have ordinances in place to ensure this.		X	



*Quality Community Objectives  
Local Assessment  
Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus and Vidalia*

<b>Open Space Preservation</b>			
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has a greenspace plan.		X	Vidalia has Greenspace Ordinance, but really landscaping focus; Lyons – No
2. Our community is actively preserving greenspace, either through direct purchase or by encouraging set-asides in new development.		X	Vidalia has purchased lands for new large regional community park
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	
<b>Environmental Protection</b>			
<b>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.</b>			
	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.			N/A
3. We have identified our defining natural resources and taken steps to protect them.		X	
4. Our community has passed the necessary "Part V" environmental ordinances, and we enforce them.		X	
5. Our community has a tree preservation ordinance which is actively enforced.	X	X	Vidalia – Yes Lyons – No
6. Our community has a tree-replanting ordinance for new development.	X	X	See above

*Quality Community Objectives  
Local Assessment  
Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus and Vidalia*

7. We are using stormwater best management practices for all new development.	X		Both Lyons and Vidalia
8. We have land use measures that will protect the natural resources in our community (steep slope regulations, floodplain or marsh protection, etc.).		X	Soil Erosion/Sedimentation only
<b><i>Social and Economic Development</i></b>			
<b>Growth Preparedness</b>			
<b>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, 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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have population projections for the next 20 years that we refer to when making infrastructure decisions.	X		In EPD Water Permits and Comp Plan
2. Our local governments, the local school board, and other decision-making entities use the same population projections.		X	
3. Our elected officials understand the land-development process in our community.	X		
4. We have reviewed our development regulations and/or zoning code recently, and believe that our ordinances will help us achieve our QCO goals.	X		Key – our goals Continue to evaluate, when appropriate
5. We have a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.	X		
6. We have designated areas of our community where we would like to see growth, and these areas are based on a natural resources inventory of our community.		X	Have designated/desired areas but not based on a natural resources inventory
7. We have clearly understandable guidelines for new development.	X	X	Local zoning ordinances in Vidalia and Lyons; None in County/Santa Claus
8. We have a citizen-education campaign to allow all interested parties to learn about development processes in our community.		X	

*Quality Community Objectives  
Local Assessment  
Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus and Vidalia*

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		Public meetings/newspaper
10. We have a public-awareness element in our comprehensive planning process.	X		
<b>Appropriate Businesses</b>			
<b>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 skill job opportunities.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our economic development organization has considered our community's strengths, assets and weaknesses, and has created a business development strategy based on them.	X		
2. Our economic development organization has considered the types of businesses already in our community, and has a plan to recruit businesses and/or industries that will be compatible.	X		Chamber/Development Authority reevaluating and developing new formal strategy
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		Diversified from former apparel manufacturing over reliance
<b>Employment Options</b>			
<b>A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our economic development program has an entrepreneur support program.	X		
2. Our community has jobs for skilled labor.	X		Need additional
3. Our community has jobs for unskilled labor.	X		
4. Our community has professional and managerial jobs.	X		

*Quality Community Objectives  
Local Assessment  
Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus and Vidalia*

<b>Housing Choices</b>			
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community allows accessory units like garage apartments or mother-in law units.	X		
2. People who work in our community can also afford to live in the community.	X		
3. Our community has enough housing for each income level (low, moderate and above-average).	X		Lyons considers itself weak in moderate income availability
4. We encourage new residential development to follow the pattern of our original town, continuing the existing street design and maintaining small setbacks.		X	
5. We have options available for loft living, downtown living, or "neo traditional" development.	X		Vidalia and Lyons both have
6. We have vacant and developable land available for multifamily housing.	X		
7. We allow multifamily housing to be developed in our community.	X		
8. We support community development corporations that build housing for lower-income households.	X		
9. We have housing programs that focus on households with special needs.		X	Some migrant housing resources available as well as both have housing authorities
10. We allow small houses built on small lots (less than 5,000 square feet) in appropriate areas.		X	Noted earlier

*Quality Community Objectives  
Local Assessment  
Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus and Vidalia*

<b>Educational Opportunities</b>			
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community provides workforce training options for its citizens.	X		Southeastern Tech, state programs, WIA
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		Southeastern Tech; Brewton Parker College, Georgia Southern University
4. Our community has job opportunities for college graduates, so that our children may live and work here if they choose.	X		Need more
<b>Governmental Relations</b>			
<b>Regional Solutions</b>			
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We participate in regional economic development organizations.	X		Chamber, Tourism, Middle Coastal Unified Development Authority
2. We participate in regional environmental organizations and initiatives, especially regarding water quality and quantity issues.	X		Altamaha River Partnership; Proposed Pendleton Creek Reservoir
3. We work with other local governments to provide or share appropriate services, such as public transit, libraries, special education, tourism, parks and recreation, emergency response, E-911, homeland security, etc.	X		
4. Our community thinks regionally, especially in terms of issues like land use, transportation and housing, understanding that these go beyond local government borders.	X		

*Quality Community Objectives*  
*Local Assessment*  
*Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus and Vidalia*

<b>Regional Cooperation</b>			
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. We plan jointly with our cities and county for comprehensive planning purposes.	X		Together and Forward – 1 <sup>st</sup> joint plan in 1992, and now in full plan update
2. We are satisfied with our Service Delivery Strategy.	X		
3. We initiate contact with other local governments and institutions in our region in order to find solutions to common problems, or to craft regionwide strategies.	X		
4. We meet regularly with neighboring jurisdictions to maintain contact, build connections, and discuss issues of regional concern.	X		Economic Development; RDC

# POPULATION

## Introduction

Population is the initial element identified in the Minimum Standards as required in a local comprehensive plan. The Population Element provides local governments with the framework to inventory the numbers and characteristics of their population, to determine trends, and to assess problems and opportunities. Such information serves as a foundation for decision-making in other elements of the plan to determine the community service and infrastructure needs, economic development strategies, and housing necessary to support the existing and future population. Determination of needed lands to accommodate expected population and growth are also made possible. Local desires, environmental, and other constraints, of course, further factor into this decision-making.

Data is presented in this section on population and demographics for Toombs County and its three municipalities (Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia), both in tabular form as well as numerous charts to illustrate various points of discussion. Only those tables which are deemed useful to highlight a particular point(s) have been included in this section. More detailed tables concerning the different topics that are included in this section can be found elsewhere in the Appendix of this *Community Assessment*. Although estimates of future populations are necessary and vital to the planning process, many demographers are reluctant to involve themselves in forecasts of small areas. This reluctance is the result of projection inaccuracies due to scale and the many variables involved. Considering the distance that many of today's workers commute, an increase in job opportunities would not necessarily result in a proportionate increase in the number of people residing in the county. Therefore, any projection technique utilized for small areas is at best an "educated guess" of what population levels might actually be in the future. This is especially true for information regarding the municipalities. When analyzing and assessing population data, it is more important to note general size, scale, and trends rather than get caught up in specific numbers and slight discrepancies.

## Total Population

Table P-1 and Charts P-1 through P-3 provide information on current, historic, and projected population levels for Toombs County and its municipalities in accordance with the Minimum Standards. Comparable information for Georgia and the United States is shown on Table P-1 and Chart P-1. Table P-1 and Chart P-1 are included to demonstrate the historic and current population trends within Toombs County and how county and city population changes compare at state and national levels. The table uses 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2007 (estimate) figures, as compiled by the U.S. Bureau of the Census to show recent growth trends. The chart uses the same data as that used in Table P-1 to show the percent change in population for each period.

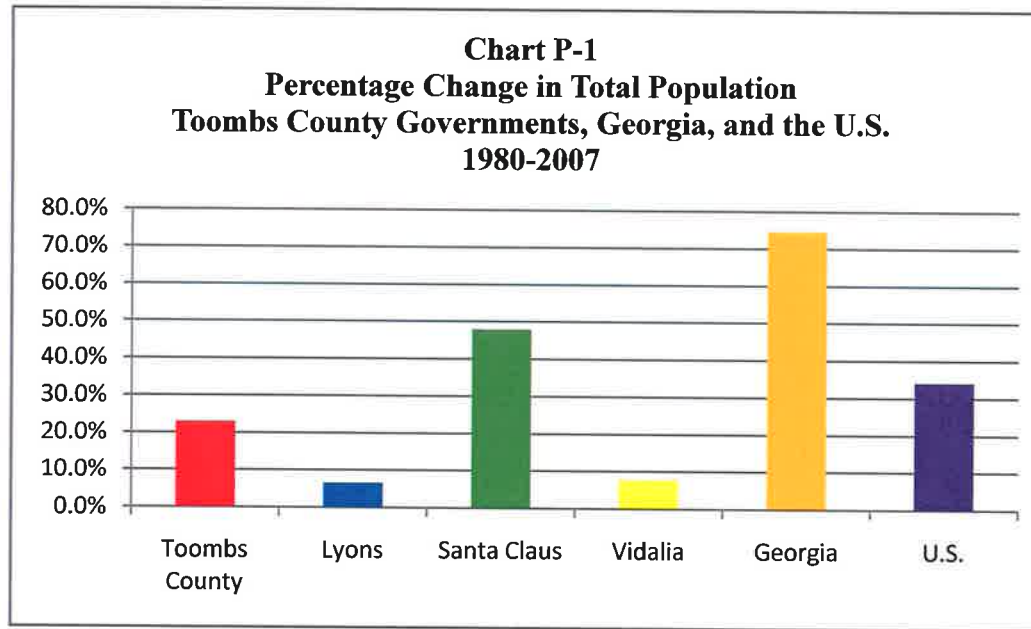
The information in the table for Toombs County shows that from the period between 1980 and 2000, the County growth (15.4 percent) was approximately 60 percent of the national growth average of 25.2 percent. Moreover, the county's growth rate over this time was only about one-third that of Georgia, which grew at the rapid rate of 50.6 percent. Although the county's moderate and steady rate of growth over the last 20 years was higher than most of its neighbors, much of the county's shortfall, compared to state growth, can be attributed to the more rapid growth seen throughout much of Northern Georgia and particularly the Metro Atlanta area. In the period of 1980-1990, the County increased in population at a 6.6 percent rate, while the state (18.6 percent) grew at a rate that was nearly triple of that locally and almost double that of the nation (10.6 percent) for the same period. The county continued to increase in growth from the period of 1990-2000 (8.3 percent). The county growth rate was again somewhat below that of national growth (13.2) and only about one-third of state growth (27.0). Over the last two decades, the County has continued to experience growth at a rate significantly less than the state but somewhat more comparable to the nation as a whole. The explosive growth in North Georgia and the Atlanta metropolitan area over the last twenty years tends to skew the data somewhat for the state as a whole, which has experienced population growth at twice the rate of the U.S. Chart P-1 also factors in estimated growth between 2000-2007, in addition to that growth seen over the previous 20 years.



**TABLE P-1**  
**HISTORIC POPULATION AND PERCENT CHANGE**  
**Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, Vidalia, Georgia, and U.S.**  
**1980-2007**

	1980	1990	1980-1990 % Change	2000	1990-2000 % Change	2007	2000-2007 % Change	1980-2000 % Change
<b>Toombs County</b>	22,592	24,072	6.6	26,067	8.3	27,820	6.7	15.4
<b>Lyons</b>	4,203	4,502	7.1	4,169	-7.4	4,480	7.5	-0.8
<b>Santa Claus</b>	167	154	-7.8	237	53.9	247	4.2	41.9
<b>Vidalia</b>	10,393	11,078	6.6	10,491	-5.3	11,224	7.0	0.9
<b>Georgia</b>	5,462,989	6,478,216	18.6	8,229,820	27.0	9,544,750	16.0	50.6
<b>United States</b>	224,810,192	248,709,873	10.6	281,421,906	13.2	301,621,157	7.2	25.2

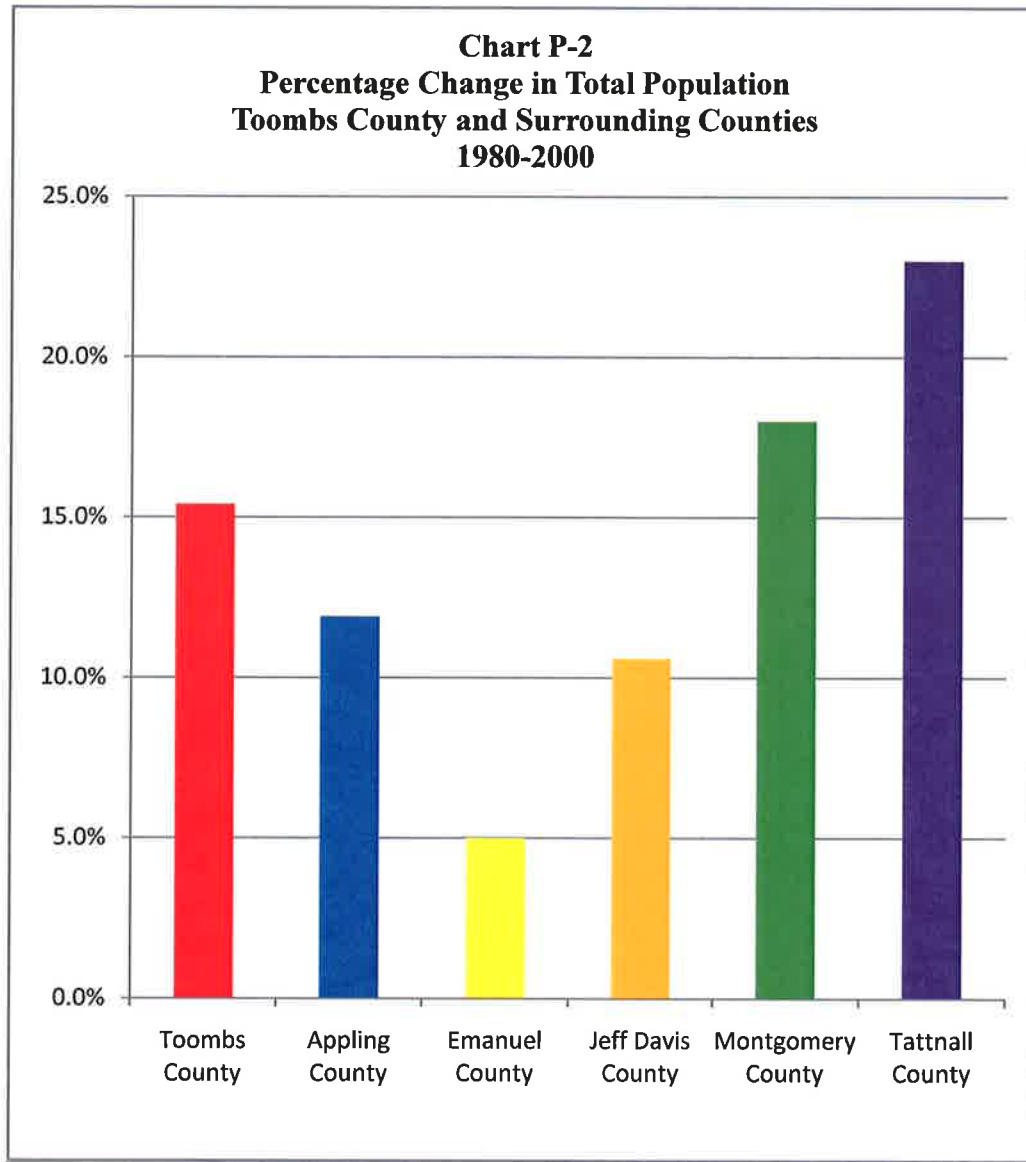
Sources: US Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1980, 1990, and 2000; [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008.



Source: US Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1980, 1990, and 2000; [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008.

Chart P-2 depicts the percentage change in population for Toombs County and its surrounding counties between 1980 and 2000. Over the last two decades, Toombs County experienced a growth in total population (15.4 percent) that was higher than most of its surrounding counties, reaffirming the county's position as a regional growth center. The only counties whose percentage growth surpassed that of Toombs during this time were Montgomery County (18.0 percent) and Tattnall County (23.0 percent). However, growth in Montgomery County is largely attributable to the expanding residential subdivision growth near and adjacent to the City of Vidalia within the Montgomery County side, as most of that county's residential growth has been on the eastern side of the county. Population growth in Tattnall County is primarily the result of an expanding prison population, as that county is home to several state correctional facilities. The counties with the next highest percentage growth (Appling and Jeff Davis) were some four to five percentage points less than Toombs, followed by Emanuel County (just 5 percent growth). During the 1980s, Toombs County led the way among its neighbors with a growth rate of 6.6 percent, as many of its neighbors were actually experiencing minimal increases or even a decline in population in a couple of instances. The county's growth was slightly stronger during the 1990s (roughly 8 percent), although higher rates of growth were experienced in Appling (10.6 percent), Montgomery (15.5 percent), and Tattnall counties (25.8 percent). Again, much of the growth in those areas was due to either spillover residential growth or expanding prison populations, as opposed to a more significant influx of new residents as the result of major job growth.

Much of Toombs County's growth can be traced to the continued development of Vidalia as an important commercial, economic, and health care hub in the upper portion of Southeast Georgia. Vidalia's prime location as a convenient stop for motorists traveling between Columbus and Savannah along U.S. 280, coupled with increasing traffic volume along the corridor, has resulted in a surge of retail and commercial development along the U.S. 280 corridor through Vidalia, particularly the city's eastern side. Numerous hotel and restaurant facilities have sprung up along the corridor, particularly within the last 10-15 years or so. The recent expansion of the Vidalia Regional Airport has enabled the facility to become an increasingly important asset for area business and commercial interests. The county's industrial areas are located within a relatively short distance of the interstate, allowing manufacturers and

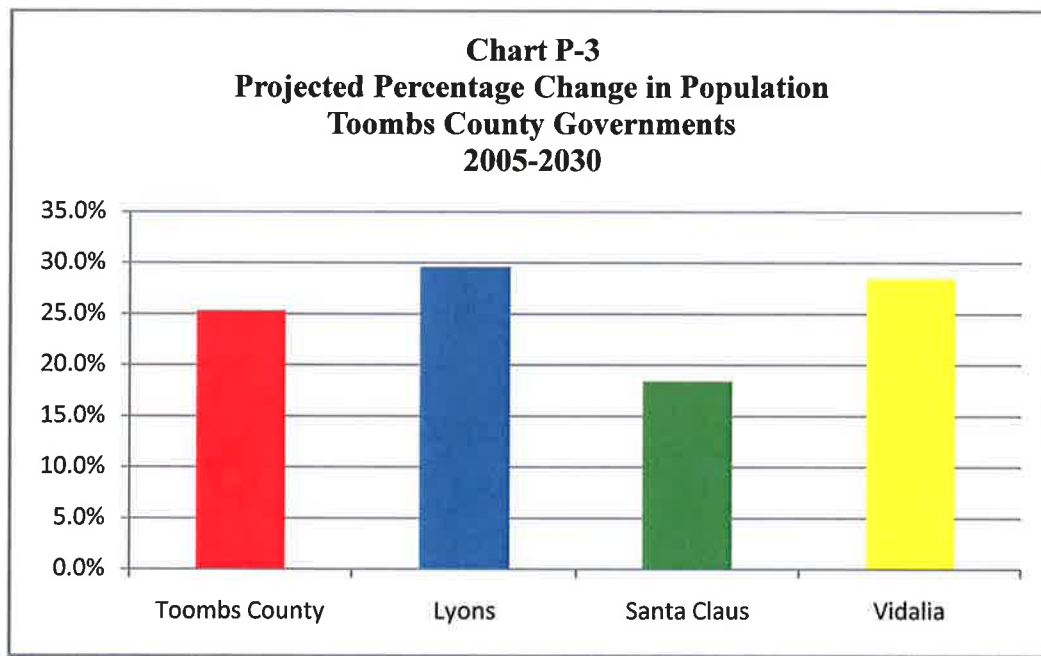


Source: US Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1980, 1990, and 2000; [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008.

distributors easy access to the interstate. Recent expansions and additions to Meadows Regional Medical Center, along with the proposed future construction of a new facility for the hospital, has served to expand the county’s growing medical community, serving to draw increasing numbers of people from the surrounding area to the county. The annual Sweet Onion Festival attracts tens of thousands of visitors a year, as the area’s staple crop, the Vidalia Sweet Onion, brings the area much valuable notoriety. Much of the county’s recent growth has also centered

around new subdivision growth near and adjacent to Vidalia, in addition to several important crossroad nodal areas throughout the county.

Chart P-3 gives the projected percentage change in population for Toombs County and its municipalities for the years of 2005 through 2030. The HOGA RDC staff projections, using an exponential growth formula provided by Microsoft Excel and also adjusted for Census estimates, show that Toombs County is projected to increase its population percentage by 25.3 percent from 2005-2030. This would be some two-thirds greater than the 15.4 percent growth over the last two decades. The county is growing because of location, quality of life, availability of services, and community size.



Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), SF 1 data as original source, [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), 2008; Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC Staff, 2008.

Municipalities. Table P-1 shows the historic, current, and projected populations for the county's three municipalities. The population growth of the municipalities can be described as fluctuating at best, although it has been on a slow but steady increase for the most part. Typical of all three cities was growth in one decade only to lose most if not all of that growth in the next decade, or vice versa. The City of Santa Claus experienced the largest percentage growth in the county, some 41.9 percent growth since 1980. However, this large percentage change is the result of the city having a much smaller population base than either Lyons or Vidalia, which tends to skew the percentage growth to an extent, as well as a questionable 1990 census number. Growth in the city in terms of absolute numbers was much smaller. Lyons was the only municipality to lose population overall during the last two decades, although only a minimal decline of 0.8 percent over the last twenty years. Only minimal population growth was seen in Vidalia as well (0.9 percent), as the city lost population to adjacent areas during the 1990s. From 1980 to 1990, Vidalia experienced an increase of 6.6 percent of its total population, only to reverse itself and decline by 5.3 percent from 1990 to 2000. From 2000-07, however, all of the municipalities are estimated to have gained in population once again, with Vidalia (7.0 percent) approaching the national growth rate of 7.2 percent and Lyons exceeding it (7.5 percent). Both cities are estimated to have also surpassed the growth rate for the county since 2000 (6.7 percent). Growth is also estimated to have continued in Santa Claus, but to a smaller extent (4.2 percent). The population decline experienced in the municipalities at times over the last twenty years or so is likely the result of the general trend seen in other areas in recent years of more people desiring to live in the unincorporated areas as opposed to municipalities. The future projections through 2030 for the municipalities show steady growth for all, as shown in Chart P-3. Lyons (29.6 percent) and Vidalia (28.5 percent) are projected to grow at a slightly higher rate than the county (25.3 percent). Santa Claus, on the other hand, is projected to only grow by 18.4 percent, or just 44 persons in terms of absolute numbers. The continuing growth, however limited, highlights the county's assets for growth, including its location, continuing public infrastructure investment, its abundant natural and cultural resources, and the availability of jobs and services.

## Households

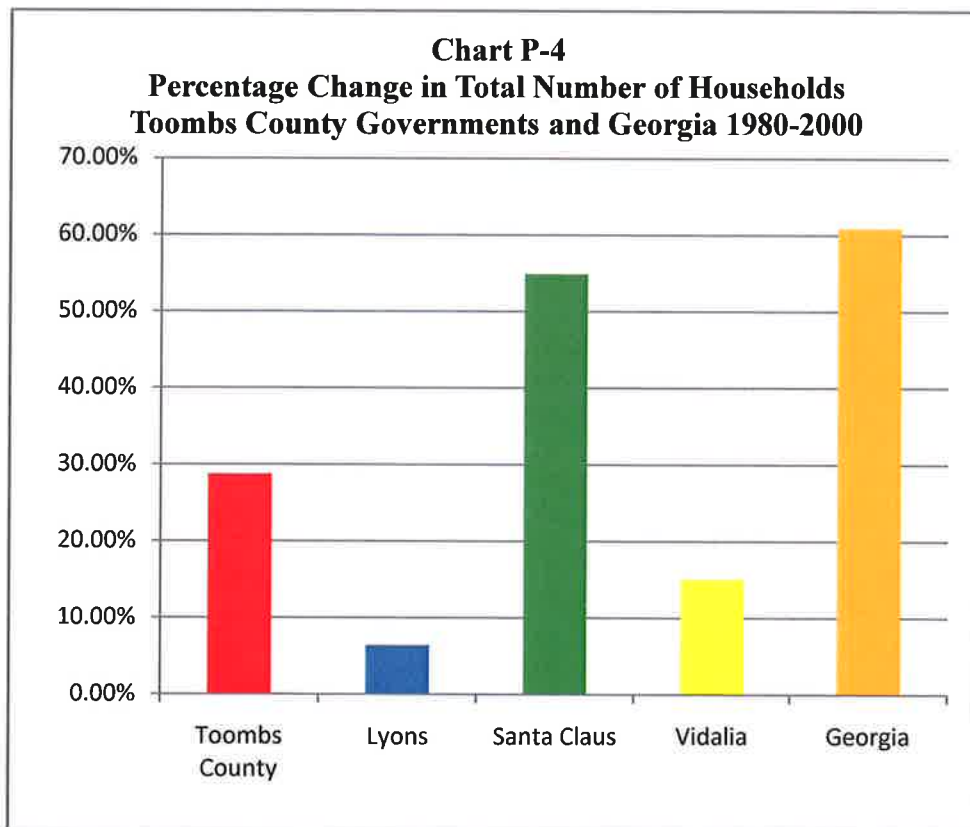
Table P-6 details the historic number of total households for Toombs County, its three municipalities, and Georgia from 1980 to 2000. Chart P-4 shows the percentage change in the total number of households for Toombs County, its municipalities, and Georgia for the same time period.

As shown in Table P-6 and Chart P-4, the total number of households in Toombs County increased by 2,205 from 1980 to 2000, which is an increase of just under 29 percent during that time. This is compared to a 15 percent increase in total population during the same period. In comparison, the total number of households in Georgia increased by almost 61 (60.86) percent, largely due to the explosive growth around the metro Atlanta area. This was some 50 percent higher than the rate of the county's growth. The greater household than population increase is reflective of the national trend of declining household size. Toombs County is no exception to this rule, which had its average household size steadily decrease from 2.90 in 1980 to 2.69 in 1990 to 2.59 in 2000. The county had a slightly higher average household size than the state in both 1980 and 1990. However, by 2000 Georgia's average household size of 2.65 was higher than Toombs County's (2.59) for the first time. This trend is projected to continue through at least 2025 when Georgia is projected to have an average household size of 2.63 and Toombs County's is projected to be 2.30, thus substantially widening the gap. Also, Toombs County's average household size was higher than the national average in both of the last two decades, although by 2000 the county's average household size equaled that for the nation as a whole. This trend is expected to continue through 2025, much as the case between the county and the state as a whole. By 2025, the county's average household size is projected to be well below that of the U.S. It is interesting to note that with Georgia's booming population, the state's average household size is expected to remain slightly higher than the nation through 2025, as both are expected to remain fairly stable.

**TABLE P-6**  
**TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS**  
**Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, Vidalia, and Georgia**  
**1980-2000**

Total Households	1980	1990	2000
Toombs County	7,672	8,804	9,877
Lyons	1,454	1,600	1,547
Santa Claus	51	62	79
Vidalia	3,621	4,132	4,167
Georgia	1,869,754	2,366,615	3,007,678

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008 (STF 1 data was used to obtain 1990 figures. SF 1 data was used to obtain 2000 figures.).

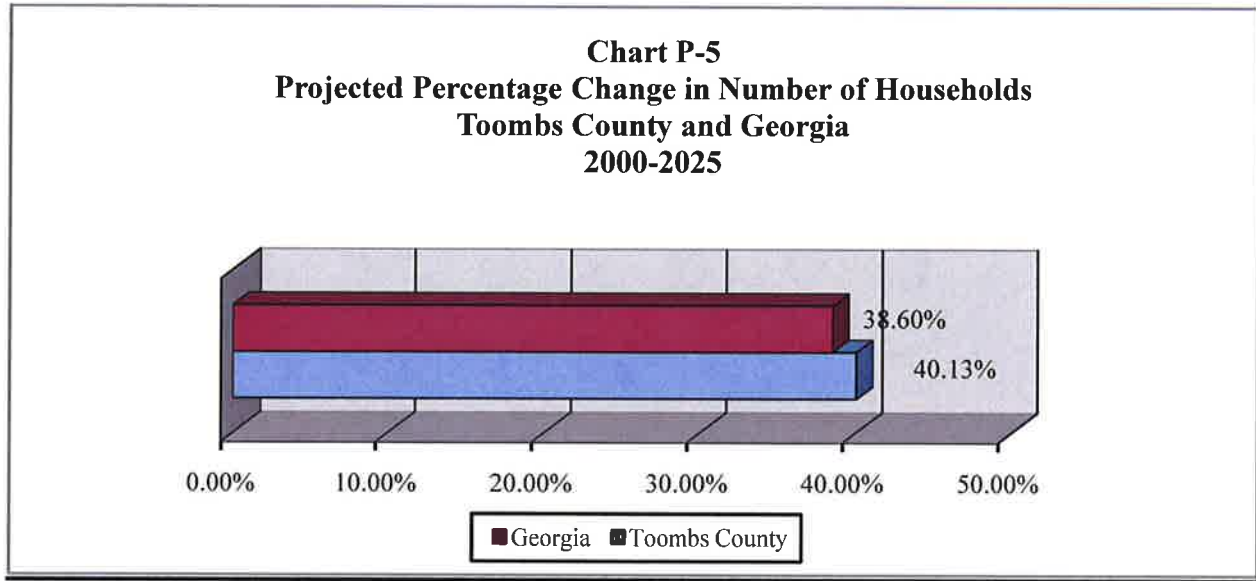


Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008 (STF 1 data was used to obtain 1990 figures. SF 1 data was used to obtain 2000 figures.).



Households are expected to increase about 50 percent in Toombs County to a total of 14,771 in 2030, based upon adjusted figures, as shown in Chart P-5. This is some 11 percentage points greater than the projected Georgia net increase of roughly 39 percent during the same period. While the county continues to see a steady and moderate increase in the number of households and a decrease in average household size, which is expected to go from 2.59 persons per household in 2000 to 2.30 in 2025, it remains dramatically below that of the state's 2025 estimate of 2.63. Since households are equivalent to occupied housing units, a considerable amount of net housing units will be needed in the county to accommodate the number of households that are expected (See Housing Element for projected housing figures). The steady projected increase in population growth can be expected to put a moderate amount of pressure on the local housing market.

Municipalities. Total households increased only slightly during the period of 1980-2000 in the largest municipality of Vidalia, as shown in both Table P-6 and Chart P-4. Vidalia experienced a net gain of 546 households, or 15.08 percent, between 1980 and 2000. Most of Vidalia's household growth occurred during the 1980s as the city's households increased by 14 percent, compared to just a 0.8 percent increase between 1990 and 2000. This would be consistent with the general loss of population during the 1990s. These numbers might appear to be somewhat suspect, but could be the result of natural increase or the movement of some of the population to the unincorporated area of the county. Outside of Vidalia, household growth among the other municipalities was fairly minimal, particularly in terms of absolute numbers. Santa Claus had the largest percentage household increase in the county (54.9 percent), but again this percentage change is large due to a small population base. Lyons increased by just 93 households in 20 years, or 6.4 percent. Possible reasons for the growth in households in the county are likely the result of new subdivision development within and adjacent to Vidalia, particularly to the west and southwest of Vidalia, as Vidalia's growth continues to push toward those directions in the county as well as Montgomery County. Other residential growth has been occurring in the unincorporated areas in the central and southwestern portions of the county and to the northwest near the community of Normantown. Future projections show that steady and noticeable increases in the number of households are anticipated to continue for each of the



Sources: Georgia Department of Community Affairs, [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), utilizing U.S. Bureau of the Census SF 1 data as original source, 2008; Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC Staff projections, 2008.

municipalities, again consistent with the vigorous and steady projected population increase. Vidalia is projected to add a net total of 2,065 new households by 2030, or a gain of 49.6 percent from 2000. This percentage gain would be nearly equal to the 49.5 percent gain projected for the county. Lyons (37.6 percent) and Santa Claus (21.5 percent) are projected to grow in households at a rate much lower than the county. Average household sizes are expected to continue to decline in the municipalities through 2030.

## Age Distribution

The current and historic population by age distribution for Toombs County, Georgia, and the U.S. is shown in Table P-10. Chart P-6 displays the percentage of age distribution in 2000 for Toombs County, Georgia, and the U.S., based on Table P-10. The same information is shown for Toombs County and its municipalities for 1980-2000 in Table P-12.

Toombs County is in some respects like most counties in terms of its age structure. A combination of two categories, the less than 25 and 25-54 categories, represented a combined

**TABLE P-10  
HISTORIC POPULATION AGE DISTRIBUTION  
Toombs County, Georgia, and U.S.  
1980-2000**

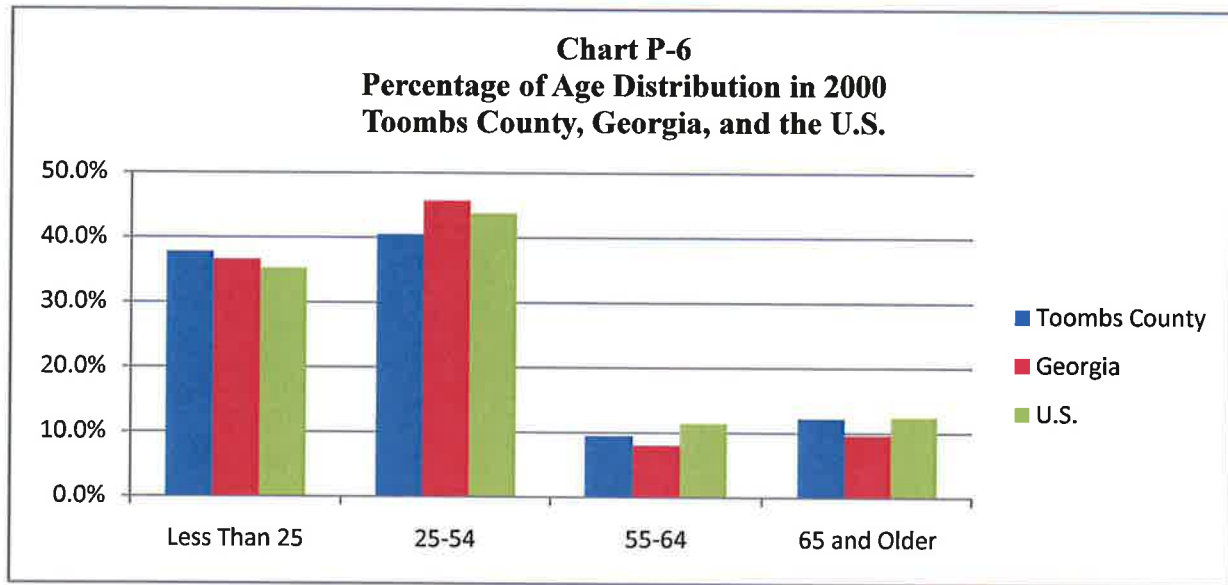
	United States			Georgia			Toombs County					
	Percent			Percent			Percent			Number		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
<b>Total</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	22,592	24,072	26,067
<b>Less Than 25</b>	41.4	36.5	35.3	43.5	39.7	36.7	44.2	38.9	37.8	9,988	9,356	9,849
<b>Age 25-54</b>	37.7	42.6	43.6	38.6	46.0	45.6	35.1	40.7	40.5	7,930	9,789	10,558
<b>Age 55-64</b>	9.6	8.4	8.6	8.5	3.8	8.1	9.5	8.0	9.5	2,152	1,914	2,482
<b>Age 65 &amp; Over</b>	11.3	12.5	12.4	9.4	10.5	9.6	11.2	12.5	12.2	2,522	3,013	3,178

Source: US Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1983 (1980 data); [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008 (1990 and 2000 data).

**TABLE P-12**  
**HISTORIC POPULATION BY AGE DISTRIBUTION**  
**Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia**  
**1980-2000**

	Toombs County			Lyons			Santa Claus			Vidalia		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
<b>TOTAL Population</b>	22,592	24,072	26,067	4,203	4,502	4,169	167	154	237	10,393	11,078	10,491
<b>0 – 4 Years Old</b>	1,915	1,913	2,010	297	388	351	14	7	17	910	857	743
<b>5 – 13 Years Old</b>	3,667	3,984	4,141	646	780	653	37	22	26	1,699	1,859	1,660
<b>14 – 17 Years Old</b>	1,818	1,199	1,292	416	241	201	8	6	10	751	574	522
<b>18 – 20 Years Old</b>	1,133	1,004	1,111	208	209	198	6	7	19	519	423	431
<b>21 – 24 Years Old</b>	1,455	1,256	1,295	229	229	217	10	12	23	699	524	465
<b>25 – 34 Years Old</b>	3,226	3,804	3,440	505	644	550	45	20	42	1,553	1,764	1,245
<b>35 – 44 Years Old</b>	2,632	3,446	3,796	491	552	577	24	28	26	1,149	1,630	1,535
<b>45 – 54 Years Old</b>	2,072	2,539	3,322	401	443	449	7	23	35	913	1,097	1,371
<b>55 – 64 Years Old</b>	2,152	1,914	2,482	431	357	374	11	12	24	998	857	962
<b>65 Years and Over</b>	2,522	3,013	3,178	579	659	599	5	17	15	1,202	1,493	1,557

Source: US Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1983 (1980 data), [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008 (1990 and 2000 data).



Source: US Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1983 (1980 data); [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008 (1990 and 2000 data).

78.3 percent of the county’s population in 2000. This trend is not just a local trend because these same two combined categories represent 78.9 percent of the U.S. population in 2000 and 82.3 percent of Georgia’s population in 2000, as shown in Table P-10 and Chart P-6. However, all three experienced decreases in the less than 25 age population from 1980-2000 in terms of percentage of overall population. Toombs County ranks slightly below the U.S. but significantly above Georgia in terms of its elderly percentage of total population at 12.2 percent in 2000, as shown in Table P-10 and Chart P-6. This county percentage, like the state and nation, is a decrease from the number in 1990. The county’s percentage of those ages 55-64 was also slightly higher than both the state and the nation. The county’s population is somewhat older than the state and roughly the same age as the nation, as shown in Table P-10 and Chart P-6.

Table P-12 shows the raw data from 1980-2000 for 10 age categories. In the five youngest age categories (zero to 25), Toombs County experienced an increase from age 0-13 but a decrease in the 14-24 age categories. There was a decrease of roughly one-third in the 14-17 age group, with only a small decrease in the number of 18-20 and 21-24 year-olds. The cities of Santa Claus and Vidalia experienced the opposite. Vidalia experienced a decrease in all of the youngest age categories. Santa Claus saw increases in each of the younger age categories, with

the exception of the 5-13 age group. This is likely attributed to the significant increase in Santa Claus' Hispanic population through in-migration. There are three age categories between the ages of 25-54. For both Toombs County and its municipalities, every age category experienced an increase except the ages of 25-34 in Santa Claus and Vidalia. Significant increases were seen in those between 35-54 years of age. In the remaining two age categories (55-64 and 65 and older), an increase was experienced in both categories for Toombs County, while a slight decline in those 55-64 were found in Lyons and Vidalia. All of the municipalities experienced an increase in those age 65 and older. If this trend continues in the future, the population of Toombs County will continue to become older. These trends are typical for a rural area, which normally depicts a growing elderly population because of higher numbers in the middle age and older population age categories. This will present a challenge to local governments in that the older population requires different service needs than a younger population, particularly in terms of health care.

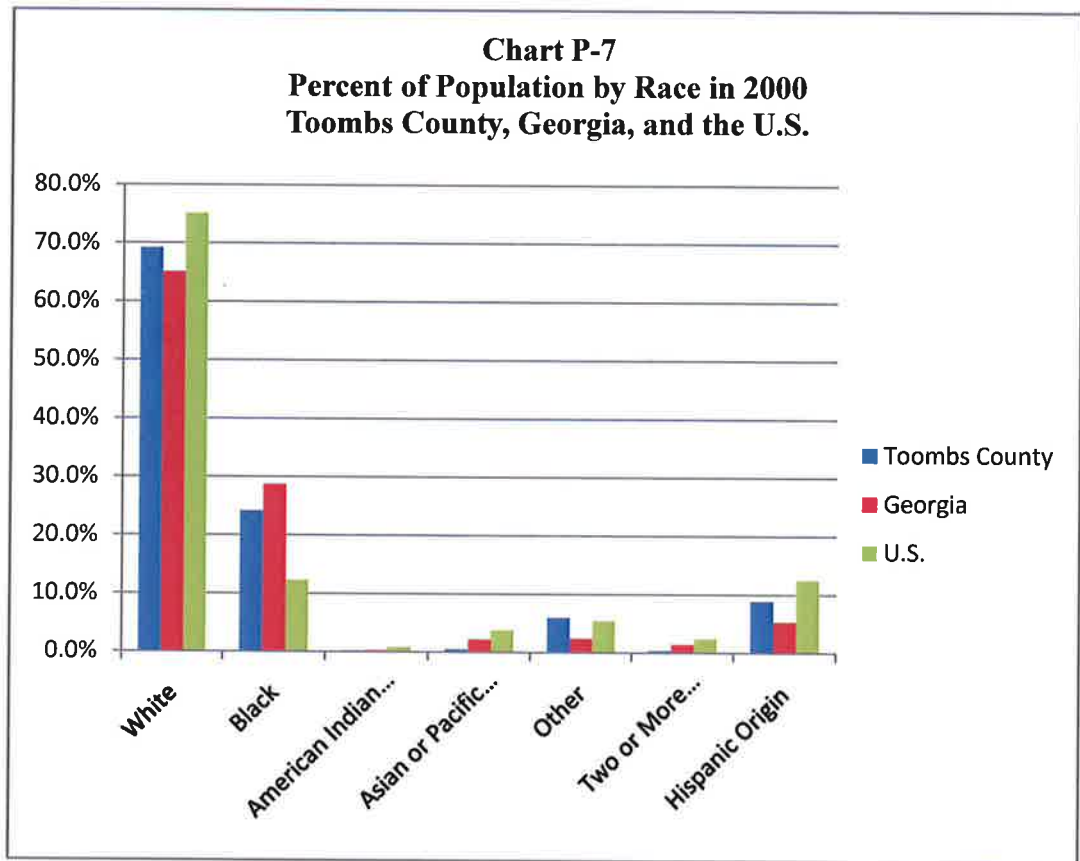
## **Racial Composition**

Table P-19 and Chart P-7 deal with the current racial composition of Toombs County, Georgia, and the United States. Table P-19 shows that as of 2000, the largest reported minority in Toombs County, Georgia, and the U.S. were Blacks. There are about twice as many blacks (24.2 percent) in the county compared to the U.S. (12.3 percent) but between four and five percent less than the state (28.7 percent). In Georgia, two categories (Black and White) combined to make up 93.8 percent of the total population, while in Toombs County they combined to make up 93.4 percent in 2000. The largest race category excluding whites and blacks is the Other category for the state and U.S., although not significantly larger. From 1980-1990, all of the race categories experienced an increase for Georgia and the U.S. The same was true for Toombs County, with the exception of the number of Blacks, which surprisingly declined slightly from 5,734 to 5,637. On the other hand, the local Hispanic population experienced an increase of some 1,220 percent from 1980-2000, from just 175 persons in 1980 to 2,310 in 2000. The large presence of labor intensive agriculture in Toombs County, particularly

**TABLE P-19**  
**PERCENT OF POPULATION BY RACE**  
**Toombs County, Georgia, and U.S.**  
**2000**

	United States	Georgia	Toombs County
<b>TOTAL Population</b>	100	100	100
<b>White</b>	75.1	65.1	69.2
<b>Black</b>	12.3	28.7	24.2
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	0.9	0.3	0.2
<b>Asian or Pacific Islander</b>	3.8	2.2	0.5
<b>Other</b>	5.5	2.4	6.0
<b>Two or More Races</b>	2.4	1.4	0.4
<b>Hispanic Origin</b>	12.5	5.3	8.9

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008.



in Vidalia Sweet Onion farming and other venues, is the principal reason for the substantial local gains in Hispanic population. In 2000, the municipalities were dominated by Whites and Blacks, but significant Hispanic populations were found in both Lyons (15.1 percent) and Santa Claus (24.9 percent). Since 1980, Whites have declined as a percentage of the population in all jurisdictions, while the percentage of the black population has essentially held steady in the county and all cities. The number of Asian or Pacific Islander residents in Vidalia has increased approximately five times over the last two decades in terms of actual numbers, while doubling in the county. All of the other race categories are expected to grow at a slow and steady pace which will cause the White and Black categories to decrease in the future. This may present interesting challenges to local governments in terms of language and cultural barriers, education, and other service provisions.

## **Educational Attainment**

Tables P-25 and P-26 and Charts P-8 and P-9 provide information on current and historic education levels of the adult population in Toombs County and its municipalities. In Table P-25 and Chart P-8, Georgia is included for comparisons in educational attainment of the percentage of persons 25 and older. Table P-26 and Chart P-9 compare the educational attainment of persons 25 and older in Toombs County to those in surrounding counties and the State of Georgia.

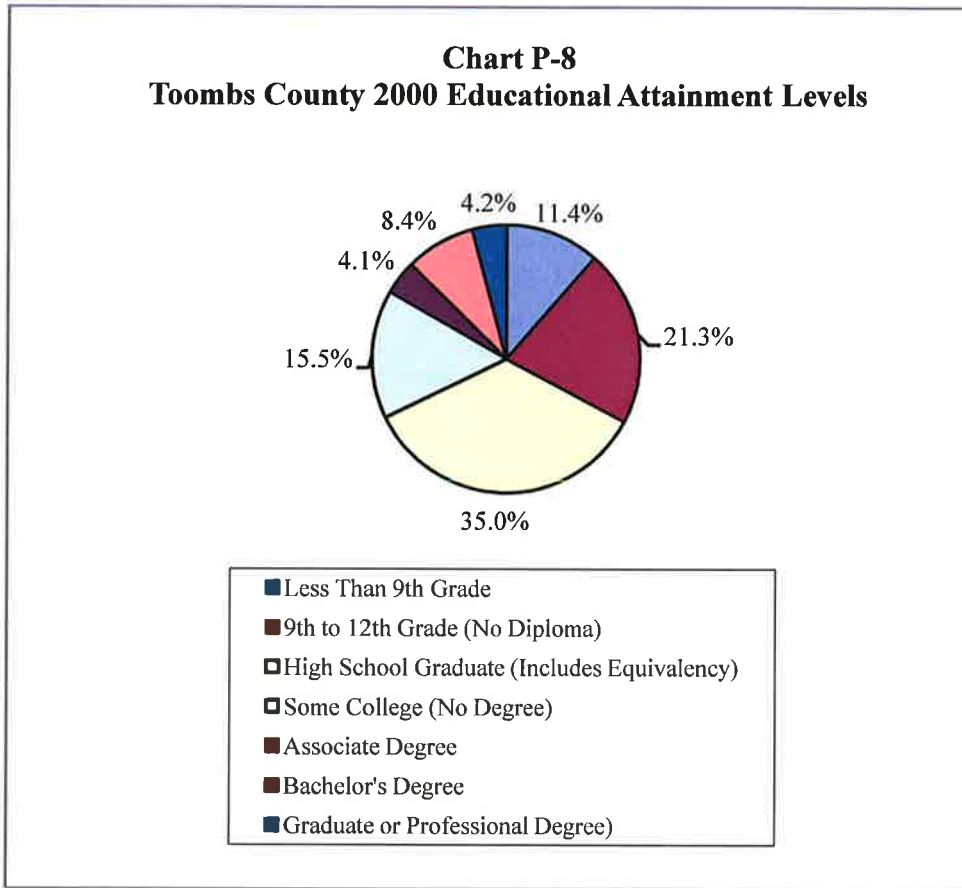
Toombs County has a less educated population in comparison to the state, as shown in Table P-25. This is not all that unexpected with the county being in a predominantly rural area, where lower educational levels are common. In 2000, Toombs County lagged behind the state in every category. However, the county has made improvements in every category since 1980. Over the last two decades, the percentage of county residents with less than a ninth grade education has declined by some two-thirds (31.0 percent to 11.4 percent). However, this is still somewhat higher than the rate of Georgia as a whole (7.6 percent). Those with a ninth to twelfth grade education but did not complete requirements necessary to receive a high school diploma have declined only slightly countywide since 1980 (25.0 percent to 21.3 percent), and this

**TABLE P-26**  
**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**  
**Percent of Persons Age 25 and Older**  
**Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, Vidalia, and Georgia**  
**1980-2000**

Category	TOTAL Adult Population 25 & Over	Less Than 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade (No Diploma)	High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	Some College (No Degree)	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
<b>Toombs County</b>								
1980	12,577	31.0	25.0	24.8	9.9*	N/A	6.3	2.9
1990	14,712	18.2	22.8	31.7	12.1	3.9	7.4	4.0
2000	16,212	11.4	21.3	35.0	15.5	4.1	8.4	4.2
<b>Lyons</b>								
1980	2,407	33.4	29.3	21.0	7.9	NA	5.7	2.8
1990	2,645	23.5	24.9	30.0	11.2	1.6	5.1	3.8
2000	2,597	15.4	29.3	30.8	12.1	3.1	6.4	2.9
<b>Santa Claus</b>								
1980	87	16.1	20.7	44.8	16.1	N/A	2.3	0.0
1990	94	8.5	23.4	53.2	5.3	4.3	5.3	0.0
2000	92	2.2	26.1	46.7	15.2	8.7	1.1	0.0
<b>Vidalia</b>								
1980	5,818	27.9	21.9	24.8	12.6	NA	9.2	3.5
1990	6,888	15.0	20.6	28.1	15.0	5.1	11.0	5.3
2000	6,714	7.9	17.4	30.0	18.8	6.0	13.4	6.5
<b>Georgia</b>								
1980	3,085,528	23.7	19.9	28.5	13.3*	NA	8.5	6.1
1990	4,023,420	12.0	17.1	29.6	17.0	5.0	12.9	6.4
2000	5,185,965	7.6	13.8	28.7	20.4	5.2	16.0	8.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1983, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008 (STF 3 data was used to obtain 1990 figures. SF 4 data was used to obtain 2000 figures.).

\* - 1980 Census data did not differentiate between those with Some College (No Degree) and those with an Associate Degree.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1983, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008 (STF 3 data was used to obtain 1990 figures. SF 4 data was used to obtain 2000 figures.).

**TABLE P-27  
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT  
Percent of Persons Age 25 and Older  
Toombs County, Surrounding Counties, and Georgia  
1980-2000**

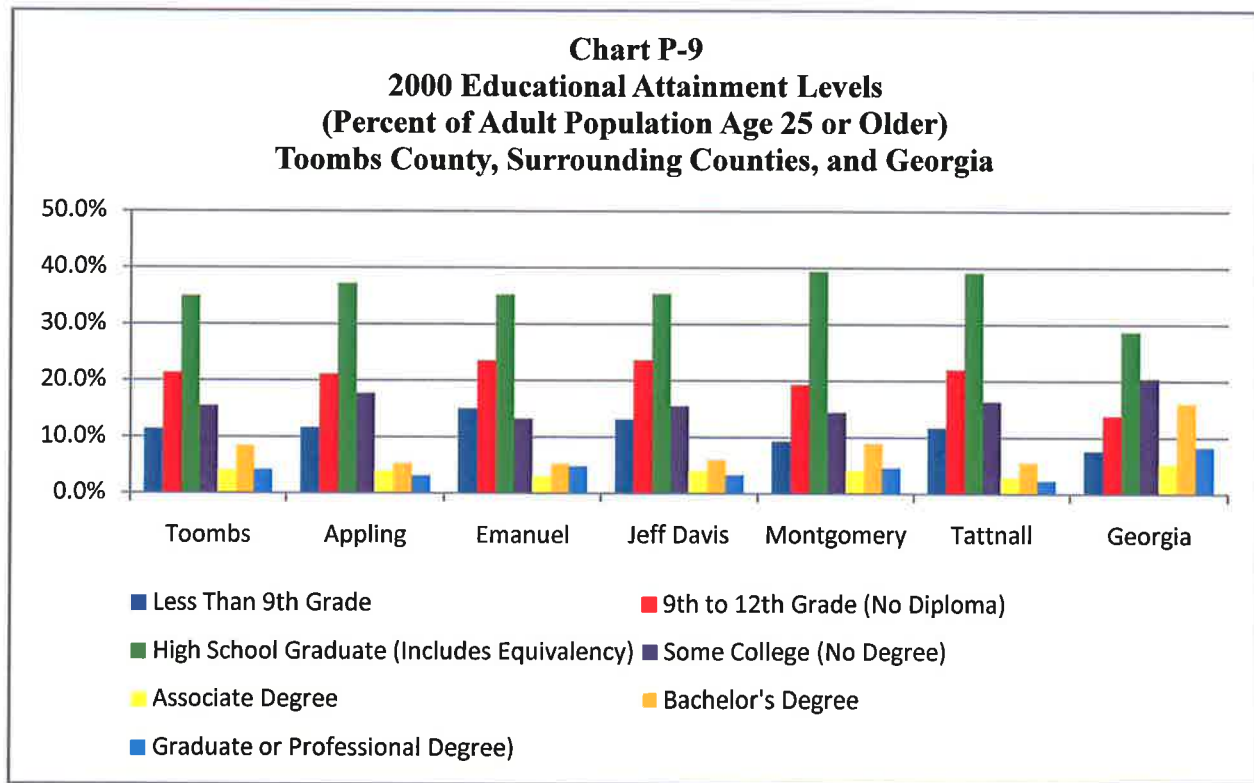
County	TOTAL Adult Population 25 & Over	Less Than 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade (No Diploma)	High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	Some College (No Degree)	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
<b>Toombs</b>								
1980	12,577	31.0	25.0	24.8	9.9*	N/A	6.3	2.9
1990	14,172	18.2	22.8	31.7	12.1	3.9	7.4	4.0
2000	16,212	11.4	21.3	35.0	15.5	4.1	8.4	4.2
<b>Appling</b>								
1980	8,386	32.2	26.2	27.5	7.6*	N/A	3.9	2.5
1990	9,646	19.9	23.0	34.4	11.7	2.8	4.7	3.5
2000	11,004	11.6	21.1	37.2	17.7	4.0	5.3	3.1
<b>Emanuel</b>								
1980	11,715	37.7	23.9	23.4	7.8*	NA	4.7	2.6
1990	12,419	22.8	24.6	30.0	9.9	3.7	5.4	3.6
2000	13,465	15.0	23.5	35.2	13.2	3.0	5.2	4.8
<b>Jeff Davis</b>								
1980	6,347	37.6	21.9	26.2	6.9*	N/A	4.5	2.9
1990	7,309	20.6	24.2	32.5	11.4	3.1	6.1	2.2
2000	8,036	13.1	23.6	35.4	15.5	4.0	6.0	3.3
<b>Montgomery</b>								
1980	3,736	33.0	25.1	28.2	6.6*	N/A	3.9	3.2
1990	4,304	19.1	23.5	32.0	11.4	3.9	6.5	3.6
2000	5,108	9.3	19.3	39.4	14.4	4.2	8.9	4.6
<b>Tattnall</b>								
1980	10,893	31.6	24.1	29.1	10.1*	N/A	5.2	1.9
1990	11,654	20.6	22.0	37.8	10.5	2.7	4.9	1.6
2000	14,688	11.7	22.0	39.2	16.3	2.9	5.5	2.3

**TABLE P-27 (Cont'd)**  
**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**  
**Percent of Persons Age 25 and Older**  
**Toombs County, Surrounding Counties, and Georgia**  
**1980-2000**

County	TOTAL Adult Population 25 & Over	Less Than 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade (No Diploma)	High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	Some College (No Degree)	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
<b>Georgia</b>								
1980	3,085,528	23.7	19.9	28.5	13.3*	NA	8.5	6.1
1990	4,023,420	12.0	17.1	29.6	17.0	5.0	12.9	6.4
2000	5,185,965	7.6	13.8	28.7	20.4	5.2	16.0	8.3

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008 (STF 3 data was used to obtain 1990 figures. SF 4 data was used to obtain 2000 figures.).

\* - 1980 Census data did not separate those with Some College (No Degree) and those with an Associate Degree.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008(STF 3 data was used to obtain 1990 figures. SF 4 data was used to obtain 2000 figures.).

percentage is more than one-half greater than the statewide rate (13.5 percent). The county has seen slight increases in the percentage of residents with a college degree, particularly those with Some College but no degree (some 15.5 percent of the population) and those with a Bachelor's Degree (more than 8 percent), but those percentages are still well below statewide figures. On a more positive note, more county residents now have at least a high school level education (67.3 percent) than those who do not (32.7 percent). However, these trends seem to be well behind state and national trends, where both are seeing its numbers of those with only a high school diploma decrease, but those moving on to the college level increase.

In terms of surrounding counties, Toombs County consistently has had more college graduates in its population than most of its neighbors, and generally higher educational attainment levels overall. This is likely a function of its size and extensive job base as a regional economic center. Among its surrounding counties in 2000, only Appling County (32.7%) and Montgomery County (28.6%) had an equal or smaller portion of the population with less than a high school level education than that of Toombs County (32.7%), as shown in Table P-26 and Chart P-9. Only Montgomery (17.7%) had a greater percentage of those with a post-secondary education than Toombs (16.7%). The County's percentage of those with a Bachelor's Degree (8.4%) was higher than the other counties, with the exception of Montgomery (8.9%), home to Brewton-Parker College. Only Montgomery (4.6%) and Emanuel (4.8%) counties had a higher percentage of those with a Graduate or Professional Degree than in Toombs (4.2%).

Municipalities. The 2000 percentage of those without a high school diploma was slightly lower in most of the municipalities (anywhere from 25.3 percent in Vidalia to 28.3 percent in Santa Claus), with the exception of Lyons (44.7 percent), than the county as a whole (32.7 percent), likely due in part to an older population in the cities than in the unincorporated area and a higher minority population in Lyons. The cities also had a lower percentage of college-educated residents, with the exception of Vidalia (25.9 percent), than the county (16.7 percent). Lyons' percentage was around 12 percent, while it was just 10 percent in Santa Claus. The lowest educational attainment rates overall tended to be in the cities of Lyons and Santa Claus, where roughly one-third of the citizens had less than a high school level education and another

one-third had only a high school diploma, and almost one-half of the citizens in Santa Claus had only a high school diploma while another one-fourth only had between a ninth and twelfth grade education. The numbers in Lyons and Santa Claus are likely skewed by the large numbers of Hispanic population. The highest educational attainment levels in the county were found in Vidalia, which is by far the largest of the municipalities and is home to Southeastern Technical College and most of the county's jobs. Interestingly, those residents in Vidalia with an Associate Degree (6.0 percent) is just above the statewide percentage (5.2 percent), and the percentages of those with either a Bachelor's Degree or a Graduate or Professional Degree nearly approach statewide averages.

For those in Toombs County and its municipalities who are moving on to college-level education, there are increasing numbers of those receiving degrees of some type over the last decade, if only slightly so. In any case, these numbers are considerably behind the state as a whole. These trends bear serious consequences in that they present barriers for the county to attract economic development. The overall low skill levels of the local population must be addressed for the county to attract the kind of growth it desires. Fortunately, there are some programs in place to address the skill levels of the labor force. These will be discussed in the Economic Development element.

## **Income**

Per capita incomes for Toombs County, Georgia, and the U.S. from 1980-2000, as shown in current dollars, are shown in Table P-28, and per capita incomes for all three in addition to the county's municipalities, as shown in actual dollars, are included in Table P-29. Chart P-10 shows Toombs County's per capita income as a percentage of that of Georgia and the U.S. in current dollars from 1980 to 2000, while Chart P-11 shows the percentage change in per capita income for all three from 1980 to 2000. Table P-32 shows the percentage of household income distribution for Toombs County and makes a comparison with the state, while Table P-33 shows the percentage distribution of household income for the municipalities. Chart P-12 depicts the 2000 percentage distribution of household income for the county, municipalities, and the state to highlight ongoing trends.



**TABLE P-29**  
**PER CAPITA INCOME**  
**Toombs County, Georgia, and the U.S.**  
**1980-2000**

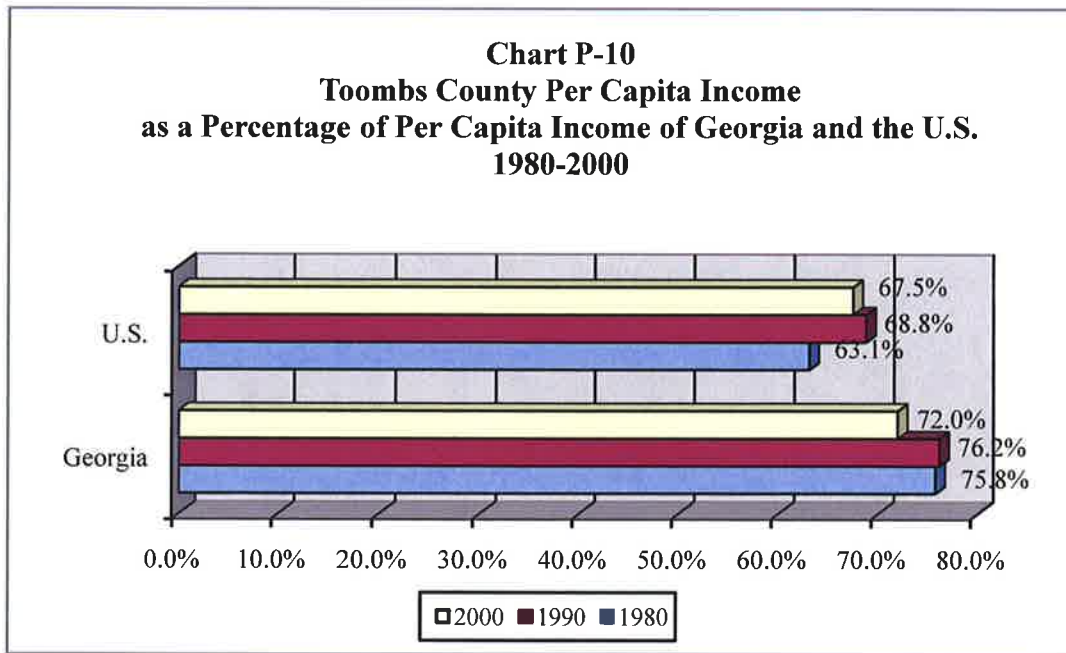
<b>Income per Capita (Current \$)</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
Toombs County	\$6,380	\$13,405	\$20,151
Georgia	\$8,420	\$17,603	\$27,987
United States	\$10,114	\$19,477	\$29,845

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System, 2008. All dollar estimates are in current dollars and are not adjusted for inflation.

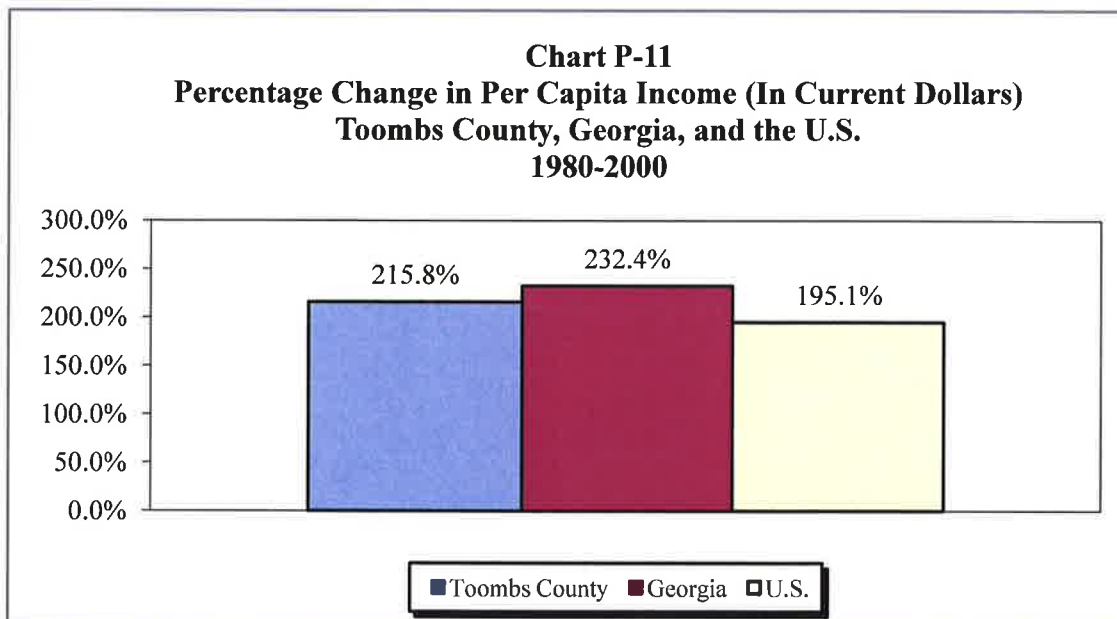
**TABLE P-30**  
**PER CAPITA INCOME**  
**Toombs County Governments, Georgia, and the U.S.**  
**1980-2000**

<b>Income per Capita (actual \$)</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
Toombs County	\$4,787	\$9,775	\$14,252
Lyons	\$4,211	\$8,637	\$12,364
Santa Claus	\$5,077	\$10,809	\$13,669
Vidalia	\$5,514	\$10,684	\$16,369
Georgia	\$6,402	\$13,631	\$21,154
United States	\$7,298	\$14,420	\$21,587

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008 (STF 3 data was used to obtain 1990 figures. SF 4 data was used to obtain 2000 figures.).



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System, 2008. All dollar estimates are in current dollars and are not adjusted for inflation.



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System, 2008. All dollar estimates are in current dollars and are not adjusted for inflation.

**TABLE P-33**  
**HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION BY PERCENTAGE**  
**Toombs County and Georgia**  
**1980-2000**

Category	Toombs County			Georgia		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
TOTAL Households	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Income less than \$5,000	26.23%	14.51%	NA	16.20%	7.90%	NA
Income \$5,000 - \$9,999	20.38%	13.02%	19.14%	17.10%	8.87%	10.13%
Income \$10,000 - \$14,999	18.05%	11.25%	11.04%	16.28%	8.62%	5.85%
Income \$15,000 - \$19,999	13.76%	12.07%	7.76%	14.19%	8.87%	5.91%
Income \$20,000 - \$29,999		14.33%	15.82%	11.53%	17.13%	12.74%
Income \$30,000 - \$34,999	16.35% <sup>1/</sup>	6.48%	5.68%	8.23%	7.90%	6.22%
Income \$35,000 - \$39,999		6.32%	5.18%	5.53%	6.77%	5.87%
Income \$40,000 - \$49,999	3.35% <sup>2/</sup>	7.21%	9.32%	3.36%	11.03%	10.85%
Income \$50,000 - \$59,999		5.27%	7.68%	2.04%	7.61%	9.24%
Income \$60,000 - \$74,999		5.21%	7.18%	1.47%	6.85%	10.48%
Income \$75,000 - \$99,999		2.57%	5.92%	2.57%	4.63%	10.36%
Income \$100,000 or more	1.89% <sup>3/</sup>	1.76%	5.28%	1.52%	3.81%	12.34%

<sup>1/</sup> Includes the \$20,000-\$29,999 and \$30,000-\$34,999 income categories.

<sup>2/</sup> Includes the \$35,000-\$39,999 and \$40,000-\$49,999 income categories.

<sup>3/</sup> Includes the \$50,000-\$59,999, \$60,000-\$74,999, \$75,000-\$99,999, and \$100,000 or more income categories.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980; [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), 2008.

**TABLE P-34**  
**HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION BY PERCENTAGE**  
**Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia**  
**1980-2000**

Category	Lyons		
	1980	1990	2000
TOTAL Households	NA	100.00%	100.00%
Income less than \$5,000	NA	21.96%	NA
Income \$5,000 - \$9,999	NA	13.12%	27.91%
Income \$10,000 - \$14,999	NA	12.11%	12.14%
Income \$15,000 - \$19,999	NA	10.41%	8.39%
Income \$20,000 - \$29,999	NA	14.01%	14.39%
Income \$30,000 - \$34,999	NA	3.79%	5.44%
Income \$35,000 - \$39,999	NA	4.48%	4.44%
Income \$40,000 - \$49,999	NA	6.12%	8.76%
Income \$50,000 - \$59,999	NA	5.62%	5.38%
Income \$60,000 - \$74,999	NA	4.48%	3.00%
Income \$75,000 - \$99,999	NA	2.59%	6.38%
Income \$100,000 or more	NA	1.32%	3.75%

**TABLE P-34 (Cont'd)**  
**HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION BY PERCENTAGE**  
**Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia**  
**1980-2000**

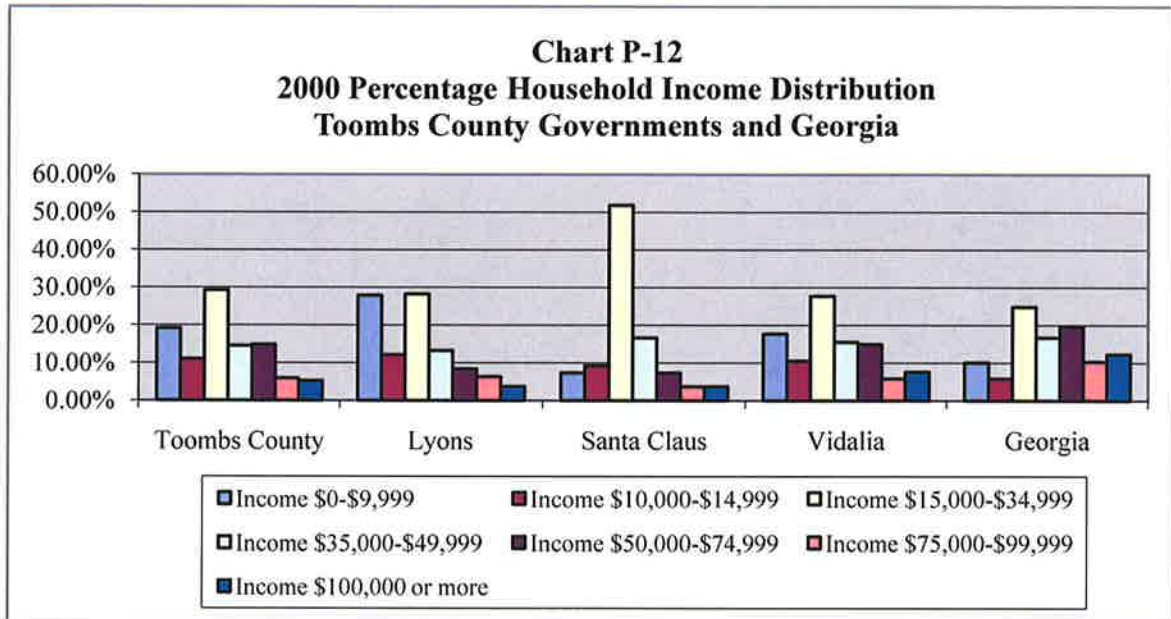
Category	Santa Claus			Vidalia		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
TOTAL Households	NA	100.00%	100.00%	NA	100.00%	100.00%
Income less than \$5,000	NA	3.64%	NA	NA	13.71%	NA
Income \$5,000 - \$9,999	NA	16.36%	7.41%	NA	14.19%	17.76%
Income \$10,000 - \$14,999	NA	9.09%	9.26%	NA	10.56%	10.52%
Income \$15,000 - \$19,999	NA	3.64%	9.26%	NA	10.74%	6.49%
Income \$20,000 - \$29,999	NA	27.27%	25.93%	NA	11.97%	16.45%
Income \$30,000 - \$34,999	NA	9.09%	16.67%	NA	6.79%	4.82%
Income \$35,000 - \$39,999	NA	0.00%	0.00%	NA	6.46%	5.46%
Income \$40,000 - \$49,999	NA	12.73%	16.67%	NA	7.24%	10.04%
Income \$50,000 - \$59,999	NA	14.55%	0.00%	NA	5.73%	8.30%
Income \$60,000 - \$74,999	NA	3.64%	7.41%	NA	6.46%	6.63%
Income \$75,000 - \$99,999	NA	0.00%	3.70%	NA	3.87%	5.89%
Income \$100,000 or more	NA	0.00%	3.70%	NA	2.26%	7.65%

<sup>1/</sup> Includes the \$15,000-\$19,999, \$20,000-\$29,999, and \$30,000-\$34,999 income categories.

<sup>2/</sup> Includes the \$35,000-\$39,999 and \$40,000-\$49,999 income categories.

<sup>3/</sup> Includes the \$50,000-\$59,999 and \$60,000-\$74,999 income categories.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983, [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), 2008.



Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983, [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), 2008.

From 1980 to 2000, Toombs County's per capita income increased significantly less than Georgia and the U.S. in current dollars in terms of absolute numbers, as shown in Table P-28. In absolute numbers, Toombs County's per capita income increased by \$13,771, or 215.8 percent, to \$20,151 from 1980 to 2000, as shown in Chart P-11. At the same time, Georgia's per capita income increased by \$19,567, or 232.4 percent, to \$27,987 between 1980 and 2000, and the U.S. per capita income increased by \$19,731, or 195.1 percent, to \$29,845. Toombs County's 1980 per capita income of \$6,380 was 75.8 percent of the state's 1980 per capita income and 63.1 percent of the national per capita income, as shown in Chart P-10. By 2000, however, the gap between the county's per capita income and that of the state and the nation had widened slightly when compared with the state but closed slightly as compared to the nation, as the county's per capita income had become 72 percent of Georgia's per capita income and 67.5 percent of the U.S. figure. Georgia's per capita income, which was 83.3 percent of U.S. per capita income in 1980, was 93.8 percent of the nation's per capita income by 2000, as the state's strong economy helped to generate healthy income growth for the state as a whole. Based on current dollars, the county's per capita income is failing to keep up with the growth of the state and nation as a whole, while the state continues to close the gap with the rest of the U.S.

As shown in Table P-32 and Chart P-12, by 2000 Toombs County had the highest percent of its household income distribution in the \$0,000-\$9,999 income category, which was approximately one-fifth of the county's households. Another one-sixth had incomes between \$20,000-\$29,999, while another one-tenth had incomes between \$10,000-\$14,999. The local percentage of households with incomes of less than \$10,000 was almost double the statewide rate, as was the percentage of households with incomes between \$10,000-\$14,999. The distribution of income by households is much more diverse at the state level than is the case locally. The apparent differences between the State and Toombs County can also be seen in the higher income categories, those ranging from \$60,000 and upwards. Toombs County had a combined 18.38 percent of households in this category in 2000, while the state had 33.18 percent of its households located within one of these three combined categories. Simultaneously, more than one-half (59.44 percent) of the county's households had incomes of under \$35,000, compared to 40.85 percent at the state level. Those households with incomes of \$75,000 or

greater locally were only about one-half of the statewide rate. Some 29 percent of local households were between \$35,000 and \$74,999, indicating somewhat less of a presence of middle income households locally, compared to roughly 36 percent at the state level. The roughly one-fifth of the county's households alone with incomes of less than \$10,000 in 2000 was down significantly by more than one-half from 46.61 percent in 1980, but it remains an indication that poverty was and still is a significant concern locally.

Municipalities. By 2000 as shown in Table P-29, per capita incomes in Lyons and Santa Claus were slightly lower than the county as a whole, while the per capita income in Vidalia was slightly above that of the county. In 1980 Santa Claus and Vidalia both had per capita incomes above the county level. Vidalia continues to have the highest per capita income in the county, some \$2,100 more than the county in 2000. Vidalia's per capita income experienced a slightly larger absolute increase than the county as a whole over the last two decades (\$10,855 vs. \$9,465) but a somewhat lower percentage increase (196.8 percent vs. 197.7 percent). The percentage growth of the per capita income in Lyons (193.6 percent) was just slightly below the county as well, while growth in Santa Claus (169.2 percent) was noticeably below the county. Possible causes of such relatively low-income figures in the cities in general can be attributed to a lack of educational attainment, the increasing elderly population, and the high percentage of minority residents who tend to have lower incomes than the population as a whole.

Table P-33 shows that in 2000, household incomes in the cities were, for the most part, largely distributed in the lower income categories. In both Lyons and Vidalia, the highest percentage of incomes were those of less than \$10,000, some 27 percent in Lyons and 17 percent in Vidalia. In Santa Claus, however, the highest percentage of incomes (25 percent) were between \$20,000-\$29,999. Some 50-60 percent of households in the municipalities had incomes of less than \$30,000, indicating a high number of lower-income households is present to go along with a lower percentage of middle income households. On a more positive note, some 15-20 percent of households in the municipalities had incomes of \$60,000 or above. These figures indicate relatively high numbers of poverty and low-income households still exist within the cities and the county to some extent, combined with a small but growing number of middle and upper income households, albeit still at lesser numbers overall than the state as a whole. For



local household incomes to catch up to the rest of the state and nation, much work will have to be done to raise the skill levels of the local labor force. Only through increased skill levels will the County be able to attract the kinds of good-paying jobs necessary to raise household incomes sufficiently.

**TABLE P-2**  
**CURRENT AND HISTORIC POPULATION AND PERCENT CHANGE**  
**Toombs County and Surrounding Counties**  
**1980-2007**

	1980	1990	1980-1990 % Change	2000	1990-2000 % Change	2007	2000-2007 % Change	1980-2000 % Change
<b>Toombs County</b>	22,592	24,072	6.6	26,067	8.3	27,820	6.7	15.4
<b>Appling County</b>	15,565	15,744	1.2	17,419	10.6	17,946	3.0	11.9
<b>Emanuel County</b>	20,795	20,546	-1.2	21,837	6.3	22,469	2.9	5.0
<b>Jeff Davis County</b>	11,473	12,032	4.9	12,684	5.4	13,291	4.8	10.6
<b>Montgomery County</b>	7,011	7,163	2.2	8,270	15.5	9,060	9.6	18.0
<b>Tattnall County</b>	18,134	17,722	-2.2	22,305	25.8	23,179	3.9	23.0

Sources: US Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1980, 1990, and 2000; [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008.

**TABLE P-3  
POPULATION PROJECTIONS  
Toombs County and Georgia  
2005-2030**

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Toombs County (DCA, from U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF 1))</b>	26,936					27,805			
<b>Georgia (DCA, from U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF 1))</b>	8,868,675					9,550,897			
<b>Toombs County (HOGA RDC)</b>	26,927	27,310	27,820	27,997	28,235	28,475	28,718	28,962	29,209

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2020	2025	2030
<b>Toombs County (DCA, from U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF 1))</b>		28,673				29,542	30,411	31,280
<b>Georgia (DCA, from U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF 1))</b>		10,233,118				10,915,340	11,597,562	12,279,784
<b>Toombs County (HOGA RDC)</b>	29,457	29,708	29,961	30,216	30,473	30,994	32,335	33,735

Sources: Georgia Department of Community Affairs, utilizing U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), SF 1 data as original source, [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), 2006; Georgia Office of Planning and Budget, 2005; Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC Staff, 2008.

**TABLE P-4  
POPULATION PROJECTIONS  
Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia  
2005-2030**

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Toombs County</b>	26,927	27,310	27,820	27,997	28,235	28,475	28,718	28,962	29,209
<b>Lyons</b>	4,379	4,397	4,480	4,526	4,573	4,620	4,668	4,716	4,765
<b>Santa Claus</b>	239	243	247	248	250	251	253	254	256
<b>Vidalia</b>	10,906	11,048	11,224	11,333	11,443	11,554	11,666	11,779	11,893

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2020	2025	2030
<b>Toombs County</b>	29,457	29,708	29,961	30,216	30,473	30,994	32,335	33,735
<b>Lyons</b>	4,814	4,864	4,914	4,965	5,016	5,120	5,390	5,675
<b>Santa Claus</b>	257	259	260	262	264	267	275	283
<b>Vidalia</b>	12,008	12,125	12,242	12,361	12,481	12,724	13,353	14,013

Sources: Georgia Department of Community Affairs, [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), utilizing U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), SF 1 data as original source, 2006; Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC Staff; 2006.

**TABLE P-5  
COMMUTING PATTERNS  
Toombs County  
1990-2000**

<b>Category</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
Daytime Population Inside County	24,725	26,993
Number of People Leaving the County During the Day to Work	2,160	2,623
Number of People Coming Into the County During the Day to Work	2,813	3,549
Total Number of Workers During the Day	10,416	11,630

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), 2008.

**TABLE P-7**  
**AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE**  
**Toombs County, Georgia, and the U.S.**  
**1980-2030**

<b>Persons per Household</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>
Toombs County	2.90	2.69	2.59	2.53	2.47	2.41	2.35	2.30	2.25
Georgia	2.84	2.66	2.65	2.61	2.59	2.59	2.60	2.63	N/A
United States	2.74	2.63	2.59	2.56	2.54	2.54	2.55	2.58	N/A

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 1983, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008 (STF 1 data was used to obtain 1990 figures. SF 1 data was used to obtain 2000 figures.), Projections for Toombs County by Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC staff, utilizing U.S. Bureau of the Census SF 1 data as original source, 2008, Projections for Georgia and the U.S. by Georgia Department of Community Affairs, [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), utilizing U.S. Bureau of the Census SF 1 data as original source, 2008.

**TABLE P-8  
CURRENT AND PROJECTED NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS  
Toombs County and Georgia  
2000-2030**

<b>Total Households</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>
<b>Toombs County</b>							
Unadj. Households	9,877	10,428	10,980	11,531	12,082	12,633	13,185
Persons Per Household	2.59	2.53	2.47	2.41	2.35	2.30	2.25
RDC Population	26,067	26,927	28,475	29,708	30,994	32,335	33,735
Adj. Households	9,877	10,602	11,326	12,120	12,976	13,841	14,771
<b>Georgia</b>							
Unadj. Households	3,022,410	3,265,030	3,501,380	3,727,580	3,929,140	4,108,410	N/A
Persons Per Household	2.650	2.610	2.590	2.590	2.600	2.630	N/A
Adj. Households	3,006,409	3,311,408	3,551,311	3,799,902	3,984,730	4,166,789	N/A

Sources: County and Georgia data by Georgia Department of Community Affairs, [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), utilizing U.S. Bureau of the Census SF 1 data as original source, 2008 (adjusted by HOGARDC, 2008).

NOTE: The number of households and persons per household were adjusted proportionately according to RDC population projections.

**TABLE P-9  
HISTORIC, CURRENT, AND PROJECTED NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS  
AND AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE  
Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia  
1980-2030**

	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
<b>Lyons</b>									
Total Households	1,454	1,600	1,547	1,643	1,738	1,837	1,927	2,025	2,128
Persons Per Household	2.80	2.70	2.55	2.53	2.51	2.48	2.47	2.46	2.45
<b>Santa Claus</b>									
Total Households	51	62	79	82	84	87	90	93	96
Persons Per Household	3.27	2.48	3.00	3.00	2.99	2.98	2.97	2.96	2.95
<b>Vidalia</b>									
Total Households	3,621	4,132	4,167	4,461	4,754	5,101	5,475	5,854	6,232
Persons Per Household	2.81	2.62	2.46	2.42	2.38	2.33	2.28	2.24	2.21

Sources: Georgia Department of Community Affairs, [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), utilizing U.S. Bureau of the Census SF 1 data as original source, 2008; Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC Staff projections, 2008.

**TABLE P-11  
DETAILED AGE DISTRIBUTION  
Toombs County, Georgia, and U.S.  
2000**

	United States	Georgia	Toombs County
<b>Total</b>	100	100	26,067 (100)
<b>Age 0 to 4</b>	6.8	7.2	2010 (7.7)
<b>Age 5 to 9</b>	7.3	7.5	1,999 (7.7)
<b>Age 10 to 14</b>	7.3	7.5	2,142 (8.2)
<b>Age 15 to 19</b>	7.1	7.2	2,037 (7.8)
<b>Age 20 to 24</b>	6.8	7.2	1,661 (6.4)
<b>Age 25 to 34</b>	14.1	15.8	3,440 (13.2)
<b>Age 35 to 44</b>	16.3	16.8	3,796 (14.6)
<b>Age 45 to 54</b>	13.4	13.1	3,322 (12.7)
<b>Age 55 to 59</b>	4.8	4.5	1,336 (5.1)
<b>Age 60 to 64</b>	6.6	3.5	1,146 (4.4)
<b>Age 65 &amp; Over</b>	12.4	9.6	3,178 (12.2)

Source: US Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008.



**TABLE P-13**  
**PROJECTED PERCENTAGE POPULATION BY AGE**  
**Toombs County**  
**2000-2030**

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>
<b>Total</b>	26,067 (100.0)	26,939 (100.0)	27,805 (100.0)	28,676 (100.0)	28,542 (100.0)	30,414 (100.0)	31,280 (100.0)
<b>Age 0 to 4</b>	7.7	7.6	7.4	7.3	7.4	7.0	6.9
<b>Age 5 to 13</b>	15.9	15.8	15.7	15.7	16.2	15.6	15.5
<b>Age 14 to 17</b>	5.0	4.3	3.7	3.1	2.7	2.1	1.6
<b>Age 18 to 20</b>	4.3	4.1	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.6	3.4
<b>Age 21 to 24</b>	5.0	4.7	4.4	4.1	4.0	3.6	3.4
<b>Age 25 to 34</b>	13.2	13.0	12.8	12.6	12.8	12.2	12.0
<b>Age 35 to 44</b>	14.6	15.2	15.7	16.3	17.4	17.3	17.7
<b>Age 45 to 54</b>	12.7	13.5	14.2	14.9	16.0	16.1	16.6
<b>Age 55 to 64</b>	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.9	9.5	9.5
<b>Age 65 &amp; Over</b>	12.2	12.4	12.6	12.8	13.4	13.1	13.3

Sources: Georgia Department of Community Affairs, utilizing U.S. Bureau of the Census SF 1 data as original source, 2008.

Note: These projections are from [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com). Percentages only are shown because individual raw numbers do not reflect official HOGARDC total population projections (See Table P-3 for official projections). The HOGARDC did not make population projections by age.

**TABLE P-14**  
**PROJECTED PERCENTAGE POPULATION BY AGE**  
**Lyons**  
**2000-2030**

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>
<b>Total</b>	4,169 (100.0)	4,162 (100.0)	4,154 (100.0)	4,145 (100.0)	4,149 (100.0)	4,196 (100.0)	4,241 (100.0)
<b>Age 0 to 4</b>	8.4	8.8	9.1	9.5	9.8	10.0	10.2
<b>Age 5 to 13</b>	15.7	15.7	15.8	15.9	15.9	15.8	15.7
<b>Age 14 to 17</b>	4.8	3.5	2.3	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Age 18 to 20</b>	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.3
<b>Age 21 to 24</b>	5.2	5.1	5.1	5.0	4.9	4.8	4.7
<b>Age 25 to 34</b>	13.2	13.5	13.8	14.1	14.3	14.4	14.6
<b>Age 35 to 44</b>	13.8	14.4	14.9	15.5	16.0	16.3	16.6
<b>Age 45 to 54</b>	10.8	11.1	11.4	11.7	12.0	12.1	12.3
<b>Age 55 to 64</b>	9.0	8.6	8.3	8.0	7.6	7.2	6.8
<b>Age 65 &amp; Over</b>	14.4	14.5	14.7	14.8	14.9	14.9	14.8

Sources: Georgia Department of Community Affairs, [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), utilizing U.S. Bureau of the Census SF 1 data as original source, 2008.

Note: These projections are from [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com). Percentages only are shown because individual raw numbers do not reflect official HOGARDC total population projections (See Table P-3 for official projections). The HOGARDC did not make population projections by age.

**TABLE P-15**  
**PROJECTED PERCENTAGE POPULATION BY AGE**  
**Santa Claus**  
**2000-2030**

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>
<b>Total</b>	237 (100.0)	255 (100.0)	275 (100.0)	292 (100.0)	307 (100.0)	325 (100.0)	345 (100.0)
<b>Age 0 to 4</b>	7.2	7.1	6.9	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.4
<b>Age 5 to 13</b>	11.0	9.0	7.6	6.2	4.9	3.7	2.9
<b>Age 14 to 17</b>	4.2	4.3	4.0	4.1	3.9	4.0	3.8
<b>Age 18 to 20</b>	8.0	8.6	9.5	9.9	10.4	10.8	11.3
<b>Age 21 to 24</b>	9.7	10.2	10.9	11.3	11.7	12.0	12.5
<b>Age 25 to 34</b>	17.7	16.1	14.9	13.7	12.7	11.7	11.0
<b>Age 35 to 44</b>	11.0	10.6	9.8	9.6	9.1	8.9	8.4
<b>Age 45 to 54</b>	14.8	16.5	17.8	19.2	20.5	21.5	22.3
<b>Age 55 to 64</b>	10.1	10.6	11.3	11.6	12.1	12.3	12.8
<b>Age 65 &amp; Over</b>	6.3	7.1	7.3	7.9	8.1	8.6	8.7

Sources: Georgia Department of Community Affairs, [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), utilizing U.S. Bureau of the Census SF 1 data as original source, 2008.

Note: These projections are from [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com). Percentages only are shown because individual raw numbers do not reflect official HOGARDC total population projections (See Table P-3 for official projections). The HOGARDC did not make population projections by age.

**TABLE P-16**  
**PROJECTED PERCENTAGE POPULATION BY AGE**  
**Vidalia**  
**2000-2030**

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>
<b>Total</b>	10,491 (100.0)	10,517 (100.0)	10,542 (100.0)	10,566 (100.0)	10,589 (100.0)	10,615 (100.0)	10,640 (100.0)
<b>Age 0 to 4</b>	7.1	6.7	6.3	5.8	5.4	5.0	4.6
<b>Age 5 to 13</b>	15.8	15.7	15.6	15.4	15.3	15.2	15.1
<b>Age 14 to 17</b>	5.0	4.4	3.9	3.3	2.8	2.2	1.7
<b>Age 18 to 20</b>	4.1	3.9	3.7	3.5	3.2	3.0	2.8
<b>Age 21 to 24</b>	4.4	3.9	3.3	2.7	2.2	1.6	1.1
<b>Age 25 to 34</b>	11.9	11.1	10.3	9.6	8.8	8.1	7.4
<b>Age 35 to 44</b>	14.6	15.5	16.4	17.3	18.1	19.0	19.9
<b>Age 45 to 54</b>	13.1	14.1	15.2	16.2	17.3	18.3	19.3
<b>Age 55 to 64</b>	9.2	9.1	9.0	8.8	8.7	8.6	8.5
<b>Age 65 &amp; Over</b>	14.8	15.7	16.5	17.3	18.1	18.9	19.6

Sources: Georgia Department of Community Affairs, [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), utilizing U.S. Bureau of the Census SF 1 data as original source, 2008.

Note: These projections are from [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com). Percentages only are shown because individual raw numbers do not reflect official HOGARDC total population projections (See Table P-3 for official projections). The HOGARDC did not make population projections by age.

**TABLE P-17**  
**PROJECTED PERCENTAGE POPULATION AGE DISTRIBUTION**  
**Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia**  
**2000-2030**

<b>Toombs County</b>			
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2000-2030 % Change</b>
<b>Total</b>	26,067 (100.0)	31,280 (100.0)	20.0
<b>Less Than 25</b>	37.9	30.8	-2.1
<b>Age 25-54</b>	40.5	46.3	37.3
<b>Age 55-64</b>	9.5	9.5	19.9
<b>Age 65 &amp; Over</b>	12.2	13.3	31.0
<b>Lyons</b>			
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2000-2030 % Change</b>
<b>Total</b>	4,169 (100.0)	4,241 (100.0)	1.7
<b>Less Than 25</b>	38.8	34.9	-8.8
<b>Age 25-54</b>	37.8	43.5	17.1
<b>Age 55-64</b>	9.0	6.8	-22.7
<b>Age 65 &amp; Over</b>	14.4	14.8	5.0
<b>Santa Claus</b>			
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2000-2030 % Change</b>
<b>Total</b>	237 (100.0)	345 (100.0)	45.6
<b>Less Than 25</b>	40.1	36.9	33.7
<b>Age 25-54</b>	43.5	41.7	39.8
<b>Age 55-64</b>	10.1	12.8	83.3
<b>Age 65 &amp; Over</b>	6.3	8.7	100.0
<b>Vidalia</b>			
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2000-2030 % Change</b>
<b>Total</b>	10,491 (100.0)	10,640 (100.0)	1.4
<b>Less Than 25</b>	36.4	25.3	-29.7
<b>Age 25-54</b>	39.6	46.6	19.4
<b>Age 55-64</b>	9.2	8.5	-5.6
<b>Age 65 &amp; Over</b>	14.8	19.6	34.2

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008.

Note: These projections are from [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com). Percentages only are shown because individual raw numbers do not reflect official HOGARDC total population projections (See Table P-3 for official projections). The HOGARDC did not make population projections by age.

**TABLE P-18  
POPULATION BY RACE  
Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, Vidalia, Georgia, and U.S.  
1980**

Category	U.S.	Georgia	Toombs County	Lyons	Santa Claus	Vidalia
<b>TOTAL Population</b>	224,810,192	5,457,566	22,592	4,203	167	10,393
<b>White</b>	186,877,632	3,944,056	16,763	2,826	167	6,794
<b>Black</b>	26,338,700	1,462,670	5,734	1,363	0	3,558
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	1,378,993	7,400	26	5	0	15
<b>Asian or Pacific Islander</b>	3,429,179	22,911	56	9	0	18
<b>Other</b>	6,726,155	18,572	13	0	0	8
<b>Hispanic Origin</b>	14,538,182	61,223	175	34	0	110

Source: US Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008.

Note: These projections are from [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com). Percentages only are shown because individual raw numbers do not reflect official HOGARDC total population projections (See Table P-3 for official projections). The HOGARDC did not make population projections by race.

**TABLE P-18 (Continued)  
POPULATION BY RACE  
Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, Vidalia, Georgia, and U.S.  
1990**

Category	U.S.	Georgia	Toombs County	Lyons	Santa Claus	Vidalia
<b>TOTAL Population</b>	248,709,873	6,478,216	24,072	4,502	154	11,078
<b>White</b>	199,686,070	4,600,148	17,596	2,709	153	7,287
<b>Black</b>	29,986,060	1,746,565	5,637	1,408	0	3,622
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	1,959,234	13,348	37	9	0	16
<b>Asian or Pacific Islander</b>	7,273,662	75,781	148	9	1	129
<b>Other</b>	9,804,847	42,374	654	367	0	24
<b>Hispanic Origin</b>	22,354,059	108,922	824	414	1	71

Source: US Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008.

Note: These projections are from [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com). Percentages only are shown because individual raw numbers do not reflect official HOGARDC total population projections (See Table P-3 for official projections). The HOGARDC did not make population projections by race.

**TABLE P-18 (Continued)**  
**POPULATION BY RACE**  
**Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, Vidalia, Georgia, and U.S.**  
**2000**

Category	U.S.	Georgia	Toombs County	Lyons	Santa Claus	Vidalia	1980-2000 % Change (U.S.)	1980-2000 % Change (GA)	1980-2000 % Change (Toombs)
<b>TOTAL Population</b>	281,421,906	8,186,453	26,067	4,169	237	10,491	25.2	50.0	11.9
<b>White</b>	211,460,626	5,327,281	18,029	2,470	195	6,254	13.2	35.1	8.0
<b>Black</b>	34,658,190	2,349,542	6,296	1,350	4	3,869	31.6	60.6	-8.0
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	2,475,956	21,737	54	15	0	15	79.5	193.7	200.00
<b>Asian or Pacific Islander</b>	10,641,833	177,416	124	8	0	93	210.3	674.4	125.00
<b>Other</b>	15,359,073	196,289	1,564	301	38	191	128.3	956.9	3845.00
<b>Two or More Races</b>	6,826,228	114,188	107	25	0	69	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Hispanic Origin</b>	35,305,818	435,227	2,310	628	59	340	142.8	610.9	1,220.0

Source: US Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008.

Note: These projections are from [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com). Percentages only are shown because individual raw numbers do not reflect official HOGARDC total population projections (See Table P-3 for official projections). The HOGARDC did not make population projections by race.

**TABLE P-20  
PROJECTED PERCENT OF POPULATION BY RACE  
Toombs County, Georgia, and U.S.  
2000-2030**

	United States							Georgia							Toombs County							
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	
<b>Total</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>White Pop.</b>	70.48	68.31	66.28	64.39	62.57	60.75	N/A	63.49	62.02	60.50	59.00	57.45	55.86	N/A	69.16	68.11	67.12	66.19	65.31	64.49	63.71	
<b>Black Pop.</b>	12.31	12.38	12.48	12.56	12.60	12.62	N/A	28.82	29.06	29.40	29.70	29.89	29.99	N/A	24.15	23.90	23.65	23.43	23.21	23.01	22.82	
<b>Native American</b>	0.76	0.77	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	N/A	0.22	0.21	0.21	0.20	0.19	0.18	N/A	0.21	0.23	0.24	0.26	0.28	0.29	0.31	
<b>Asian &amp; Pacific Islander</b>	3.90	4.42	4.97	5.50	6.03	6.59	N/A	2.17	2.64	3.19	3.77	4.37	5.05	N/A	0.48	0.52	0.57	0.61	0.65	0.69	0.72	
<b>Hispanic, any Race</b>	12.56	14.12	15.49	16.76	18.02	19.27	N/A	5.31	6.07	6.70	7.34	8.10	8.91	N/A	8.86	10.56	12.15	13.64	15.05	16.37	17.62	

Note: Percentages do not equal 100 because of races of two or more

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008; [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), 2008.

Note: These projections are from [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com). Percentages only are shown because individual raw numbers do not reflect official HOGARDC total population projections (See Table P-3 for official projections). The HOGARDC did not make population projections by race.



**TABLE P-21**  
**PROJECTED PERCENT CHANGE IN POPULATION BY RACE**  
**Toombs County, Georgia, and U.S.**  
**2000-2030**

	United States % Change	Georgia % Change	Toombs County % Change
<b>Total</b>	30.2	50.0	20.0
<b>White Population</b>	N/A	N/A	10.5
<b>Black Population</b>	N/A	N/A	13.4
<b>Native American</b>	N/A	N/A	77.8
<b>Asian &amp; Pacific Islander</b>	N/A	N/A	82.3
<b>Hispanic, any Race</b>	N/A	N/A	138.7

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008; [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), 2008.

Note: These projections are from [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com). Percentages only are shown because individual raw numbers do not reflect official HOGARDC total population projections (See Table P-3 for official projections). The HOGARDC did not make population projections by race.

**TABLE P-22**  
**PROJECTED PERCENTAGE POPULATION BY RACE**  
**Toombs County**  
**2000-2030**

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	% Change 2000-2030
<b>Total</b>	26,067 (100.0)	26,937 (100.0)	27,805 (100.0)	28,674 (100.0)	29,542 (100.0)	30,412 (100.0)	31,280 (100.0)	20.0
<b>White Population</b>	69.2	68.1	67.1	66.2	65.3	64.5	63.7	10.5
<b>Black Population</b>	24.2	23.9	23.7	23.4	23.2	23.0	22.8	13.4
<b>Native American</b>	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	77.8
<b>Asian &amp; Pacific Islander</b>	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	82.3
<b>Other</b>	6.0	7.2	8.4	9.5	10.5	11.5	12.4	148.8
<b>Hispanic, any Race</b>	8.9	10.6	12.1	13.6	15.0	16.4	17.6	138.7

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008; [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), 2008.

Note: These projections are from [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com). Percentages only are shown because individual raw numbers do not reflect official HOGARDC total population projections (See Table P-3 for official projections). The HOGARDC did not make population projections by race.

**TABLE P-23**  
**PROJECTED PERCENTAGE POPULATION BY RACE**  
**Lyons**  
**2000-2030**

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	% Change 2000-2030
<b>Total</b>	4,169 (100.0)	4,162 (100.0)	4,153 (100.0)	4,144 (100.0)	4,135 (100.0)	4,128 (100.0)	4,119 (100.0)	-1.2
<b>White Population</b>	59.2	57.2	55.2	53.2	51.1	49.1	47.0	-21.6
<b>Black Population</b>	32.4	32.4	32.4	32.3	32.3	32.3	32.3	-1.4
<b>Other</b>	7.8	9.8	11.8	13.8	15.8	17.8	19.8	150.0
<b>Hispanic</b>	15.1	18.7	22.3	25.9	29.6	33.2	36.9	141.9

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008; [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), 2008.

Note: These projections are from [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com). Percentages only are shown because individual raw numbers do not reflect official HOGARDC total population projections (See Table P-3 for official projections). The HOGARDC did not make population projections by race.

**TABLE P-24**  
**PROJECTED POPULATION BY RACE**  
**Santa Claus**  
**2000-2030**

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	% Change 2000-2030
<b>Total</b>	237 (100.0)	255 (100.0)	272 (100.0)	290 (100.0)	307 (100.0)	325 (100.0)	342 (100.0)	44.3
<b>White Population</b>	82.3	79.2	76.8	74.5	72.6	68.6	69.3	21.5
<b>Black Population</b>	1.7	2.0	2.2	2.4	2.6	2.5	2.9	150.0
<b>Other</b>	16.0	18.8	21.0	23.1	24.8	23.4	27.8	150.0
<b>Hispanic</b>	24.9	29.0	32.7	35.5	38.4	10.2	43.3	150.8

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008; [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), 2008.

Note: These projections are from [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com). Percentages only are shown because individual raw numbers do not reflect official HOGARDC total population projections (See Table P-3 for official projections). The HOGARDC did not make population projections by race.

**TABLE P-25**  
**PROJECTED POPULATION BY RACE**  
**Vidalia**  
**2000-2030**

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	% Change 2000-2030
<b>Total</b>	10,491 (100.0)	10,516 (100.0)	10,541 (100.0)	10,546 (100.0)	10,589 (100.0)	10,614 (100.0)	10,639 (100.0)	1.4
<b>White Population</b>	59.6	58.2	56.8	55.5	54.0	52.6	51.2	-13.0
<b>Black Population</b>	36.9	37.5	38.2	38.9	39.5	40.1	40.8	12.1
<b>Other</b>	2.5	3.1	3.7	4.3	4.8	5.4	6.0	145.4
<b>Hispanic</b>	3.2	3.8	4.3	4.9	5.4	5.9	6.4	101.5

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008; [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), 2008.

Note: These projections are from [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com). Percentages only are shown because individual raw numbers do not reflect official HOGARDC total population projections (See Table P-3 for official projections). The HOGARDC did not make population projections by race.

**TABLE P-28  
EDUCATIONAL GRADUATION STATISTICS  
Toombs County, Surrounding Counties, and Georgia  
2001-2007**

<b>Education Graduation Statistics</b>	<b>H.S. Graduation Rate</b>	<b>H.S. Dropout Rate</b>	<b>Percent of Grads Attending Georgia Public Colleges</b>	<b>Percent of Grads Attending Georgia Public Technical Colleges</b>
<b>Toombs County</b>				
2001-2002	49.4%	5.0%	31.3%	18.2%
2002-2003	62.6%	4.4%	22.7%	11.3%
2003-2004	56.8%	2.3%	46.8%	13.5%
2004-2005	68.1%	6.8%	38.7%	14.0%
2005-2006	68.8%	6.3%	36.8%	10.2%
2006-2007	72.0%	4.8%	36.5%	17.3%
<b>Vidalia City</b>				
2001-2002	62.9%	4.2%	42.4%	20.8%
2002-2003	65.1%	4.5%	44.4%	12.5%
2003-2004	65.2%	5.5%	51.8%	3.6%
2004-2005	75.4%	5.7%	43.2%	7.6%
2005-2006	80.6%	4.2%	52.1%	3.0%
2006-2007	71.9%	5.1%	49.6%	9.0%
<b>Appling County</b>				
2001-2002	57.7%	5.1%	41.8%	15.4%
2002-2003	59.4%	4.2%	37.6%	14.7%
2003-2004	57.6%	6.1%	38.8%	13.9%
2004-2005	68.6%	6.1%	38.2%	10.2%
2005-2006	67.9%	5.1%	39.0%	10.6%
2006-2007	67.3%	5.3%	41.6%	18.2%

**TABLE P-28(Cont'd)  
EDUCATIONAL GRADUATION STATISTICS  
Toombs County, Surrounding Counties, and Georgia  
2001-2007**

<b>Education Graduation Statistics</b>	<b>H.S. Graduation Rate</b>	<b>H.S. Dropout Rate</b>	<b>Percent of Grads Attending Georgia Public Colleges</b>	<b>Percent of Grads Attending Georgia Public Technical Colleges</b>
<b>Emanuel County</b>				
2001-2002	57.8%	7.0%	34.8%	19.4%
2002-2003	56.4%	5.9%	32.9%	13.7%
2003-2004	46.1%	6.2%	34.6%	10.4%
2004-2005	52.9%	4.6%	22.9%	14.4%
2005-2006	57.1%	5.4%	40.8%	10.5%
2006-2007	67.2%	4.2%	33.8%	21.1%
<b>Jeff Davis County</b>				
2001-2002	69.3%	7.4%	27.2%	28.7%
2002-2003	61.7%	6.1%	29.3%	24.4%
2003-2004	65.5%	4.5%	33.9%	21.7%
2004-2005	72.6%	5.7%	40.0%	11.1%
2005-2006	64.6%	6.9%	31.9%	7.5%
2006-2007	76.2%	6.3%	39.3%	26.5%
<b>Montgomery County</b>				
2001-2002	54.1%	6.2%	27.3%	19.5%
2002-2003	51.4%	6.4%	21.2%	15.2%
2003-2004	62.4%	2.8%	36.8%	8.8%
2004-2005	60.8%	3.4%	27.9%	17.2%
2005-2006	63.5%	3.4%	37.5%	10.4%
2006-2007	69.4%	5.4%	33.3%	27.8%

**TABLE P-28 (Cont'd)**  
**EDUCATIONAL GRADUATION STATISTICS**  
**Toombs County, Surrounding Counties, and Georgia**  
**2001-2007**

Education Graduation Statistics	H.S. Graduation Rate	H.S. Dropout Rate	Percent of Grads Attending Georgia Public Colleges	Percent of Grads Attending Georgia Public Technical Colleges
<b>Tattnall County</b>				
2001-2002	47.7%	8.0%	17.9%	17.3%
2002-2003	49.3%	6.2%	12.8%	19.6%
2003-2004	52.5%	3.7%	33.1%	19.5%
2004-2005	65.3%	5.9%	20.3%	12.4%
2005-2006	70.0%	4.4%	31.1%	16.8%
2006-2007	70.4%	3.8%	34.7%	18.2%
<b>Georgia</b>				
2001-2002	61.8%	5.3%	36.1%	9.7%
2002-2003	63.3%	5.5%	38.7%	8.3%
2003-2004	65.4%	5.1%	40.0%	7.7%
2004-2005	69.4%	5.0%	38.5%	7.7%
2005-2006	70.8%	4.7%	38.2%	6.5%
2006-2007	72.3%	4.1%	41.6%	10.1%

Source: Georgia Department of Education (2008). NA indicates that data was not available for that particular year.



**TABLE P-31**  
**MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME**  
**Toombs County Governments, Georgia, and the U.S.**  
**1980-2000**

<b>Median Household Income (Actual \$)</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
Toombs County	\$10,812	\$19,473	\$26,811
Lyons	NA	\$16,002	\$21,202
Santa Claus	NA	\$24,464	\$28,750
Vidalia	NA	\$20,465	\$28,365
Georgia	\$15,033	\$29,021	\$42,433
United States	\$16,841	\$30,056	\$41,994

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008 (STF 3 data was used to obtain 1990 figures. SF 4 data was used to obtain 2000 figures.).

**TABLE P-32**  
**HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION**  
**Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia**  
**1980-2000**

Category	Toombs County			Lyons		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
TOTAL Households	7,622	8,640	9,870	NA	1,585	1,598
Income less than \$5000	1,999	1,254	NA	NA	348	NA
Income \$5000 - \$9999	1,553	1,125	1,889	NA	208	446
Income \$10000 - \$14999	1,376	972	1,090	NA	192	194
Income \$15000 - \$19999	1,049	1,043	766	NA	165	134
Income \$20000 - \$29999		1,238	1,561	NA	222	230
Income \$30000 - \$34999	1,246 <sup>1/</sup>	560	561	NA	60	87
Income \$35000 - \$39999		546	511	NA	71	71
Income \$40000 - \$49999	255 <sup>2/</sup>	623	920	NA	97	140
Income \$50000 - \$59999		455	758	NA	89	86
Income \$60000 - \$74999		450	709	NA	71	48
Income \$75000 - \$99999		222	584	NA	41	102
Income \$100000 or more	144 <sup>3/</sup>	152	521	NA	21	60

**TABLE P-32 (Cont'd)**  
**HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION**  
**Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia**  
**1980-2000**

Category	Santa Claus			Vidalia		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
TOTAL Households	NA	55	54	NA	3,976	4,194
Income less than \$5000	NA	2	NA	NA	545	NA
Income \$5000 - \$9999	NA	9	4	NA	564	745
Income \$10000 - \$14999	NA	5	5	NA	420	441
Income \$15000 - \$19999	NA	2	5	NA	427	272
Income \$20000 - \$29999	NA	15	14	NA	476	690
Income \$30000 - \$34999	NA	5	9	NA	270	202
Income \$35000 - \$39999	NA	0	0	NA	257	229
Income \$40000 - \$49999	NA	7	9	NA	288	421
Income \$50000 - \$59999	NA	8	0	NA	228	348
Income \$60000 - \$74999	NA	2	4	NA	257	278
Income \$75000 - \$99999	NA	0	2	NA	154	247
Income \$100000 or more	NA	0	2	NA	90	321

<sup>1/</sup> Includes the \$20,000-\$29,999 and \$30,000-\$34,999 income categories.

<sup>2/</sup> Includes the \$35,000-\$39,999 and \$40,000-\$49,999 income categories.

<sup>3/</sup> Includes the \$50,000-\$59,999, \$60,000-\$74,999, \$75,000-\$99,999, and \$100,000 or more income categories.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980; [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), 2008.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Introduction

This plan element addresses the state of economic development of the Toombs County community, including its three municipalities of Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia. The economic base, labor force, local economic resources, and ongoing economic trends of the community are examined through a community assessment and the identification by the local community of issues and opportunities that require further attention. The inclusion of economic data, as required for ten years prior to the plan and for twenty years beyond plan preparation, has been satisfied to the best of the community's ability. Almost all economic data is presented at the county level, because such data for rural areas is generally only available at that level, and economic planning generally only makes sense at that level. Only limited data would be available for the municipalities. The county as a whole is truly an inseparable economic entity, most significant economic activity centers on the largest municipality of Vidalia, and local economic resources and activities generally take place on a joint countywide basis. It has been accepted for a long time in Toombs County that the economic fate of all four local governments is intertwined, and that the local economy could not be analyzed or developed except on a countywide basis.

It is necessary for a community to understand and address the factors driving its economic development to improve itself and make its desired future happen. Toombs County's past development is an obvious example of commerce's influence on growth and development. From the family farm to the development of the timber industry and the Altamaha River and the railroads, Toombs County's growth periods prior to World War II have been associated with commerce and economic development. Similarly the changing face of economic development can cause decline. Much of the late twentieth century saw the decline of the railroad as a principle means of transportation and the advent of the automobile that allowed people greater mobility to search for better employment and higher wages. Further changes in technology led to the development of more mechanized farming that requires a lesser number of people needed

to work the farm than in times past. The labor intensive Vidalia Sweet Onion crop has at least slowed this trend.

The Minimum Standards require the inclusion of a multitude of numbers and data forecasts, all of which can be found in this Technical Addendum and Data Appendix of the comprehensive plan. Certain individual tables and charts necessary to illustrate key points are included. Many of these numbers are provided from data obtained through national econometric models that are based on past occurrences, and known trends and influences. It should be remembered that data are numbers with inherent accuracy problems, no matter the source. Application of models which display accurate national results become less accurate when applied to smaller areas because of sheer size. The purpose for these numbers is to provide a snapshot of the community and to help understand ongoing trends. Those citizens and leaders involved in plan preparation often have intuitive knowledge and insight on both the conditions of the local economy and the reality behind the numbers. The recognition and acknowledgement of strengths and weaknesses revealed in such analysis provides the foundation to determine means, goals, and policies appropriate for local community economic development strategies.

## **Economic Base**

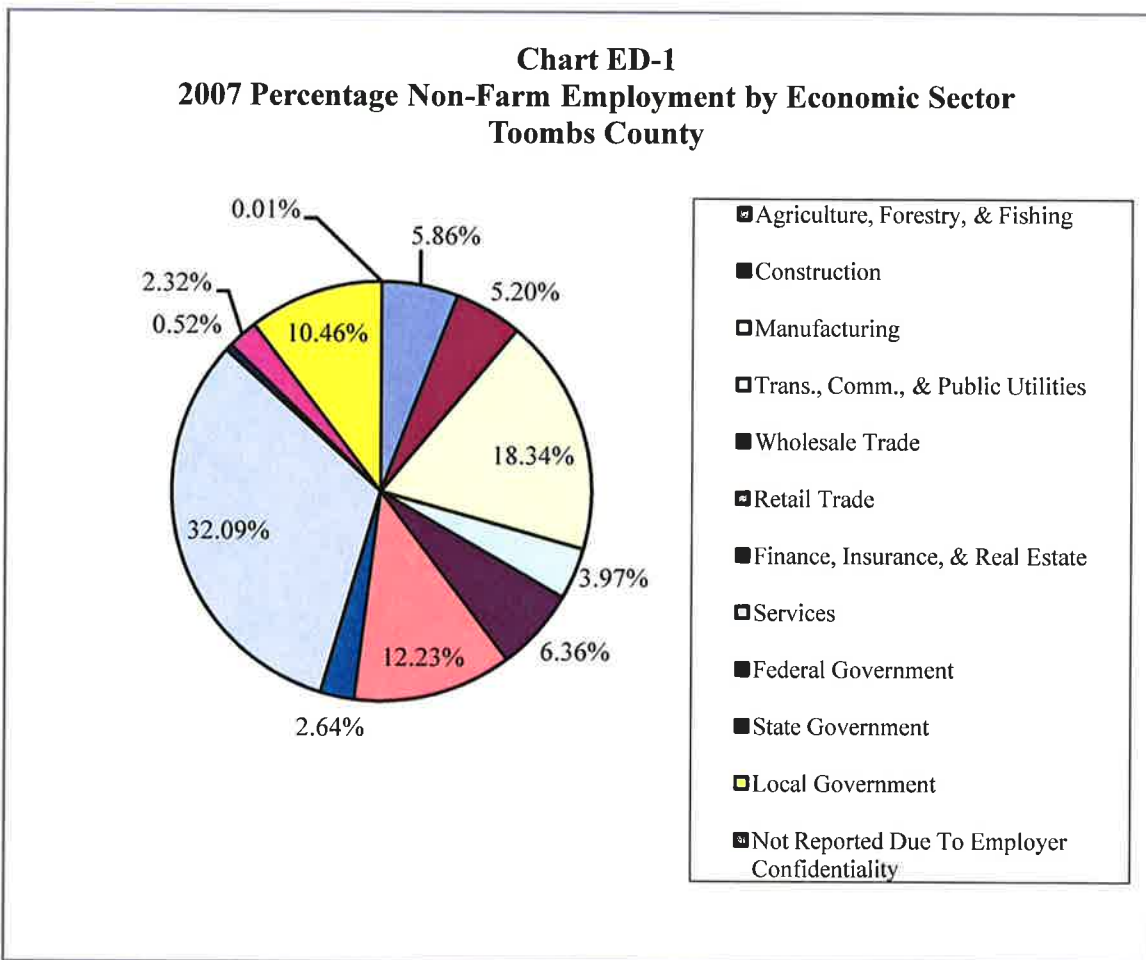
**Overall Description/Trends.** Toombs County is a rural county in southeast Georgia with a past and present intricately tied to transportation and agriculture, whose population is approaching 30,000. Over 77 percent of its land area remains in agriculture and timberlands, despite its many jobs and services. With the changes in agricultural technology over the last fifty years, only a small portion of the county's employment is still in agriculture or related activities, although this number has increased recently because of the Vidalia Sweet Onion and other vegetable production. The county's early development can be traced to its access to the Altamaha River, its pine forests and abundant land for farming, and later development to railroads, U.S. 1 and U.S. 280. Toombs County's future economic development may similarly be tied to these features. Its biggest assets include the existing size of the community and its services, its agricultural and forestry land base and other natural resources, and its transportation access. The county has shown steady and solid growth, at a rate much slower than that of the

state but comparing more favorably to the U.S as a whole. It is a rural economic growth center with many jobs and services available.

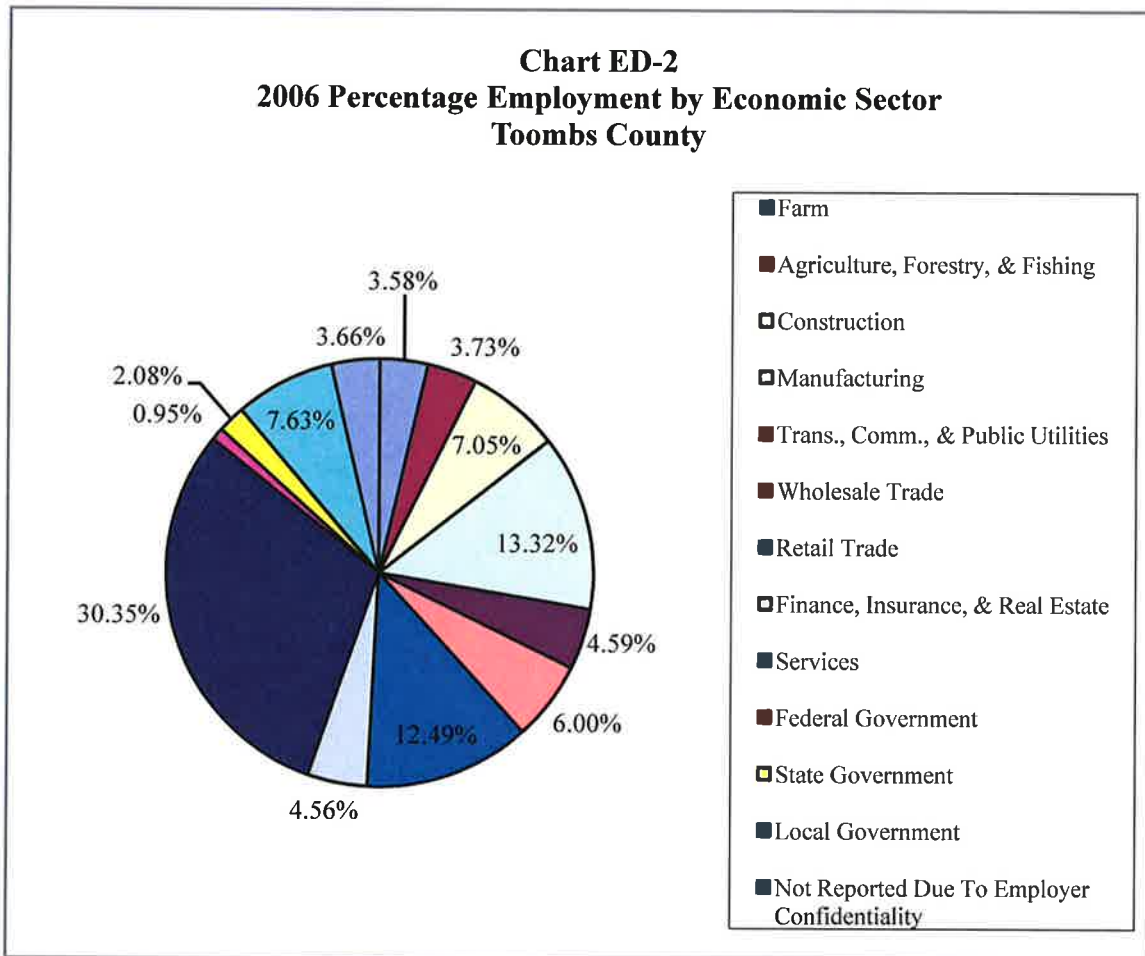
In isolation, the Toombs County economy has exhibited generally steady growth in the last decade or two. Employment has grown from 11,671 workers in 1990 to 16,104 in 2006. This is about one-fourth of the jobs in its recognized labor market area. Total earnings have increased (in actual dollars) from \$211.4 million in 1990 to \$302.3 million in 2006. While this growth has remained positive (which may not be said of all rural areas) and actually kept up or exceeded state or national job growth, it pales in comparison to state or national growth in earnings. From 1990 to 2006, Toombs County's total employment grew approximately 37 percent, while total earnings increased by 43 percent. This county employment growth was some two-thirds greater than that of the U.S. (22.7 percent) and just slightly above Georgia's (33.5 percent). County total earnings increase for the period, however, was less than one-half that of the U.S. (105.3 percent) and about one-third that of Georgia's (136.1 percent). This is certainly evidence that while the county economy was not completely stagnant, it compared favorably to the state and nation in terms of employment but fell behind both in terms of earnings.

**Employment By Sector.** The detail of employment by sector, both in terms of non-farm employment and including farming, shown for Toombs County in Charts ED-1 and ED-2, respectively, and its comparison with Georgia in Charts ED-3 and ED-4 reveal major differences in the two economies. The top four sectors of employment in Toombs County in 2007 were, in descending order: Services, Manufacturing, Retail Trade, and Local Government. As of 2007, some 73 percent of the local economy's total employment can be found in just those four sectors. Georgia's top four 2006 employment sectors were the same as those for the U.S. These were Services, Retail Trade, Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate, and Manufacturing. Prior to 2000, Manufacturing had been the top employment sector in Toombs County while Retail Trade had been a close second. Retail Trade was the top employment sector briefly in 2000, before being topped by Services in 2005. Services was third in 1990 and second in 2000, while Local Government has remained fourth. Between 1990 and 2007, employment in the Services sector more than doubled (13.68% to 32.09%), as the increase with Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing was even more substantial in terms of a percentage basis (0.59% vs. 5.86%). On the other hand,

substantial declines were found in the Manufacturing (25.68% vs. 18.34%) sector, indicating a decreasing reliance on a historically important component of the local economy, the Retail Trade sector (24.47% to 12.23%), and the Local Government sector (13.22% to 10.46%). In 1990, Georgia began the switch from an economy that was led in employment by the manufacturing sector to an economy where the services sector employed the greatest number of people. Simultaneously, Toombs County was beginning to slowly transition away from an economy with manufacturing as the sole primary employer. In the state as a whole, this change had occurred some decades ago.

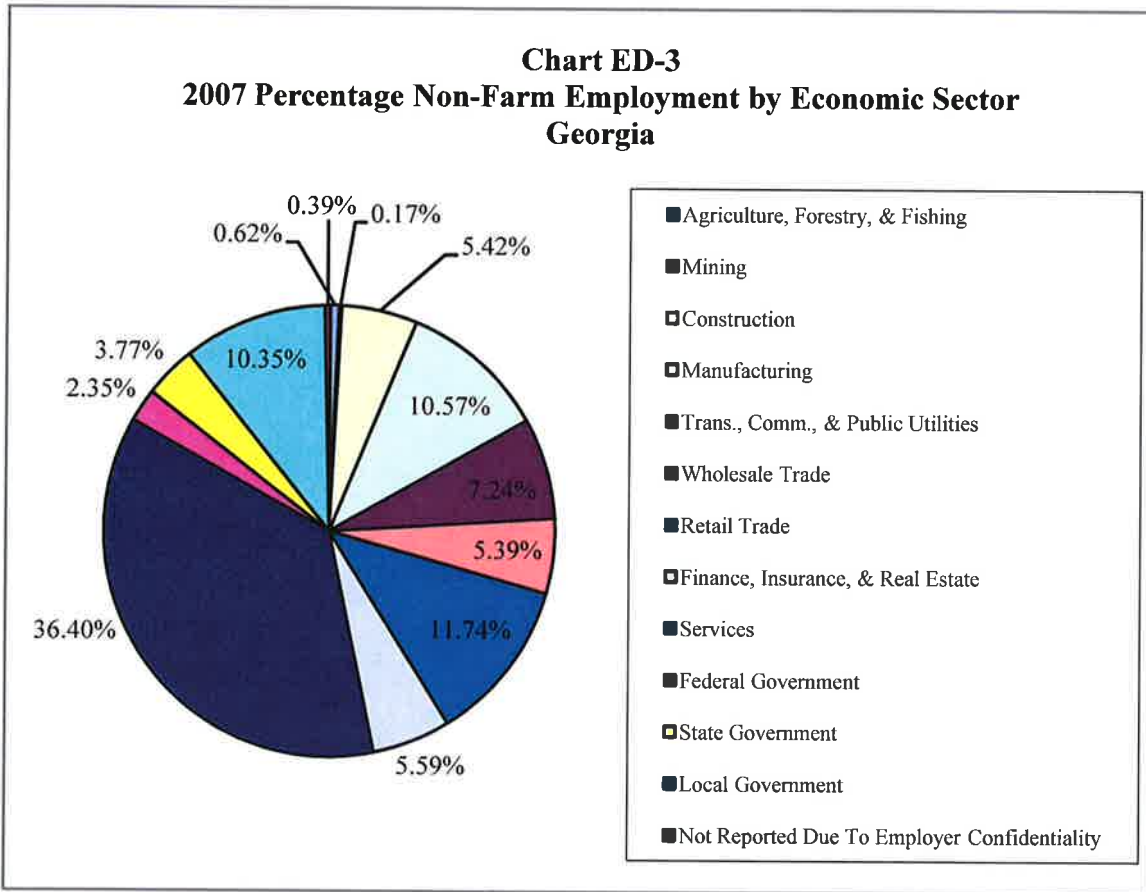


Source: Georgia Department of Labor, 2008.

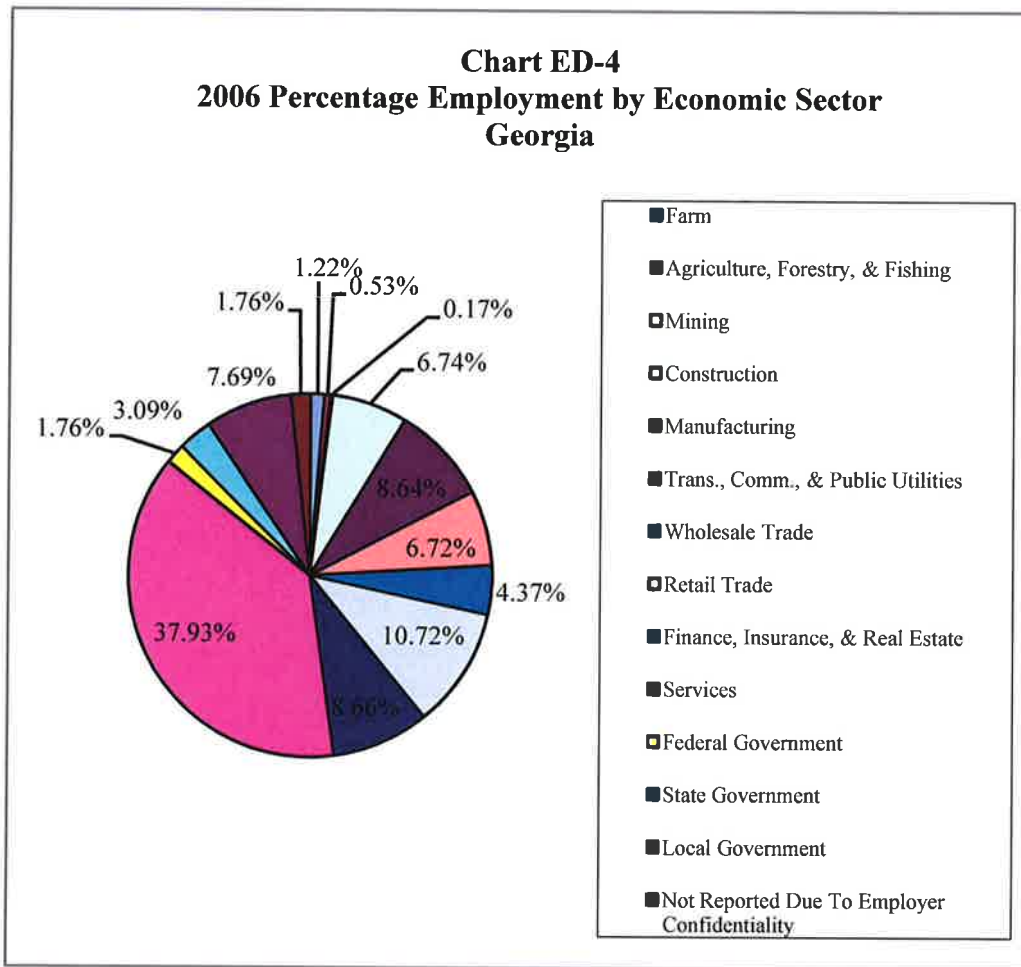


Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2008.





Source: Georgia Department of Labor, 2008.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2008.

In terms of percentages, manufacturing jobs were more than one-half again as more prevalent in Toombs County in 2006 as Georgia and the U.S. Other sectors with a larger presence in Toombs County in 2006 than in Georgia were Farming (some three times above Georgia's percentage), Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing (seven times greater than the state's percentage), Wholesale Trade (some one-third greater than Georgia's percentage), Retail Trade (some 20 percent greater than that of Georgia as a percentage), and Construction (just slightly higher than that of Georgia). On the other hand, the Finance/Insurance/Real Estate and State Government sectors in Toombs County in 2006 were about one-half that of Georgia, and the local Federal Government sector was twice as high as a percentage statewide as locally.

At the same time, both the state and national economies have experienced fundamental shifts as well. The largest increase in Georgia's employment between 1990 and 2007 was in the Services sector (19.97% vs. 36.40%), while the steepest decline was found in the Manufacturing sector (19.0% vs. 10.57%). This mirrors the change in the national economy over the same time period, as the economy at both the state and federal level shifts away from a manufacturing-based economy to one that is more service-based. Between 1990 and 2006 the Services sector increased in terms of total employment in the U.S. from 27.74 percent to 40.01 percent. Simultaneously, the Manufacturing sector's share of total U.S. employment dropped from 14.13 percent to 8.28 percent, as that sector has experienced hard times over the last two decades due to technological changes and an increasingly competitive global economy.

Although no projections are available at the present time, the current data seems to indicate that the ongoing trends taking place at the local, state, and national level should continue. Total employment in Toombs County should continue its steady increase from recent years, barring the closure in the county of any large-scale establishments. The largest sectors of employment in Toombs County will likely continue to be found in the Services, Manufacturing, Retail Trade, and Local Government sectors. These four sectors combined presently comprise some 73 percent of Toombs County's total employment, and this will likely remain the case for the foreseeable future. The Services sector is the fastest growing sector both in terms of actual numbers and its share of total employment in the county, mirroring the current trend at the state and national levels of a more service-based economy. The upward movement of this sector locally does provide opportunity and room for further growth and expansion. Professional services are limited but growing. The continued growth of Meadows Regional Medical Center coupled with an aging population offers potential markets for additional medical and support services. There are already identified needs for more physicians. There are several personal care homes and assisted living facilities available locally to help serve the county's elderly population, and there is room for additional facilities in the future. The increase in technology and computer use provides a need for new types of services. The availability of Southeastern Technical College provides a source for training in specific service areas that may be identified by the community.

The Manufacturing sector is expected to continue a marked and steady decline in terms of its share of total employment. Many of the county's manufacturers specialize in the production of metals or wood related products. This segment of the county's manufacturing provides over 2,000 jobs locally, according to a 2007 Area Labor Profile conducted by the Georgia Department of Labor, and includes some of the county's larger employers such as American Standard, Inc. and Savannah Luggage Works.

The Farm sector is expected to continue its slow decline from previous years as the economy continues to become less dependent on agriculture. By 2002 there were 382 farms in Toombs County valued at \$1,528 per acre. Many small, family-owned farms have had to give way to larger, more corporate-owned operations due to higher production costs resulting from the changes in technology and increased competition from other countries. As noted earlier, the Vidalia Sweet Onion and other vegetable production have somewhat reversed this trend. The forests and natural resources of the county do offer opportunities for the development of value-added enterprises and recreation-based hunting and fishing enterprises. Agriculture will never provide the employment opportunities necessary to support large population numbers, but will remain a very important economic impact in the county, especially if nurtured and properly supported.

According to a Georgia Department of Labor Area Labor Profile for Toombs County that was conducted in 2007, 38 separate government offices with over 1,600 employees were operational in Toombs County. This is over one-tenth of local non-farm employment. Of these 38 separate offices, 50 percent are state government offices with one-third being local government offices. This sector provides much stability to the local economy, despite a slight decline in recent years. Although no projections are available, recent trends would likely indicate that growth for this sector would look to continue to be small but steady as reflected in the Labor Department data, as there is positive potential for growth through population expansion, expansion of service, and the securing of new governmental functions.

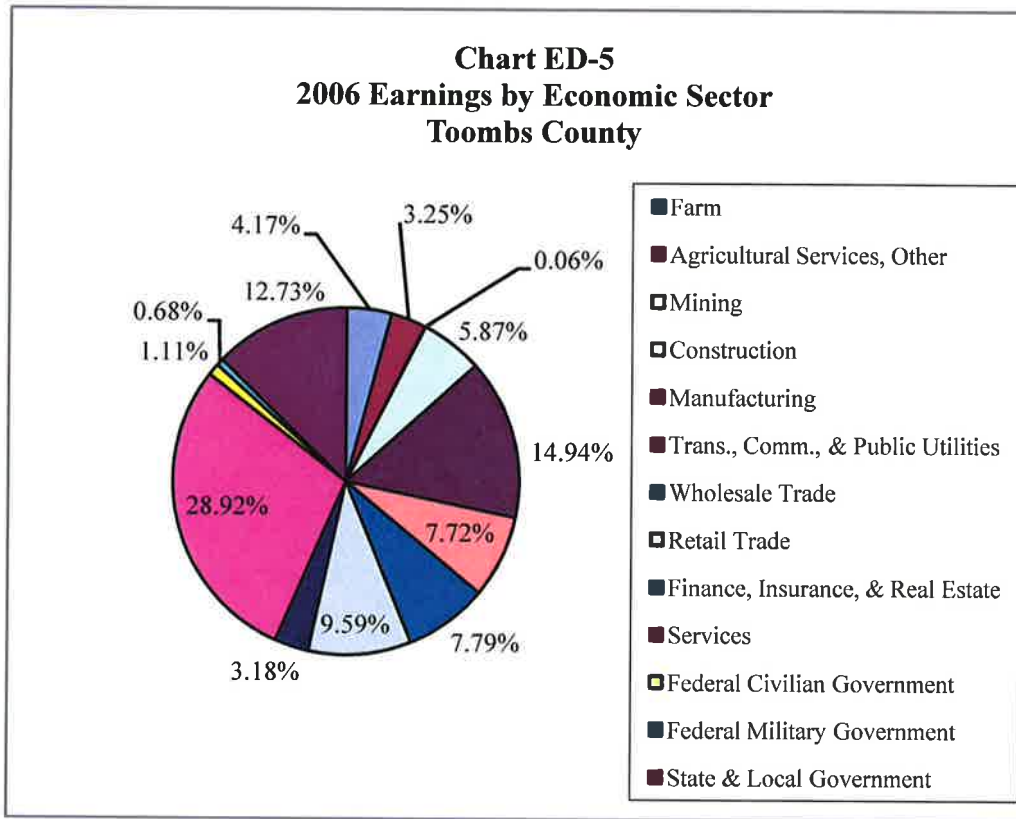
Toombs County is a major retail area for an approximately 8 county area in southeast Georgia. Additional retail opportunities abound in the relatively nearby major cities of Macon and Savannah. The major sources of local retail trade are Toombs, Montgomery, Tattnall,

Treutlen, and Wheeler counties with Appling, Emanuel, and Jeff Davis providing lesser trade activity. Toombs County has three (3) major shopping centers, all located in Vidalia, and five counting a revitalized downtown Lyons and downtown Vidalia. Despite a noticeable drop in retail trade employment in the last five years, the general retail trade climate in Vidalia has been on the upswing recently, particularly with the opening in the last decade of a Wal-Mart Supercenter on the eastern edge of Vidalia along the U.S. 280 East corridor to replace the smaller, earlier Wal-Mart. The result has been steady growth in new restaurant and hotel/motel development along the U.S. 280 corridor near and adjacent to the Wal-Mart Supercenter. This sector's further development will likely be dependent on the continued development around and nearby Wal-Mart to continue attracting outside shoppers, or expansion of other sectors generating population growth. A good quantity of land is available for continued commercial/retail development in Vidalia along U.S. 280, particularly along the north side of U.S. 280 stretching northward to GA 292. The future construction of a new Meadows Regional Medical Center between U.S. 280 and GA 292 should serve as a catalyst for future commercial/retail growth along both thoroughfares.

The state of Georgia's economy could reasonably be expected to head in much the same direction as it has been. The largest sectors of employment in Georgia are expected to likely continue to be in the Services, Retail Trade, Local Government, and Manufacturing sectors; currently comprising some two-thirds of Georgia's total employment. The Services sector is expected to continue to see the biggest increase statewide in the near future, as it becomes an even more dominant player in the state's economy than even at present. This trend mirrors that currently ongoing at the national level as well. Manufacturing is expected to continue a slow and steady decline in terms of its share of total employment, remaining only a shadow of what it used to be in terms of being a major player in the state's employment picture. The same is ongoing at the federal level. Some of the void is being filled through local government and retail trade jobs, although the percentage of total employment in these sectors is only slightly higher than manufacturing at the present time.

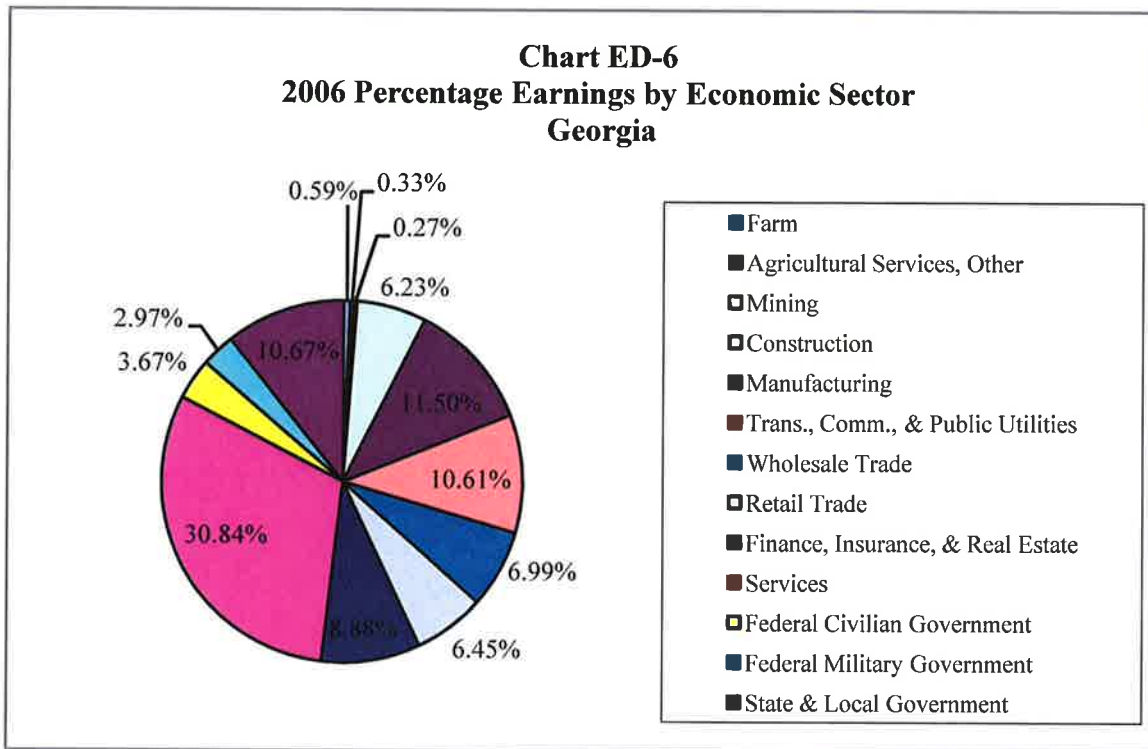
**Earnings By Sector.** In terms of 2006 earnings, the three highest employment sectors in Toombs County were Services, Manufacturing, and State & Local Government. While first in total employment, the Services sector earnings are double those of the next closest sector,

Manufacturing, attributable both to the recent declines in the number of manufacturing jobs and to the much greater presence of service jobs compared to any other sector. This is the case despite the typically low wages that are associated with service jobs. Low wages are also common in the Retail Trade sector, which is third in total employment but fourth in total earnings. Symptomatic of its decline, agriculture is now only a small factor in terms of total earnings as well as total employment in the local economy. It is significant to note the top three sectors provided about 57 percent of Toombs County 2006 earnings. Services alone accounted for almost 3 in 10 of local earnings. Manufacturing and State and Local Government both accounted for some one-sixth and one-seventh of earnings, respectively. Retail Trade earnings were not very far behind, providing almost one-tenth of total earnings. Chart ED-5 illustrates the state of total earnings in Toombs County as of 2006. Between 1990 and 2006, earnings in the Manufacturing sector declined by three percentage points as a percent of total earnings in Toombs County (17.98% vs. 14.94%), despite a greater percentage decline in total employment, as did State and Local Government (14.79% vs. 12.73%). This is largely attributable to the higher wages typically common in both sectors. Services almost doubled as a percentage over the last decade (15.84% in 1990 vs. 28.92% in 2006). Although at a much smaller percentage, significant gains were also made in the Agricultural Services sector (0.76% vs. 3.25%). On the other hand, Retail Trade earnings fell by one-half as a percentage of total earnings (18.53% vs. 9.59%), as was nearly the case with Construction (9.77% vs. 5.87%).



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2008.

Georgia's 2006 top four sectors in terms of earnings were Services, Manufacturing, State & Local Government, and Transportation/Communications/Public Utilities. Those four sectors provided nearly two-thirds of total earnings, and Services alone accounted for almost one-third (30.84 percent) of total earnings, as shown in Chart ED-6. Between 1990 and 2006, earnings in the Manufacturing sector declined by nearly one-third at the state level in terms of its share of total earnings. The Services sector's share increased by nearly 40 percent over that same time. In 2006, the top four sectors in terms of earnings at the national level were Services, Manufacturing, State & Local Government, and Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate. These four sectors combined to make up some 67 percent of total earnings nationwide. Interestingly, while Retail Trade was one of the top employers in the U.S., it only made up just 6.6 percent of total earnings.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2008.

This is a reflection of the low-paying jobs that are often found in this particular sector. The changes in total earnings at the national level mirror closely those found in Georgia, with Manufacturing steeply declining in terms of its share of the total and Services sharply rising.

Although no projections are again available at the present time, the current data seems to indicate that the ongoing trends taking place at the local, state, and national level should continue. Currently, almost 6 in 10 of Toombs County's total earnings can be found in just three sectors: Services, Manufacturing, and State & Local Government. This somewhat mirrors the trends ongoing for total employment, minus the lower paying Retail Trade sector. While government jobs should still be a stable source of employment, they are not likely to produce great numbers of new jobs unless expansions or new openings occur sometime in the future. Manufacturing jobs are also not in the numbers locally that they once were, although those that remain seem to be well paying. The county's manufacturing base does appear to still be strong at least to some extent. While the county's economy is expected to continue to become more service-oriented, it is interesting to note that earnings in that sector were only about one-third of the county's total earnings as of 2006 as compared to about one-third of total county



employment. This is reflective of the lower wages that are common in many services industries. Although still quite important to the local economy, earnings in Farm jobs are expected to continue to slowly decline as employment numbers level off.

Ongoing trends for Georgia's total earnings could reasonably be expected to continue for some time to come. Almost one-third of Georgia's total earnings in 2006 were in the Services sector, and, with service-oriented industries on the rise statewide, this sector should become an even more dominant part of the state's economy. This seems to indicate that Services will continue to increase its stronghold on the state's economy for the next couple of decades. Another sector that is on the rise, albeit not to the same extent as services, is the Transportation, Communications, and Public Utilities sector. As of 2006, it had become some one-tenth of total earnings statewide, some one-fifth higher as a percentage of total earnings than in 1990. Manufacturing earnings are still another one-eighth of total earnings, slightly higher than this sector's percentage of total statewide employment as large numbers of people remain employed in manufacturing jobs despite steady declines in this sector.

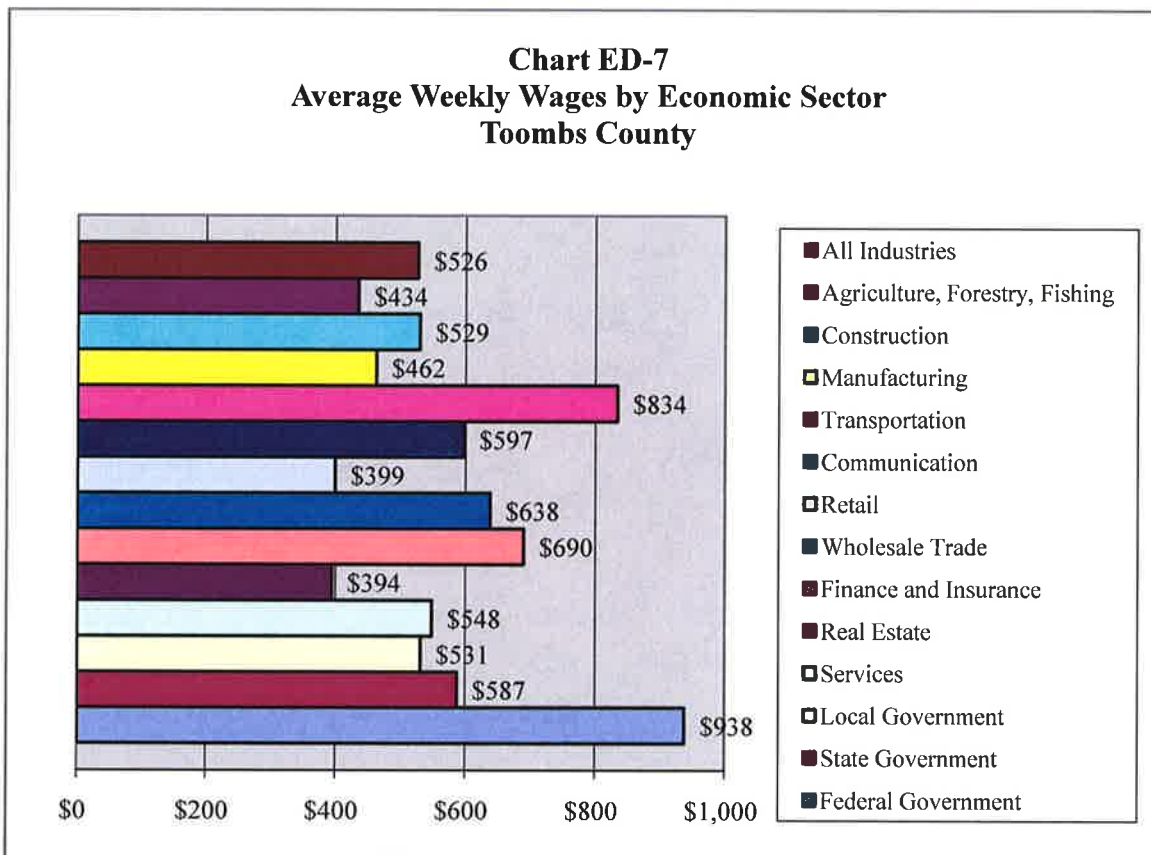
National trends closely resemble those indicated for Georgia. As in Georgia, almost one-half (some 45 percent) of the U.S. total earnings in 2006 were in the Services and Manufacturing sectors. Services jobs alone were responsible for one-third of total U.S. earnings. Earnings trends for state and local government jobs are very similar to those seen in Georgia. Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate earnings, on the other hand, are slightly higher nationally than in the state, and this trend is likely to continue for the next few years.

## **Labor Force**

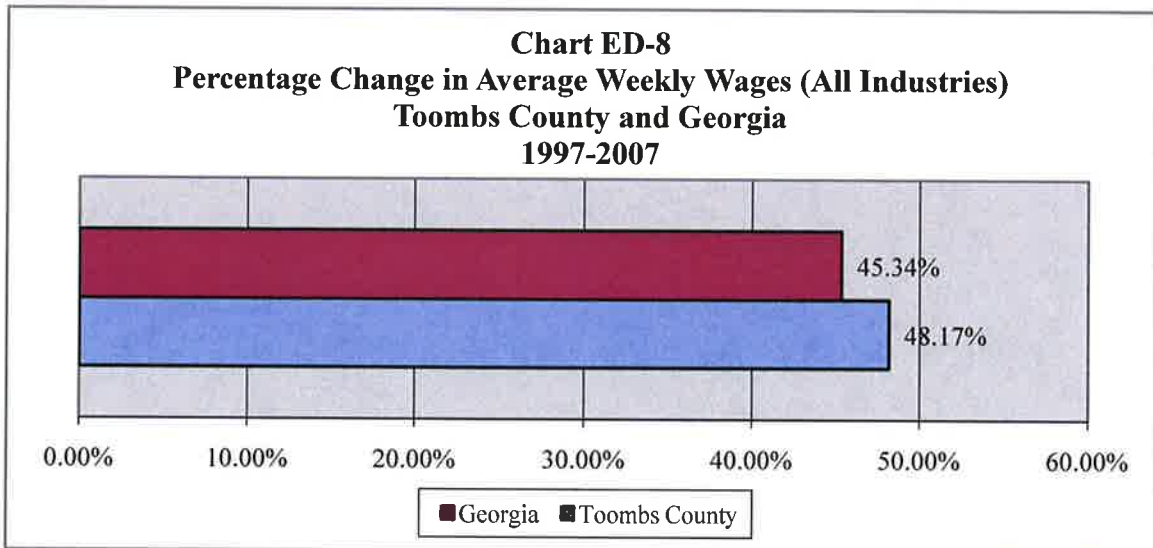
### **Average Weekly Wages**

Average weekly wages for all economic sectors in Toombs County with comparisons to Georgia are illustrated in Charts ED-7 and ED-8. This data is shown for the years 1997 through 2007. These figures confirm an economy not keeping pace with that of the state. Averages for all sectors show overall wages in Toombs County that were on average \$203 per week behind

the state in 1997, falling to \$285 per week behind by 2007. Growth in overall average weekly wages, however, was slightly higher in Toombs County (48.17 percent) than in Georgia (45.34 percent) between 1997 and 2007 (a matter of scale and lower Toombs starting numbers). More telling, average overall wages in 2007 in Toombs County were approximately 65 percent of Georgia's, with no local sector equaling or surpassing the state's total for that respective sector. In 2007, the highest wages in Toombs County were in the Utilities (\$1,031), Federal Government (\$938), and Transportation (\$834) sectors. Georgia's highest average weekly wages in 2007 were in the following sectors: Communications (\$1,416), Utilities (\$1,410), Finance and Insurance (\$1,331), and Federal Government (\$1,223).



Sources: Georgia Department of Labor, Covered Employment and Wages Series, 2006; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008.



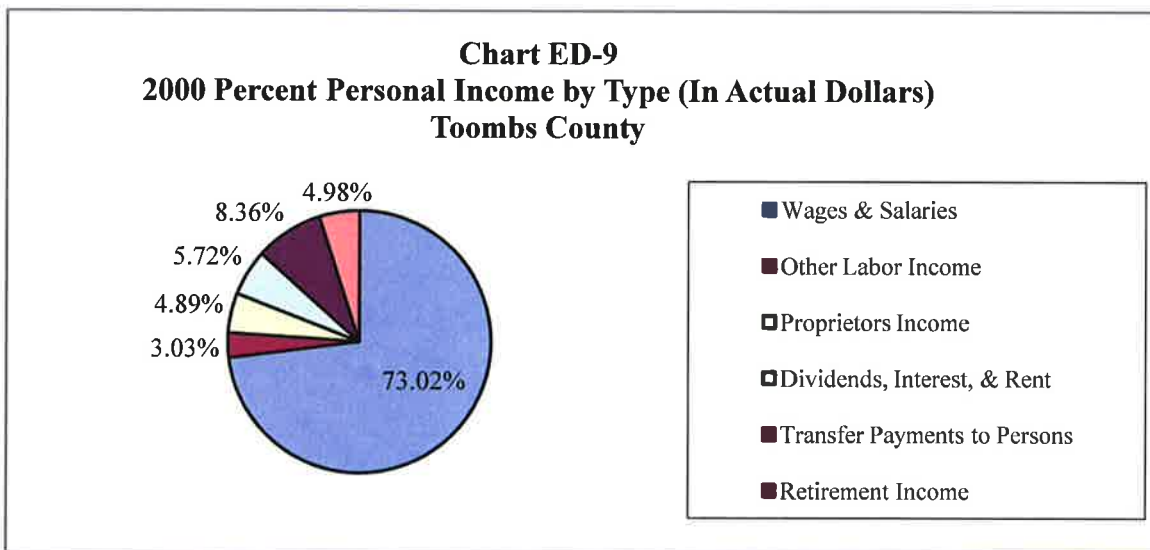
Sources: Georgia Department of Labor, Covered Employment and Wages Series, 2006; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008.

Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing, Transportation, Retail, and State Government wages are the only ones in Toombs County that remotely approach that of the state for those respective sectors, with wages in each of these sectors being just over 80 percent of the state's average. This is likely the influence of more demand for these jobs in the county than most other sectors. Local Government wages in the county are about 78 percent that of the state. This is reflective of lower overall wages and less skilled jobs of a rural government. Federal Government wages locally are about 76 percent that of the state, with Utilities being around 73 percent that of the state. It is interesting to note that many of these areas with higher local wages are sectors with greater local presence than in the state, thus they are function in part, of supply and demand.

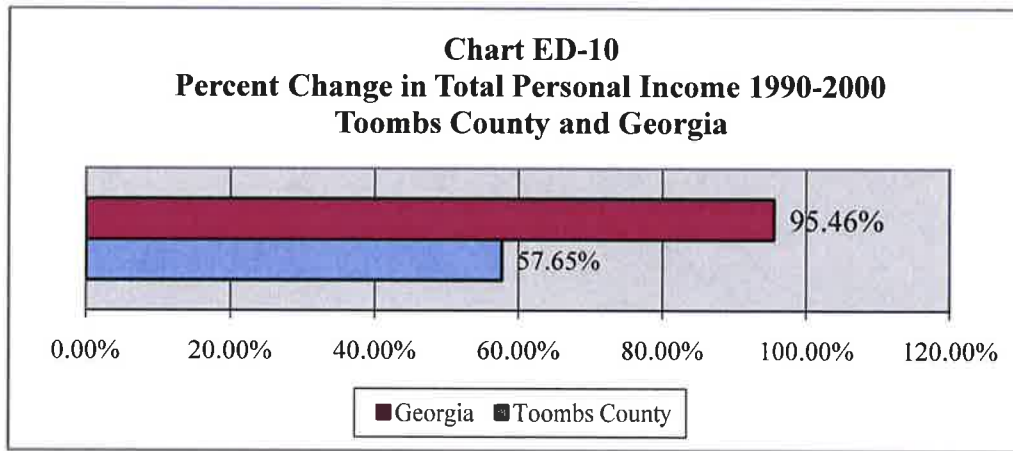
The remaining sectors of the local economy have significantly lower (most 40-50 or more percent less) wages than the state. Most of these same sectors had much lower employment and earnings presence locally than in the state as a whole. Thus, there are few jobs locally and supply of workers exceeds demand providing no pressure for higher wages. General economic development and the creation of more job opportunities will lessen this situation and tend to put higher pressure on wages through efforts to attract workers.

## Sources of Personal Income

Chart ED-9 shows the current personal income by type for Toombs County as of 2000, as supplied by the U.S. Census Bureau. Chart ED-10 provides the percentage change of total personal income from 1990 through 2000 for Toombs County and Georgia. Current data for total personal income shows a significant increase for the county over the last decade. The two sources of personal income with major differences between the county and state are wage and salary income and transfer payments. There is somewhat more "Other Labor" income in the county than in the state and slightly more "Dividends, Interest, and Rent" and "Retirement" income.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2008.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2008.

Wage and salary county income are currently more than five (5) percentage points less than that of the state in terms of percentages, with a slight decrease from 76.33 percent of the county's total personal income in 1990 to 73.01 percent in 2000. Without a growth in the demand for jobs, there is no pressure being placed on wages and salaries to significantly increase. Between 1990 and 2000, meanwhile, Georgia's total personal income nearly doubled (95.46%) as Toombs County's increased by 57.65 percent. Transfer payments to households were the source of 1 out of every 12 dollars of county personal income in 2000, compared to only about 1 out of every 25 dollars of personal income in the state in 2000. This indicates greater county reliance on Social Security, unemployment insurance, food stamps, and other sources of governmental assistance as might be expected in a low wage, generally poor economy. While this is a stable source of income, it is not the type conducive to produce substantive economic growth and job creation.

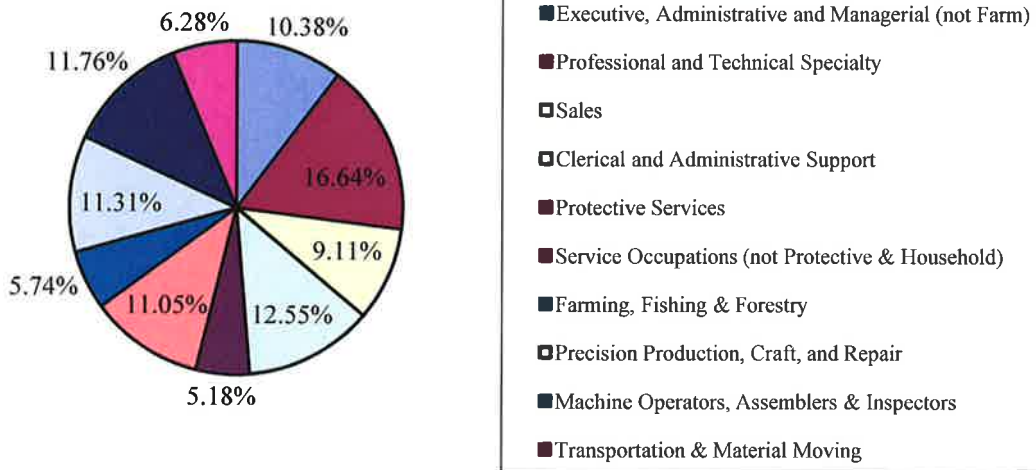
## Employment by Occupation

Current employment of the local labor force by occupation (or types of job held) is shown in Chart ED-11, with information at the state level provided in Chart ED-12, and the percentage change over the last decade for Toombs County, its municipalities, and Georgia shown in Chart ED-13. The minimal growth in the employment of the local workforce is seen here once again. From 1990 to 2000, total employment by occupation increased only slightly in

Toombs County (9 percent, an increase of 907 jobs), while growing statewide at a rate of 24.18 percent. Each of the municipalities experienced a decrease, however, albeit very slight decreases in absolute numbers. The City of Vidalia experienced a loss of 173 jobs over the last decade (-3.67 percent), which was slightly higher than the percentage decrease that occurred in Lyons (-2.43 percent, a loss of 38 jobs). Santa Claus lost only 13 jobs, but at a percentage decrease of -16.88 percent. As of 2000, the top four occupations of Toombs Countians are: Professional and Technical; Clerical and Administrative Support; Machine Operators, Assemblers, and Inspectors; and Precision Production, Craft, and Repair. These differ somewhat from Georgia where the top four 2000 occupations are: Professional and Technical; Clerical and Administrative; Executive and Managerial; and Sales. The top U.S. occupations of 2000 were similar to Georgia except that Service occupations replaced Sales as fourth. This finding confirms that workers in Toombs County are somewhat more "blue collar" oriented than other more "white collar" workers in Georgia and the U.S., although the presence of "white collar" jobs is slowly on the rise locally. This again is a reflection of the influence of manufacturing and the agribusiness industry in the local economy, and the local economy's less developed state. It also is an indicator of less educated, though not necessarily less skilled, local workers. However, local work force skills are not the technological skills of an information age either.

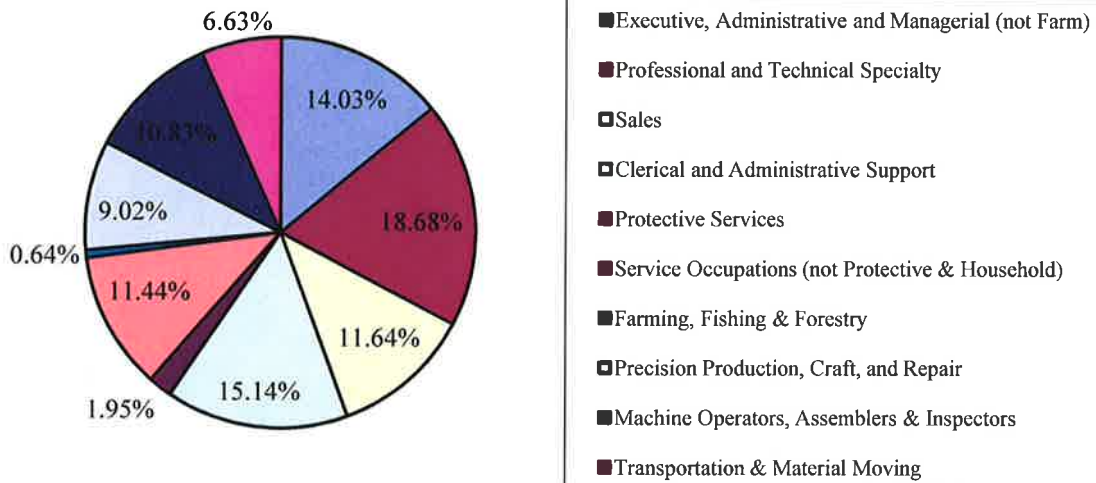
This assessment of a growth in local "white-collar" workers is also seen in analysis of 1990 to 2000 change. While "farming, forestry, and fishing" and "machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors" did experience noticeable increases locally in real numbers, professional and technical jobs increased by about one-half as a percentage locally, while increasing at somewhat slower rates at both the state and national levels. The third leading state and national occupation (executive, administrative, and managerial) increased at roughly the same percentage locally as it did at either the state or national level. On the other hand "precision production, craft, and repair," a standard "blue collar" occupation and the county's second leading occupation, increased on a percentage basis locally, and remained some 2 to 3 percentage points above that of Georgia and U.S. percentages.

**Chart ED-11**  
**2000 Percentage Employment by Occupation (All Occupations)**  
**Toombs County**

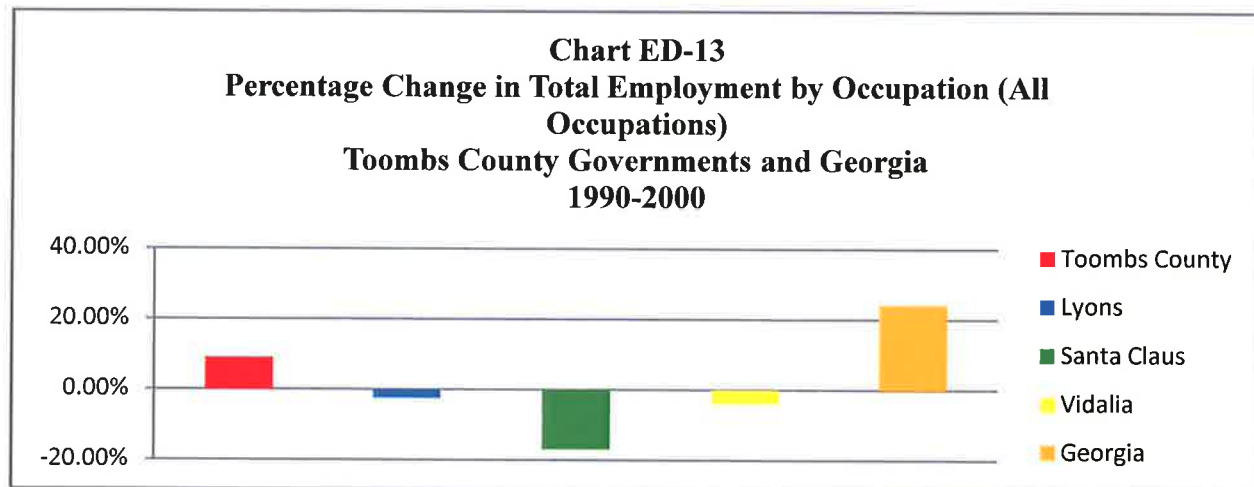


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov); 2008.

**Chart ED-12**  
**2000 Percentage Employment by Occupation (All Occupations)**  
**Georgia**



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov); 2008.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov); 2008.

While the technical, "blue collar" skills of the local work force serve the current manufacturing economic base of the county well, it points to a need for more education and retraining of the labor force to attract information age jobs. Technology is pervasively invading even traditional manufacturing arenas. Greater educational efforts are currently ongoing thanks to the availability of Southeastern Technical College as well as other nearby post-secondary facilities. While these efforts are helping Toombs County to develop a greater presence of "white-collar" jobs, more still needs to be done to allow Toombs County to better utilize to the information age that has propelled the economies of the state and the nation.

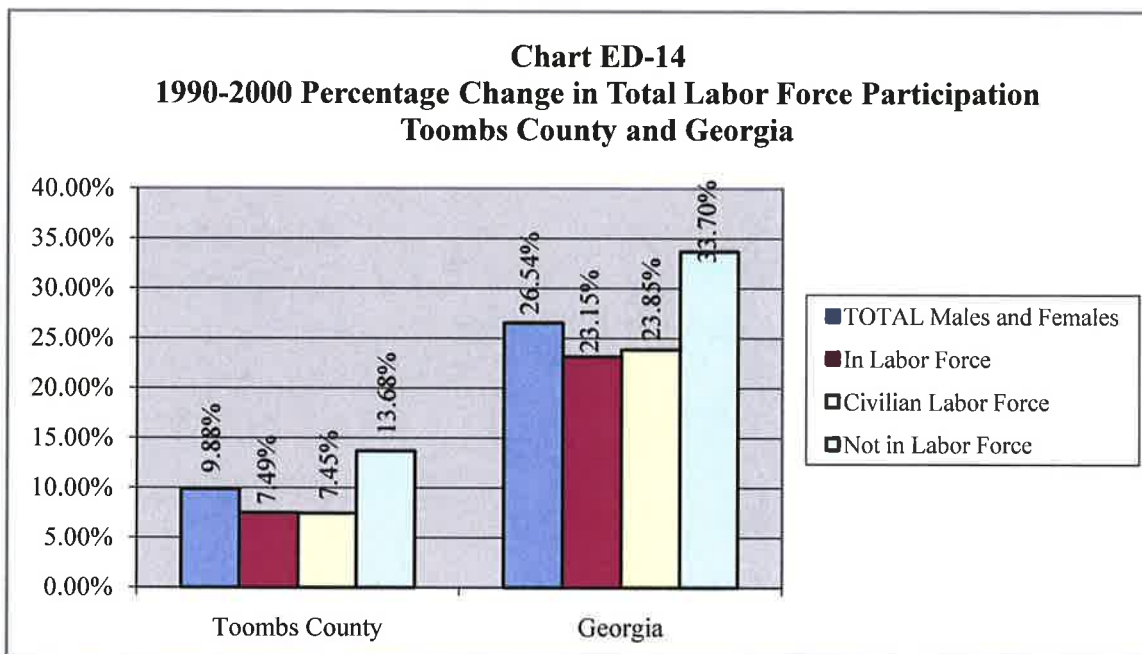
## Employment Status and Labor Force Characteristics

Current and historic data on employment status and labor force characteristics are shown in Chart ED-14 in a comparison of the percentage change over the last decade for Toombs County and Georgia. The total labor force in Toombs County grew by 1,746 workers in the ten years from 1990 to 2000, an increase of almost 10 percent. During the same period the state labor force grew by more than 26.5 percent, while the U.S. labor force expanded at a rate somewhat above that of Toombs County at 13.5 percent. Those not in the labor force increased in total numbers by more than one-half the rate of the labor force as a whole (6,825 persons in 1990 vs. 7,759 persons in 2000, a gain of 934 persons, or 13.68 percent).



County employment in the civilian labor force fell well short of Georgia growth but did fare somewhat better when compared to the U.S. as a whole during the 1990s. County civilian employment increased by 907 persons during the 1990s, or 9 percent, compared to 11.8 percent for the U.S. and 23.8 percent for the state. A lesser factor affecting those in the labor force is the significant portion of the county's population that is elderly. As of 2000, some 12.2 percent of the county's population is age 65 and older. This percentage is almost one-third higher than the state (9.6 percent) and just below that of the nation (12.4 percent). As more young people leave the area in search of good paying jobs elsewhere, the remaining population is aging and, thus, slowly leaving the labor force.

Of the 1,746 new workers added to Toombs County's total labor force between 1990 and 2000, 1,072, or 61.4 percent, were males. This compares to Georgia where 28.6 percent of new workers were males and the U.S. where about 14.3 percent of new workers were males. However, in 2000 males constituted 46.3 percent of the local labor force compared to 48.5 percent in Georgia and 48 percent in the U.S. Despite this similar percentage of local male workers, the male participation rate in the county labor force in 2000 was 71 percent, down slightly from 72.5 percent in 1990 but just less than Georgia's 73 percent male participation rate and nearly equal to the U.S. rate of almost 71 percent. The number of males not in the labor force locally increased by almost 20 percent over the last decade. The female participation rate in the local labor force is also well below that of the state and nation (just over 50 percent in Toombs County, over 59 percent in Georgia, and 57.5 percent in the U.S.). Overall, the county had only 60.04 percent of persons aged 16 or older in the work force in 2000 compared to Georgia's 66 percent and the U.S.'s 64 percent.



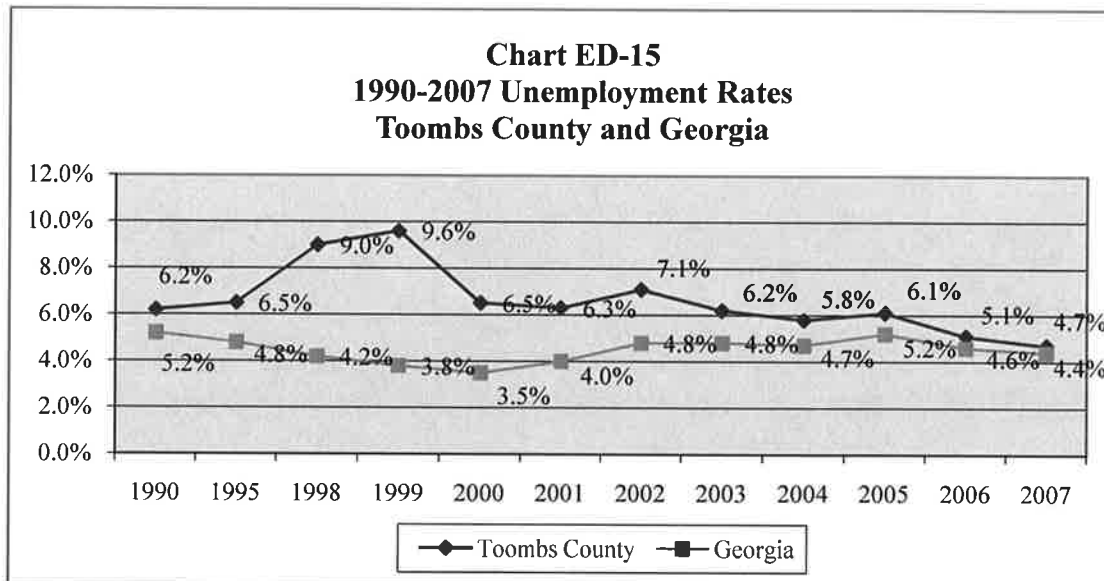
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov); 2008.

These statistics indicate less than healthy growth in the local labor force, especially when compared to Georgia but mainly slightly less growth when compared to the U.S. However, it also means that there are likely other available workers in the population not currently counted in the labor force. The county population may have larger numbers of elderly and those with transfer payments, but the gap between the local labor force and that of the state and nation is somewhat larger than might be expected. There may be some indication that welfare and benefits programs are still more attractive than current low wage jobs, in spite of the welfare reforms that have transpired at the state and national levels. This is more evidence of an increased need for labor force education and training to increase participation rates, and greater diversification of the economy.

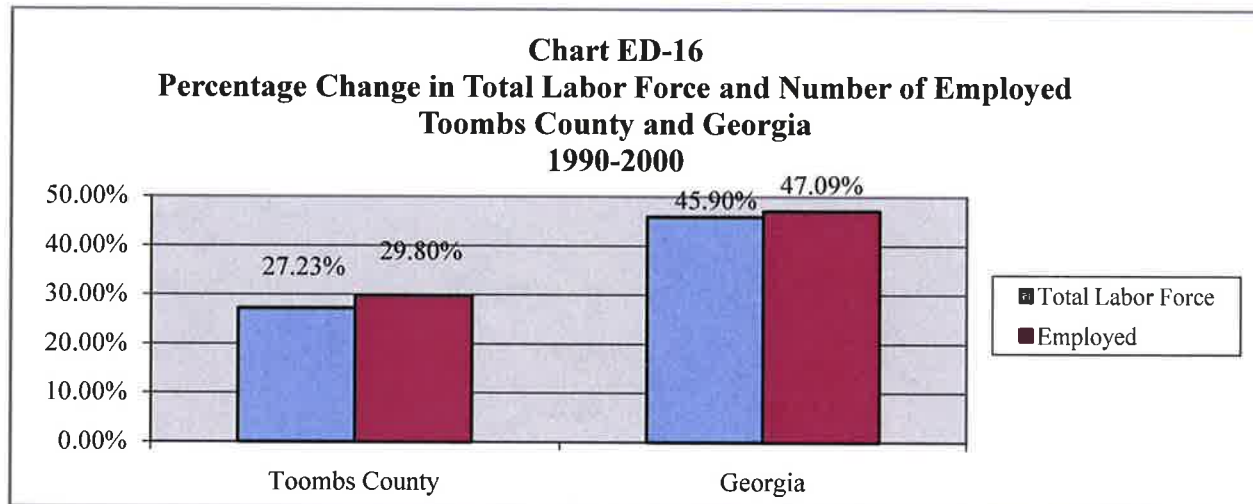
## Unemployment Rates

Chart ED-15 details annual average unemployment rates in Toombs County from 1990 through 2007, while Chart ED-16 highlights the percentage change in the total labor force and the number of employed persons during the 1990s both on a countywide and statewide level. Unemployment in the Toombs County labor force has been consistently above that of Georgia

and the U.S. since 1990 as the economic boom seen throughout much of Georgia and the U.S. during the latter half of the 1990s failed to have quite as much positive impact at the local level. Toombs County could still not keep pace with the rapid growth throughout Georgia but was able to grow at a noticeably higher rate than the U.S. as a whole, as evidenced by an increase of 2,950 persons from the local labor force between 1990 and 2007 (27.23 percent compared to the state’s growth rate of 45.9 percent and the national growth rate of 21.68 percent). Unemployment rates in Toombs County were normally in the middle of the surrounding counties, with Tattnall County consistently having lower unemployment rates throughout the period, and at times also Emanuel, Jeff Davis, and Montgomery counties. In recent years, Toombs County unemployment has usually been 0 to 2 percentage points below these counties, despite being the area’s regional growth center, and usually about 1 to 2 percentage points above the Georgia rate while fluctuating from 0 to 2 percentage points above the U.S. rate. Since 2002, however, the gap between the local unemployment rate and the statewide rate has steadily shrunk significantly. This is indication of an economy whose job additions are not entirely keeping pace with its labor force growth, but not falling drastically behind it either. It likely reflects the change in the local economy from manufacturing to more government and service jobs. The community’s status as a regional economic center is reflected, providing new jobs at a pace nearly that of the U.S. as a whole despite more limited population growth.



Source: Georgia Department of Labor, 2008.



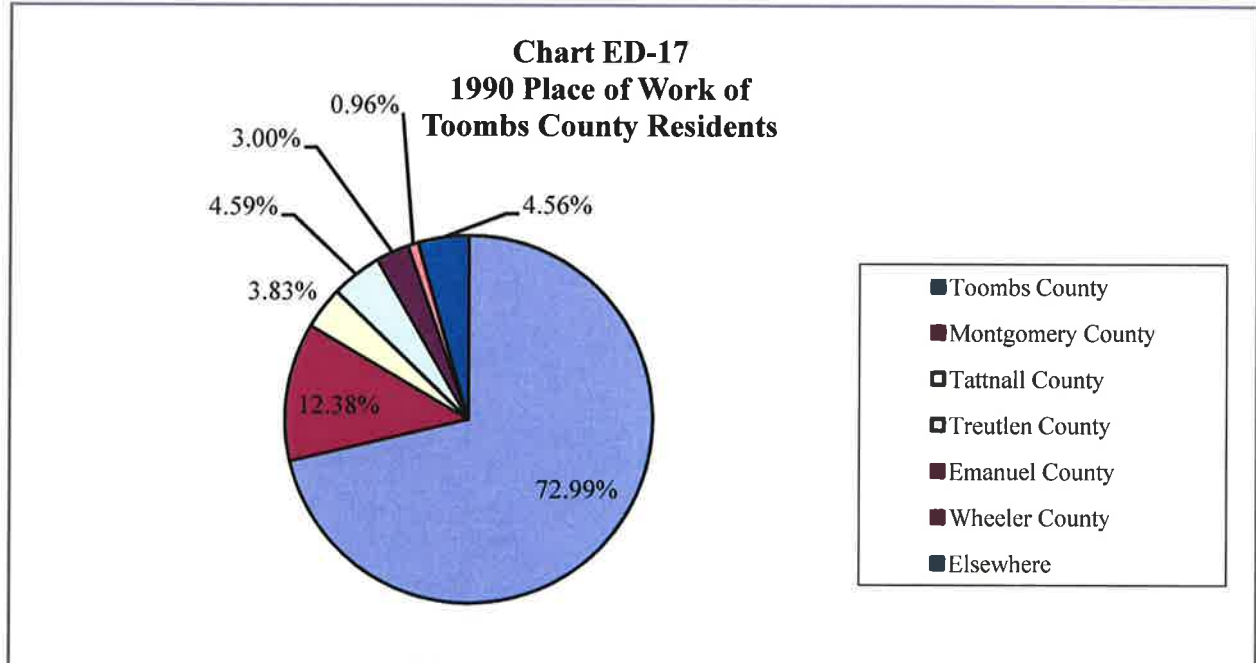
Source: Georgia Department of Labor, 2008.

## Commuting Patterns

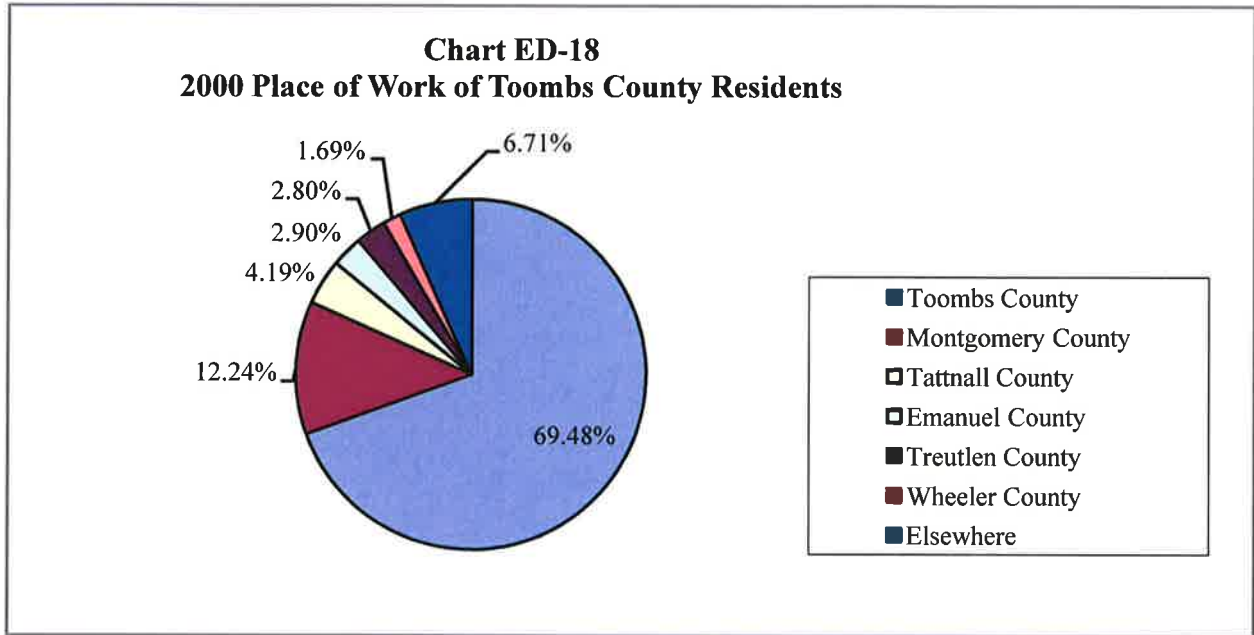
Charts ED-17 through ED-20 depict commuting patterns and trends of the local labor force and details by county where the local resident labor force is working, and where the people working in Toombs County live. The charts document that an increasing number of residents have to commute outside the county to find work, albeit slightly so. However, as discussed previously, the county's labor force is also growing only slowly at the same time. Almost 44 percent of the local resident labor force traveled elsewhere for jobs in 2000 compared to 37 percent in 1990. 478 more residents were working in the county in 2000 than 1990, while 736 more residents had to go outside the county. Another way of saying it is that the local economy gained 980 jobs in the 1990s, but there were also 1,214 more people in the local workforce. As discussed previously, the minimal growth of the labor force in the county is not leading to a high demand for job creation. Hence, those in the labor force are increasingly more likely to pursue employment outside of the county partly since additional job opportunities being created at home are different than the current occupations of the workforce, and partly as higher-paying opportunities are pursued elsewhere.

The detailed tables showing what counties worked in and what counties local workers lived in document that while 3,549 Toombs Countians traveled outside the county for work in

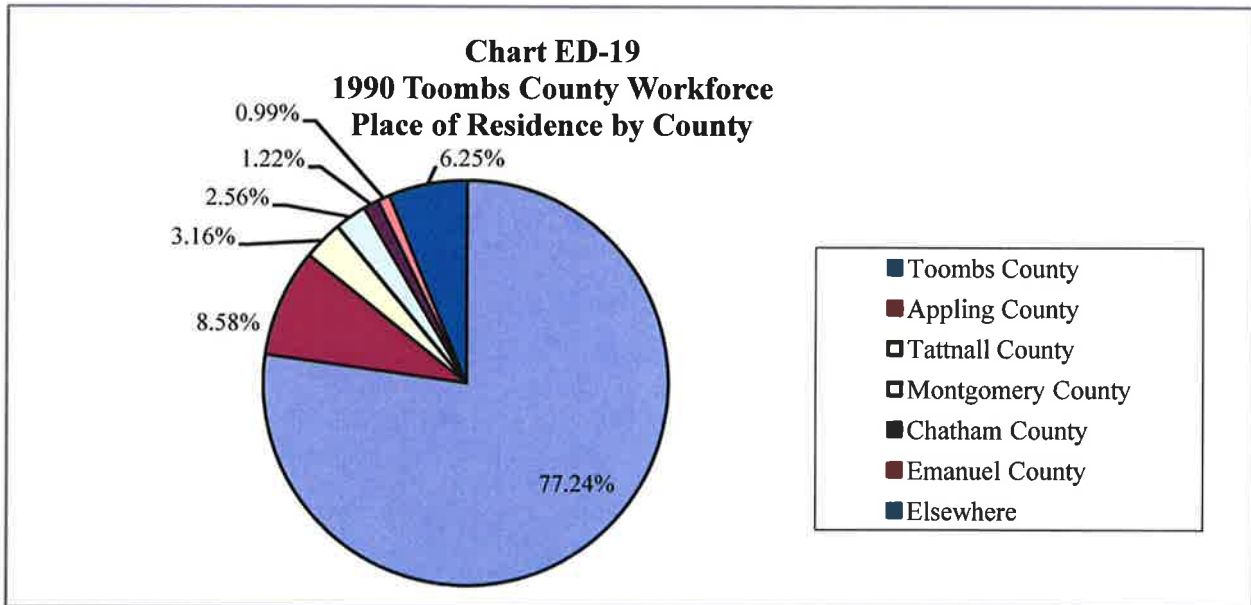
2000, 2,742 workers from outside the county had jobs in Toombs County, more than likely with the county's major employers (Savannah Luggage Works, Trane, Meadows Regional Medical Center, and Wal-Mart). Toombs Countians not working in their home county usually work predominantly in Montgomery County (Mount Vernon), with Tattnall County (Glennville/Reidsville), Emanuel County (Swainsboro), Treutlen County (Soperton), and Wheeler County (Alamo/Glenwood) being secondary destinations. The numbers commuting to Wheeler County nearly tripled between 1990 and 2000, largely attributable to the opening of a private correctional facility in Alamo in the late 1990s, while those commuting to Emanuel County approximately doubled. The numbers of those commuting to Montgomery County increased slightly. Most of those Toombs Countians commuting to these counties are most likely finding employment with the manufacturing base in these areas, or likely at nearby correctional facilities (Tattnall and Wheeler counties). People commuting from outside the county to jobs in Toombs County are more likely to come from Tattnall County (Glennville/Reidsville), Appling County (Baxley), or Montgomery County (Mount Vernon/Ailey/part of Vidalia). Toombs County workers increasingly have to look elsewhere for a source of appropriate employment.



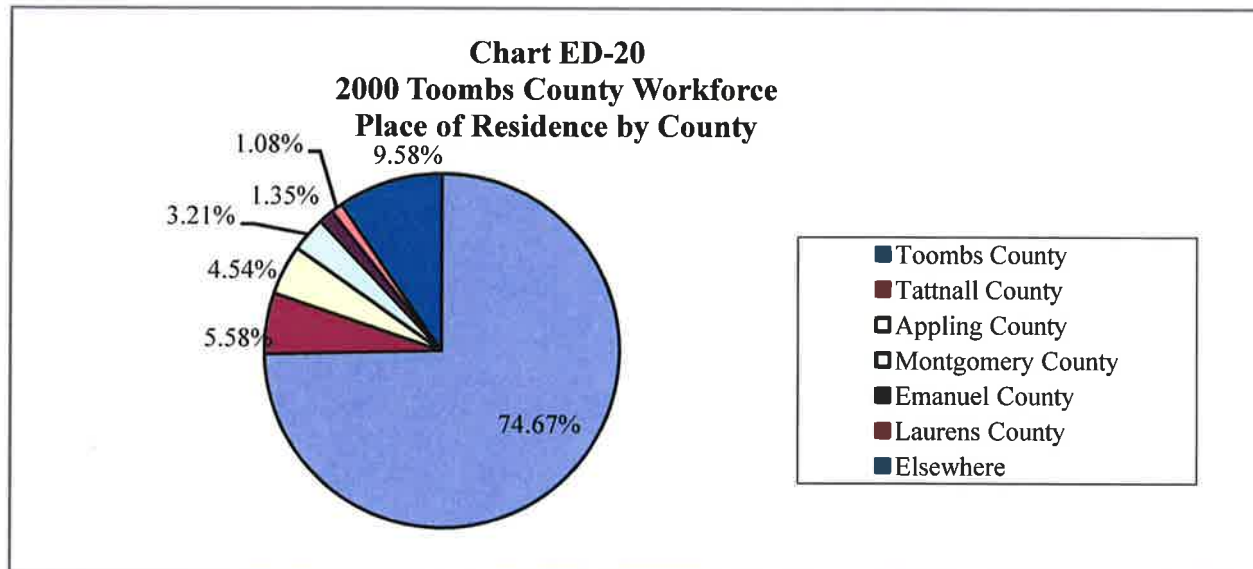
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov); 2008.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov); 2008.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov); 2008.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov); 2008.

## Local Economic Development Resources

### Economic Development Agencies

**Toombs-Montgomery Chamber of Commerce** The Toombs-Montgomery Chamber of Commerce is the first contact for newcomers, both labor and industry, to the community, providing assistance and information of all types related to the area. The Chamber has a long and distinguished history, combining the efforts of both Toombs and Montgomery for the greater promotion of economic development efforts to the general area, and is led by local citizens who are experienced in all fields of community activities. The Chamber has a segment devoted to industry, both old and new, and provides help in areas of labor education, business retention and industry recruitment. The Chamber is funded by dues paid by the local members and receives no public funds. Because of its lengthy history, the Toombs-Montgomery Chamber has built a strong reputation of being an active and effective force for business development in the area. It is a rallying point, and should take a lead role, when the community needs to band together. It was instrumental in the community locating a new industrial park along U.S. 1 north of Lyons and other recent economic development activities.

**Toombs County Development Authority** The Toombs County Development Authority, created by a local statute in 1990, is a public authority founded by Georgia public law. This act set up an authority with seven board members, who serve staggered four-year terms. Officers are elected from the members of the board. The Authority is funded by a 1/2 mill of property tax per year. This funding is to finance Authority activities, recruit new industry, and assist present industry. The Authority, along with the Chamber, has a strong reputation as being an active player in local economic development efforts and is striving to continue to be even more effective. Among the recent developments in which the Authority has played an instrumental role include the establishment and development of the Airport Industrial Park and the location of a new U.S. 1 Industrial Park.

**Vidalia Area Convention and Visitors Bureau** The Vidalia Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) also has a brief history, having been constituted in 2002 as a merger between the previous tourism boards in Toombs (primarily the City of Vidalia) and Montgomery counties, and is led by a Board of Directors with several ex-officio members who represent the local governments of both counties. The CVB has a website devoted to promoting tourism opportunities in the area, and has also developed promotional brochures to help visitors learn more about the two-county area. Though only in existence for a short time, the CVB is working to establish itself as an effective tool in promoting the tourism assets of Montgomery County and the surrounding area, and thus attract additional visitors to the area.

**Middle Coastal Unified Development Authority** The Middle Coastal Unified Development Authority (MCUDA), created in 1994, has the distinction of being designated as the first multi-county joint development authority in Georgia. Consisting of 13 counties in Southeast Georgia (including Toombs), MCUDA seeks to promote economic and industrial recruitment on a regional scale. Its most successful promotional activity is its sponsorship of the annual Green Diamond Tour, which began in 1999. The tour invites industrial prospects from throughout the U.S. to spend several days meeting with economic developers from all 13 counties, and provides an informal setting including hunting excursions, dinner, and other forms of hospitality. By building relationships between economic developers and potential industrial prospects, the hope is that the foundation can be laid to attract these companies to consider



locating new facilities to the area in the future. The MCUDA also allows the participating counties to be available for various state job tax credits.

**Downtown Vidalia Association** The Downtown Vidalia Association was created in 1989 as a merger between a downtown merchants group and the City of Vidalia's participation in the national Main Street Program to promote development of the central business district. The Association consists of members and volunteers and is led by a Board of Directors, and funding is received through membership dues as well as annual appropriations from the general fund budgets of both the City and Toombs County. The funds are used for operation of the DVA and to assist and promote downtown development. The DVA is very active in promoting business retention and building improvements through grants and loans to qualifying individual businesses, and has been involved in community beautification efforts.

**Southeastern Technical College** Southeastern Technical College's main campus is located on U.S. 280 East in Vidalia, with a satellite campus in Glennville, adult learning/literacy centers in Mount Vernon and Reidsville, and soon to have a satellite campus in Swainsboro through a recent state approved merger between STC and Swainsboro Technical College. STC is a state funded school and guarantees the ongoing availability of state-of-the-art trained employees whose skills match those required in today's competitive work place. Georgia's Quick Start Training program is offered at Southeastern Tech. This program enables new industry to train their work force while their facility is under construction or allow an expanding existing industry to train additional workers in new technologies. The Quick Start Program also offers an Existing Industries Program to aid retention and expansion efforts. Individual referrals which match client needs for specific training are available through Southeastern Tech. All graduates of Southeastern Tech are covered by the Department of Technical and Adult Education "Technical Education Guarantee" which assures industry that graduates can either perform as advertised in their trained field, or the graduate will be retrained at the school's expense. Further discussion about STC's programs is included under the Training Opportunities section.

STC also has a newly renovated Economic Development Center, which offers conference space and can seat up to 150 people for dinners and luncheons. The campus also has two multi-purpose auditoriums: the Toombs Auditorium, which seats 776 persons, and the Tattnell

Auditorium, with a seating capacity of 236 persons. This allows STC to serve as the home of the Franklania Playhouse, which showcases regular theatre productions performed by local talent in the community. Thus, STC is not only an important asset for local businesses and industries, but one for the entire community.

STC will also be home to the newly proposed Southeastern Early College and Career Academy. The first of its kind in the state and a joint venture among STC and the Toombs County, Montgomery County, and Vidalia City school systems, the career academy will operate as a regional charter school, and an application to create the academy has been submitted to the Georgia State Board of Education for approval. Students from both school districts would be served on STC's campus, and students would be provided with a mix of academic and career/technical courses, all of which would count toward their high school diploma and with some even providing college credit. Some students may earn enough credit to be awarded both a high school diploma and a post-secondary degree/diploma simultaneously. In addition to serving the Toombs County, Montgomery County, and Vidalia school systems, there is also the possibility that Treutlen County may join in the future, truly making the academy a regional school. Classes are proposed to begin in Fall 2009, and STC has applied for state funding to begin constructing facilities. The career academy has the potential to be a very significant asset in improving the educational quality of the area's youth while working to further reduce local drop-out rates.

## **Programs**

The Toombs County Development Authority has among its economic development assets two current industrial parks. The Toombs Corporate Center at Vidalia Regional Airport, located just south of U.S. 280 East on Old Airport Road and Harris Industrial Boulevard adjacent to the Vidalia Regional Airport on the southeast side of Vidalia, consists of approximately 226 acres. The park has full access to water and sewer service from the City of Vidalia, as well as close proximity to the airport's 6,000 foot runway. The Airport Industrial Park is also located within five miles or less of the area's major transportation arteries (U.S. 280, U.S. 1, and GA 292). At present, there is a 27-acre site available adjacent to the airport that the Toombs County Development Authority is marketing as an aerospace site in order to attract aerospace-related

industries that could utilize the airport. The Toombs Corporate Center at U.S. 1, located at the intersection of U.S. 1 and GA 130 just north of Lyons, is the county's newest industrial park and includes approximately 240 total acres with two separate spec buildings, and with approximately 200 buildable acres. The first spec building, which formerly was the home of Simonton Windows, consists of approximately 220,000 square feet on an 18 acre parcel. The second spec building, constructed in 2007, sits on a 14 acre parcel and consists of approximately 100,000 square feet and is capable of being expanded up to 300,000 square feet. The Center has access to water and sewer service from the City of Lyons. Other industrial sites are scattered throughout primarily the northwestern section of Vidalia, including the former Piggly Wiggly distribution facility located off of Brinson Road, of which a portion is home to Southeastern Technical College's Economic Development Center and a southeastern distribution facility for DOT Foods, the nation's leading food redistributor. A portion of the old Piggly Wiggly distribution facility is still available for potential industry. There is also the site for Southeastern Luggage Works on GA 297 North, as well as the site for Atlantic Wood, located off of GA 297 North. Several other vacant buildings are available and are scattered throughout the city (see table). Local citizens realize the importance of being able to provide jobs and a stable economic base that will allow its citizens to work and keep their wages at home, and there does appear to be continued efforts to make it possible for the area to be increasingly more marketable to potential businesses and industries in the future. At the present time, there is ample room in the county for future industrial growth.

The City of Lyons is home to one of the county's largest industrial employers, Oxford Industries, an apparel manufacturer with over 300 employees. Several former apparel buildings are currently available, including the Oxley building, formerly home to one of the county's largest apparel employers before the decline of the textile industry locally. Water and sewer is available for those vacant sites. As it stands currently, there is ample room for Lyons to attract greater industrial development.

The following table from the Toombs-Montgomery Chamber of Commerce website ([www.toombsmontgomerychamber.com](http://www.toombsmontgomerychamber.com)) lists those buildings/sites that are available in Toombs County.

<b>Area/Acreage</b>	<b>Building/Site Name</b>	<b>City</b>
125,000 square feet	Brinson Road Building	Vidalia
135,000 square feet	Mitchell Building	Lyons
40,600 square feet	Oxley Building	Lyons
104,000 square feet	Pennington Building	Vidalia
49,700 square feet	Piggly Wiggly Support Bldg.	Vidalia
220,000 square feet	Simonton Windows Bldg.	Lyons
176,740 square feet	Thomas & Betts Building	Vidalia
240 acres	Toombs Corporate Center	Lyons
100,000 square feet	Toombs Corporate Spec Bldg.	Lyons
27 acres	Vidalia Airport Aerospace Site	Vidalia

Source: [www.toombsmontgomerychamber.com](http://www.toombsmontgomerychamber.com), 2005.

The Lyons Better Hometown Program was designated by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs in 1999 to promote development and revitalization of the central business district. The program is headed by a board of directors appointed by the City, and funding is received through annual appropriations from the City's general fund budget. The funds are used for operation of the program and to assist and promote downtown development. The Better Hometown Program is very active in promoting business retention and building improvements through grants and loans to qualifying individual businesses, has been involved in community beautification efforts, and has been active in the ongoing renovations to Lyons' downtown area.

One potential bright spot locally is the Tri-County Regional Entrepreneur Support Team (Tri-CREST) program, which is housed at Southeastern Technical College. The local program is a collaboration of the Toombs-Montgomery Chamber of Commerce and the development authorities of Montgomery, Tattnall, and Toombs counties, and was created in 2003 to encourage and promote the development of local entrepreneurs in all three communities. The Tri-County

Regional Entrepreneur Support Team has the distinction of being the first program of its kind in the state of Georgia to coordinate all entrepreneur and small business development activities in the tri-county area. The program is headed by a board of directors appointed by all three communities, and funding is received through annual appropriations from each community's general fund budget. The funds are used for operation of the program and to assist and promote downtown development in both municipalities. The program is a non-profit entity that provides local would-be entrepreneurs technical assistance with such start-up activities as writing a business plan, site location, financial management, and mentoring. The program has links to a variety of resources and contacts to help an entrepreneur get started in creating his/her own establishment. The success of the program has helped to lead to the designation of the regional team as "entrepreneur friendly" by the Georgia Department of Economic Development's Entrepreneur and Small Business Office and Georgia Tech's Economic Development Institute in June 2005. The Tri-County Regional Entrepreneur Support Team is the first regional team in Georgia to achieve such a designation.

Toombs County also began the process in 2007 to become a Certified Work Ready Community. Offered through the Governor's Office of Workforce Development, the program is a voluntary initiative that counties can undertake to demonstrate that its citizens have the skills necessary for businesses and industries that may wish to locate in a particular community. In order to be designated a Certified Work Ready Community, the county has to demonstrate a commitment to improving public high school graduation rates, have a minimum county graduation rate of 70 percent, drive current workers and the available work force to earn Work Ready Certificates, and create a team of economic development, government, and education partners to create programs to meet these criteria. In 2008, Toombs County applied for and received grant funding to accelerate the process of achieving Certified Work Ready Community status within 18 months.

Toombs County and its three municipalities assist with industrial development with "Freeport" exemption on industrial inventories. An exemption of 100 percent was established countywide and serves those industries located in Toombs County or any one of its three municipalities. Toombs County is also classified as a Tier One county by the OneGeorgia Authority, making qualifying industries locating to Toombs County eligible to receive up to

\$3,500 per job created. The Development Authority and Chamber also are seeking to continue their ongoing efforts to work closely together to assist existing industry. The Development Authority is included within the Chamber's website, and the Vidalia Area Convention and Visitors Bureau now has a website as well. All three agencies have their own brochures, and there is also a Toombs/Montgomery Magazine, which promotes noteworthy features and happenings within the area on a monthly basis. While the programs and resources of these agencies have had a fair amount of effectiveness, they are not remaining static. There are ongoing plans for improvement.

## **Training Opportunities**

**Southeastern Technical College** Through its educational programs and services, Southeastern Technical College seeks to assist students in the development of their individual potential and meet identified needs of local businesses. Southeastern Tech also holds high standards for their students, not only in academic performance, but also in the area of work ethics. It is accredited by the Accrediting Commission of the Council on Occupational Education. The presence of STC is an excellent economic development attractor and provides a flexible means to meet needed educational improvement skills level training of the local labor force, particularly on a local level through its main campus in Vidalia. Southeastern Tech's programs can be easily coordinated and adapted to meet newly identified, special, or changing training needs. Associate in Applied Technology degrees are offered in such areas as accounting, business administrative technology, computer information systems (internet specialist/web site design, computer support specialist, and networking specialist), management and supervisory development, early childhood education, and marketing management, in addition to such diploma and certificate programs such as criminal justice technology, cisco network specialist, human resource management specialist, network administrator, and health care (medical assistant and practical nursing). Continuing education programs are currently offered in computers, personal development, technical development, business and professional development, and allied health care, as well as Quick Start training to new and expanding industries. Adult education classes for basic literacy for those not able to read and write through the General Equivalency Degree are offered at STC. Special classes have been set up at local companies.

Several other institutions of higher learning are within a short driving distance of Toombs County. Georgia Southern University is the main college of choice for students who want to attend a university located nearby. It is located in Statesboro, Georgia, which is approximately 45 miles east of Lyons/Vidalia. Brewton-Parker College, located in Mount Vernon, Georgia, is approximately 10 miles west of Vidalia and is also a very popular choice for Toombs County students. East Georgia College, a two-year unit of the University System of Georgia located in Swainsboro, Georgia, is approximately 30 miles north of Lyons/Vidalia. Having these institutions of higher learning in close proximity allows Toombs County students the opportunity to pursue a four-year college education or higher without having to travel far from home.

In addition to these training resources, job-training programs through the Workforce Investment Act Program are also available in Toombs County. The program for Service Delivery Region Nine, administered through the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center and provided by Job Training Unlimited, Inc., based in Claxton, provides assistance to adults, youths, welfare recipients, and displaced workers through its local One-Stop Center in Vidalia. The One-Stop Center serves as a single access point for Toombs County residents in need of work-related services. Workers who have been laid off from their present job can receive individual training accounts to obtain training at a local technical college or four-year college and receive assistance in paying for tuition, books, and support services such as child care and transportation. Services for youth are available such as after school programs, tutoring, mentoring, and work experience to help prepare them for life after graduation. Those currently on public assistance programs can receive help in making the transition from welfare to the workforce. The WIA Program and the local One-Stop Center have been a tremendous resource in helping many local residents either get back on their feet or find their niche in the workplace.

## **Economic Trends**

### **Recent Major Economic Activities**

Among the changes to the county's industrial base in the last few years, perhaps the development with the biggest potential impact in future years is the establishment of the Toombs Corporate Center at U.S. 1. Located along U.S. 1 just north of Lyons, federal and state funds were utilized to develop the 240-acre industrial park, which was established in 2004 and served with water and sewer. A 100,000 square foot speculative building was constructed on an 18-acre parcel of the property in 2005, which would later become home to the Center's first tenant, Simonton Windows. In 2007, another speculative building of similar size was also constructed, and is currently available for potential tenants. The establishment of these facilities is significant in that they allow the county to take advantage of its relatively close proximity to I-16 as an area conducive to the development of increased warehouse/distribution type facilities. Ample room exists for continued development in this area, and potential businesses are being targeted through the Port of Savannah. In 1999, DOT Foods, Inc., the nation's leading food redistributor, opened a distribution facility in Vidalia to expand its market in the Southeastern U.S. The facility is now one of nine company distribution centers across the country, and with 275 employees it is the county's fourth largest industrial employer. Savannah Luggage Works, a contract manufacturer of leading edge military gear founded and based in Vidalia, received a contract with the U.S. Department of Defense to provide newly created protective body armor to soldiers serving in the current War on Terror in Iraq. In 2006, Trane/American Standard, a leading national manufacturer of heating/air conditioning systems and the county's largest employer with 1,000 employees, developed an additional product line at its facility in Vidalia and created 75 new jobs. Another important industrial development occurred in 2006 as Atlantic Wood, a manufacturer of pressure treated forest products such as utility poles, timber piling, structural lumber, and vinyl sheeting, initiated an \$8.5 million dollar expansion of its Vidalia facility. As an incentive to the company, the City of Vidalia developed an incentive package which included the construction and/or improvement of rail and road to the facility. The expansion resulted in



some 60 jobs remaining in the area, as well as an estimated impact on regional purchasing power of some \$14 million.

On the other hand, one unfortunate closing in recent years is the loss of what once was the anchor of the Toombs Corporate Center at U.S. 1, Simonton Windows. The manufacturer of vinyl replacement and construction aluminum windows opened in 2005 with the promise of creating some 85 new jobs and quickly exceeded that in less than one year and proceeded to expand their facility and double in size. However, Simonton suffered the same fate as many other manufacturers across the country who deal in the housing sector, making the decision in 2007 to shut down its local facility and move operations to another facility in Oklahoma. Another closing, albeit on a smaller scale but no less important, was the closing of Toombs Apparel in Lyons. The garment industry had been a very important component of the local economy, although its influence has waned considerably in recent years as it has been decimated by foreign competition. The garment industry as a whole in the U.S. is very unhealthy and is suffering greatly due to foreign competition with cheap labor costs. This particular manufacturing sector has virtually vacated the county at this time, with the prospects for luring any major employers in this sector back to the county almost non-existent.

In addition, other important developments have occurred within the county in recent years. Southeastern Technical College has undergone facility expansions in the last decade, with the construction of the Hugh M. Gillis Regional Medical Technology Center and a Health Sciences Annex, the acquisition of the former Piggly Wiggly building in the Toombs Industrial Park for use as an Economic Development Center, the establishment of the Tri-County Regional Entrepreneur Support Team, and the forthcoming Early College and Career Academy. An important development in Downtown Vidalia is the completion of the one-way pairing of U.S. 280 through the downtown area in 2008. After several years of construction, the new one-way pair will serve to significantly improve the flow of traffic through downtown, which had been a major issue in Vidalia for many years. The opening of a new Wal-Mart SuperCenter in Vidalia earlier this decade has helped to expand new retail development along the U.S. 280 East corridor, with the potential for more developments in the future. Among new establishments within the corridor in recent years are a new 61-room Hampton Inn, a new Lowe's home improvement store, Arby's, Zaxby's, Ruby Tuesday, and Krystal. Further retail/commercial development can

be expected pending the construction of the proposed new Meadows Regional Medical Center is completed, particularly along the north side of U.S. 280 East as well GA 292 East. The Vidalia Regional Airport witnessed its most extensive expansion in its history in 2003, including the construction of a new 4,000 square foot terminal building, the extension of the runway to 6,000 feet and installation of state-of-the-art avionics, and the attainment of regional status for the airport. New specialty physicians and physician office complexes continue to expand in the areas adjacent to Meadows Regional Medical Center to serve the growing health care needs of the general area, enabling Vidalia to become a regional health care hub in Southeast Georgia for those who prefer the convenience of not having to travel to Macon, Savannah, or points beyond for their primary health care destination.

### **Special Economic Activities**

The most unique or special economic activity in Toombs County is tourism. While still a fledgling activity to some extent, its current impact is beginning to be realized, and there is plenty of room for continued growth. Tourism is often misunderstood because of recent developments and narrowly construed as amusement attractions. Toombs County will likely never be a major tourist destination, and should not be, given its unique rural character and important natural resources. But defining tourism as simply visitor attraction, Toombs County does now enjoy limited tourism benefits, and has some potential.

The annual Vidalia Sweet Onion Festival is the area's major festival. The festival began in 1978 as a means to celebrate and promote the annual harvest each spring of the area's principal crop and Georgia's Official State Vegetable, the Vidalia Sweet Onion. Today the festival attracts thousands of visitors to Vidalia each year during the latter part of April, and includes such events and activities ranging from a street dance to a Vidalia Onion cook-off to arts and crafts in addition to food and entertainment. The highlight of the festival is the annual Air Show, which has featured past performances from such internationally known aerial demonstration groups as the U.S. Navy Blue Angels and the Canadian Snowbirds.

Another major annual local event is the area folk play "Tales from the Altamaha", which is held each spring in Lyons at the restored Blue Marquee Theater. Created in 2005 and based

on the success of other Georgia folk life plays such as “Swamp Gravy” and “Reach of Song”, “Tales from the Altamaha” is a collection of stories drawn from over 800 manuscripts that were written by the late Colonel T. Ross Sharpe, depicting the history of the Altamaha River Area and the lives of the regional settlers of a five-county radius. Col. Sharpe’s daughter presented these writings to the Lyons Better Hometown Program as a tribute to her father. Each year a new play is created based on one of Col. Sharpe’s stories. Since its inception, many people from throughout the surrounding area have attended “Tales from the Altamaha,” serving as a major weekend tourist draw for the local area each spring.

Other community-wide events taking place include the annual Christmas in Lyons and the Vidalia Christmas Parade, both of which are held annually in December. The creation of additional such festivals or other daylong gatherings on an annual basis or otherwise would help to draw greater numbers of people to the area, particularly those from surrounding communities. This would be a ready source of increased tourism expenditures locally.

Hunting and fishing recreation in the county will likely grow, especially with declining opportunities in Florida because of population and development. Some 51 percent of Toombs County’s total land area consisted of forestland as of 2008, offering an abundant area for hunting opportunities. Excellent fishing and hunting opportunities abound in the Altamaha and Ochoopee rivers. Alternative hunting and fishing enterprises could flourish, and could provide secondary income for farmers and landowners. The Altamaha River Basin is one of the most unique and important natural resources on the east coast of the U.S.: relatively undeveloped, Georgia's largest river-swamp system and largest free-flowing river and second largest watershed on the eastern U.S. coast. The Nature Conservancy, upon completing a two-year ecological inventory, recently named it as its first bioserve in Georgia in recognition of its state, regional, and national ecological significance. It contains over 50 natural community types, including nearly 100 rare species of flora and fauna. In addition the Altamaha Basin contains a number of historic and archaeological sites, all undeveloped, of extreme importance to the early settlement and development of Georgia. The potential development of a recreational/residential lake/public fishing area offers potential for Toombs County to take advantage of this current “nature-based tourism” phenomenon by utilizing its abundant natural resources for economic gain. A committee within the Toombs-Montgomery Chamber of Commerce was formed to look into the

potential of, among other things, developing a regional reservoir within the area of Montgomery, Tattnall, Toombs, and Treutlen counties.

The county has the potential to develop into a local agri-tourism hub, given the natural resources available. Seasonal farm tours of various Vidalia Onion farms are already offered through the Vidalia Area CVB. With the success of the local farming industry, additional farm tours could be developed providing another secondary source of income for farmers. Enough farming is available to continue to use the local agri-tourism industry as a sort of “niche” market to attract nature enthusiasts to the area.

As development of these venues continues, Vidalia could see an increase in the number of visitors to the area. The City is well positioned as a logical overnight lodging point, with numerous lodging and restaurant facilities already established, and with more likely to come as traffic along U.S. 280 continues to increase. If agri-tourism and other natural resource venues are more fully developed, this could help provide the impetus needed in the private sector to help the City to develop additional accommodations. In the interim, small natural and historic resource attractors currently are available and can continue to be developed and nurtured.

Toombs County has already provided a mechanism for marshalling local efforts toward tourism growth. The Vidalia Area Convention and Visitors Bureau was established in 2002 as a joint effort among Toombs and Montgomery counties and their municipalities to pool their resources together in the pursuit of promoting and attracting tourism opportunities to the area.

## **Summary of Needs Assessment**

The Toombs County economy was developed relying on transportation and its vast forests, and its future to a large extent will depend on these same avenues. The local economy, while continuing to grow at a steady pace, is not adding jobs at the rate its labor force is growing, even though the population and labor force itself is steadily growing. The economy overall is somewhat less developed and diverse than the state. There is an unhealthy reliance on a volatile manufacturing sector and the relatively low wage service and retail trade industries, although recent manufacturing developments may help provide some future stability at least for the time

being. The labor force is in need of modern skills improvement, and higher paying jobs to increase participation rates. Improved infrastructure is still needed in order to attract future business and industrial growth. Within the municipalities, the downtown areas are in need of continued revitalization and improvements to bring needed retail and other businesses back to the heart of the cities. Likewise, improvements to the gateway corridors in the municipalities would serve to entice visitors as well. Continued upgrades to both the county's and Vidalia's school facilities is another important area that needs to be addressed, as is ongoing with the recent construction of the new Lyons Upper Elementary School. Quality of life issues, such as the continued development of medical services and improvements to the county's recreation facilities, are also important items that will enhance the area's livability. Continuing to improve ongoing local cooperation is a key avenue to increase the involvement of all facets of the community to work together for the betterment of both the County and the municipalities.

Despite some structural economic problems, Toombs County has a number of important assets and opportunities for growth. Toombs County's location on two planned developmental highways (U.S. 1 and U.S. 280) as well as close proximity to I-16 continues to offer many opportunities for economic growth including transportation, tourism, and agriculture. The natural resources of the county, particularly the Altamaha and Ochopee rivers, offer enormous potential for tourism and other economic growth. The abundant groundwater supply will help. Another important advantage is that the County has the presence of abundant, available, and affordable land for industrial development. The new Airport Industrial Park along with available land within the new Toombs Corporate Center at U.S. 1 is illustrative of this particular opportunity. Good educational facilities in the form of Southeastern Technical College is a key asset in continuing to raise the educational attainment levels of the community, as well as serving to attract young people from surrounding communities. The community is also considered a rural leader in health care facilities and programs, technological access, and in its airport facilities. The Vidalia Sweet Onion Festival remains the area's major tourist drawing card, and it will continue to play a vital role in attracting visitors. It is very likely that the same areas that spurred development in the county in the 19th and 20th centuries will again stimulate development in the 21st Century. Transportation and natural resources, the fields and forests of the county, still offer the most potential for growth albeit in new variation. There is much work

to be done to prepare for and stimulate this growth, but the unity of the community and its local economic development and training resources already in place can accomplish much.

**Table ED-1**  
**Employment By Economic Sector (Non-Farm)**  
**Toombs County**  
**1990-2007**

Category	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
Total	8,940	11,022	10,897	11,223	11,964
Agriculture, Forestry, & Fishing	53	318	583	678	701
Mining	0	0	0	0	0
Construction	648	485	718	569	622
Manufacturing	2,296	3,252	2,043	1,901	2,194
Trans., Comm., & Public Utilities	261*	291*	347*	412	475
Wholesale Trade	519	1,007	980	734	761
Retail Trade	2,188	2,235	2,354	1,605	1,463
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	272	257	290	290	316
Services	1,223	1,903	2,088	3,583	3,839
Federal Government	80	68	73	66	62
State Government	214	290	353	300	278
Local Government	1,182	917	1,070	1,199	1,252
Not Reported Due To Employer Confidentiality	4	0	0	883	1

\* - The number shown does not include the total for Communications, which was withheld due to individual employer confidentiality reasons.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, 2008.

**Table ED-2**  
**Employment By Economic Sector**  
**Toombs County**  
**1990-2006**

Category	1990	1995	2000	2006
Total	11,761	14,283	14,278	16,104
Farm	545	559	593	577
Agriculture, Forestry, & Fishing	122	369	477	600
Mining	NA	NA	NA	NA
Construction	934	1,020	1,030	1,136
Manufacturing	2,339	3,332	2,131	2,145
Trans., Comm., & Public Utilities	391*	401*	527*	739
Wholesale Trade	602	1,139	1,150	967
Retail Trade	2,638	2,650	2,769	2,012
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	475	496	592	734
Services	2,107	2,918	3,389	4,888
Federal Government	188	169	159	153
State Government	219	300	377	335
Local Government	1,195	924	1,078	1,229
Not Reported Due To Employer Confidentiality	6	6	6	589

\* - The total shown does not include Communications employment due to those figures being withheld from public disclosure.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2008.



**Table ED-3**  
**Percentage Employment By Economic Sector (Non-Farm)**  
**Toombs County**  
**1990-2007**

<b>Category</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2007</b>
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, & Fishing	0.59%	2.89%	5.35%	6.04%	5.86%
Mining	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Construction	7.25%	4.40%	6.59%	5.07%	5.20%
Manufacturing	25.68%	29.50%	18.75%	16.94%	18.34%
Trans., Comm., & Public Utilities	2.92%*	2.64*	3.18*%	3.67%	3.97%
Wholesale Trade	5.81%	9.14%	8.99%	6.54%	6.36%
Retail Trade	24.47%	20.28%	21.60%	14.30%	12.23%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	3.04%	2.33%	2.66%	2.58%	2.64%
Services	13.68%	17.27%	19.16%	31.93%	32.09%
Federal Government	0.89%	0.62%	0.67%	0.59%	0.52%
State Government	2.39%	2.63%	3.24%	2.67%	2.32%
Local Government	13.22%	8.32%	9.82%	10.68%	10.46%
Not Reported Due To Employer Confidentiality	0.04%	0.00%	0.00%	7.87%	0.01%

\* - The number shown does not include the total for Communications, which was withheld due to individual employer confidentiality reasons.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, 2008.

**Table ED-4**  
**Percentage Employment By Economic Sector**  
**Toombs County**  
**1990-2006**

Category	1990	1995	2000	2006
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Farm	4.63%	3.91%	4.15%	3.58%
Agriculture, Forestry, & Fishing	1.04%	2.58%	3.34%	3.73%
Mining	NA	NA	NA	NA
Construction	7.94%	7.14%	7.21%	7.05%
Manufacturing	19.89%	23.33%	14.93%	13.32%
Trans., Comm., & Public Utilities	3.32%*	2.81%*	3.69%*	4.59%
Wholesale Trade	5.12%	7.97%	8.05%	6.00%
Retail Trade	22.43%	18.55%	19.39%	12.49%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	4.04%	3.47%	4.15%	4.56%
Services	17.92%	20.43%	23.74%	30.35%
Federal Government	1.60%	1.18%	1.11%	0.95%
State Government	1.86%	2.10%	2.64%	2.08%
Local Government	10.16%	6.47%	7.55%	7.63%
Not Reported Due To Employer Confidentiality	0.05%	0.04%	0.04%	3.66%

\* - The total shown does not include Communications employment due to those figures being withheld from public disclosure.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2008.

**Table ED-5**  
**Percentage Employment By Economic Sector (Non-Farm)**  
**Georgia**  
**1990-2007**

<b>Category</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2007</b>
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, & Fishing	0.93%	1.07%	1.16%	0.65%	0.62%
Mining	0.30%	0.23%	0.20%	0.18%	0.17%
Construction	4.96%	4.50%	5.22%	5.33%	5.42%
Manufacturing	19.00%	17.50%	14.95%	11.46%	10.57%
Trans., Comm., & Public Utilities	6.40%	6.23%	6.65%	7.36%	7.24%
Wholesale Trade	7.27%	6.78%	6.64%	5.40%	5.39%
Retail Trade	17.92%	18.73%	18.38%	11.70%	11.74%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	5.48%	5.13%	5.13%	5.64%	5.59%
Services	19.97%	23.00%	25.62%	35.75%	36.40%
Federal Government	3.52%	2.96%	2.51%	2.39%	2.35%
State Government	3.94%	4.06%	3.65%	3.83%	3.77%
Local Government	10.15%	9.72%	9.05%	10.15%	10.35%
Not Reported Due To Employer Confidentiality	0.16%	0.09%	0.84%	0.16%	0.39%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, 2006.

**Table ED-6**  
**Percentage Employment By Economic Sector**  
**Georgia**  
**1990-2006**

Category	1990	1995	2000	2006
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Farm	2.01%	1.63%	1.37%	1.22%
Agriculture, Forestry, & Fishing	0.85%	1.06%	1.14%	0.53%
Mining	0.29%	0.22%	0.20%	0.17%
Construction	5.76%	5.59%	6.16%	6.74%
Manufacturing	15.51%	14.32%	12.29%	8.64%
Trans., Comm., & Public Utilities	5.85%*	5.73%*	6.19%*	6.72%
Wholesale Trade	6.19%	5.75%	5.62%	4.37%
Retail Trade	16.42%	17.09%	16.69%	10.72%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	6.64%	6.39%	7.11%	8.66%
Services	23.76%	26.51%	29.01%	37.93%
Federal Government	2.79%	2.32%	1.98%	1.76%
State Government	3.22%	3.32%	3.04%	3.09%
Local Government	8.24%	7.82%	7.26%	7.69%
Not Reported Due To Employer Confidentiality	2.47%	2.25%	1.94%	1.76%

\* - The total shown does not include Communications employment due to those figures being withheld from public disclosure.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2008.

**Table ED-7**  
**Percentage Employment By Economic Sector**  
**United States**  
**1990-2006**

Category	1990	1995	2000	2006
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Farm	2.26%	2.08%	1.87%	1.61%
Agricultural Services, Other	1.04%	1.19%	1.27%	0.57%
Mining	0.75%	0.59%	0.47%	0.50%
Construction	5.21%	5.18%	5.66%	6.49%
Manufacturing	14.13%	12.88%	11.46%	8.28%
Trans., Comm., & Public Utilities	4.70%*	4.75%*	4.94%*	5.58%
Wholesale Trade	4.82%	4.65%	4.55%	3.67%
Retail Trade	16.42%	16.81%	16.32%	10.77%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	7.69%	7.41%	7.91%	9.07%
Services	27.74%	29.85%	31.78%	40.01%
Federal Government	2.32%	1.97%	1.73%	1.56%
State Government	3.16%	3.20%	2.97%	2.89%
Local Government	7.80%	7.89%	7.81%	7.87%
Not Reported Due To Employer Confidentiality	1.96%	1.55%	1.26%	1.13%

\* - The total shown does not include Communications employment due to those figures being withheld from public disclosure.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2008.

**Table ED-8**  
**Earnings By Economic Sector**  
**Toombs County**  
**1990-2006**

<b>Category</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2006</b>
Total	\$211,403,000	\$289,389,000	\$347,234,000	\$441,033,000
Farm	\$10,495,000	\$20,127,000	\$18,084,000	\$18,409,000
Agricultural Services, Other	\$1,616,000	\$4,917,000	\$6,070,000	\$14,329,000
Mining	\$175,000	\$0	\$175,000	\$251,000
Construction	\$20,657,000	\$21,897,000	\$36,078,000	\$25,872,000
Manufacturing	\$38,018,000	\$62,656,000	\$53,250,000	\$65,894,000
Trans., Comm., & Public Utilities	\$13,447,000	\$17,898,000	\$27,851,000	\$34,048,000
Wholesale Trade	\$12,836,000	\$26,366,000	\$33,258,000	\$34,340,000
Retail Trade	\$39,165,000	\$36,396,000	\$44,219,000	\$42,296,000
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	\$6,209,000	\$7,625,000	\$10,646,000	\$14,046,000
Services	\$33,493,000	\$55,160,000	\$70,997,000	\$127,527,000
Federal Civilian Government	\$2,947,000	\$3,226,000	\$3,509,000	\$4,879,000
Federal Military Government	\$1,081,000	\$1,208,000	\$1,290,000	\$2,977,000
State & Local Government	\$31,264,000	\$31,913,000	\$41,807,000	\$56,165,000

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2008.

**Table ED-9**  
**Percentage Earnings By Economic Sector**  
**Toombs County**  
**1990-2006**

<b>Category</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2006</b>
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Farm	4.96%	6.95%	5.21%	4.17%
Agricultural Services, Other	0.76%	1.70%	1.75%	3.25%
Mining	0.08%	0.00%	0.05%	0.06%
Construction	9.77%	7.57%	10.39%	5.87%
Manufacturing	17.98%	21.65%	15.34%	14.94%
Trans., Comm., & Public Utilities	6.36%	6.18%	8.02%	7.72%
Wholesale Trade	6.07%	9.11%	9.58%	7.79%
Retail Trade	18.53%	12.58%	12.73%	9.59%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	2.94%	2.63%	3.07%	3.18%
Services	15.84%	19.06%	20.45%	28.92%
Federal Civilian Government	1.39%	1.11%	1.01%	1.11%
Federal Military Government	0.51%	0.42%	0.37%	0.68%
State & Local Government	14.79%	11.03%	12.04%	12.73%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2008.

**Table ED-10**  
**Percentage Earnings By Economic Sector**  
**Georgia**  
**1990-2006**

<b>Category</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2006</b>
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Farm	1.37%	1.41%	0.88%	0.59%
Agricultural Services, Other	0.47%	0.55%	0.59%	0.33%
Mining	0.37%	0.30%	0.26%	0.27%
Construction	5.80%	5.27%	5.84%	6.23%
Manufacturing	17.65%	17.07%	14.78%	11.50%
Trans., Comm., & Public Utilities	8.83%	9.61%	9.99%	10.61%
Wholesale Trade	8.96%	8.22%	8.67%	6.99%
Retail Trade	9.20%	9.05%	8.77%	6.45%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	6.23%	6.83%	7.75%	8.88%
Services	21.80%	24.02%	27.23%	30.84%
Federal Civilian Government	4.64%	4.14%	3.41%	3.67%
Federal Military Government	2.73%	2.51%	2.07%	2.97%
State & Local Government	11.94%	11.03%	9.77%	10.67%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2008.



**Table ED-11**  
**Percentage Earnings By Economic Sector**  
**United States**  
**1990-2006**

<b>Category</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2006</b>
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Farm	1.26%	0.85%	0.68%	0.46%
Agricultural Services, Other	0.65%	0.63%	0.68%	0.32%
Mining	1.09%	0.85%	0.95%	1.27%
Construction	5.91%	5.31%	5.87%	6.51%
Manufacturing	19.11%	18.19%	16.46%	12.42%
Trans., Comm., & Public Utilities	6.54%	6.88%	6.79%	7.91%
Wholesale Trade	6.35%	6.16%	6.24%	5.25%
Retail Trade	9.20%	8.96%	8.58%	6.31%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	6.84%	8.02%	9.89%	10.17%
Services	25.21%	26.67%	28.54%	32.88%
Federal Civilian Government	3.86%	3.68%	3.06%	3.13%
Federal Military Government	1.96%	1.55%	1.22%	1.65%
State & Local Government	12.03%	12.26%	11.02%	11.70%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2008.

**Table ED-12**  
**Average Weekly Wages**  
**Toombs County**  
**1997-2007**

Category	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
All Industries	\$355	\$371	\$387	\$401	\$412	\$429	\$446	\$453	\$465	\$505	\$526
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	\$179	\$201	\$286	\$201	\$242	\$266	\$404	\$343	\$373	\$385	\$434
Mining	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Construction	\$410	\$423	\$485	\$512	\$508	\$570	\$465	\$442	\$444	\$552	\$529
Manufacturing	\$342	\$359	\$353	\$402	\$412	\$399	\$417	\$424	\$448	\$469	\$462
Transportation, Comm., Utilities	\$617*	\$621*	\$613*	\$708*							
Transportation					\$664**	\$748**	\$735**	\$792**	\$805**	\$806**	\$834**
Communication					\$551**	\$476**	\$468**	\$508**	\$589**	\$588**	\$597**
Utilities					\$935**	\$1,035**	NA	\$895**	\$908**	\$912**	\$1,031**
Wholesale	\$395	\$417	\$464	\$470	\$480	\$512	\$571	\$607	\$567	\$570	\$638
Retail	\$245	\$253	\$267	\$280	\$330	\$339	\$348	\$366	\$371	\$386	\$399
Financial, Insurance, Real Estate	\$456	\$492	\$528	\$524							
Finance and Insurance					\$550***	\$588***	\$622***	\$614***	\$601***	\$661***	\$690***
Real Estate					\$303***	\$314***	\$289***	\$332***	\$409***	\$353***	\$394***
Services	\$400	\$393	\$399	\$417	\$404	\$425	\$444	\$461	\$470	\$518	\$548
Federal Government	\$655	\$579	\$588	\$605	\$669	\$727	\$769	\$805	\$867	\$871	\$938
State Government	\$483	\$484	\$476	\$450	\$466	\$496	\$503	\$526	\$549	\$557	\$587
Local Government	\$417	\$443	\$422	\$439	\$451	\$467	\$474	\$484	\$487	\$509	\$531

\*- Includes only Transportation and Public Utilities. Average Weekly Wages for Communications were not reported.

\*\* - Beginning in 2001, the Average Weekly Wages for Transportation, Communications, and Utilities were reported separately.

\*\*\* - Beginning in 2001, Average Weekly Wages were reported separately for the sectors of Financial and Insurance and Real Estate.

Sources: Georgia Department of Labor, Covered Employment and Wages Series, 2008; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008.

**Table ED-13**  
**Average Weekly Wages**  
**Georgia**  
**1997-2007**

<b>Category</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
All Industries	\$558	\$592	\$622	\$658	\$676	\$687
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	\$348	\$372	\$390	\$403	\$417	\$410
Mining	\$781	\$831	\$866	\$879	\$876	\$915
Construction	\$556	\$590	\$623	\$655	\$687	\$693
Manufacturing	\$617	\$653	\$684	\$721	\$711	\$728
Transportation, Comm., Utilities	\$805	\$834	\$896	\$949		
Transportation					\$808*	\$828*
Communication					\$1,102*	\$1,098*
Utilities					\$1,235*	\$1,292*
Wholesale	\$809	\$870	\$933	\$988	\$1,022	\$1,018
Retail	\$299	\$318	\$335	\$350	\$433	\$440
Financial, Insurance, Real Estate	\$801	\$867	\$901	\$967		
Financial and Insurance					\$1,051**	\$1,082**
Real Estate					\$670**	\$697**
Services	\$550	\$582	\$612	\$657	\$680	\$688
Federal Government	\$772	\$797	\$807	\$847	\$893	\$969
State Government	\$532	\$561	\$579	\$588	\$605	\$631
Local Government	\$480	\$507	\$523	\$549	\$571	\$593

**Table ED-13 (Cont'd)**  
**Average Weekly Wages**  
**Georgia**  
**1997-2007**

Category	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
All Industries	\$704	\$728	\$752	\$776	\$811
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	\$421	\$432	\$472	\$491	\$513
Mining	\$952	\$993	\$1,026	\$1,048	\$1,110
Construction	\$710	\$739	\$768	\$804	\$837
Manufacturing	\$761	\$797	\$811	\$849	\$875
Transportation, Comm., Utilities					
Transportation	\$838*	\$870*	\$816*	\$805*	\$997*
Communication	\$1,148*	\$1,181*	\$1,264*	\$1,322*	\$1,416*
Utilities	\$1,312*	\$1,315*	\$1,390*	\$1,404*	\$1,410*
Wholesale	\$1,032	\$1,085	\$1,128	\$1,183	\$1,224
Retail	\$454	\$464	\$473	\$486	\$491
Financial, Insurance, Real Estate					
Financial and Insurance	\$1,117**	\$1,174**	\$1,205**	\$1,268**	\$1,331**
Real Estate	\$715**	\$770**	\$811**	\$883**	\$908**
Services	\$702	\$727	\$752	\$774	\$813
Federal Government	\$1,036	\$1,071	\$1,134	\$1,164	\$1,223
State Government	\$640	\$641	\$656	\$672	\$700
Local Government	\$610	\$620	\$632	\$654	\$676

\* - Beginning in 2001, the Average Weekly Wages for the Transportation, Communications, and Utilities sectors were reported separately. Prior to 2001, the Average Weekly Wages for these sectors were combined.

\*\* - Beginning in 2001, the Average Weekly Wages for the Financial, Insurance, and Real Estate sectors were reported separately. Prior to 2001, the Average Weekly Wages for these sectors were combined.

Sources: Georgia Department of Labor, Covered Employment and Wages Series, 2006; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006.

**Table ED-14**  
**Toombs County Average Weekly Wages**  
**As a Percentage of Georgia Average Weekly Wages**  
**1997-2007**

Category	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
All Industries	63.62%	62.67%	62.22%	60.94%	60.95%	62.45%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	51.44%	54.03%	73.33%	49.88%	58.03%	64.88%
Mining	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Construction	73.74%	71.69%	77.85%	78.17%	73.94%	82.25%
Manufacturing	55.43%	54.98%	51.61%	55.76%	57.95%	54.81%
Transportation, Comm., Utilities	76.65% *	74.46% *	68.42% *	74.60% *		
Transportation					82.18%* *	90.34%* *
Communication					50.00%* *	43.35%* *
Utilities					75.71%* *	80.11%* *
Wholesale	48.83%	47.93%	49.73%	47.57%	46.97%	50.29%
Retail	81.94%	79.56%	79.70%	80.00%	76.21%	77.05%
Financial, Insurance, Real Estate	56.93%	56.75%	58.60%	54.19%		
Finance and Insurance					52.33%* *	54.34%* *
Real Estate					45.22%* *	45.05%* *
Services	72.73%	67.53%	65.20%	63.47%	59.41%	61.77%
Federal Government	84.84%	72.65%	72.86%	71.43%	74.92%	75.03%
State Government	90.79%	86.27%	82.21%	76.53%	77.02%	78.61%
Local Government	86.88%	87.38%	80.69%	79.96%	78.98%	78.75%

**Table ED-14 (Cont'd)**  
**Toombs County Average Weekly Wages**  
**As a Percentage of Georgia Average Weekly Wages**  
**1997-2007**

Category	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
All Industries	63.35%	62.23%	61.84%	65.08%	64.86%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	95.96%	79.40%	79.03%	78.41%	84.60%
Mining	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Construction	65.49%	59.81%	57.81%	68.66%	63.20%
Manufacturing	54.80%	53.20%	55.24%	55.24%	52.80%
Transportation, Comm., Utilities					
Transportation	87.71%**	91.03%**	98.65%**	100.12%**	83.65%**
Communication	40.77%**	43.01%**	46.60%**	44.48%**	42.16%**
Utilities	NA	68.06%**	65.32%**	64.96%**	73.12%**
Wholesale	55.33%	55.94%	50.27%	48.18%	52.12%
Retail	76.65%	78.88%	78.44%	79.42%	81.26%
Financial, Insurance, Real Estate					
Finance and Insurance	55.68%***	52.30%***	49.88%***	52.13%***	51.84%***
Real Estate	40.42%***	43.12%***	50.43%***	39.98%***	43.39%***
Services	63.25%	63.41%	62.50%	66.93%	67.40%
Federal Government	74.23%	75.16%	76.46%	74.83%	76.70%
State Government	78.59%	82.06%	83.69%	82.89%	83.86%
Local Government	77.70%	78.06%	77.06%	77.83%	78.55%

\*- Includes only Transportation and Public Utilities. Average Weekly Wages for Communications were not reported.

\*\* - Beginning in 2001, the Average Weekly Wages for Transportation, Communications, and Utilities were reported separately, and only those wages for Transportation and Communication were reported from this point forward.

\*\*\* - Beginning in 2001, Average Weekly Wages were reported separately for the sectors of Financial and Insurance and Real Estate.

Sources: Georgia Department of Labor, Covered Employment and Wages Series, 2008; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008.

**Table ED-15**  
**Personal Income By Type (In Actual Dollars)**  
**Toombs County**  
**1990-2000**

Category	1990	2000
Total	\$232,718,767	\$366,878,100
Wages & Salaries	\$177,629,039	\$267,872,700
Other Labor Income	\$3,393,914	\$11,132,600
Proprietors Income	\$12,958,140	\$17,927,900
Dividends, Interest, & Rent	\$13,303,642	\$20,998,600
Transfer Payments to Households	\$18,574,925	\$30,669,500
Retirement Income	\$6,859,107	\$18,276,800

Sources: [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), utilizing U.S. Bureau of the Census data as original source, 2008.

**Table ED-16**  
**Percent Personal Income By Type (In Actual Dollars)**  
**Toombs County**  
**1990-2000**

Category	1990	2000
Total	100.00%	100.00%
Wages & Salaries	76.33%	73.01%
Other Labor Income	1.46%	3.03%
Proprietors Income	5.57%	4.89%
Dividends, Interest, & Rent	5.72%	5.72%
Transfer Payments to Persons	7.98%	8.36%
Retirement Income	2.95%	4.98%

Sources: [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), utilizing U.S. Bureau of the Census data as original source, 2008.

**Table ED-17**  
**Percent Personal Income By Type (In 1996 Dollars)**  
**Georgia**  
**1990-2000**

Category	1990	2000
Total	100.00%	100.00%
Wages & Salaries	78.51%	78.24%
Other Labor Income	1.13%	1.70%
Proprietors Income	6.26%	5.60%
Dividends, Interest, & Rent	5.62%	5.27%
Transfer Payments to Households	5.05%	4.04%
Retirement Income	3.43%	4.57%

Sources: [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com), taken from U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2008.

**Table ED-18**  
**Employment By Occupation**  
**Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia**  
**1990 and 2000**

Category	1990			
	Toombs County	Lyons	Santa Claus	Vidalia
TOTAL All Occupations	10,080	1,567	77	4,711
Executive, Administrative and Managerial (not Farm)	875	88	4	579
Professional and Technical Specialty	1,105	151	4	674
Technicians & Related Support	358	42	4	172
Sales	1,125	177	11	622
Clerical and Administrative Support	1,352	137	16	729
Private Household Services	58	20	0	38
Protective Services	295	96	6	90
Service Occupations (not Protective & Household)	903	178	6	342
Farming, Fishing and Forestry	406	54	0	75
Precision Production, Craft, and Repair	1,216	115	16	511
Machine Operators, Assemblers & Inspectors	1,198	233	6	481
Transportation & Material Moving	562	143	1	144
Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, Helpers & Laborers	627	133	3	254



**Table ED-18 (Cont'd)**  
**Employment By Occupation**  
**Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia**  
**1990 and 2000**

**2000**

Category	Toombs County	Lyons	Santa Claus	Vidalia
TOTAL All Occupations	10,987	1,529	64	4,538
Executive, Administrative and Managerial (not Farm)	1,140	137	6	496
Professional and Technical Specialty	1,828	172	4	1,003
Technicians & Related Support	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sales	1,001	159	7	473
Clerical and Administrative Support	1,379	202	9	589
Private Household Services	NA	NA	NA	NA
Protective Services	569	127	3	189
Service Occupations (not Protective & Household)	1,214	190	9	580
Farming, Fishing and Forestry	631	129	0	60
Precision Production, Craft, and Repair	1,243	157	7	539
Machine Operators, Assemblers & Inspectors	1,292	157	13	372
Transportation & Material Moving	690	99	6	237
Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, Helpers & Laborers	NA	NA	NA	NA

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008.

**Table ED-19**  
**Percentage Employment By Occupation**  
**Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia**  
**1990 and 2000**

<b>1990</b>				
<b>Category</b>	<b>Toombs County</b>	<b>Lyons</b>	<b>Santa Claus</b>	<b>Vidalia</b>
TOTAL All Occupations	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Executive, Administrative and Managerial (not Farm)	8.68%	5.62%	5.19%	12.29%
Professional and Technical Specialty	10.96%	9.64%	5.19%	14.31%
Technicians & Related Support	3.55%	2.68%	5.19%	3.65%
Sales	11.16%	11.30%	14.29%	13.20%
Clerical and Administrative Support	13.41%	8.74%	20.78%	15.47%
Private Household Services	0.58%	1.28%	0.00%	0.81%
Protective Services	2.93%	6.13%	7.79%	1.91%
Service Occupations (not Protective & Household)	8.96%	11.36%	7.79%	7.26%
Farming, Fishing and Forestry	4.03%	3.45%	0.00%	1.59%
Precision Production, Craft, and Repair	12.06%	7.34%	20.78%	10.85%
Machine Operators, Assemblers & Inspectors	11.88%	14.87%	7.79%	10.21%
Transportation & Material Moving	5.58%	9.13%	1.30%	3.06%
Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, Helpers & Laborers	6.22%	8.49%	3.90%	5.39%

**Table ED-19 (Cont'd)**  
**Percentage Employment By Occupation**  
**Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia**  
**1990 and 2000**

**2000**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Toombs County</b>	<b>Lyons</b>	<b>Santa Claus</b>	<b>Vidalia</b>
TOTAL All Occupations	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Executive, Administrative and Managerial (not Farm)	10.38%	8.96%	9.38%	10.93%
Professional and Technical Specialty	16.64%	11.25%	6.25%	22.10%
Technicians & Related Support	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sales	9.11%	10.40%	10.94%	10.42%
Clerical and Administrative Support	12.55%	13.21%	14.06%	12.98%
Private Household Services	NA	NA	NA	NA
Protective Services	5.18%	8.31%	4.69%	4.16%
Service Occupations (not Protective & Household)	11.05%	12.43%	14.06%	12.78%
Farming, Fishing and Forestry	5.74%	8.44%	0.00%	1.32%
Precision Production, Craft, and Repair	11.31%	10.27%	10.94%	11.88%
Machine Operators, Assemblers & Inspectors	11.76%	10.27%	20.31%	8.20%
Transportation & Material Moving	6.28%	6.47%	9.38%	5.22%
Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, Helpers & Laborers	NA	NA	NA	NA

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008.

**Table ED-20**  
**Percentage Employment By Occupation**  
**Georgia**  
**1990 and 2000**

Category	1990	2000
TOTAL All Occupations	100.00%	100.00%
Executive, Administrative and Managerial (not Farm)	12.26%	14.03%
Professional and Technical Specialty	12.39%	18.68%
Technicians & Related Support	3.58%	NA
Sales	12.28%	11.64%
Clerical and Administrative Support	16.00%	15.14%
Private Household Services	0.51%	NA
Protective Services	1.70%	1.95%
Service Occupations (not Protective & Household)	9.77%	11.44%
Farming, Fishing and Forestry	2.20%	0.64%
Precision Production, Craft, and Repair	11.86%	9.02%
Machine Operators, Assemblers & Inspectors	8.50%	10.83%
Transportation & Material Moving	4.60%	6.63%
Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, Helpers & Laborers	4.34%	NA

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 1991, 2008.

**Table ED-21**  
**Percentage Employment By Occupation**  
**United States**  
**1990 and 2000**

Category	1990	2000
TOTAL All Occupations	100.00%	100.00%
Executive, Administrative and Managerial (not Farm)	12.32%	13.45%
Professional and Technical Specialty	14.11%	20.20%
Technicians & Related Support	3.68%	NA
Sales	11.79%	11.25%
Clerical and Administrative Support	16.26%	15.44%
Private Household Services	0.45%	NA
Protective Services	1.72%	1.97%
Service Occupations (not Protective & Household)	11.04%	12.89%
Farming, Fishing and Forestry	2.46%	0.73%
Precision Production, Craft, and Repair	11.33%	8.49%
Machine Operators, Assemblers & Inspectors	6.83%	9.45%
Transportation & Material Moving	4.08%	6.14%
Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, Helpers & Laborers	3.94%	NA

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 1991, 2008.

**Table ED-22**  
**Labor Force Participation**  
**Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia**  
**1990 and 2000**

1990				
Category	Toombs County	Lyons	Santa Claus	Vidalia
TOTAL Males and Females	17,673	3,268	116	8,168
In Labor Force	10,848	1,769	84	5,018
Civilian Labor Force	10,848	1,769	84	5,018
Civilian Employed	10,080	1,567	77	4,711
Civilian Unemployed	768	202	7	307
In Armed Forces	0	0	0	0
Not in Labor Force	6,825	1,499	32	3,150
TOTAL Males	7,919	1,416	58	3,454
Male in Labor Force	5,739	944	48	2,500
Male Civilian Labor Force	5,739	944	48	2,500
Male Civilian Employed	5,388	818	43	2,389
Male Civilian Unemployed	351	126	5	111
Male in Armed Forces	0	0	0	0
Male Not in Labor Force	2,180	472	10	954
TOTAL Females	9,754	1,852	58	4,714
Female in Labor Force	5,109	825	36	2,518
Female Civilian Labor Force	5,109	825	36	2,518
Female Civilian Employed	4,692	749	34	2,322
Female Civilian Unemployed	417	76	2	196
Female in Armed Forces	0	0	0	0
Female Not in Labor Force	4,645	1,027	22	2,196

**Table ED-22 (Cont'd)**  
**Labor Force Participation**  
**Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia**  
**1990 and 2000**

	<b>2000</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>Toombs County</b>	<b>Lyons</b>	<b>Santa Claus</b>	<b>Vidalia</b>
TOTAL Males and Females	19,419	3,205	116	7,944
In Labor Force	11,660	1,627	71	4,831
Civilian Labor Force	11,656	1,627	71	4,827
Civilian Employed	10,987	1,529	64	4,538
Civilian Unemployed	669	98	7	289
In Armed Forces	4	0	0	4
Not in Labor Force	7,759	1,578	45	3,113
TOTAL Males	8,991	1,458	50	3,437
Male in Labor Force	6,387	884	32	2,459
Male Civilian Labor Force	6,383	884	32	2,455
Male Civilian Employed	6,042	842	29	2,315
Male Civilian Unemployed	341	42	3	140
Male in Armed Forces	4	0	0	4
Male Not in Labor Force	2,604	574	18	978
TOTAL Females	10,428	1,747	66	4,507
Female in Labor Force	5,273	743	39	2,372
Female Civilian Labor Force	5,273	743	39	2,372
Female Civilian Employed	4,945	687	35	2,223
Female Civilian Unemployed	328	56	4	149
Female in Armed Forces	0	0	0	0
Female Not in Labor Force	5,155	1,004	27	2,135

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008.

**Table ED-23**  
**Labor Force Participation (By Percentage)**  
**Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia**  
**1990 and 2000**

Category	1990			
	Toombs County	Lyons	Santa Claus	Vidalia
TOTAL Males and Females	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
In Labor Force	61.38%	54.13%	72.41%	61.43%
Civilian Labor Force	61.38%	54.13%	72.41%	61.43%
Civilian Employed	57.04%	47.95%	66.38%	57.68%
Civilian Unemployed	4.35%	6.18%	6.03%	3.76%
In Armed Forces	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Not in Labor Force	38.62%	45.87%	27.59%	38.57%
TOTAL Males	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Male in Labor Force	72.47%	66.67%	82.76%	72.38%
Male Civilian Labor Force	72.47%	66.67%	82.76%	72.38%
Male Civilian Employed	68.04%	57.77%	74.14%	69.17%
Male Civilian Unemployed	4.43%	8.90%	8.62%	3.21%
Male in Armed Forces	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Male Not in Labor Force	27.53%	33.33%	17.24%	27.62%
TOTAL Females	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Female in Labor Force	52.38%	44.55%	62.07%	53.42%
Female Civilian Labor Force	52.38%	44.55%	62.07%	53.42%
Female Civilian Employed	48.10%	40.44%	58.62%	49.26%
Female Civilian Unemployed	4.28%	4.10%	3.45%	4.16%
Female in Armed Forces	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Female Not in Labor Force	47.62%	55.45%	37.93%	46.58%



**Table ED-23 (Cont'd)**  
**Labor Force Participation (By Percentage)**  
**Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia**  
**1990 and 2000**

Category	2000			
	Toombs County	Lyons	Santa Claus	Vidalia
TOTAL Males and Females	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
In Labor Force	60.04%	50.76%	61.21%	60.81%
Civilian Labor Force	60.02%	50.76%	61.21%	60.76%
Civilian Employed	56.58%	47.71%	55.17%	57.12%
Civilian Unemployed	3.45%	3.06%	6.03%	3.64%
In Armed Forces	0.02%	0.00%	0.00%	0.05%
Not in Labor Force	39.96%	49.24%	38.79%	39.19%
TOTAL Males	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Male in Labor Force	71.04%	60.63%	64.00%	71.54%
Male Civilian Labor Force	70.99%	60.63%	64.00%	71.43%
Male Civilian Employed	67.20%	57.75%	58.00%	67.36%
Male Civilian Unemployed	3.79%	2.88%	6.00%	4.07%
Male in Armed Forces	0.04%	0.00%	0.00%	0.12%
Male Not in Labor Force	28.96%	39.37%	36.00%	28.46%
TOTAL Females	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Female in Labor Force	50.57%	42.53%	59.09%	52.63%
Female Civilian Labor Force	50.57%	42.53%	59.09%	52.63%
Female Civilian Employed	47.42%	39.32%	53.03%	49.32%
Female Civilian Unemployed	3.15%	3.21%	6.06%	3.31%
Female in Armed Forces	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Female Not in Labor Force	49.43%	57.47%	40.91%	47.37%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008.

**Table ED-24**  
**Georgia Labor Force Participation (By Percentage)**  
**1990 and 2000**

Category	1990	2000
TOTAL Males and Females	100.00%	100.00%
In Labor Force	67.89%	66.07%
Civilian Labor Force	66.41%	65.00%
Civilian Employed	62.60%	61.43%
Civilian Unemployed	3.80%	3.57%
In Armed Forces	1.48%	1.07%
Not in Labor Force	32.11%	33.93%
TOTAL Males	100.00%	100.00%
Male in Labor Force	76.65%	73.11%
Male Civilian Labor Force	73.87%	71.20%
Male Civilian Employed	70.07%	67.65%
Male Civilian Unemployed	3.80%	3.55%
Male in Armed Forces	2.78%	1.91%
Male Not in Labor Force	23.35%	26.89%
TOTAL Females	100.00%	100.00%
Female in Labor Force	59.88%	59.43%
Female Civilian Labor Force	59.59%	59.15%
Female Civilian Employed	55.78%	55.57%
Female Civilian Unemployed	3.81%	3.59%
Female in Armed Forces	0.29%	0.28%
Female Not in Labor Force	40.12%	40.57%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008.

**Table ED-25**  
**U.S. Labor Force Participation (By Percentage)**  
**1990 and 2000**

<b>Category</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
TOTAL Males and Females	100.00%	100.00%
In Labor Force	65.28%	63.92%
Civilian Labor Force	64.39%	63.39%
Civilian Employed	60.34%	59.73%
Civilian Unemployed	4.05%	3.66%
In Armed Forces	0.89%	0.53%
Not in Labor Force	34.72%	36.08%
TOTAL Males	100.00%	100.00%
Male in Labor Force	74.48%	70.75%
Male Civilian Labor Force	72.82%	69.81%
Male Civilian Employed	68.18%	65.81%
Male Civilian Unemployed	4.63%	3.99%
Male in Armed Forces	1.66%	0.94%
Male Not in Labor Force	25.52%	29.25%
TOTAL Females	100.00%	100.00%
Female in Labor Force	56.79%	57.54%
Female Civilian Labor Force	56.60%	57.39%
Female Civilian Employed	53.10%	54.04%
Female Civilian Unemployed	3.51%	3.35%
Female in Armed Forces	0.19%	0.15%
Female Not in Labor Force	43.21%	42.46%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008.

**Table ED-26**  
**Toombs County Labor Statistics**  
**1990-2007**

<b>Category</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
Labor Force	10,883	12,176	12,431	12,659	12,288	11,743
Employed	10,161	11,380	11,313	11,449	11,494	11,001
Unemployed	672	796	1,118	1,210	794	742
Unemployment Rate	6.2%	6.5%	9.0%	9.6%	6.5%	6.3%

<b>Category</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Labor Force	11,601	12,198	12,462	12,922	13,546	13,833
Employed	10,780	11,447	11,735	12,131	12,851	13,189
Unemployed	821	751	727	791	695	644
Unemployment Rate	7.1%	6.2%	5.8%	6.1%	5.1%	4.7%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, 2008.

**Table ED-27**  
**Unemployment Rates**  
**Toombs County, Surrounding Counties, Georgia, and the U.S.**  
**1990-2007**

	1990	1995	1998	1999	2000	2001
Toombs County	6.2%	6.5%	9.0%	9.6%	6.5%	6.3%
Appling County	11.5%	7.4%	10.2%	9.5%	5.3%	6.7%
Emanuel County	8.7%	10.5%	8.8%	10.1%	5.6%	5.9%
Jeff Davis County	6.1%	6.0%	7.9%	6.7%	4.5%	7.3%
Montgomery County	6.5%	7.3%	8.6%	9.5%	5.7%	6.5%
Tattnall County	4.6%	4.9%	5.3%	5.6%	5.7%	5.0%
Georgia	5.2%	4.8%	4.2%	3.8%	3.5%	4.0%
U.S.	5.6%	5.6%	4.5%	4.2%	4.0%	4.7%

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Toombs County	7.1%	6.2%	5.8%	6.1%	5.1%	4.7%
Appling County	7.5%	6.7%	6.2%	5.8%	5.4%	5.2%
Emanuel County	5.3%	5.1%	5.1%	5.5%	5.0%	5.2%
Jeff Davis County	8.0%	7.7%	7.0%	7.1%	7.1%	6.9%
Montgomery County	6.6%	5.7%	5.4%	5.7%	5.1%	4.6%
Tattnall County	5.2%	5.1%	5.3%	6.2%	5.2%	4.7%
Georgia	4.8%	4.8%	4.7%	5.2%	4.6%	4.4%
U.S.	5.8%	6.0%	5.5%	5.1%	4.6%	4.6%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, 2008.

**Table ED-28**  
**Georgia Labor Statistics**  
**1990-2007**

<b>Category</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
Labor Force	3,300,136	3,699,727	4,029,245	4,106,678	4,233,388	4,277,967
Employed	3,129,389	3,522,905	3,861,646	3,951,684	4,084,062	4,107,109
Unemployed	170,747	176,822	167,599	154,994	149,326	170,858
Unemployment Rate	5.2%	4.8%	4.2%	3.8%	3.5%	4.0%

<b>Category</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Labor Force	4,308,229	4,340,666	4,390,395	4,588,023	4,732,450	4,814,831
Employed	4,100,119	4,134,525	4,188,271	4,346,289	4,516,169	4,602,947
Unemployed	208,110	206,141	202,124	241,734	216,281	211,884
Unemployment Rate	4.8%	4.7%	4.6%	5.3%	4.6%	4.4%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, 2008.

**Table ED-29**  
**U.S. Labor Statistics**  
**1990-2007**

<b>Category</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
Labor Force (thousands)	125,840	132,304	137,763	139,368	142,583	143,734
Employed (thousands)	118,793	124,900	131,463	133,488	136,891	136,933
Unemployed (thousands)	7,047	7,404	6,210	5,880	5,692	6,801
Unemployment Rate	5.6%	5.6%	4.5%	4.2%	4.0%	4.7%

<b>Category</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Labor Force (thousands)	144,863	146,510	147,401	149,320	151,428	153,124
Employed (thousands)	136,485	137,736	139,252	141,730	144,427	146,047
Unemployed (thousands)	8,378	8,774	8,149	7,591	7,001	7,078
Unemployment Rate	5.8%	6.0%	5.5%	5.1%	4.6%	4.6%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008.

**Table ED-30**  
**Place of Residence of Workforce by County**  
**Toombs County**  
**1990 and 2000**

	<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>
Toombs County	7,603	Toombs County	8,081
Appling County	845	Tattnall County	604
Tattnall County	311	Appling County	491
Montgomery County	252	Montgomery County	347
Chatham County	120	Emanuel County	146
Emanuel County	97	Laurens County	117
Elsewhere	615	Elsewhere	1,037
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,843</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>10,823</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008.

**Table ED-31**  
**Place of Work of County Residents**  
**Toombs County**  
**1990 and 2000**

	<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>
Toombs County	7,603	Toombs County	8,081
Montgomery County	1,289	Montgomery County	1,423
Tattnall County	399	Tattnall County	487
Treutlen County	349	Emanuel County	337
Emanuel County	228	Treutlen County	326
Wheeler County	73	Wheeler County	196
Elsewhere	475	Elsewhere	780
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,416</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>11,630</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008.

**Table ED-32**  
**Toombs County Commuting Patterns**  
**1990 and 2000**

	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
Employed Residents of County		
Worked in County	73.0	69.5
Commuted in Region	24.6	27.6
Commuted to Elsewhere	2.4	3.0
Persons Working in County		
Lived in County	77.2	74.7
Commuted from Region	18.4	19.5
Commuted from Elsewhere	4.6	6.2
Employed Residents as Percentage of County Workers	105.8	107.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008.



# NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

## Introduction

Toombs County's abundance of natural and cultural resources contributes to its rural character and excellent quality of life. Scenic pastoral landscapes and forests abound, while the Altamaha River flows to the south forming the county's southern boundary, and the Ochopee River forms its northeastern border. Visual reminders of Toombs County's agrarian, railroad, and naval stores heritage and its continued dependence on agriculture and its natural resources are evident in the unincorporated areas, including crossroads communities, as well as in its three cities. These include historic farmhouses; schools; churches; downtown commercial buildings; a depot; and others. Evidence of earlier settlements and the presence of prehistoric cultures also remain at known archaeological sites throughout Toombs County.

There is strong interest in protecting Toombs County's fragile natural resources and significant cultural properties, as well as its rural character, while balancing the desire for economic development and growth. It is recognized that this sometimes difficult task can be achieved through careful planning, which can actually complement natural and cultural resources and help conserve them, when guidelines are created within which sensitive resource development and utilization can occur and is encouraged.

## Natural Setting

Toombs County is located within the Southern Coastal Plain Major Land Resource Area about 100 miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean. The county seat of Lyons is located approximately 75 miles west of Savannah and 90 miles south of Augusta. The county has a total area of approximately 236,160 acres or 369 square miles and is the 70<sup>th</sup> county in Georgia in terms of size. It is bordered by the Ochopee River and Tattnall County on the east; Candler County to the northeast; Emanuel County to the north; Treutlen County on the northwest;

Montgomery County to the west; the Altamaha River and Appling and Jeff Davis counties to the south.

Toombs County is considered subtropical, having warm, humid summers with relatively mild winters. The average annual temperature is about 66 degrees. The frost-free period extends from about March 20 to November 14, providing a growing season of approximately 240 days. Toombs County receives an average annual rainfall of about 46 inches.

## **Environmental Planning Criteria**

### **WATER SUPPLY WATERSHEDS**

These natural resources are not applicable to Toombs County.

### **WETLANDS**

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) defines freshwater wetlands as “those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.” Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas. The highest concentrations of wetlands in Toombs County are near the Altamaha and Ochopee rivers; Pendleton Creek Corridor; Tiger Creek Corridor; Swift Creek Corridor; Rocky Creek Corridor; and other major creeks, although they are found throughout the county. See the National Wetlands Inventory map of Toombs County, Map NCR-1. This map shows over 13 percent of county acreage as wetlands. Based on general soil associations, approximately 22 percent of the county hosts hydric soils, which underlie wetlands by definition. As of April, 2006, there were no acres in Toombs County in the Wetlands Reserve Program.

Wetlands are important for a number of reasons, including their environmental, wildlife, recreational and aesthetic values. They play key roles in natural water filtration, flood control, water table maintenance, and local climate moderation. Wetlands provide habitat for fish and wildlife and are keys to basic food chain productivity both on land and in estuaries. They also offer diverse recreation opportunities, including hunting, fishing, hiking, nature observation, and boating. Toombs County's wetlands are home to many species of flora and fauna, including rare plants and animals, such as the yellow flytrap and Altamaha spiny mussel. There are a number of known archaeological sites near or within the Altamaha River and Rocky Creek, as well as likely additional sites, which have not yet been identified, located within or adjacent to the county's wetlands.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulates activities in wetlands at the federal level under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Neither Toombs County nor the cities of Lyons, Santa Claus, or Vidalia have adopted the "Environmental Conservation, On-Site Sewage Management, and Permit Ordinance," which provides protection for wetlands as required by DNR's Part 5 Environmental Standards. The County and cities plan to do so in the near future.

### **GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AREAS**

Groundwater recharge is a natural process whereby water infiltrates the ground to replenish an aquifer, which is an area of rock below the earth's surface capable of storing and producing water. Recharge of Coastal Plain aquifers occurs at specific locations where the aquifer outcrops. Toombs County's significant groundwater recharge areas are located primarily along sand ridges adjacent to Pendleton and Tiger creeks and the Ochopee River in the north and northeastern part of the county, including within the city of Lyons. All recharge the Miocene-Pliocene-Recent Unconfined Aquifer, and are of average/medium pollution susceptibility. See Map NCR-2 for approximate locations.

Groundwater recharge areas need protection to avoid toxic and hazardous waste contamination of drinking water supplies. The previously referenced "Environmental Conservation, On-Site Sewage Management, and Permit Ordinance" also addresses protection

for significant groundwater recharge areas as required by DNR's Part 5 Environmental Standards under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. Toombs County and its cities plan to adopt the ordinance in the near future.

### **PROTECTED RIVER CORRIDORS**

Toombs County has two Protected River Corridors, the Altamaha and Ochopee rivers, which are protected under the 1991 River Corridor Protection Act. Any perennial river or water course with an average minimum flow of 400 cubic feet per second requires protection under this Act. The Altamaha River originates at the confluence of the Oconee and Ocmulgee rivers near Lumber City in Telfair County and winds its way some 137 miles toward the Georgia coast, emptying into the Atlantic Ocean near Darien. Estimated to be more than 20 million years old, the Altamaha River remains the largest free flowing river on the East Coast of the United States. It is Georgia's largest river-swamp system (60,000 acres) and is of major importance in maintaining the ecological balance of the state's estuarine coast. The Nature Conservancy designated the Altamaha as 1 of 75 "Last Great Places" remaining worldwide in 1991 and selected it as its first bioserve in Georgia. Public access to the Altamaha River is available in Toombs County via Gray's, McNatt Falls, and U.S. 1 Bridge landings. The Ochopee River originates from Tennille in Washington County and flows through Johnson, Treutlen, Emanuel, and Toombs counties before emptying into the Altamaha River in Tattnall County. It forms the northeastern boundary of Toombs County. There are no public landings on the Ochopee River in Toombs County.

The River Corridor Protection Act provides for the maintenance of a natural vegetative buffer of 100 feet on each side of the Altamaha and Ochopee rivers and strict regulations of uses infringing upon the required buffers. Map NCR-3 gives the general location of the Altamaha and Ochopee rivers corridors; however, the 100 foot protected buffers are too narrow to appear on a map of this scale. These corridors are of vital importance to Toombs County and Georgia in that they help preserve those qualities that make a river suitable as a habitat for wildlife, for recreation, and as a source of clear drinking water. They also allow the free movement of wildlife from one area to another, help control erosion and river sedimentation, and assist in

absorbing flood waters. The Altamaha and Ochoopee rivers are significant in terms of history as important transportation arteries for Indians and early settlers to the region and movement of goods and timber products. A number of archaeological sites along the Altamaha in Toombs County have been recorded in the State Archaeological Site File at the University of Georgia, and there are likely additional sites within or near both river corridors which have yet to be discovered.

Toombs County actively participates in the Altamaha River Partnership (ARP), a regional group formed to foster economic development by promoting sustainable nature-based tourism along the Altamaha River Basin. ARP has encouraged improved infrastructure along the river through local government pursuit of available grants, and has helped promote the river through development of a brochure/map, signage, rack cards, and a website, as well as encouraging local and regional special events. Toombs County has not yet adopted the Environmental Conservation or other ordinance to enforce its provisions, which would provide for protection of the Altamaha and Ochoopee River corridors as required by DNR's Part 5 Environmental Standards. The County plans to do so in the near future.

### **PROTECTED MOUNTAINS**

These natural resources are not found in Toombs County.

## **Other Environmentally Sensitive Areas**

### **PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY SOURCES**

Groundwater is the major source of drinking water in Toombs County and its municipalities. In 2000, an average of 14.05 million gallons per day of water was used county-wide, including 6.97 million gallons of groundwater and 7.08 million gallons of surface water. Agricultural irrigation required 10.84 million gallons per day. The Upper Floridan Aquifer System supplies most of the water used in Toombs County. Said to possibly be the largest aquifer in the world (it covers one-third of Georgia, most of Florida, and parts of Alabama and

South Carolina), the Floridan Aquifer also provides approximately 50 percent of Georgia's groundwater. Adoption and enforcement of the Environmental Conservation ordinance by Toombs County will help prevent groundwater contamination (primarily shallow) because once an aquifer is polluted, it is nearly impossible to clean.

Toombs County was one of 24 counties in southeast Georgia required by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) under the *Interim Strategy for Managing Salt Water Intrusion in the Upper Floridan Aquifer of Southeast Georgia* to prepare a comprehensive water supply plan. BE&K/Terranext, LLC completed Toombs County's plan in 2000. According to the plan under normal growth conditions, the cities of Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia, each of which have Floridan wells, are expected to have sufficient water supply until at least 2050. However, location of a major new industry in any of these communities would likely result in the need for additional water. Toombs County's Water Supply Plan outlined a proposed management plan consisting of the following: a domestic/commercial conservation program; research funding to implement Metering and Leak Detection and Agricultural Conservation Programs; and implementation of an industrial conservation program for new industries seeking to locate in Toombs County. EPD's moratorium on new public, industrial, or agricultural Upper Floridan wells in Toombs County was lifted based on subsequent Sound Science Study results.

Water quality is already a concern in Toombs County because of the presence of polluted waters on the state's 303(d) list of impaired waters. EPD officially identified seven creeks in Toombs County as "impaired waters" for exceeding the maximum amount of one or more pollutants that a body of water can contain and still be deemed safe (TMDLs). They are Pendleton, Cobb, Milligan, Oconee, Rocky, Swift, and Tiger creeks. At the time of testing between 1998 and 2002, all of the creeks contained excessive fecal coliform and less than desired levels of dissolved oxygen, except for Cobb Creek, which was cited only for dissolved oxygen. Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Plans have been completed for all but two of Toombs County's currently listed impaired waters (Cobb and Oconee creeks). Common observations made in these plans include the need for better data at each monitoring station and more stations for additional sampling. There is some question of contamination cause, because of limited violation. The problem may be naturally occurring, especially during drought conditions.

The culprits, if any, are likely non-point source pollutants, such as urban runoff, animal carcasses or wildlife. The plans, in any event, generally recommend use of Best Management Practices and additional education to improve water quality and prevent further regulations from being imposed at the local, state, or federal level. Implementation of these TMDL Plans by EPD, the local governments, and property owners along the impaired waters should help improve water quality.

### **STEEP SLOPES**

Toombs County has a very few steep slopes scattered throughout the county, but attention to other natural resources such as recharge areas, wetlands, flood hazards, or sensitive soils will address these isolated slopes.

### **COASTAL RESOURCES**

These natural resources are not applicable to Toombs County.

### **FLOOD PLAINS**

Flood plains are defined as areas subject to flooding based on the 100-year (base) flood. They are an important water resource area when left in their natural or relatively undisturbed state. They help control the rate of water flow and provide an area for temporary storage of floodwaters. Vegetative flood plains enhance water quality by collecting sediment which would otherwise contribute to damaging water temperature rises, increased pollution, and reduced levels of dissolved oxygen needed for desirable aquatic species. Natural flood plains also assist groundwater recharge through local ponding and flood detention, thus slowing runoff and allowing additional time for infiltration of groundwater aquifers. Toombs County's flood plains and flood zones are found along the Ochoopee and Altamaha rivers, Pendleton Creek, and other large branches and creeks county-wide. See Map NCR-4 for the approximate location of the county's flood zones.

The Altamaha River flood plain forest, part of which is located in Toombs County, is Georgia's largest riparian corridor. It stretches for 89 miles and ranges from one-half to six miles wide, encompassing an estimated 170,000 acres of contiguous bottomland and swamp forests. Overall high quality, relatively undisturbed flood plain forests occur along the Altamaha, with 14 different community types identified within the alluvial flood plain alone. The Nature Conservancy, through its Altamaha Flood Plain Initiative, promotes conservation through partnerships with property owners and educational outreach.

Toombs County and the cities of Lyons and Vidalia participate in the National Flood Insurance Program, while the City of Santa Claus does not. FEMA is currently mapping the entire state of Georgia in digital format. Toombs County and the surrounding region should be finalized in 2009 or 2010.

### SOIL TYPES

Toombs County has six basic soil associations. They are:

1. Osier-Bibb-Coxville Association: Very poorly to poorly drained. Severe development limitations. Primarily wooded, provides wetlands wildlife with management. Found along flood plains of large branches, creeks, and Altamaha and Ochoopee rivers. Comprises nearly 19 percent of county's land area.
2. Pelham-Ardilla-Ocilla Association: Poorly to somewhat poorly drained. Severe to moderate limitations for development. Primarily used for pine trees, high water level. Located mostly in northern/northeastern and southern parts of Toombs County adjacent to flood plains. Comprises almost 4 percent of county's land area.
3. Tifton-Fuquay-Pelham Association: Well and poorly drained. Moderate to slight limitations to development, except for sloping soils and wet areas. Mostly cropland, some of best farming soil. In large areas scattered throughout county. Comprises over 36 percent of county's land area.



4. Cowarts-Lakeland-Wagram Association: Well and excessively drained. Only slight to moderate limitations to development, except for erosion on sloping soils and wetness along branches/creeks. Majority used for trees, some cultivated crops, and pastures. Found adjacent to Pendleton, Tiger, and Buckhorn creeks on narrow, gently sloping ridge tops. Comprises over 2 percent of county's land area.
5. Lakeland-Kershaw-Troup Association: Excessively to well drained. Found mostly on broad ridges adjacent to flood plains on east side of Pendleton, Rocky, and Cobb creeks. Slight to moderate limitations for land development. Coincides closely with significant groundwater recharge areas. Mostly used for pine trees. Comprises over 2 percent of county's land area.
6. Cowarts-Lakeland-Pelham Association: Excessively to poorly drained. Slight to moderate development limitations. Primary uses include crop cultivation, pasture, and woodland. In large areas scattered throughout county. Comprises nearly 36.5 percent of county's land area.

Areas of Toombs County where the Pelham-Ardilla-Ocilla and Osier-Bibb-Coxville (severe) soil associations are found have development limitations based on their soil composition, due primarily to wetness (hydric or saturated soils). Together these two associations comprise nearly 22.5 percent of the county's area. See Map NCR-5. Soil erosion exists in Toombs County, but is not a severe problem. EPD issues Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control (land disturbance) permits for Lyons and Santa Claus, while Toombs County and Vidalia issue their own.

## PLANT AND ANIMAL HABITATS

DNR's list of Special Concern Animals, Plants, and Natural Communities for Toombs County lists seven animals and 11 plants as of May, 2008, including two animals with federal status (Protected, Candidate or Partial Status) indicated by (US). They are listed below. Georgia protected species are followed by (GA).

<b>Animals</b>	<b>Plants</b>
<i>Alasmidonta arcuata</i> Altamaha Arcmussel	<i>Balduina atropurpurea</i> Purple Honeycomb Head (GA)
<i>Cordulegaster sayi</i> Say's Spiketail (GA)	<i>Ceratiola ericoides</i> Sandhill Rosemary (GA)
<i>Drymarchon couperi</i> Eastern Indigo Snake (US)	<i>Matelea pubiflora</i> Trailing Milkvine (GA)
<i>Elliptio spinosa</i> Altamaha Spiny mussel (US)	<i>Oxypolis ternata</i> Savanna Cowbane
<i>Gopherus polyphemus</i> Gopher Tortoise (GA)	<i>Penstemon dissectus</i> Cutleaf Beardtongue (GA)
<i>Pituophis melano leucus mugitus</i> Florida Pine Snake	<i>Quercus austrina</i> Bluff White Oak
<i>Pyganodon gibbosa</i> Inflated Floater	<i>Sarracenia flava</i> Yellow Flytrap (GA)
	<i>Sarracenia minor</i> Hooded Pitcherplant (GA)
	<i>Sarracenia psittacina</i> Parrot Pitcherplant (GA)
	<i>Sideroxylon macrocarpum</i> Ohoopée Bumelia (GA)
	<i>Sporobolus teretifolius</i> Wire-leaf Dropseed

Source: Wildlife Resources Division, Georgia DNR, May 27, 2008.

At least 125 species of rare or endangered plants and animals exist along the Altamaha River, some of which are found in Toombs County. These were identified during The Nature Conservancy's two-year inventory of the Altamaha River Bioreserve. The Nature Conservancy and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources completed a conservation plan to protect the entire Altamaha River Bioreserve/Lower Altamaha River Watershed in 1997.

There were no "natural communities" noted in DNR's updated list for Toombs County; however, areas likely to include sensitive plant/animal habitat, in addition to the Altamaha River

flood plain, are the Ochoopee River flood plain, various creeks and their flood plains, and wetlands as well as uplands areas. Some protection would be afforded the county's sensitive plant and animal habitats through passage of the Environmental ordinance covering wetlands and the Altamaha and Ochoopee Protected River Corridors.

## **Significant Natural Resources**

### **SCENIC AREAS**

Scenic areas located within Toombs County are most associated with natural resources. The Altamaha and Ochoopee rivers and their corridors are the focal point for numerous picturesque views. The high bluffs and white sandbars on both rivers provide ideal locations for camping, fishing, or picnicking. Others regard the county's numerous creeks, pastoral agrarian landscapes, and forests as scenic.

### **PRIME AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST LAND**

Agriculture (25.6 percent) and forestry (51.3 percent) are Toombs County's primary land uses, with about 77 percent of the county's land area used for these purposes. According to the existing land use map prepared in conjunction with preparation of this plan, approximately 181,280 acres of Toombs County are in agricultural or forest land use. See Map LU-1. Prime farmland (Class I) comprises approximately 85,600 acres or about 36 percent of the county's land area and consists of Tifton, Fuquay, Dothan, Carnegie, Cowarts, and other loamy soils. See Map NCR-6. As of April, 2006, 3,479 acres of Toombs County farmland had been converted to timberland under the Conservation Reserve Program.

Since about 1950, the number of farms nationwide has declined significantly. This is true of Toombs County as well. The county had 382 farms in 2002, a decrease of 22 percent from 1997. The total acreage of farms county-wide decreased substantially from 106,709 acres in

1997 to 92,934 in 2002 (12.9 percent decrease). About 40 percent of the county's total land area was in farms in 2002. The average farm in Toombs County has decreased only slightly in size from 249 acres in 1997 to 243 acres in 2002. This is still more than the average of 218 acres statewide. Acres of harvested cropland decreased considerably from 29,091 acres in 1997 to 25,362 acres in 2002 (12.8 percent decrease). Irrigated land increased significantly from 13,540 acres in 2000 to 16,734 acres in 2004.

Toombs County's estimated value of agriculture production in 2007 was \$92,700,136 (ranked 37<sup>th</sup> in state). The rank by Commodity Group in 2007 was as follows from highest to lowest: Vegetables; Forestry and Related Products; Row/Forage Crops; Ornamental Horticulture; Poultry/Egg; Livestock/Aquaculture; Other (includes hunting leases); and Fruit and Nuts. The county ranks sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) in Georgia for vegetable production, second (2<sup>nd</sup>) for onions, fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) for greens, fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) for sweet corn, eighth (8<sup>th</sup>) for cabbage, and tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) for squash. Toombs County's principal Row/Forage Crops in 2007 were cotton, corn, soybeans, hay, peanuts, silage, wheat, rye, and oats. Under Ornamental Horticulture, the county ranked 14<sup>th</sup> in the state for field nursery stock. In terms of poultry production, there were six (6) broiler houses and eight (8) hatching layer houses in Toombs County in 2007. Livestock production in 2007 included 4,280 beef cattle; 550 hogs (farrow to finish ninth (9<sup>th</sup>) in state), as well as horses, quail, and catfish.

Toombs County ranks 28<sup>th</sup> in Georgia for timber production. The 2007 Farm Gate value was \$6,150,199. Most of Toombs' timber land is in private/individual ownership. In 2007, the county ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> in Georgia for total forestry and related products valued at \$7,393,949 and 16<sup>th</sup> for pine straw.

### **MAJOR PARK, RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AREAS**

Toombs County has no federal or state recreation areas or wildlife management areas; however, there are public landings on the Altamaha River at Gray's Landing, McNatt Falls, and the U.S. 1 Bridge. There are also local and regional parks, such as Partin Park (Lyons) and Vidalia's new Regional Park on Ezra Taylor Road, which is currently under development. There

are future plans for a regional reservoir near Pendleton Creek in Toombs, Montgomery, Treutlen, and/or Emanuel counties.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

Toombs County was created in 1905 from portions of Emanuel, Montgomery, and Tattnall counties. Georgia's 142<sup>nd</sup> county was named for General Robert Toombs, a U.S. Congressman and Senator from Georgia who fought for the Confederacy after resigning as Confederate Secretary of State.

The earliest settlers in present-day Toombs County were primarily farmers and stockmen of Scotch Highland descent. Many had migrated to South Georgia from the mountains of North Carolina after the American Revolution. The great pine forests of southeast Georgia attracted large numbers of timber and naval stores men from the Carolinas during the middle 1800s. These people operated sawmills and turpentine stills throughout this section of the state, and were major contributors to the local economy for many decades. The completion of the railroad through what is now Toombs County in 1890 brought yet another wave of settlers, this group consisting primarily of businessmen and farmers, many of whom came from Johnson, Washington, and Emanuel counties.

As was common across the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century, railroads played a vital role in the development of Toombs County. Many towns such as Vidalia and Lyons were established, at least in part, due to their strategic location along a railroad. Vidalia and Lyons were created as railroad stations on the Savannah, Americus, and Montgomery Railroad in 1890, when the construction of the railroad was nearing completion. Colonel Sam Hawkins, president of the railroad, named the two stations, as was customary. The origin of the name "Vidalia" is still a mystery. For many years it was thought that the town was named for the railroad president's daughter, but subsequent research does not support that theory since Colonel Hawkins apparently did not have a daughter named Vidalia. A more likely story is that the town was named by Colonel Hawkins' daughter. The name "Lyons" was more in keeping with Colonel Hawkins'

policy of giving European names to the towns along his railroad; thus, Lyons joined the towns of Rhine, Abbeville, Rochelle, Seville, and Milan along the S.A. & M. Railroad.

Vidalia was incorporated in early 1893. By 1902, Vidalia was a railroad center, served by the Seaboard Air Line Railroad (successor to the S.A. & M.) and the Macon, Dublin, and Savannah Railroad; and a few years later it became a junction point for the Georgia and Florida Railroad and the Millen and Southwestern. The availability of railway transportation undoubtedly aided in attracting new businesses to the city and, therefore, contributed to the area's overall prosperity. Vidalia was recognized in 1910 as one of the fastest growing communities in Georgia.

Located only five miles from Vidalia, Lyons was the terminus of the Savannah, Americus, and Montgomery Railroad, and the Savannah and Western Railroad in 1890. The city was incorporated in 1897. Its early development was also greatly influenced by the railroads. Being so close together, the two towns developed a rivalry from the start. The rivalry probably reached its peak in 1905 when Toombs County was formed, and a county seat had to be selected. Lyons was selected because of its central location, and the fact that its citizens had raised a large sum of money to build a courthouse.

The small City of Santa Claus, which lies about one mile south of Lyons on U.S. 1, is the only other remaining incorporated municipality in the county. Santa Claus was granted a charter on March 27, 1941, and comprised an area planned for residential development. Among the reasons for incorporation were to qualify for Farmers Home Administration loan funds for the construction of a water and sewer system and to capitalize on U.S. 1 tourist traffic. The city's Christmas theme is illustrated through its street names, including Rudolph Way, Reindeer Street, and Candy Cane Road. The population of Santa Claus was five in 1960, 118 in 1970, 167 in 1980, 154 in 1990, and 237 in 2000.

Three other incorporated municipalities in Toombs County, Ohoopee, Normantown, and Charles, have become inactive through the years. In addition, there were numerous unincorporated settlements, scattered throughout the county. Many of these communities sprang up around churches, schools, crossroads, sawmills, or turpentine stills. Most of them, like Appleton and

Stacer, have disappeared without a trace. Others, like Johnson Corner, Cedar Crossing, New Branch, and Center, have survived, and still support groups of families.

Local volunteers, under the supervision of the Altamaha Georgia Southern APDC historic preservation planner, conducted a historic structures survey from 1981-82 to identify and record all existing historic properties located in Lyons, Santa Claus, Vidalia, and throughout Toombs County. As a result of the survey, which inventoried all structures that appeared to be at least 50 years old, approximately 695 properties were recorded county-wide and their locations marked on a map. No historic resources were noted in the City of Santa Claus, probably largely due to the community's relatively recent development (at the time of the survey). The majority of the structures recorded date from the late 19th and early 20th centuries and are of wood frame and some log construction, except for commercial/public buildings which were built primarily of brick. Late Victorian farmhouses and cottages, Craftsman bungalows, and other vernacular interpretations of nationally popular styles/forms predominate.

The 1982 Toombs County Historic Resources Survey provides a good representation of the county's architecture, but given its age and the methodology used in selecting properties to record, it is no longer considered comprehensive or up to date. In the last 25 years, a number of additional properties have become historic, while others listed no longer exist. At best, it does have value for general reference until such time as local interest and funds are available to help sponsor a new survey. Matching funds are currently available through the Historic Preservation Division of Georgia DNR to assist with a limited number of surveys each year.

Toombs County currently has nine listings in the National Register of Historic Places, the federal government's listing of historic properties worthy of preservation. They are: the Vidalia Commercial Historic District; the Brazell House (now the Altama Museum of Art and History in Vidalia); Citizens Bank of Vidalia; Garbutt House (Lyons); Leader-Rosansky House (Vidalia); Lyons Womans Club House; McLemore-Sharpe Farmstead (near Vidalia); Peterson-Wilbanks House (Vidalia); and the Jim Smith House (near Lyons). Some documentation has been compiled in recent years to nominate Downtown Lyons to the National Register. To determine National Register eligibility a property is thoroughly documented, and its value or significance is assessed along with its level of significance (local, state, national) and integrity (survival of

historic physical characteristics). Each National Register property generally must be a minimum of 50 years old. It is expected that a number of individual properties/sites and potential historic districts located throughout unincorporated Toombs County and its municipalities may be eligible for the National Register. These include potential historic districts encompassing the residential area south of downtown Vidalia and the previously mentioned Downtown Lyons commercial area.

Less is known concerning archaeological resources in Toombs County, although at least 41 sites have been recorded to date in the State Archaeological Site File at the University of Georgia. See Map NCR-7 for the general locations. Specific sites are not mapped to protect them from vandalism. The earliest known human inhabitants of present-day Toombs County came to the area approximately 11,500 years ago, toward the end of the last Ice Age. Archaeological sites in Toombs County, therefore, range from pre-historic sites where hunters manufactured stone tools to historic Indian and settler sites to small late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century farmsteads, naval stores operations, and the like. The largest concentration of recorded sites is near the Altamaha River and its tributaries in the south part of the county. There are also large areas along U.S. 1, primarily south of Lyons, with documented sites. Further research is expected to yield additional Indian sites and the remains of historic communities, farms, sawmills, and turpentine operations.

Some community landmarks have been identified by the Toombs County Local Plan Coordination Committee which, although they may or may not be National Register eligible or even historic, are considered locally important. It is known that the list is far from exhaustive, and no significance should be presumed because a property is not listed. Those properties which appear eligible for National Register listing are indicated; however, there are likely additional eligible properties about which a determination cannot be made without further study. All of the following are located in unincorporated areas of Toombs County unless otherwise noted. No historic landmark properties were identified in Santa Claus.



1. Residential Resources

Jackson-Durden Streets Area Historic District, Vidalia (National Register eligible)

Alice Baker-Benton House

Jim Smith House (National Register-listed)

Charles McCall Home, Lyons

Lankford House, Lyons (National Register eligible)

Mann Home

Robert Clark House

Garbutt House (Twenty Columns), Lyons (National Register-listed)

Holloway-Dunagin House, Lyons

Nunry House (Sir Richard's Barbershop), Lyons

Patrick House, Lyons

Lori Wilkes-Oren Olive House, Lyons

Cooper Funeral Home (McBride House, Stewart Hall Funeral Home), Lyons

Robert Garbutt House, Lyons

Annie Laura Hussey-Hagin House, Lyons

Old Randall House (Olive Property), Lyons

Inman House, Lyons

Smith House, Lyons

Mama Smith House (W.P.C. Smith), Lyons

Grace Thompson Home, Lyons

Dr. Akin Home, Lyons

Leader and Rosanky House, Vidalia (National Register-listed)

Peterson-Wilbanks House, Vidalia (National Register-listed)

Altama Museum of Art and History (Crawford W. Brazell House), Vidalia (National Register-listed)

2. Commercial Resources

Vidalia Commercial Historic District (National Register-listed)  
Downtown Lyons Commercial Historic District (National Register eligible)  
Robert Toombs Inn (former Elberta Hotel)  
M&M Pawn Shop, Lyons  
Brown Trading Company, Lyons  
Toombs County Stockyard, Lyons  
Pal Theater, Lyons  
Aiken-McArthur Clinic, Lyons  
Citizens Bank Building (National Register-listed), Vidalia  
Rigdon Printing Warehouse, Vidalia  
First National Bank Building, Vidalia  
Coca Cola Building, Vidalia  
Darby Bank Building, Vidalia  
Panache Building, Vidalia  
Jackson Hotel Building, Vidalia

3. Industrial Resources

None noted.

4. Institutional Resources

Lyons Garden Club (National Register-listed)  
Parker's School  
Methodist Church, Lyons  
First Baptist Church, Vidalia  
Old English Eddy Church (school?)  
English Eddy Church

Old Methodist Campgrounds  
Marvin Church  
Old Laff Post Office  
Paul Anderson Youth Home  
Hardin Chapel  
Lyons Post Office  
Old Lyons Gym  
Vidalia City Hall  
Vidalia Woman's Club  
Old Vidalia City Hall  
Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery, Vidalia

5. Transportation Resources

Lyons Depot (National Register eligible)

6. Rural Resources

All historic resources listed in unincorporated Toombs County should be considered rural resources. See Toombs County Cultural Resources Map Legend for list of 16 rural resources.

McLemore-Sharpe Farmstead (National Register-listed)

7. Other Historic, Archaeological, and Cultural Sites

Partin Old Pond  
East Park Cemetery, Vidalia  
Pine Crest Cemetery, Vidalia  
Mose Coleman Home Site, Vidalia  
Baptist Pastorium and Church Site, Lyons

Old Alexander Swim Hole

Johnson Hill Campsite

Americana Furniture Store and News Office Site (New Lyons Hotel), Lyons

Lyons Cemetery

Charles, Georgia, Vidalia

Crone Cemetery, Vidalia

Sites on File at the University of Georgia

The 41 sites on file at the University of Georgia consist of prehistoric Indian sites and historic Indian and settler sites from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The approximate locations of the above cited resources, with the exception of archaeological resources, are shown on Maps NCR-8 through 10. As previously referenced, the archaeological sites on file at the University of Georgia are generally shown on Map NCR-7. To aid in their protection, their specific site locations are available upon request only to authorized individuals.

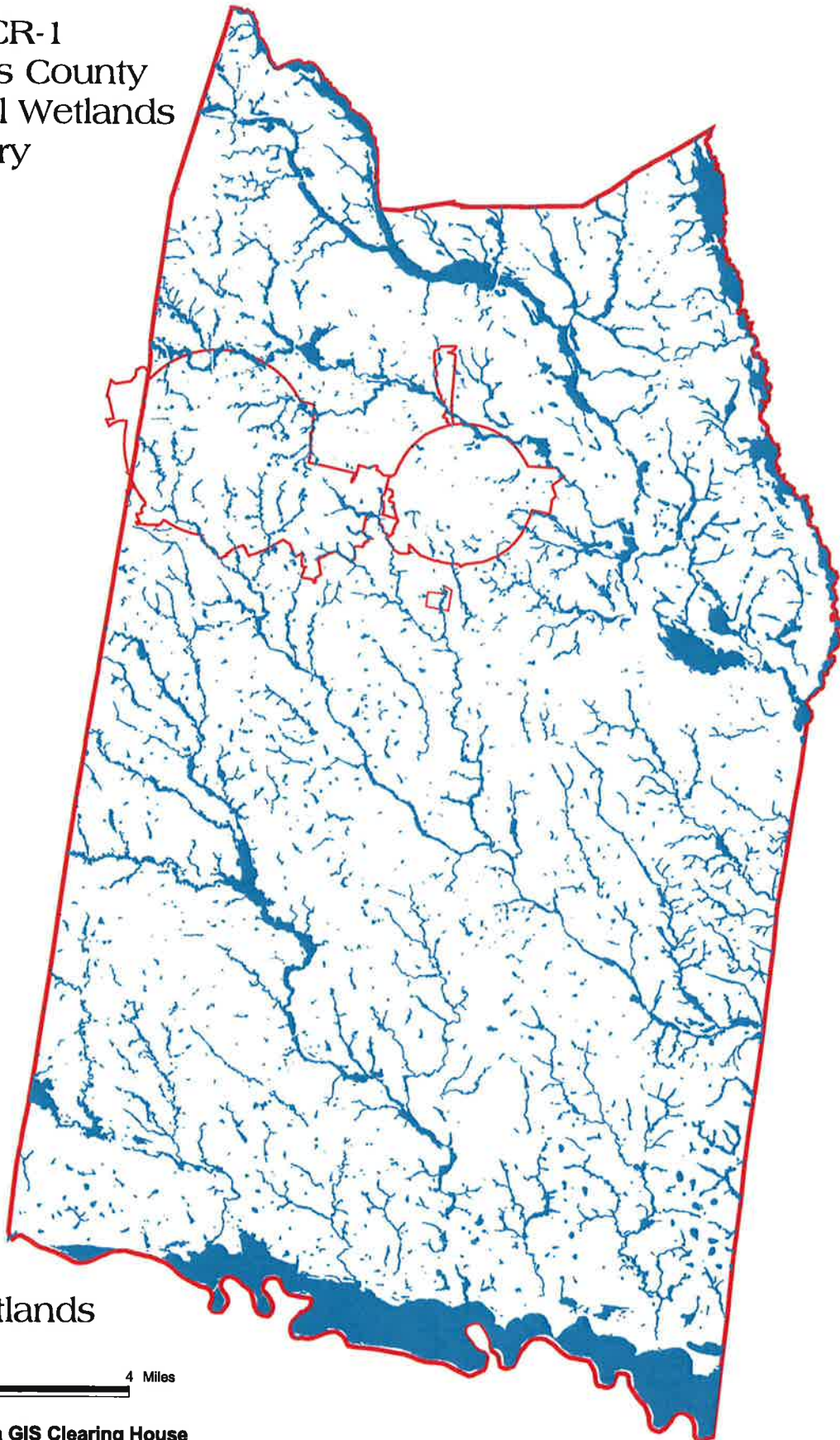
Historic preservation-related activity has increased overall in Toombs County and its cities in recent years, with efforts ranging from individual and community rehabilitation projects, such as the Lyons Depot, to downtown revitalization efforts in Lyons and Vidalia. Efforts have been underway for a number of years to improve the appearance of and generally revitalize downtown Lyons and Vidalia. Both cities have received Department of Transportation Enhancement Funds for streetscape improvements. The City of Vidalia has been a Georgia Main Street city since 1989. Much of its downtown commercial core was listed in the National Register in 1996. The Vidalia City Hall is located in the historic WPA era post office in the National Register historic district. The City successfully rehabilitated the building for continued municipal use, including enlarging it with a compatibly designed rear addition. There have been several certified rehabilitations of historic commercial structures and residences which qualified for the historic preservation tax incentives. Lyons participates in Georgia's Better Hometown Program, a downtown revitalization program designed for smaller communities. In recent years, its manager and others have worked to compile documentation to nominate downtown Lyons to the National Register. Privately funded rehabilitations of historic commercial structures in downtown Lyons have also been completed. The City owns the historic Lyons Depot, which

was successfully rehabilitated in phases for multi-purpose community use using various grants and private funding. The depot project was recognized statewide with a Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation award for its outstanding rehabilitation. The Lyons Garden Club continues to work to maintain its National Register-listed club house through local government, grant, and private financial assistance. Local heritage tourism related efforts are supported by the City of Lyons Better Hometown's leadership in producing the annual local history play, *Tales From the Altamaha*.

## **Summary Needs Assessment**

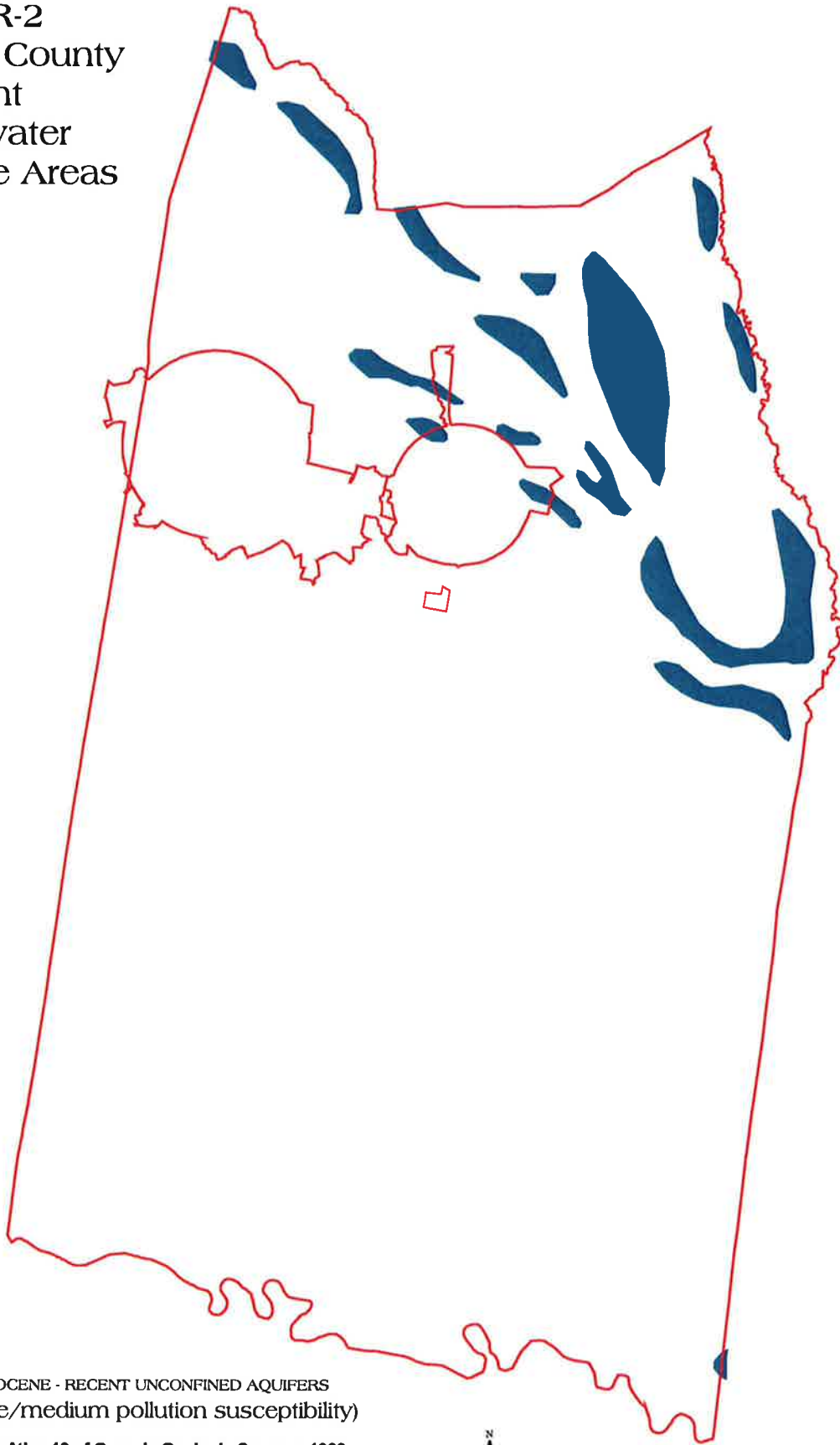
Protection of Toombs County's natural and cultural resources and the county's rural character is paramount to maintaining the community's overall quality of life now and in the future. This can best be achieved through controlled and planned growth and land use regulation designed to conserve these significant resources and encourage their sensitive development, as appropriate. The Altamaha and Ochopee rivers, and the county's forests and parks are among the natural resources which need to be utilized and promoted for public recreation, such as fishing, wildlife management, and/or other compatible economic development and tourism uses. The proposed regional reservoir would also contribute to enhancing nature-based tourism in and near Toombs County. Preservation of historic community landmarks, continued revitalization of downtown Lyons and Vidalia, and ongoing support for the *Tales From the Altamaha* production are also needed and desired. Conservation and preservation of Toombs County's significant natural and cultural resources truly hold keys to the community's future.

MAP NCR-1  
Toombs County  
National Wetlands  
Inventory



Source: Georgia GIS Clearing House  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008

MAP NCR-2  
Toombs County  
Significant  
Groundwater  
Recharge Areas



Recharge Areas  
■ MIOCENE/PLIOCENE - RECENT UNCONFINED AQUIFERS  
(All average/medium pollution susceptibility)

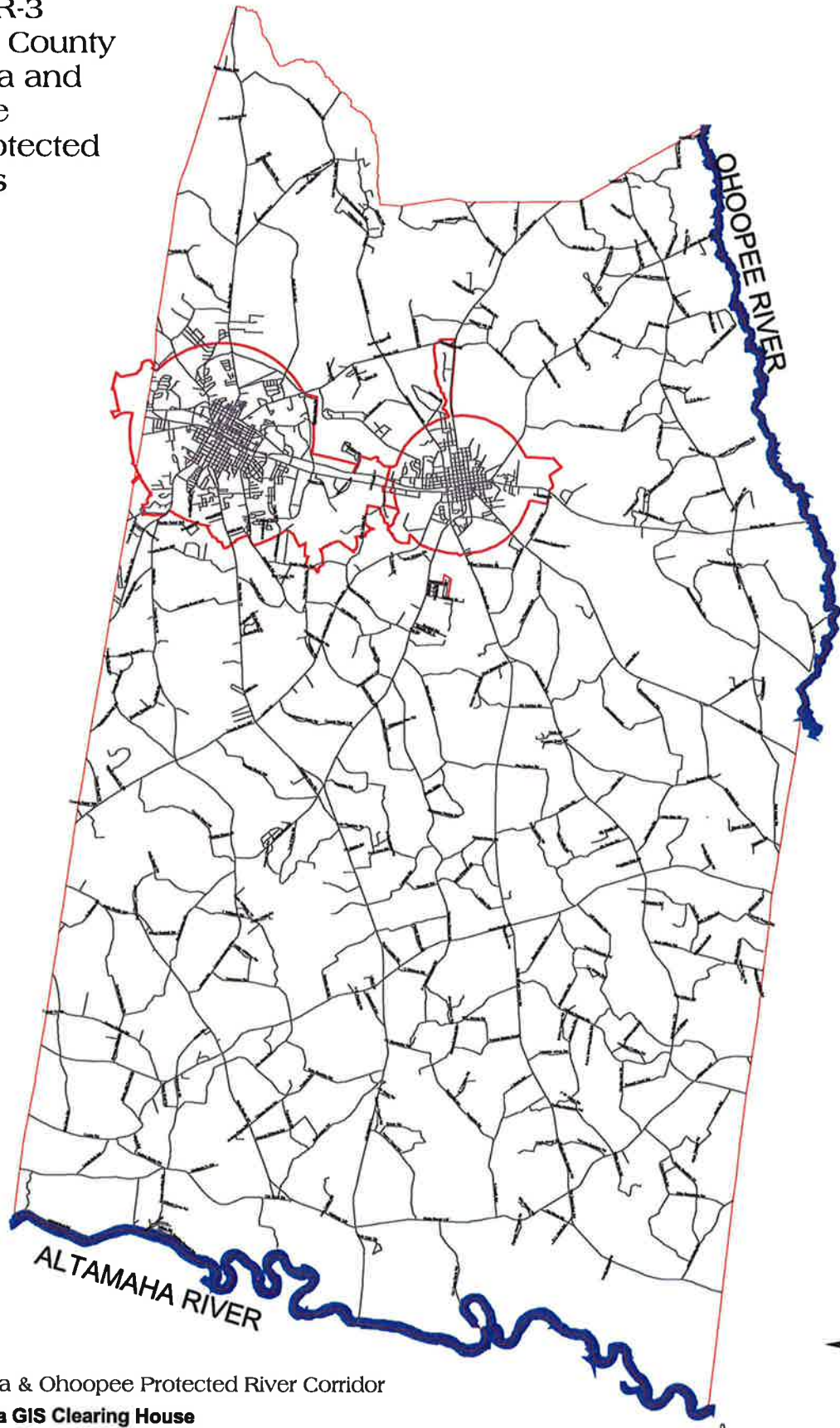
Source: Hydrologic Atlas 18 of Georgia Geologic Survey, 1989  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008




2 0 2 Miles

A scale bar with markings at 0 and 2 miles, used to provide a sense of scale for the map.

MAP NCR-3  
Toombs County  
Altamaha and  
Ochopee  
River Protected  
Corridors

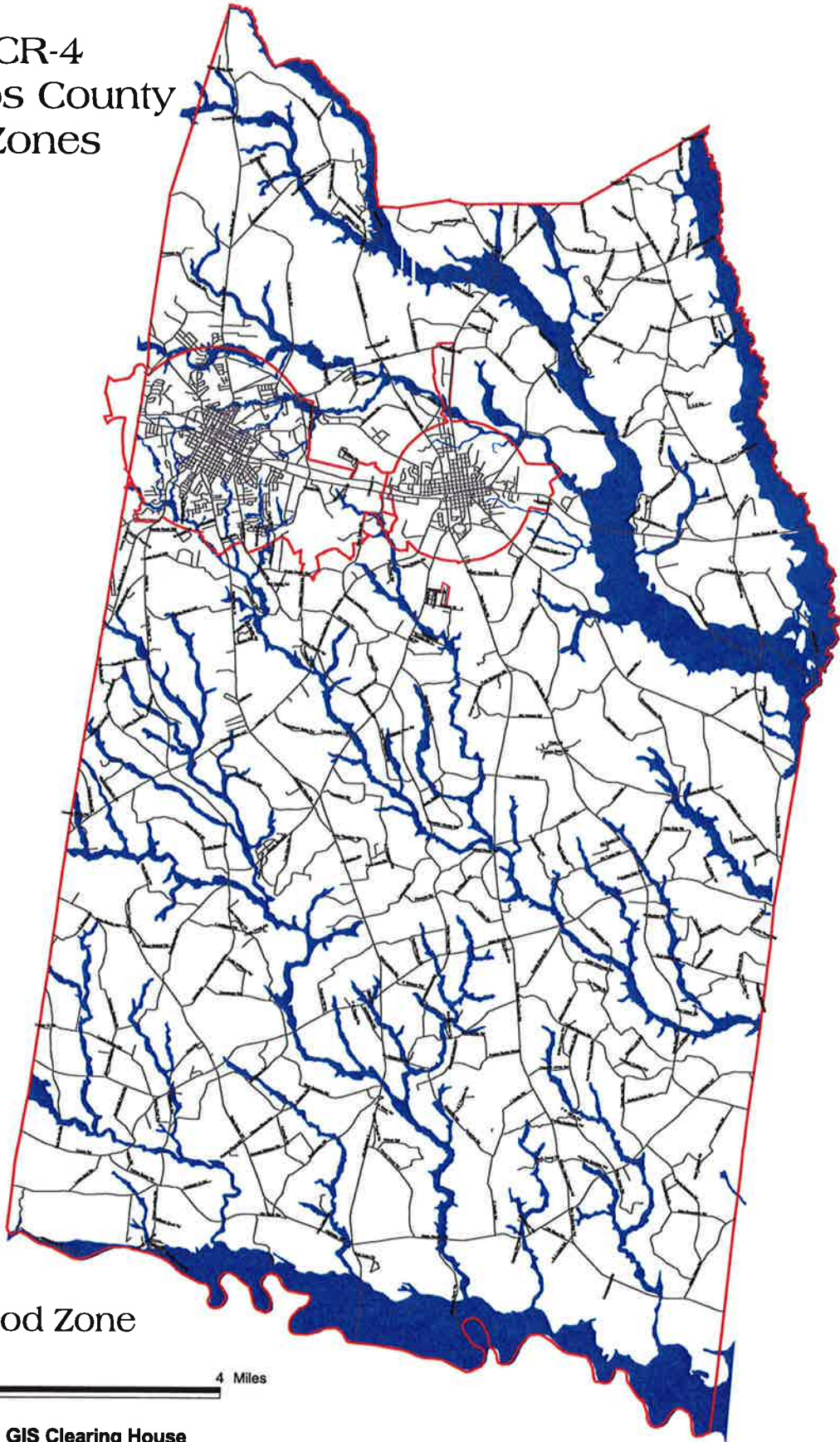


 Altamaha & Ochopee Protected River Corridor  
Source: Georgia GIS Clearing House  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008





MAP NCR-4  
Toombs County  
Flood Zones



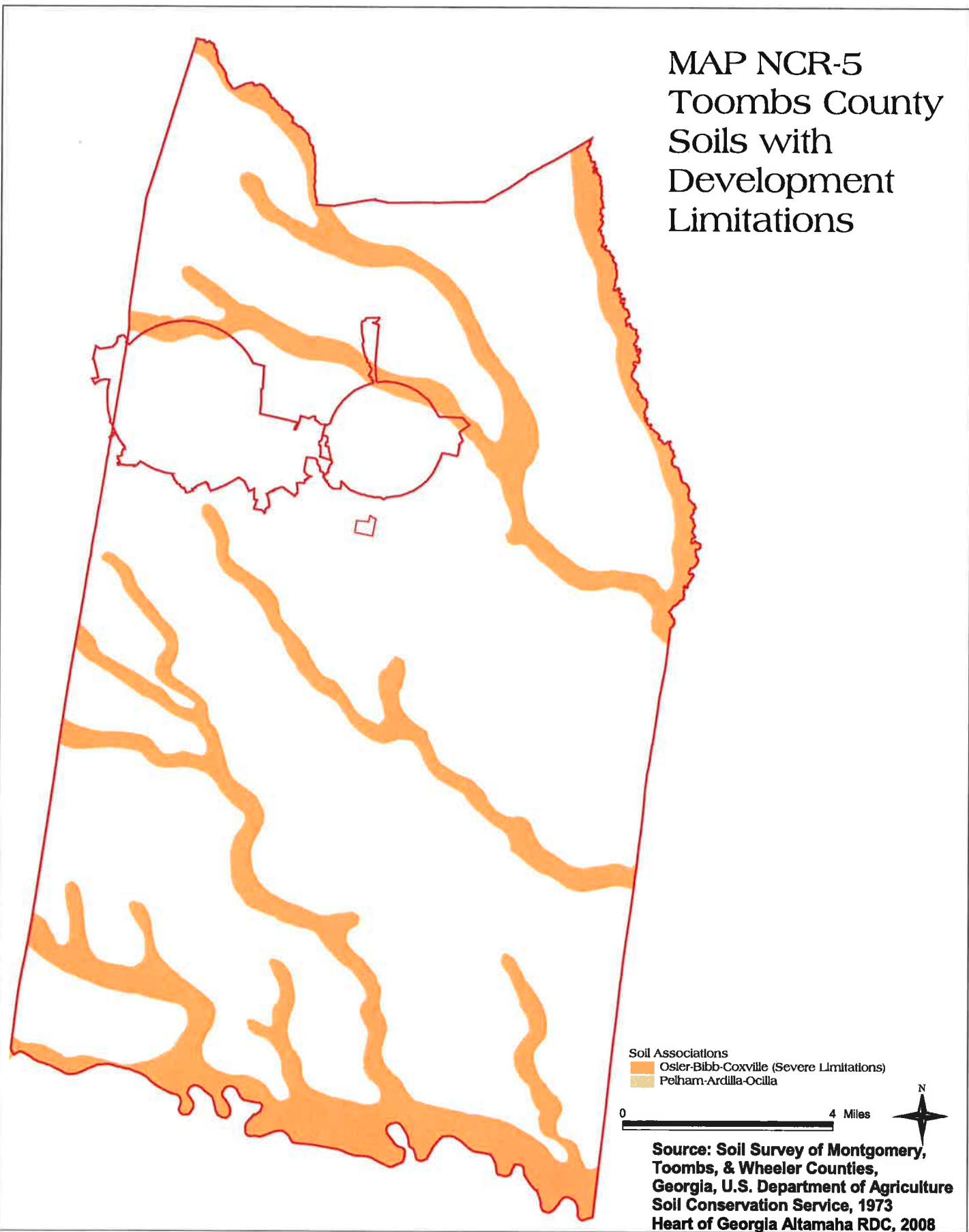
 Flood Zone



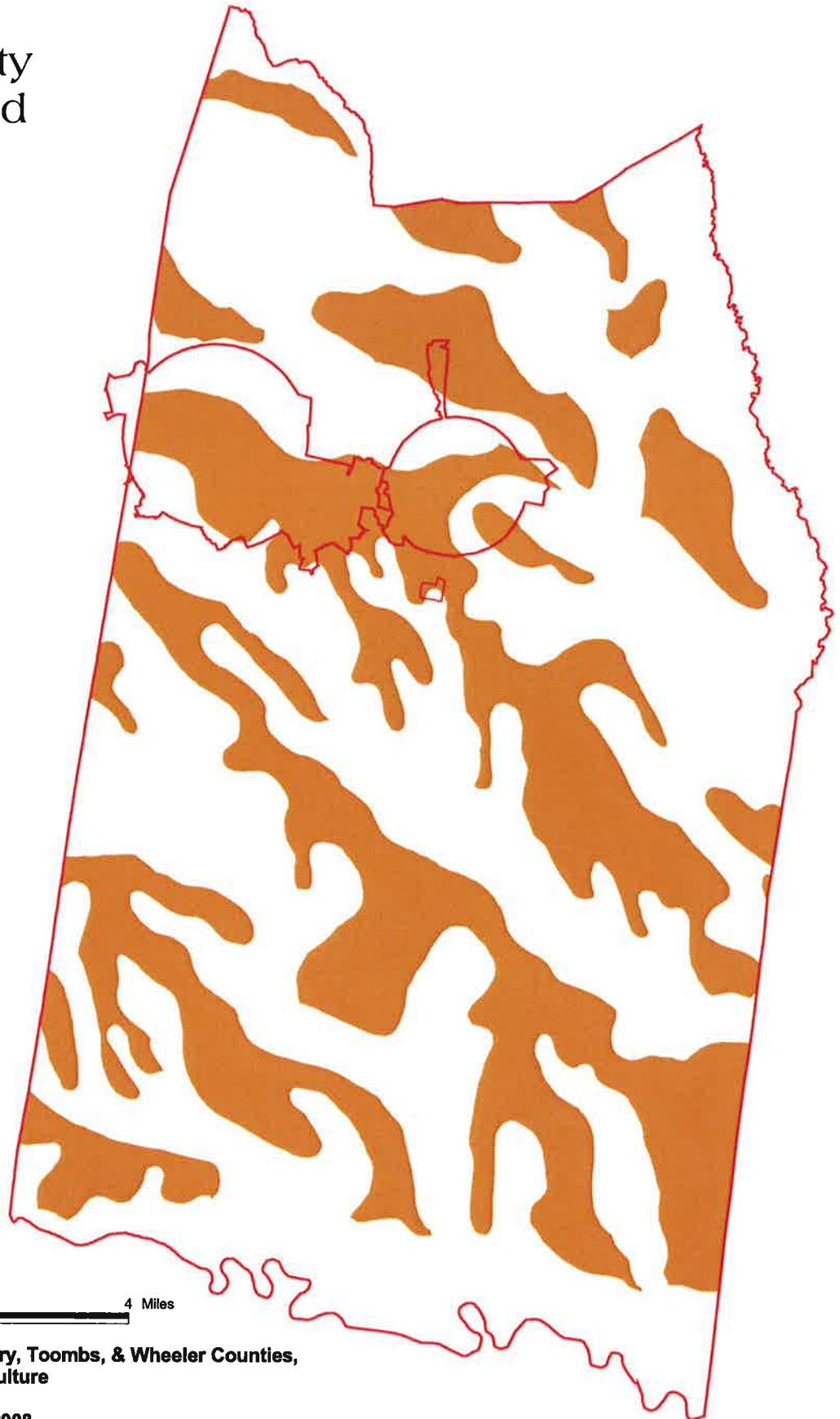
0  4 Miles

Source: Georgia GIS Clearing House  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008

# MAP NCR-5 Toombs County Soils with Development Limitations



MAP NCR-6  
Toombs County  
Prime Farmland



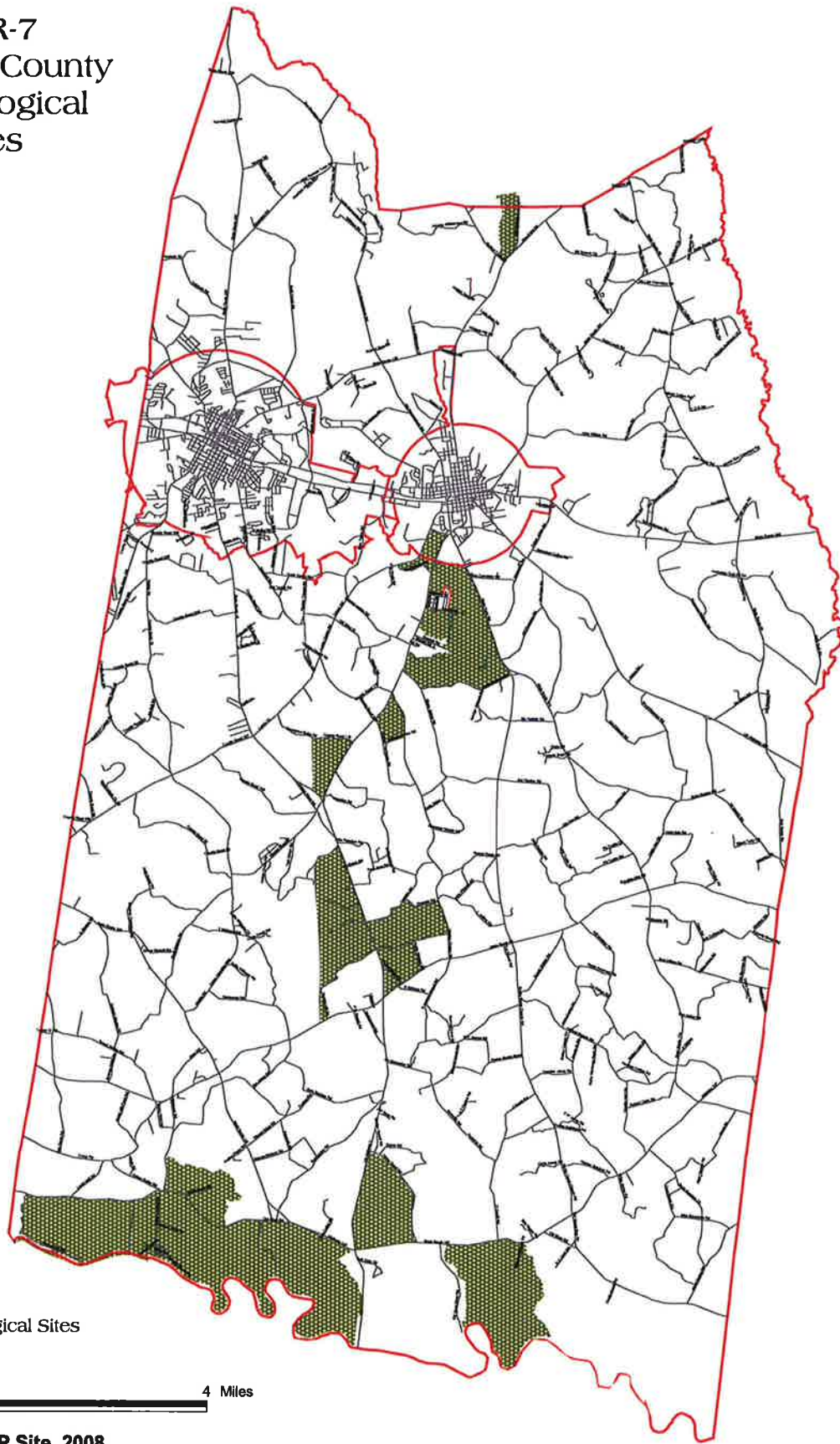
Soil Association  
Tifton-Fuquay-Pelham



0 4 Miles

Source: Soil Survey of Montgomery, Toombs, & Wheeler Counties,  
Georgia, U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Soil Conservation Service, 1973  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008

MAP NCR-7  
Toombs County  
Archaeological  
Resources



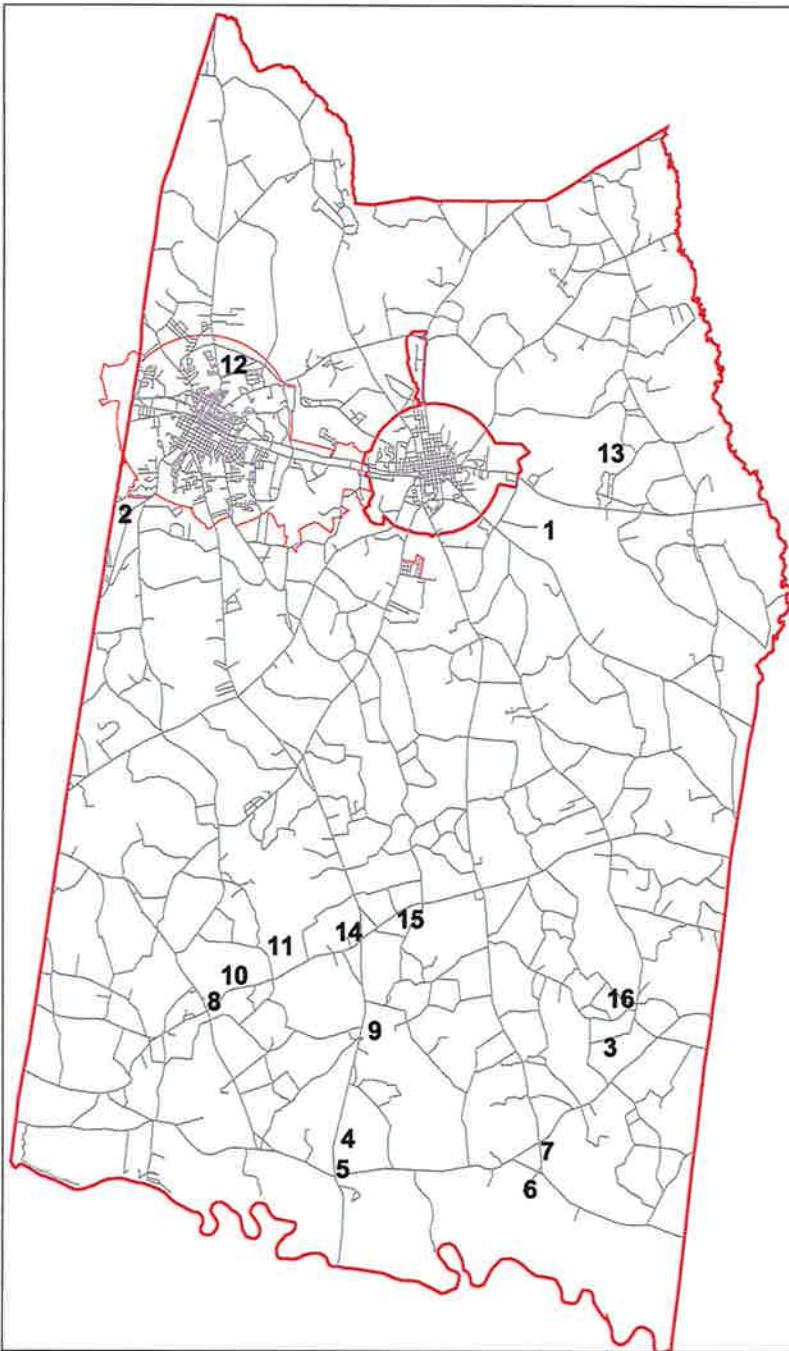
 Archaeological Sites



0 4 Miles

Source: DCA FTP Site, 2008  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008

# MAP NCR-8 Toombs County Cultural Resources



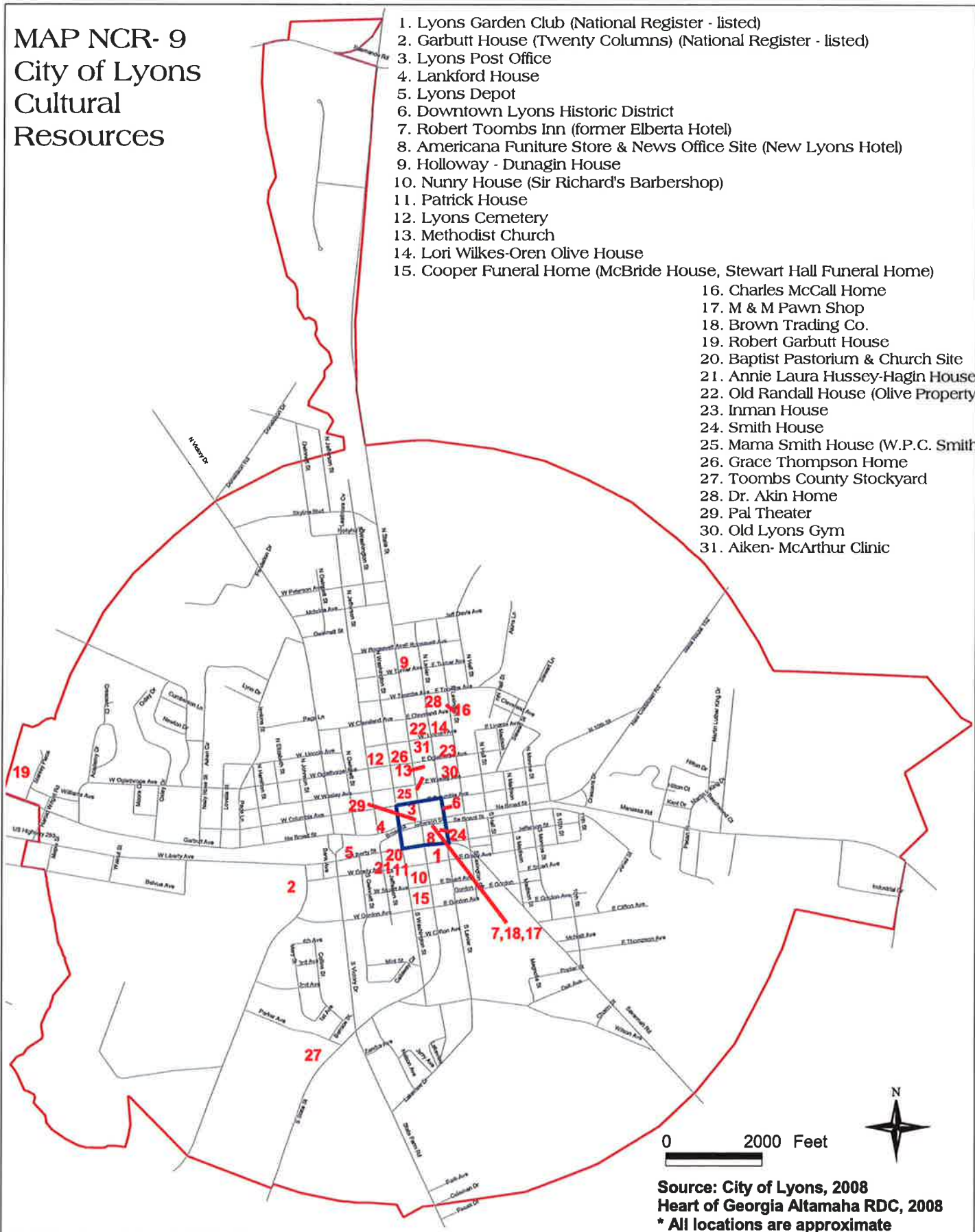
1. Alice Baker-Benton House
2. McLemore-Sharpe Farmstead (National Register - Listed)
3. Jim Smith House (National Register - Listed)
4. English Eddy Church
5. Old English Eddy Church (School?)
6. Old Methodist Campgrounds (Now Tattnall Campgrounds)
7. Marvin Church
8. Mann Home
9. Old Alexander Swim Hole
10. Old Laff Post Office
11. Partin Old Pond
12. Paul Anderson Youth Home
13. Johnson Hill Campsite
14. Parker's School
15. Hardin Chapel
16. Robert Clark House

Note: All locations are approximate.



# MAP NCR- 9 City of Lyons Cultural Resources

1. Lyons Garden Club (National Register - listed)
2. Garbutt House (Twenty Columns) (National Register - listed)
3. Lyons Post Office
4. Lankford House
5. Lyons Depot
6. Downtown Lyons Historic District
7. Robert Toombs Inn (former Elberta Hotel)
8. Americana Furniture Store & News Office Site (New Lyons Hotel)
9. Holloway - Dunagin House
10. Nunry House (Sir Richard's Barbershop)
11. Patrick House
12. Lyons Cemetery
13. Methodist Church
14. Lori Wilkes-Oren Olive House
15. Cooper Funeral Home (McBride House, Stewart Hall Funeral Home)
16. Charles McCall Home
17. M & M Pawn Shop
18. Brown Trading Co.
19. Robert Garbutt House
20. Baptist Pastorium & Church Site
21. Annie Laura Hussey-Hagin House
22. Old Randall House (Olive Property)
23. Inman House
24. Smith House
25. Mama Smith House (W.P.C. Smith)
26. Grace Thompson Home
27. Toombs County Stockyard
28. Dr. Akin Home
29. Pal Theater
30. Old Lyons Gym
31. Aiken- McArthur Clinic



0 2000 Feet

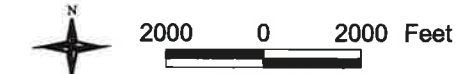


Source: City of Lyons, 2008  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008  
\* All locations are approximate

# MAP NCR-10 City of Vidalia Cultural Resources

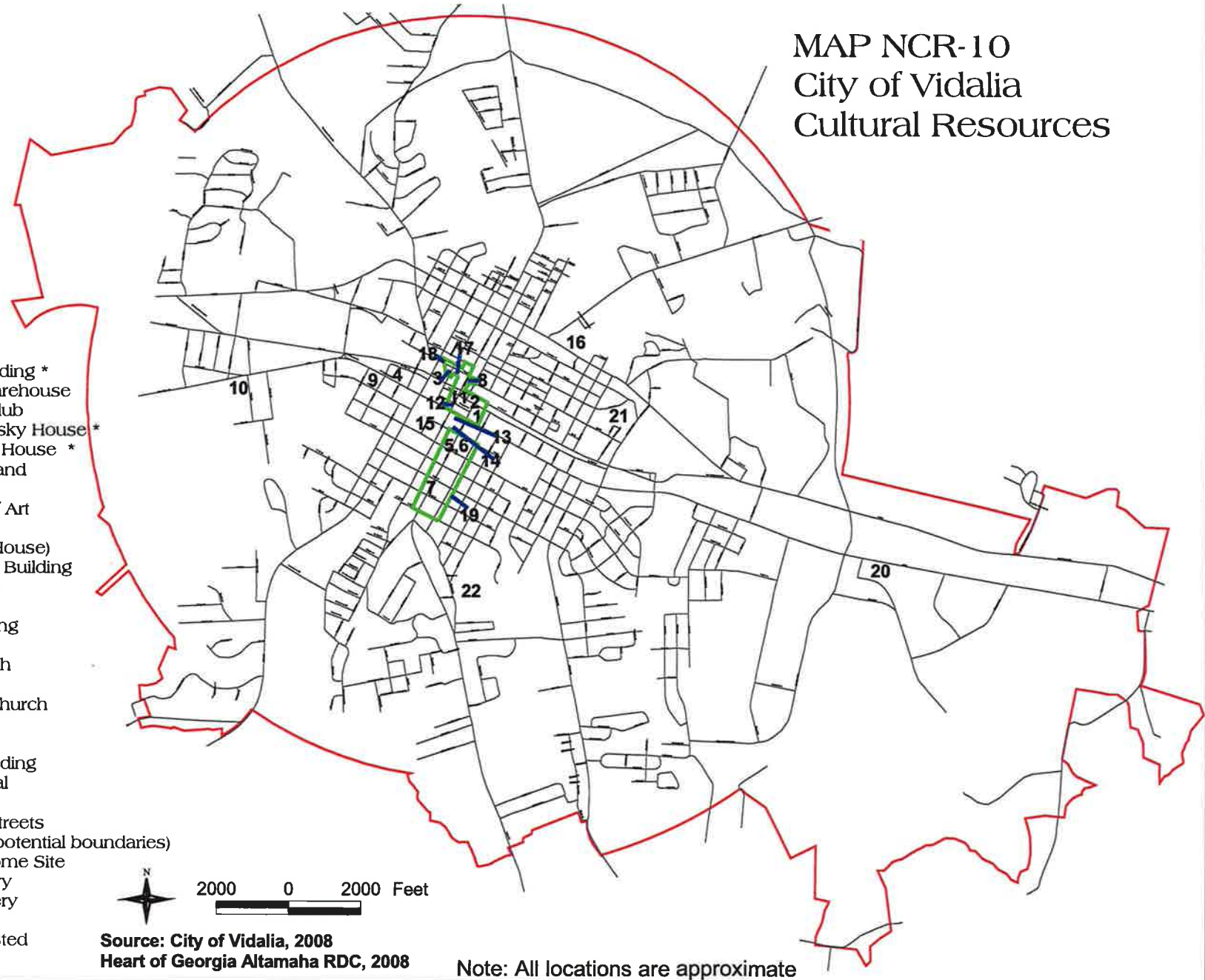
1. Vidalia City Hall
2. Citizens Bank Building \*
3. Rigdon Printing Warehouse
4. Vidalia Woman's Club
5. Leader and Rosansky House \*
6. Peterson-Wilbanks House \*
- ( Andrews, Threlkeld and Ellington Law Offices)
7. Altama Museum of Art and History \*
- (Crawford W. Brazell House)
8. First National Bank Building
9. Coca Cola Building
10. Charles, Georgia
11. Darby Bank Building
12. Old City Hall
13. First Baptist Church
14. Panache Building
15. Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery
16. Crone Cemetery
17. Jackson Hotel Building
18. Vidalia Commercial Historic District \*
19. Jackson-Durden Streets Area Historic District (potential boundaries)
20. Mose Coleman Home Site
21. East Park Cemetery
22. Pine Crest Cemetery

\* National Register - listed



Source: City of Vidalia, 2008  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008

Note: All locations are approximate



# COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

## Introduction

The provision of services, protection of its citizens, preservation of its resources, and enrichment and enhancement of the quality of life for its people are among the primary reasons for the creation and existence of local governments. A community's facilities and infrastructure exist to address these needs. "Community Facilities and Services" is one of the most important elements required under the Georgia Planning Act because construction of new facilities and maintenance and upgrading of existing ones generally represent the largest public expenditures of local governments. Due to limited funds, ongoing planning is vital for a community to offer the services and facilities desired by current and future residents, businesses, and industries in an efficient and effective manner. The location of public facilities can be an important tool in guiding and managing growth and development. Planning ahead can provide the opportunity to properly prepare and anticipate growth, and prevent expensive mistakes.

The following contains a description, assesses the adequacy, and presents the community's recommendations for improving community facilities and services for existing and future residents in Toombs County and the cities of Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia as a whole in accordance with the Local Planning Requirements at the intermediate planning level. Future needs of economic growth are addressed as well as future needs required by population growth. The categories of community facilities and services considered are: transportation; water supply and treatment; sewerage system and wastewater treatment; solid waste; public safety; hospital and other public health facilities; recreation; general government; educational facilities; and library and other cultural facilities.

## Transportation

Inventory. A total of approximately 822.5 miles of county roads, city streets, and state and federal highways serve Toombs County. There are a total of 523.88 miles of county roads. A total of 455.34 miles are paved, while 367.16 miles remain unpaved in the county. Lyons has 60.97 miles of city streets (approximately 57.94 miles of paved and 3.03 miles of unpaved), while Santa Claus has approximately 3.24 miles of city streets, including approximately 2 miles of paved and 1.24 miles of unpaved streets. Vidalia has a total of approximately 131.84 miles of



city streets, consisting of about 126.59 miles of paved streets and 5.25 miles of unpaved. The county has 150.1 miles of roads on the State Highway System.

#### Local Government Activities.

Toombs County annually budgets an average of \$1.3 million for road maintenance and \$300,000 for capital expenditures for roads. The County has its own road construction and maintenance crews that grade, drain, and base county roads in preparation for paving contracts and for maintenance of existing county roads, both paved and unpaved. No dirt roads are currently being paved in Toombs County, while an average of 5 miles are resurfaced annually. SPLOST, Local Assistance Road Program (LARP), and other funds, as available, are used to pay for road improvements in Toombs County.

The City of Lyons does not have a separate transportation budget. It provides basic maintenance, such as patching pot holes. No dirt streets are currently being paved. Using SPLOST Funds and with DOT assistance, the City was able to have 30 streets (6 to 7 miles) resurfaced in 2008. Typically, an average of 0.5 mile is resurfaced annually under LARP.

The City of Santa Claus contracts with the County and the Georgia Department of Transportation for assistance in this area. It has no road equipment of its own. The County currently scrapes the City's dirt streets as needed. An average of about 3 blocks or one street are resurfaced annually by DOT through LARP. The County prepared the road bed, and the City paid for paving approximately two blocks about 2003/2004. DOT has asked for a 60 foot right-of-way for further paving; however, only a 50 foot right-of-way is available.

The City of Vidalia's Public Works Department has an annual budget of approximately \$1,060,000. The City contracts with Environmental Services Group (ESG) of Vidalia to manage all streets/public works, including water and sewer services. An average of 0.8 mile of roads are resurfaced annually through LARP. Approximately 5 miles of city streets were paved in both 2006 and 2007, while about 1.6 miles were paved in 2008. A new SPLOST passed in 2008 will provide funds for needed equipment and additional paving projects. The City plans to make much needed upgrades to the entrance road to the Vidalia Airport.

### Major Highways.

Toombs County is traversed by two federal highways and 12 state highways. Interstate 16, the main route from Savannah to Macon, runs north of Lyons through Emanuel County. The two federal highways passing through Toombs County are U.S. 1 and U.S. 280. U.S. 1, which runs north-south through the center of Toombs County and Lyons, is designated a developmental highway in the Governor's Road Improvement Program. The planned 4-laning of U.S. 1 north of Lyons to I-16 is important to Toombs County for future economic development and is a top priority. The U.S. 1 Bypass of Lyons appears to have been put on hold for the foreseeable future, due primarily to lack of funding. U.S. 280 runs east-west through Toombs County, linking the cities of Lyons and Vidalia. It continues west from Vidalia into Montgomery County and across Georgia to Columbus, as well as southeastward from Lyons to Reidsville, then generally east toward Savannah. U.S. 280 was one-way paired through Vidalia in the last several years. Long-term, there has been discussion concerning 4-laning U.S. 280 through Georgia.

In terms of state routes, GA 297 runs northward from Vidalia to I-16 in Treutlen County. GA 292 passes through both Lyons and Vidalia north of U.S. 280 before terminating on the west in Montgomery County and extending eastward through Tattnall County into Evans County where it ends at the junction of U.S. 280 and GA 169 in Bellville. GA 15 runs generally north-south through Toombs County entering from Higgston/Montgomery County on the west to Vidalia, then southward where it joins U.S. 1. GA 56 passes through Cedar Crossing in the southern part of the county, having originated to the west in Montgomery County, and runs generally northeastward to Reidsville in Tattnall County. Other state routes in Toombs County include GA 29 (runs with GA 15); GA 130 (runs southwest from Vidalia into Montgomery County where it ends at GA 135 and northeast to U.S. 1 north of Lyons); GA 152 (connects Lyons with Cobbtown to the northeast in Tattnall County); GA 30 (runs with U.S. 280 through the county); GA 86 (runs somewhat parallel with Ochoopee River from junction with U.S. 280/GA 30 in east-central Toombs County northwest into Emanuel County from which it continues to Dublin); GA 4 (runs with U.S. 1 through county); GA 147 (begins at U.S. 1 in southern Toombs County and travels northeast where it joins GA 178 at Stanleys Store before crossing into Tattnall County and passing through the Georgia State Prison, ending at junction of U.S. 280/GA 56 in Reidsville); and GA 178 (runs southeast of Lyons, crossing GA 56, and joining GA 147 near Tattnall County line).

Many of these transportation routes serve as major thoroughfares through Toombs County and the region. The road network in Toombs County and its municipalities is depicted on the Community Facilities maps (Maps CFS-1-11).

### Bridges/Overpasses.

There are approximately 70 bridges and culverts located on county, state, and federal routes in Toombs County. According to a 2007 DOT Study, there were 32 local bridges in the county, five (5) of which were determined to be functionally obsolete (16 percent) and two (2) which were structurally deficient (6 percent).

### Rail.

The City of Vidalia owns a regional railroad, which is a spur line to Atlantic Wood adjacent to Choo Choo Supply in north Vidalia. The 2.5 mile line was purchased from the Georgia Central Railroad. State funds upgraded the track by adding side rail tracks to serve Atlantic Wood. The Georgia Central Railroad operates in Toombs County on the lines which pass through both downtown Lyons and Vidalia.

### Airport.

The Vidalia Regional Airport is owned and managed by the City of Vidalia. The Level III state of the art airport serves the general aviation needs of the area. It has been recently upgraded, including extending its lighted runway to 6,000 feet and renovating its terminal. The airport is located in southeast Vidalia and south of U.S. 280 conveniently adjacent to an industrial area. The airport also has a second 5,000 foot back-up runway. Full ILS instrument approach procedure is available. The City has 19 rental hangars. See Map CFS-9 for the location of the airport in Vidalia.

### Public Transit.

There is no local public general purpose transit system in Toombs County through the Section 5311 Program of the GA Department of Transportation; however, residents are served by the GA Department of Human Resources (DHR) Coordinated Transportation Program (5310). The low incomes and aging population of the county suggest a need for a more general public transit system.

### Bicycle and Pedestrian Ways.

Currently, there are no formal bike paths in Toombs County; however, the Heart of Georgia Altamaha's only designated local bike trail, the 27-mile Yamassee Trail, is located in adjacent Montgomery County. Toombs County has one bicycle club, the Sweet Onion Cyclists out of Vidalia, listed on the Georgia Bicycle Federation website ([www.bicyclegeorgia.com](http://www.bicyclegeorgia.com)). The club sponsors the annual Sweet Onion Century Ride the first Saturday of May. The third largest biking event in the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, the Sweet Onion Century ride has been held since 1996. It offers rides of 24, 50, 62.5, 100, and 125 miles through Toombs, Candler, Montgomery, Tattnall, and Treutlen counties.

Toombs County is seeking to partner with the other 16 counties in the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center Region to implement the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center Regional Bike and Pedestrian Plan completed in 2005. The regional bike/pedestrian plan examines existing conditions and needs, and provides recommendations for future improvements, including new route recommendations and other efforts to boost education, safety, and usage. Needs identified for the region include additional facilities, particularly paved shoulders, additional state bike routes, better state signage, and increased safety and educational activities. There was a special need identified to interconnect the region's state parks with bicycle facilities, and to interconnect region facilities to other state bike routes. Proposed new routes passing through Toombs County include a central regional route along U.S. 280 from Claxton in Evans County, west through Lyons and Vidalia to McRae (Telfair County), a distance of 68 miles. Another is a connector route along U.S. 1 from Swainsboro in Emanuel County, south through Lyons to U.S. 341 in Baxley (Appling County) to link with the existing Georgia Bike State Route 40 (Trans-Georgia Route) and other proposed regional routes. Compatible local bicycle facilities, events and regional cooperation, marketing, and promotion were encouraged. Bicycling was seen as having potential economic development/tourism benefits for the region. The region could be promoted as a touring destination for beginning and intermediate cyclists because of its low traffic counts, open spaces, pastoral scenery, historic sites, topography, and climate.

Toombs County has a total of 35.22 miles of sidewalks, all of which are located in either Lyons, with 12.71 miles of sidewalks, or Vidalia, with 22.51 miles. The City of Santa Claus has no sidewalks. Lyons and Vidalia have made some sidewalk improvements in their downtown areas through DOT Transportation Enhancement funded streetscape projects.

Assessment. While Toombs County has a good transportation system, it has needs in this area. The county ranks 49<sup>th</sup> out of 159 counties in the state in total road mileage. It also ranks 124<sup>th</sup> in the state in percentage of roads paved, with approximately 56 percent of its roads paved. Since the county is expected to face the pressure of steady population growth, there is a need to continue work to upgrade the county transportation network to enhance local efforts to attract economic development and make progress toward reducing the unpaved mileage and otherwise improving roads. Four-laning U.S. 1 north of Lyons to I-16 is the community's top priority. Other planned projects which appear to have been put on hold for the foreseeable future include the Lyons Bypass and U.S. 1 four-laning south of Lyons and across the Altamaha River. There are also unmet needs to improve GA 15/29 and GA 297 to I-16. Toombs County needs additional funds to continue paving and resurfacing roads and to work with Georgia DOT on bridge repairs and/or replacements. Routine maintenance and resurfacing are ongoing needs in the county's municipalities, as is additional paving, except in Santa Claus where there are currently no plans to pave the remaining dirt streets. The County also needs a new maintenance shop and road asset tracking system to report infrastructure capitalization. Lyons and Vidalia have ongoing downtown revitalization efforts underway, both having received DOT Transportation Enhancement grants to assist with streetscape projects. The City of Vidalia has also expressed the need for additional equipment, including a motor grader, dump truck, flat bed truck, pothole patching truck, brush chipper, and jumping jack mechanical tamp.

Railways played an important role in the development of Toombs County and its cities; however, their role has diminished in recent years. The existing Georgia Central Railroad lines running through Lyons and Vidalia have great potential for increased use in the future to enhance local economic development efforts. Vidalia's short-line railroad is already providing service to Atlantic Wood and has the potential to connect with other industrial concerns, such as Huber at Nunez in Emanuel County.

The City of Vidalia continues to make improvements to its state-of-the-art Vidalia Regional Airport facility. Plans include upgrading the entrance road.

Currently, no bike routes exist in Toombs County. The county is included as a part of a regional bicycle and pedestrian plan prepared by the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center. The plan recommends designation of additional state bike routes throughout the Region, including a regional route along U.S. 280 through Toombs County linking Claxton and McRae and to other regional routes. A new connector route has also been proposed in central Toombs County located along U.S. 1, which would connect with Georgia State Bike Route 40. Other general improvements to encourage greater usage are also addressed.

Local connectivity and better bicycle/pedestrian access is especially needed in Lyons and Vidalia.

The Toombs County DHR Coordinated Transit System is important to many citizens of Toombs County. The county has a significant elderly population and many DHR users and clients; therefore, continuation of the program is very important due to the lack of personal transportation available. The many low income citizens, and recent immigrants, within the county suggest a need for a more general public transportation system.

## Water Supply and Treatment

Inventory. All three municipalities in Toombs County own and operate their own public water systems. The county government does not operate a water supply system. Unincorporated county residents who do not obtain water from a nearby municipal system rely mainly on individual private wells for their water supply. These private wells tap primarily into the Upper Floridan (limestone) or shallow aquifers. The cities withdraw water from the Upper Floridan Aquifer, as well.

The City of Lyons provides water service to 1,900 residential and business customers through a distribution system consisting of six (6) and four (4) inch water lines, although some are even smaller and date back to the City's early years. A 10-inch water main connects to the Vidalia system in case either city loses their water service. 100 percent of the households are served inside of the town limits, while there are 100 additional customers served outside Lyons. The City presently operates four deep wells with a combined capacity of 4,000 gallons per minute (See Table CFS-1). Current average daily usage is 1 million gallons, although the permitted capacity is 1.5 million gallons per day.

**TABLE CFS-1**  
**Deep Wells**  
**City of Lyons**

<u>WELL NO.</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>CAPACITY (GPM)</u>	<u>DATE DRILLED</u>
1	GA Highway 292 West	1,000	1968
2	Quint Shrine Road	1,000	1980
3	Washington St.	1,000	1987
4	U.S. 1 Corporate Center	1,000	2001

Four elevated storage tanks serve the City of Lyons. See Table CFS-2 for information. Map CFS-4 shows the location of water services throughout Lyons.

**TABLE CFS-2**  
**Elevated Storage Tank**  
**City of Lyons**

<u>TANK NO.</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>CAPACITY</u>	<u>DATE ERECTED</u>
1	GA Highway 292 West	250,000 gals.	1980
2	Quint Shrine Road	250,000 gals.	N/A
3	South Washington St.	250,000 gals.	1968
4	U.S. 1 Corporate Center	250,000 gals.	2001

The City of Santa Claus provides water service to 86 customers within the city limits and three (3) adjacent to the city. 100 percent of households within Santa Claus are served. Water is distributed through a system comprised of 1.5 miles of 1, 2, and 4 inch lines. The present system is more than 30 years old, and was originally a private system sold to the City. Santa Claus currently operates one 700-800 foot deep well (See Table CFS-3).

**TABLE CFS-3**  
**Deep Well**  
**City of Santa Claus**

<u>WELL NO.</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>CAPACITY (GPM)</u>	<u>DATE DRILLED</u>
1	City Hall	N/A	Unknown

One new storage tank with a pressure pump serves the City of Santa Claus. See Table CFS-4 for information. Map CFS-7 shows the location of water services throughout Santa Claus.

**TABLE CFS-4**  
**Elevated Storage Tank**  
**City of Santa Claus**

<u>TANK NO.</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>CAPACITY</u>	<u>DATE ERECTED</u>
1	City Hall	5,200 gals	2008

The City of Vidalia has 4,789 water customers, serving the entire city. Water lines range from 6 to 12 inches in diameter. The total permitted daily capacity is 4 million gallons, with a total average daily flow of 1.76 million gallons. The City has four wells. See Table CFS-5 for more information.

**TABLE CFS-5****Deep Wells****City of Vidalia**

<u>WELL NO.</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>CAPACITY (GPM)</u>	<u>DATE DRILLED</u>
1	110 West 6 <sup>th</sup> Street	1,600	1960
2	U.S. 280 East	1,100	1973
3	200 Poe Street	1,000	1973
4	Todd Road	4,000	1995

The City of Vidalia also has four elevated water storage tanks. See Table CFS-6 for information. Map CFS-10 shows the location of water services throughout Vidalia.

**TABLE CFS-6****Elevated Storage Tanks****City of Vidalia**

<u>TANK NO.</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>CAPACITY</u>	<u>DATE ERECTED</u>
1	110 West 6 <sup>th</sup> Street	250,000 gals.	1960
2	U.S. 280 East	250,000 gals.	1973
3	200 Poe Street	250,000 gals.	1973
4	Todd Road	500,000 gals.	1995

Assessment. The City of Lyons upgraded its water system in 2001 with the addition of a new water storage tank, pumps, and well. It now needs to replace all of its older lines, which range in size from 6 to 4 inches and smaller. The smallest and oldest are believed to date from the early 1900s. They are currently no plans to expand the existing system, except for providing additional service via routine hook-ups as needed.



Santa Claus' priority community infrastructure need is for a new water system to replace its outdated 30 plus year old system. The City has sought unsuccessfully CDBG funding for a new system. Plans are to install the new system in two stages. The first phase would consist of replacing the existing 1, 2, and 4 inch lines with new 6 inch lines and adding fire hydrants, as the City currently has none. In the second phase, a new well and 50,000 gallon storage tank (possibly elevated) would be installed. In the meantime, Santa Claus did install a new ground storage tank in 2008.

The City of Vidalia has made water system improvements in recent years, including upgrading existing or extending service in the 7<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Street CDBG target area; along U.S. 280 West in conjunction with the one-way pairing; in the Gwendolyn Drive area; along Ezra Taylor Road; and in the Brice Drive area. There is still a need to replace old lines in downtown Vidalia, as well as in large areas east and west of Adams Street and Center Drive in south Vidalia; east and west of McIntosh Street in north Vidalia; southeast of North Loop Road; and north and south of GA 292 in a small area of east Vidalia. There are continuing needs to serve expected growth areas.

Overall, Toombs County's municipalities should continue maintenance and upgrading of their water systems as needed, including water line extensions within their jurisdictions and in their adjacent growth areas to help further facilitate growth. There is ample room for growth both from normal population increases as well as possible future annexations.

There is a need in Toombs County to ensure that private wells are located, drilled and developed in such a manner to protect public health and the environment.

## **Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment**

Inventory. All three cities in Toombs County currently have public sewerage systems. Since Toombs County does not have a public sanitary sewerage system, individuals in the unincorporated area continue to use septic tanks except for those in areas who are hooked onto sewer service in an adjacent community.

The City of Lyons has two wastewater treatment facilities: East Wastewater Treatment Plant (290 Thompson Avenue) and North Wastewater Treatment Plant (333 Aiken Lane). Both plants utilize the traditional extended aeration activated sludge treatment process, and each is permitted to treat 0.8 million gallons per day. The average daily flow (ADF) is 300,000 gallons. 1,600 customers are presently served, representing about 98 percent of city households. There is

one small area in east Lyons along GA 152 which does not currently receive sewer service. No service is provided outside Lyons. The City's sewer collection system consists of approximately 40 miles of lines, and 15 lift stations divert sewage to the two treatment facilities. Information on the lift stations is included in Table CFS-7. See Map CFS-5 for Lyons' sewer system.

**TABLE CFS-7**  
**Lift Stations**  
**City of Lyons**

<u>PUMP STATION NO.</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>YEAR</u> <u>INSTALLED</u>	<u>PUMP DATA</u>
1	391 Clifton Ave.	2004	600 gpm each (2)
2	290 E. Thompson St. (East Plant)	1988	465 gpm each (2)
3	157 Park Ave.	2002	200 gpm each (2)
4	McLendon Trailer Park	Unknown	100 gpm each (2)
5	287 Belvue Ave.	Unknown	100 gpm each (2)
6	102 Maple St.	Unknown	65 gpm
7	127 Longleaf Lane	Unknown	200 gpm each (2)
8	Gwinnett St. Extension	Unknown	110 gpm
9	1015 U.S. 1 North (North State St.)	2002	250 gpm each (2)
10	102 Peterson Ave.	2007	700 gpm each (2)
11	333 Aiken Lane	1988	465 gpm each (2)
12	326 Stuart Lane	1985	80 gpm each (2) 225 gpm each (2)
13	Hilton Cascade Drive	1985	225 gpm each (2)
14	363 Solomon Drive	2004?	200 gpm each (2)
15	276 Pecan Place	Unknown	110 gpm

The City of Santa Claus provides sewerage and wastewater treatment to approximately 66 customers. While a majority of residents are served, there are about nine (9) households which still rely on septic tanks. It is cost prohibitive at this time to serve these nine (9) residences since additional lines and a lift station would be required. The existing gravity system dates from about 2003 and has 6 and 8 inch lines. The oxidation pond was upgraded circa 2005. A new system effluent structure was installed, which functions as a mini treatment plant. Since its construction, EPD has lifted its previous consent orders. The City's average daily flow is 8-9,000 gallons up to a maximum of 10,000 gallons. See Map CFS-8 for Santa Claus' sewer system.

The City of Vidalia has two wastewater treatment plants. The Swift Creek WWTP is located at 2505 Swift Creek Road and has an activated sludge NPDES discharge, while the Southside WWTP has an extended aeration and application system. They treat an average daily flow (ADF) of 1.787 million gallons and have a daily treatment capacity of 3.68 million gallons. The City's sewer collection system consists of in excess of 100 miles of sewer lines ranging from 0.75 to 12 inches in diameter and 19 active lift stations that lift wastewater from lower areas to gravity lines running to the treatment plants. Information on the lift stations is included in Table CFS-8. See Map CFS-11 for Vidalia's sewer system.

**TABLE CFS-8**  
**Lift Stations**  
**City of Vidalia**

<u>PUMP STATION NO.</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>YEAR</u> <u>INSTALLED</u>	<u>PUMP DATA</u>
1	1318 C.V. Mosley Blvd.	2000	3,000 gpm
2	2107 N. Maple Dr.	1992	3,000 gpm
3	2211 Center Dr.	1992	2,500 gpm
4	1400 Orange Street	1998	350 gpm
5	City Hall, Jackson Street	1990	50 gpm
6	817 Barksdale Dr.	1980	125 gpm
7	929 5 <sup>th</sup> Ave.	1983	200 gpm
8	1718 McSwain Dr.	2006 (Upgrade)	150 gpm
12	Sandy Rd.	1985	75 gpm
15	GA Hwy. 297	2001	400 gpm
16	Orange St. Trailer Park	2006	125 gpm
25	1519 Clydette Blvd.	2000	250 gpm
26	1600 Pleasure Ct.	1982	125 gpm
27	2113 Hanna Circle	1999	100 gpm
31	Wal-Mart, 311 Pete Phillips Rd.	2001	350 gpm
32	Miracle Lane	2000	350 gpm
33	622 Julie Dr.	2008	350 gpm
34	U.S. 280 West (120 Crestwood Dr.)	2008	350 gpm
35	Tap Dr. (1724 Mt. Vernon Rd.)	2008	350 gpm

Assessment. The City of Lyons made major upgrades to its sewerage system in 1988. Since that time, new lift stations have been added and service extended as needed. The system does have some infiltration problems when it rains, but the source has not been found. There are also some leaking storm drains. The City will need to expand or increase its treatment capability in the future to accommodate industrial growth.

The City of Santa Claus replaced its sewerage system about 2003, and upgraded its oxidation pond about two years later. The system remains in good shape and is expected to be adequate for the planning period.

The City of Vidalia has won state and national plant of the year awards for its land application system. Recent upgrades to sewer lines in Vidalia include those in the 7<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> CDBG target area and others in conjunction with the U.S. 1 one-way pairing. Sewer service has also been extended to the Tap Drive area behind Vidalia High School (2008) and Forest Lake subdivision (2007). A new CDBG project will improve sewer, and possibly water, service in the Poe Street neighborhood. Further sewer service upgrades are needed in the southwest, south central, and northern parts of Vidalia (same general areas needing water system improvements).

The cities of Lyons and Vidalia may need to add lines to serve future growth within their respective jurisdictions and/or extend/expand service in the future to accommodate growth in their adjacent growth areas.

Septic tank regulations are enforced at the local level as a part of the State of Georgia's septic tank laws by Toombs County through its Health Department. Citizens of Toombs County can obtain a septic tank permit at the Toombs County Health Department. Septic tank permits are enforced at the local level by a Georgia Department of Human Resources Environmental Health Specialist at the Toombs County Health Department. A continued check of the septic tanks by the Toombs County Health Department throughout Toombs County is needed to ensure their proper use and installation.

## **Solid Waste**

Inventory. The Toombs County Waste Landfill is located southwest of Lyons and south of Vidalia off GA 15. This Subtitle D permitted facility has an estimated remaining capacity of 16.7 years in its current cell. The landfill accepts household, commercial, and industrial waste; C

and D; white and brown goods; and tires. The County's only convenience center is located at Cedar Crossing. The manned center will take household waste; white and brown goods; and private C and D. Only cardboard is recycled at present. The County plans to remove its green boxes, which are located county-wide, and replace them with four additional convenience centers by the end of 2009. Sullivan Environmental Services of Vidalia picks up the refuse and disposes of it at the Toombs County Landfill.

The City of Lyons collects household, commercial, and yard waste on a weekly basis for residential customers and up to five times a week for commercial customers on an as needed basis. It disposes of the waste at the Toombs County Landfill. The City has a recycling program for plastic, paper, cardboard, and aluminum. It picks up recyclables on a weekly basis or they can be dropped off at the recycling center. The City has applied for grant funds to construct a larger facility at a new donated location. Plans are for the new recycling center to accept all recyclable materials, except glass. The City contracts with the Georgia Department of Corrections for a crew that helps with litter control, while a Lyons City employee works to help maintain the appearance of downtown by picking up trash.

The City of Santa Claus contracts with Sullivan Environmental Services of Vidalia to pick up household waste weekly and carry it to the county landfill. Local businesses contract directly with Sullivan for service. The City does not have a recycling program.

The City of Vidalia also contracts with Sullivan Environmental to pick up and haul solid waste to the Toombs County Landfill. Residential garbage is picked up weekly, while businesses can have more frequent pick-ups as needed. The City does all the billing. There is curbside recycling available, which accepts newspaper/magazines, glass, plastic, cardboard, and aluminum. In addition, there is a recycling center located on Brinson Road at the public works department that is open six days a week. V-Tech picks up cardboard from local businesses.

Illegal dumping is an issue in unincorporated Toombs County, particularly at green box sites. Toombs County's code enforcement program strives to enforce existing laws discouraging such behavior, while providing environmental education to the public concerning the dangers and costs of such unsightly practices. There was a problem at one time with illegal dumping across the branch from Santa Claus, but the Toombs County Sheriff's Department put an end to it. Illegal dumping is not a major issue in either Lyons or Vidalia.

Assessment. The collection of solid waste in Toombs County and its municipalities is adequate. As stated previously, the Toombs County Landfill has additional capacity in its

existing cell to operate for approximately 16 more years. The County is in the process of setting up four (4) new convenience centers and removing its green boxes. Plans are to complete the transition to convenience center by the end of 2009. The County has also expressed the need for a new industrial bailer, additional land for top soil cover, and waste stream reduction programs, including gasification.

As previously mentioned, the City of Lyons is seeking funding for a new recycling center to be located on a donated site. The new center would accept all recyclable materials, except glass. The City of Santa Claus did not specify any solid waste related needs at this time, while the City of Vidalia needs a new recycling truck as it furnishes a truck for Sullivan to use for collecting recyclables. The City is also searching for other options for disposing of its recyclables. It had been working with Montgomery County's recycling program, but this is no longer feasible.

A full comprehensive solid waste management plan for Toombs County and its municipalities is being prepared in conjunction with this comprehensive plan. That document should be consulted for more detailed information concerning solid waste programs and issues in all Toombs County jurisdictions.

## **Public Safety**

### Law Enforcement

Inventory. Toombs County has three law enforcement agencies: Lyons Police Department, Vidalia Police Department, and the Toombs County Sheriff's Department. The Lyons Police Department is located on the lower level of the Lyons City Hall at 257 North State Street in Lyons. The Lyons Police Department Substation is located on Northeast Broad Street in Lyons. The Vidalia Police Department is located at 101 Durden Street in Vidalia. The Toombs County Sheriff's Department and Detention Center are located at 357 Northwest Broad Street in Lyons.

The mission of the Toombs County Sheriff's Department is to preserve the peace, protect life and property, and to enforce in a fair and impartial manner all federal, state, and county laws. The Toombs County Sheriff's Department has a total of 59 employees, 25 certified officers, 28

full-time jail employees, four (4) part-time jail employees, and two (2) clerical staff members. The department has 38 patrol cars and detention equipment.

The Lyons Police Department's main functions are to protect and serve the citizens of Lyons. The Lyons Police Department has 16 certified officers and eight (8) patrol cars.

The mission of the Vidalia Police Department is to provide competent and courteous service to all citizens and to all visitors of the community in their homes and places of business. The department's motto is "Serving with the Community." The Vidalia Police Department has 43 employees; 33 certified police officers, eight (8) non-sworn employees, and two (2) animal control officers. The department has eight patrol units, five investigation units, four command staff units, one probation officer unit, one Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) unit, and one animal control van.

### Fire Protection

Inventory. Toombs County has 10 organized fire stations located throughout the county. Six (6) of the fire stations are part of the Toombs County Fire Association. Cedar Crossing Fire Department is located at 2291 Cedar Crossing Road in Uvalda. East Toombs Volunteer Fire Department is located at 357 Northwest Broad Street in Lyons. Marvin Yancey Volunteer Fire Department is located at 427 Laura Dixon Road in Lyons. New Branch Fire Department is located at 5171 Highway 1878 in Lyons. Normantown Fire Department is located at 200 East Second Street. South Thompson Fire Department is located on Cedar Crossing Road in Vidalia. The City of Lyons has two fire stations located at 109 South Lanier Street and 257 North State Street. There are three professional staff members, and 20 first responder volunteers. The City has an ISO rating of 4, with an average response time of five to six minutes. The City of Vidalia has two fire stations located at 1415 Aimwell Road and 302 West Pine Street. There are 13 full-time state certified firemen, and 12 module one certified volunteers. The City has an ISO rating of 5, with an average response time of three to five minutes. The City has mutual aid agreements with the neighboring cities of Lyons and Swainsboro.

### Emergency Medical Services

Inventory. The Toombs-Montgomery County Emergency Medical Service (EMS) has two locations; 509 Maple Drive in Vidalia, and 2291 Cedar Crossing Road in Uvalda. The facility located in Vidalia is owned by the county, and leased to Meadows Regional Medical Center. The Toombs-Montgomery County EMS is operated by the Medical Center under the umbrella of the Toombs and Montgomery County Board of Commissioners through an intergovernmental agreement. The area served is about 612 square miles with an approximate population of 34,270. The EMS has four regular duty state of the art ambulances, equipped with life pack cardiac monitors. The staff consists of 23 paramedics and 12 emergency medical technicians.

### Emergency Management Agency

Inventory. The Toombs County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) is located at 321 Northwest Broad Street in Lyons. The building is in good condition. The EMA is the agency that has overall responsibility for the coordination and carrying out of all emergency functions during emergencies and/or disaster situations (man-made or natural) that may affect the citizens of Toombs County, its municipalities, and Plant Hatch in neighboring Appling County. The staff consists of one full-time employee, one part-time employee, and 25 Volunteer Certified Rescue Specialists.

### E-911

Inventory. The Toombs County E-911 is an enhanced center having the capability of geographically locating all calls, including cell phone calls. The Toombs County E-911 Communications Center is responsible for answering all 911 and nonemergency calls for the citizens of Toombs and Montgomery counties. The E-911 Center provides dispatching for all law enforcement, EMA, EMS, rescue, fire, and first responders.

Assessment. Although the local law enforcement agencies in Toombs County provide adequate public protection, facility improvements and equipment upgrades are needed to



maximize the capability of the departments. Since terrorists attacked the World Trade Towers on September 11, 2001, local law enforcement has been asked to increase their awareness of suspicious activities and continue to be on heightened alert at certain times. Also, there may be a need for additional training in the future to deal with Homeland Security issues such as chemical bio-terrorism and various other means terrorists use.

The Lyons Police Department is currently located on the lower level of the Lyons City Hall. Construction of a new Lyons City Hall will begin in the spring of 2009 with a tentative completion date of the fall 2009. The Lyons Police Department will then be able to occupy the entire building of the old City Hall, providing the police department with much needed additional office space.

The Vidalia Police Department has utilized the current facility for approximately 35 years. The facility is in fair condition; however, a new facility is needed to properly accommodate the department. The Vidalia Police Department is presently pursuing funding sources for the construction of a new station.

The Toombs County Sheriff's Department needs basic equipment upgrades including video equipment, GIS equipment, protective gear including bullet proof vests, and tasers. The department also needs vehicle equipment consisting of lights and sirens, video equipment, and vehicle upgrades.

Toombs County has an overall good fire protection program for a rural county; however, as technology advances and daily usage wears out equipment, additional equipment will be needed to accommodate services offered. The City of Lyons needs a training complex and upgrades to fire engines. Vidalia needs a 75 foot ladder truck with a pump and three additional full-time employees.

The Toombs-Montgomery County EMS is in need of additional trained staff members to efficiently accommodate citizens in the service area. Equipment needs include three regular duty state of the art ambulances equipped with life pack cardiac monitors.

The Toombs County EMA facility is in good condition; however, internal renovations are needed to increase the longevity of the facility. A concrete slab with cover and hookups is needed to shelter the agency's 30 foot mobile command post.

The E-911 facility in Lyons is responsible for dispatching emergency calls from Toombs and Montgomery counties. Additional stations are needed in order to efficiently handle the amount of calls the center receives. Additional equipment needed includes a new recorder, which has been budgeted for the 2009 year.

## **Hospital and Other Public Health Facilities**

Inventory. Meadows Regional Medical Center is a non-profit acute care hospital located at 1703 Meadows Lane in Vidalia. The facility consists of three floors housing all inpatient and outpatient areas as well as clerical and administrative staff offices. Meadows Regional opened in its current location in 1963. It is a 122 bed acute care facility providing specialty service in areas such as Cardiopulmonary, Social Service and Discharge Planning, transitional care, and rural health. Meadows Regional has over 600 employees including medical staff, active and consulting medical staff, and other staff members. Meadows Regional Medical Center is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. Meadows Regional Medical Center opened a rural health center in 1994, to provide healthcare to individuals who did not have a primary care physician or for those in need of immediate care. The center is located at 110 R.T. Stanley Place (Highway 292) in Lyons.

The Toombs County Health Department is located at 714 Northwest Broad Street in Lyons. The department has 19 full-time employees, including Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, Communicable Disease Specialist, administrative and clerical staff. In the 2007 fiscal year, the clinic provided services to 17,070 clients, while serving approximately 32 percent of the population of Toombs County. The clinic provides public health services in the areas of disease screening, family planning, immunization, STD services, child health checks, community health education, environmental health, infectious diseases, and bioterrorism preparedness.

Southeast Georgia Communities Project is located at 300 South State Street in Lyons. The agency works to improve maternal and child health access for the Latino population in five counties in the Southeast. Southeast Georgia Communities Project provides medical interpretation for women and their children at OB/GYN and pediatrician offices, health education, child abuse and neglect training, and medical service enrollments through the Bright Horizons program. The agency has 12 full-time employees, including nine interpreters.

Toombs County has three (3) nursing homes: Bethany Home Nursing Center of Vidalia (168 beds), Toombs Health and Rehabilitation (144 beds), and Meadows Nursing Center (35 beds). Meadows Nursing Center is located on the second floor of Meadows Regional Medical Center. There are also six (6) personal care homes: Bethany Assisted Living, Inc. (48 beds), Fuller House (3 beds), Morning Glory (4 beds), Precious Care Home (15 beds), Southern Magnolia Women's Home (12 beds), and Summer's Landing (48 beds).

Assessment. Meadows Regional Medical Center has been at its current location for approximately 45 years. Construction of a new facility is expected to start in the spring/summer of 2009. The new facility will be located on US Highway 280 East across from Meadows Wellness Center in Vidalia. The \$75 million dollar project will take approximately 18 months to complete.

## **Recreation**

Inventory. Recreational facilities in Lyons are operated by the Lyons Recreation Department located at One (1) South Washington Street, and also are utilized by the South Toombs Recreation Department located at 6289 U.S. 1 South. The Lyons Recreation Department has three full-time employees: the director, assistant director, and a maintenance employee. More than 1,600 participants utilize the recreation facilities yearly. The Recreation Department offers basketball, softball, baseball, football, cheerleading, and soccer programs for the youth. Additional activities include softball for adult men and quarterly events for approximately 380 senior citizens. Lyons has three recreational facilities. The Lyons City Gym on Oglethorpe Street, which has a seating capacity of 1,500, has a concession area, dressing rooms, and a storage area. Partin Park located off South Washington Street is approximately 26 acres, and it

houses the Lyons Recreation Department employee offices. The facility has three (3) concession stands, ½ mile lighted walking trail, a volleyball court, a bicycle trail, a 36 hole miniature golf course, nine (9) outdoor pavilions, five (5) athletic fields, three (3) batting cages, and 10 playground areas. Partin Park has several facilities that are utilized for community events: the Callaway Center, NeSmith Birthday House, Durden Cabin, and an octagon shaped building. Vincent Faison Park, formally known as Hallmark Park, is located on Hilton Drive and is approximately 10 acres. It has two (2) lighted basketball courts, a baseball/softball field, a playground, a concession/restroom area, and an outdoor pavilion. The South Toombs Recreation Department has one full-time employee, the director and more than 50 volunteers. The Recreation Department activities include basketball, baseball, tennis, cheerleading, and football. The South Toombs Recreation Department has one 10 acre park which is located on U.S. 1 South, and consists of limited facilities including a baseball field, concession stand, restroom facilities, and a tennis court. It also utilizes the football field across from the Toombs Central Elementary School.

The Vidalia Recreation Department manages the recreational facilities in Vidalia; the office is located at the Ed Smith Complex at 102 Stockyard Road, just off U.S. 280. The Recreation Department has six (6) full-time employees, 70 part-time employees, and over 200 volunteers. The City of Vidalia has six (6) recreational facilities. Ed Smith Complex is approximately 21.7 acres. It has five (5) baseball/softball fields, four (4) tennis courts, playground equipment, and a maintenance facility. Bay Street Park is located at 400 Bay Street; this older park is approximately 15.57 acres. The park has older facilities, including two (2) baseball fields, four (4) tennis courts, a swimming pool, a football/soccer field, a playground park with a pavilion, a multipurpose building, and a recreation office. This facility will likely be abandoned upon completion of the new Ezra Taylor Road regional complex. Frances Godbee Park is located on Church Street; it is six (6) acres. It has playground equipment with a pavilion. Gaynell Davis Park is located on West Sixth Street; the park is one (1) acre. It has playground equipment, a picnic shelter, and a basketball court. Flossie Hayes Park is located at 404 Thirteenth Avenue; it is approximately six (6) acres. It has two (2) pavilions, two (2) basketball courts, playground equipment, and a restroom area. H.W. Miller Park is located on Epstein Street, it is approximately ¾ acre. The park has playground equipment and a basketball court.

The City of Santa Claus does not have any public recreation facilities at this time; however, residents have access to such facilities nearby in Lyons, Vidalia and elsewhere in the county. The community of Cedar Crossing also has some recreational facilities including a picnic area, and a lighted walking track.

Assessment. Lyons, Vidalia, and the County have been able to provide adequate recreation services to its citizens at this point; however, several parks are in need of renovations or upgrades. Lyons Recreation Department needs two additional full-time maintenance employees and a secretary. Equipment needs include replacing the fencing around several fields, additional playground equipment, construction of a new outdoor pavilion, adding additional space to the equipment building, and additional paved parking. The South Toombs Recreation Department needs funding to provide additional equipment and to be able offer more facilities and services to participants. It is a candidate for consolidation with the Lyons Recreation Department. Vidalia Recreation Department needs to continue with the development of the 104 acre new recreation complex on Ezra Taylor Road. The facility will include four (4) adult softball fields, four (4) youth baseball fields, five (5) tennis courts, three (3) soccer/football fields, a concession stand and control tower, pavilions, a swimming pool, and a parking lot.

## **General Government**

Inventory-Services. There are four local governments: the cities of Lyons, Santa Claus, Vidalia, and Toombs County. Each government offers services and maintains public facilities, which enhance the quality of life for their citizens.

Toombs County was created in 1905 by legislative act. The County is governed by five County Commissioners, while a full time County Manager manages the day-to-day operations. Constitutional officers include the Sheriff, Clerk of Court, Tax Commissioner, the Probate Court Judge, State Court Judge and Solicitor. Among the services Toombs County offers are public safety, court services, jail operation, road and bridge maintenance, health and welfare services, solid waste collection and disposal, recycling, voter registration/elections, senior services, EMS, EMA, E-911, library, recreation, rural fire protection, and community development services. Public boards and authorities in Toombs County include the Board of Registrars, Toombs

County Development Authority, Toombs County Board of Education, Board of Tax Assessors, Library Board, Toombs-Montgomery Chamber of Commerce, Toombs County Hospital Authority, and the Toombs County Development Authority.

Incorporated in 1902, a mayor and five-member council govern the City of Lyons, while a full time City Administrator manages the day-to-day operations. The City provides public safety, water and sewer services, solid waste collection and disposal, and street maintenance and repairs. Public boards and authorities in Lyons include the Lyons Downtown Development Authority and the Lyons Housing Authority. Recreational facilities are provided by the Lyons Recreation Department.

The City of Santa Claus was incorporated in 1940. It is governed by a mayor and four-member council. The City provides water and sewer services, and solid waste collection and disposal. Police and fire protection is provided by the County.

The City of Vidalia was incorporated in 1890. It is governed by a mayor and five-member council, while a full time City Manager manages the day-to-day operations. The City provides police and fire services, water and sewer services, solid waste collection and disposal, zoning, street maintenance and repairs, codes enforcement, and beautification. Public boards and authorities include the Downtown Vidalia Association, Vidalia Board of Education, Vidalia Housing Authority, and the Vidalia Airport Authority. Recreational facilities are provided by the Vidalia Recreation Department.

Inventory-Facilities. Toombs County facilities are spread throughout the county, with a total of 192 employees. The Courthouse is located at 100 Courthouse Square in Lyons. The Tax Assessor, Tax Commissioners Office, Board of Commissioners, and Voter Registration Office are located in the Courthouse. The Toombs County Extension Office is adjacent to the Courthouse, at 200 Courthouse Square in Lyons. The two Emergency Medical Service facilities are located at 509 Maple Drive in Vidalia and 2291 Cedar Crossing Road in Uvalda. The Toombs County E-911, Toombs County Sheriff's Department and Detention Center, and the Toombs County Volunteer Fire Department are located at 357 Northwest Broad Street in Lyons. Toombs-Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce is located at 2805 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street in

Vidalia. The Toombs County Department of Family and Children Service is located at 162 South Oxley Drive in Lyons. The Toombs County Health Department is located at 714 Northwest Broad Street in Lyons. The Toombs County Board of Education is located at 117 East Wesley Avenue in Lyons.

The Lyons City Hall is currently located at 257 North State Street although a new facility is set to begin construction in 2009. The mayor, city administrator, city clerk, personnel, and police department are located inside of City Hall. The Public Works Department is located on Lanier Street. The City of Lyons has 42 full-time employees.

The Santa Claus City Hall is located at 25 December Drive. A storage building is adjacent to the City Hall. The mayor's office, city clerk, and council chambers are located in the municipal building. Currently, the City of Santa Claus employs one full-time employee and one part-time employee.

The Vidalia City Hall is located at 114 Jackson Street. The mayor's office, council chambers, city manager's office, administration department, tax/license department, and utility services are located in the City Hall. The Public Works Department and Water and Sewer Department are located at 111 Brinson Road. The Vidalia Police Department is located at 101 Durden Street. The Vidalia Board of Education is located at 301 Adams Street. The City of Vidalia has 80 employees.

Assessment-Services. It appears that the services offered by the local governments are adequate. However, it is anticipated that many services will need to be improved and expanded due, in part to state and federal mandates, as well as to improve efficiency and control cost. Solid waste disposal is a service, which has changed dramatically due to the requirements of the Georgia Solid Waste Management Act. Toombs County and its municipalities have implemented and continue to implement their solid waste management plan. Also services will need to be improved to meet the ever-changing needs of the population. While services are generally good, they cannot remain static.

Given the increasing complexities of local government services and the growing burden on local governments to deliver more with less whenever possible, local governments need to employ professional staff to help provide more efficient services. There is a need for cooperative intergovernmental sharing of various services to ensure countywide enforcement and coordination, and to prevent duplication of efforts and unnecessary waste of resources. Recreation services are one area deserving consideration of service merger.

Assessment-Facilities. The City of Lyons' facility needs for the next 20 years are recreational facility improvements, completion of a new city hall, public safety improvements and solid waste disposal improvements. The new Lyons City Hall will be at the corner of North Lanier Street and Northeast Broad Street, facing GA Highway 292. The groundbreaking ceremony took place in January, 2009. It will take approximately seven months to complete the new facility.

The City of Santa Claus' major public facility needs for the next 20 years are to make improvements to the water system along with making general improvements that are necessary throughout the city.

The City of Vidalia's major public facility needs for the next 20 years are fire safety improvements, health care facility completion, recreational facility improvements, and construction of a new police station.

## **Educational Facilities**

Inventory. Toombs County has two separate school systems, Toombs County and the City of Vidalia. The Toombs County School System is operated by the Toombs County Board of Education, whose office is located at 117 East Wesley Avenue in Lyons. The school system is comprised of five schools, all but one of which are located in Lyons: Toombs County High (9-12) located at 600 Bulldog Road (Lyons), Toombs County Middle School (6-8) located at 701 Bulldog Road (Lyons), Lyons Upper Elementary School (3-5) located at 830 South State Street (Lyons), Lyons Primary School (P-2) located at 298 North Lexington Street (Lyons), and Toombs Central Elementary (P-5) located at 6287 U.S. 1 south of Lyons. Toombs County High



School is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS); the remaining Toombs County Schools are Georgia Accredited. Enrollment for Toombs County in 2008-2009 is 3,020 students. The Toombs County School System has approximately 455 employees, of which 225 are certified personnel. The total budget for the 2008 FY is \$38,000,000. The Toombs County School System has a postsecondary option program agreement through the University System of Georgia with East Georgia College and Georgia Southern University. The school system also has a private school agreement in the "ACCEL" program with Brewton-Parker College.

The schools in Vidalia are operated by the Vidalia Board of Education, whose office is located at 301 Adams Street. There are four Vidalia City Schools: J. D. Dickerson Primary (P-2) located on GA 292; Sally D. Meadows Elementary (3-5) located at 205 Waters Drive; J.R. Trippe Middle School (6-8) located at 200 McIntosh Street; and Vidalia Comprehensive High School (9-12) located at 1001 North Street. Enrollment for Vidalia City Schools in 2008-2009 is 2,445 students. Vidalia Comprehensive High School is SACS accredited; the remaining Vidalia City Schools are Georgia Accredited. The Vidalia City School System has approximately 241 employees, of which 202 are certified personnel.

There are four private educational institutions in Toombs County. Robert Toombs Christian Academy is located in Lyons. Total enrollment for the school is 332, grades P-12. The school is fully accredited by the Georgia Accrediting Commission. Blount Youth Home, Paul Anderson Youth Home, and Vidalia Heritage Academy are located in Vidalia. Total enrollment for Blount Youth Home is 24, grades 5-12. The school is a member of the Institute for Independent Education. Total enrollment for Paul Anderson Youth Home is 20, grades 9-12. The school is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Vidalia Heritage Academy has approximately 80 students attending grades K-7. The school is a member of the Association of Christian Schools International.

Kiddie Kastle I is a Head Start program for children of seasonal and migrant farm workers through Telamon Corporation. It is one of three Head Start programs in Georgia for these children. The school is open from April to December, coinciding with the local farming

season. Approximately 138 children attended the program for the 2008 school year. Kiddie Kastle I is located at 684 North Washington Street in Lyons.

Southeastern Technical College is a two-year higher education institution, located in Vidalia. The facility provides training to students in more than 50 programs, as well as Adult Literacy programs that are offered through the Economic Development Center. It is currently merging and assuming control of the Swainsboro Technical College in Swainsboro. It also has articulation agreements with the local school systems.

Several other post secondary schools are located in close proximity to Toombs County. Brewton-Parker College, a four-year private Baptist college is located in Mount Vernon. Georgia Southern University, a four-year Carnegie Doctoral-Research University, is located in Statesboro. East Georgia College is a two-year college located in Swainsboro. There are two technical colleges located within commuting distance of Toombs County, Swainsboro Technical College located in Swainsboro (soon to be part of Southeastern Technical College) and Altamaha Technical College located in Baxley.

Assessment. The Vidalia City and Toombs County school systems have experienced some growth in recent years. The Toombs County School System projects construction of two new schools, a high school and primary school, within the next five years. The educational facilities in the Vidalia City Schools System and the Toombs County School System are in good condition. Continuous upgrades and renovations are completed as needed to school facilities. Ongoing general maintenance will be needed in the future at all schools in the school systems. Growth in the system (student growth) will be the determining factor for new school construction.

## Library and Other Cultural Facilities

Inventory. Toombs County has three library facilities which are part of the Ochoopee Regional Library System: Vidalia-Toombs County Library (Vidalia), Nelle Brown Memorial Library (Lyons), and the Ladson Genealogical Library (Vidalia). The Vidalia-Toombs County Library is located at 610 Jackson Street in Vidalia. The facility was originally built in 1967, and was renovated in 1992. It serves as the headquarters for the Ochoopee Regional Library System covering Toombs, Tattnall, and Montgomery counties. Approximately 9,758 patrons annually borrow 60,865 print materials from the 17,764 square foot facility. The library employs six full-time employees and one part-time employee. The Nelle Brown Library is located at 166 West Liberty Street in Lyons. The 7,069 square foot facility was built in 1990. The library has a collection of 14,648 print materials, 804 non-print materials, 3 downloadable books, and 12 print subscriptions to offer to its 1,200 patrons. The Ladson Genealogical Library is located at 125 Church Street, Suite 104 in downtown Vidalia. There are 93 patrons registered at this facility. The library has approximately 30,000 books and pamphlets covering state and county history, marriage and death records, Census and church records, Confederate rosters, individual biographies, family histories, genealogical periodicals, and materials on heraldry.

The Altama Museum of Art and History, located on Jackson Street in the National Register-listed Brazell House, is a public art facility that displays antique prints and exhibits. The museum is known for its Norma Damon Libby Collection of Staffordshire porcelain, one of the largest collections in the country with over 260 pieces and approximately 210 different patterns. The museum's permanent collection contains 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century English, French, and German prints, 20<sup>th</sup> century Southern art, and 19<sup>th</sup> century wooden art.

There are several facilities located in Toombs County that are used for community events and social gatherings, including the historic Pal Theatre in downtown Vidalia, and the Franklania Playhouse. The three-floor Pal Theatre is located at 122 Church Street. The first floor has a film screen, dressing rooms, and meeting space utilized for meetings, conferences, non-profit screenings, small plays, and films. The second and third floors are utilized for offices, and

a supply and equipment warehouse. The Franklania Playhouse is located at 3001 East First Street in Vidalia on the campus of Southeastern Technical College. The facility is utilized for theatrical performances and short plays. The Franklania Playhouse draws its audience from various areas, but primarily from Toombs County and residents from the six surrounding counties. Recently, the Franklania Playhouse has utilized the Southeastern Technical College Toombs Auditorium, which has a seating capacity of 776. Southeastern Tech also has a 236 seat Tattnall Auditorium available for community events. The historic Pal Theatre in Lyons has been renovated and is now called the Blue Marquee Theatre, which is home to the “Tales from the Altamaha” community play.

Toombs County has nine listings on the National Register of Historic Places. The privately owned Robert and Missouri Garbutt House, also known as Twenty Columns, is located at 700 West Liberty Street in Lyons. The Lyons Woman’s Club House is located on East Liberty Street in Lyons. The Jim Smith House is located south of Lyons in rural Toombs County. As previously stated, the Crawford W. Brazell House is currently rehabilitated as the Altama Museum of Art and History. Citizens Bank of Vidalia is located at 117 Southeast Main Street. The Leader-Rosansky House is located at 403 Jackson Street in Vidalia and has been rehabilitated for real estate offices. The McLemore-Sharpe Farmstead is located southwest of Vidalia on GA Highway 130. The Vidalia Commercial Historic District, also known as Downtown Vidalia, is bounded generally by Meadow Street, Jackson Street, Pine Street, and Thompson streets. The Peterson-Wilbanks House is also located on Jackson Street, where it houses a law firm.

The City of Vidalia hosts the annual Vidalia Onion Festival, a tradition that started in 1978. The festival is held the last weekend of April. Events include an air show, arts and craft fair, cooking sessions, pageants, fireworks, street dancing, and more. The festival is organized through the Vidalia Area Convention and Visitors Bureau. Proceeds from the events are donated back to the community throughout the year.

The City of Lyons hosts the annual production of “Tales from the Altamaha.” The tales, which are based on the writings of the late Colonel T. Ross Sharpe, are accounts of events that transpired from regional settlers about their lives, losses, love, and scandals. The collection has

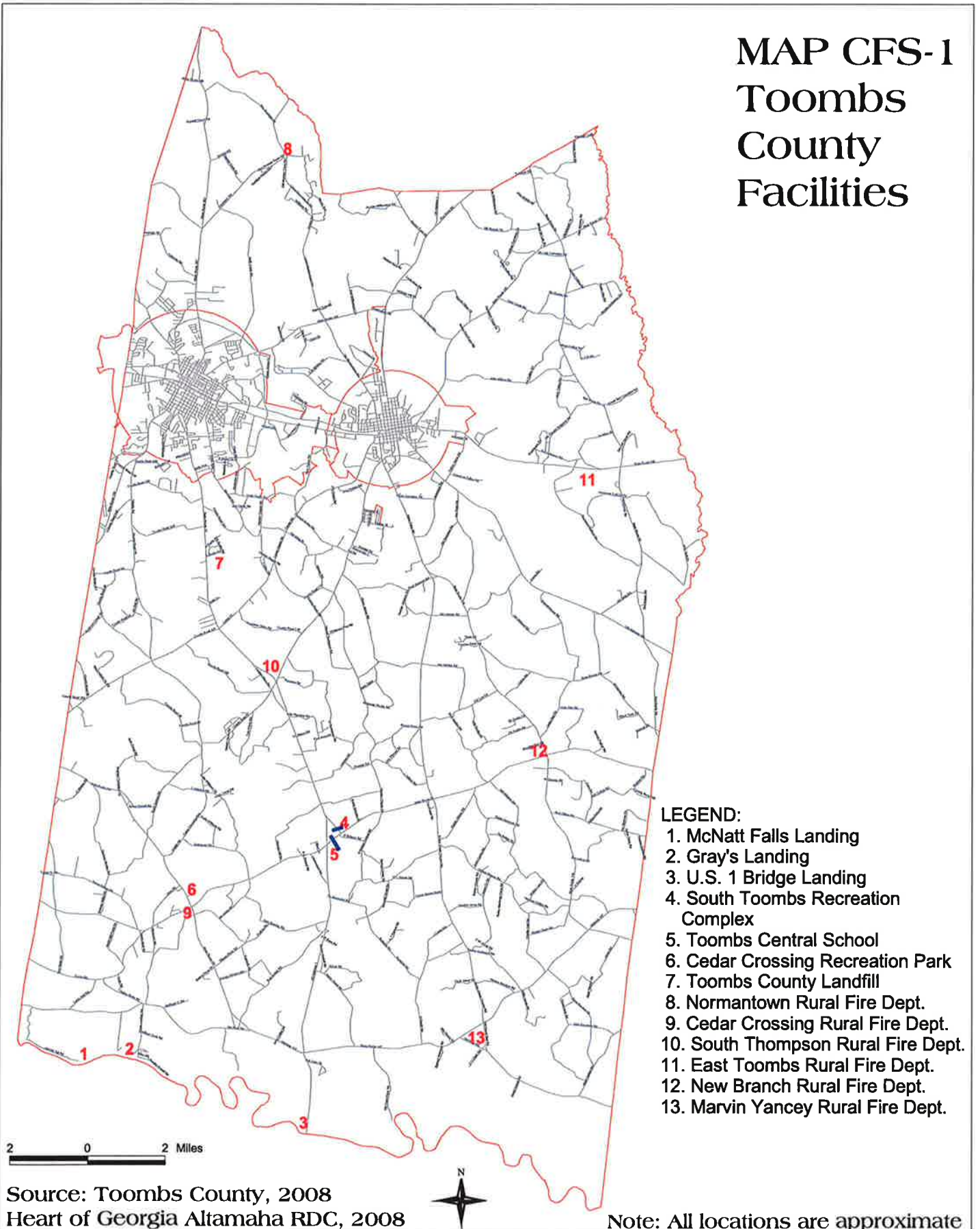
over 800 manuscripts, and each year a new scenario is reenacted. The annual event started in the spring of 2005.

The City of Lyons also hosts the Southeast Georgia Soapbox Derby. This event is dedicated to the youth of Lyons. Participants race down Derby Hill. The winner competes at the national competition in the summer held in Akron, Ohio.

The City of Santa Claus hosts an annual Christmas Party and candle lighting for its citizens. The event which has lasted for a number of years is held in December. On Christmas Eve city officials light a candle in front of each residence in the city limits.

Assessment. Toombs County and its cities have a number of facilities and traditions countywide that are symbolic of the community and what it represents. There is a desire to utilize the historic Pal Theatre more, through increased publicity in other Region communities.

# MAP CFS-1 Toombs County County Facilities



## LEGEND:

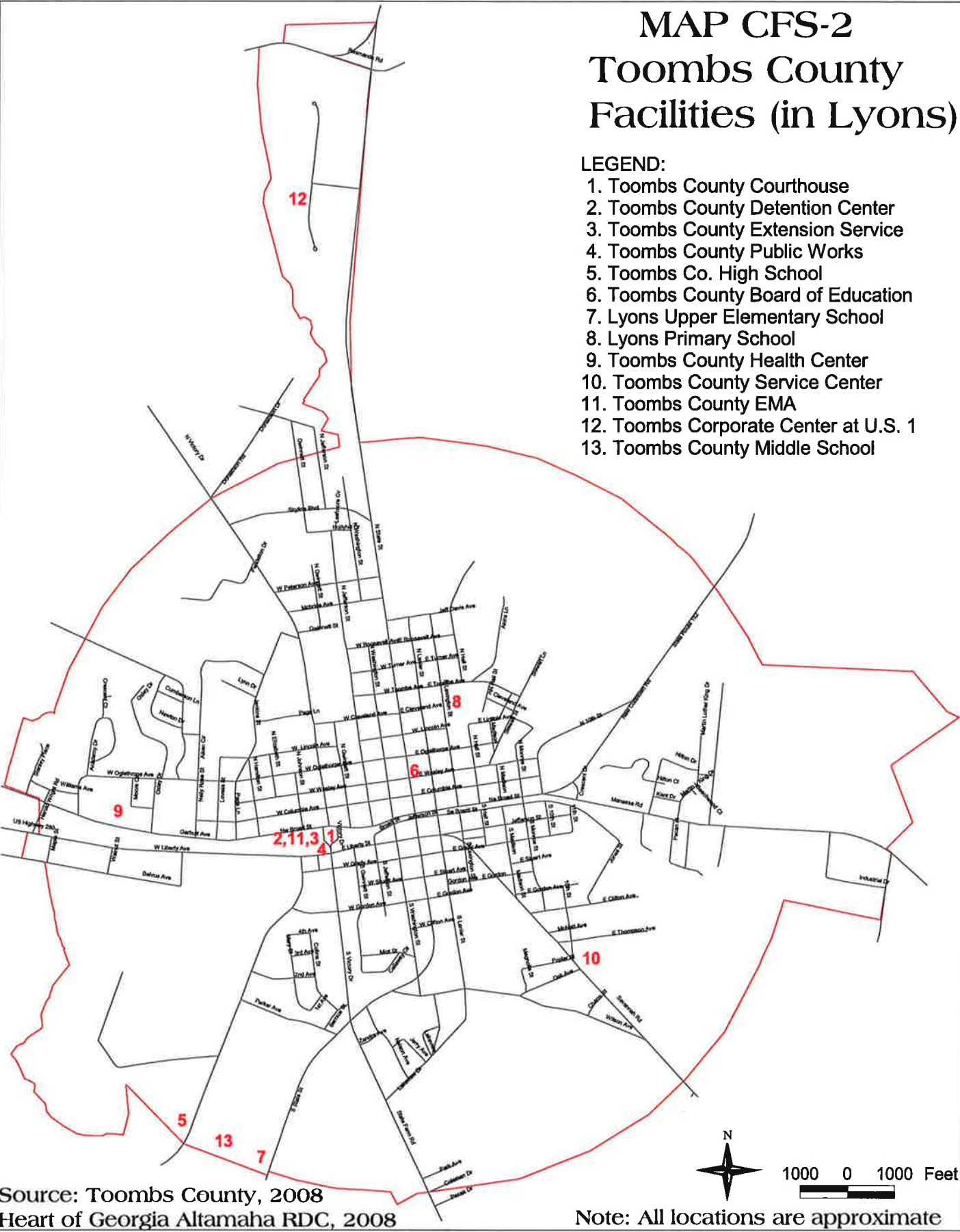
1. McNatt Falls Landing
2. Gray's Landing
3. U.S. 1 Bridge Landing
4. South Toombs Recreation Complex
5. Toombs Central School
6. Cedar Crossing Recreation Park
7. Toombs County Landfill
8. Normantown Rural Fire Dept.
9. Cedar Crossing Rural Fire Dept.
10. South Thompson Rural Fire Dept.
11. East Toombs Rural Fire Dept.
12. New Branch Rural Fire Dept.
13. Marvin Yancey Rural Fire Dept.

Source: Toombs County, 2008  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008

Note: All locations are approximate

# MAP CFS-2 Toombs County Facilities (in Lyons)

- LEGEND:**
- 1. Toombs County Courthouse
  - 2. Toombs County Detention Center
  - 3. Toombs County Extension Service
  - 4. Toombs County Public Works
  - 5. Toombs Co. High School
  - 6. Toombs County Board of Education
  - 7. Lyons Upper Elementary School
  - 8. Lyons Primary School
  - 9. Toombs County Health Center
  - 10. Toombs County Service Center
  - 11. Toombs County EMA
  - 12. Toombs Corporate Center at U.S. 1
  - 13. Toombs County Middle School



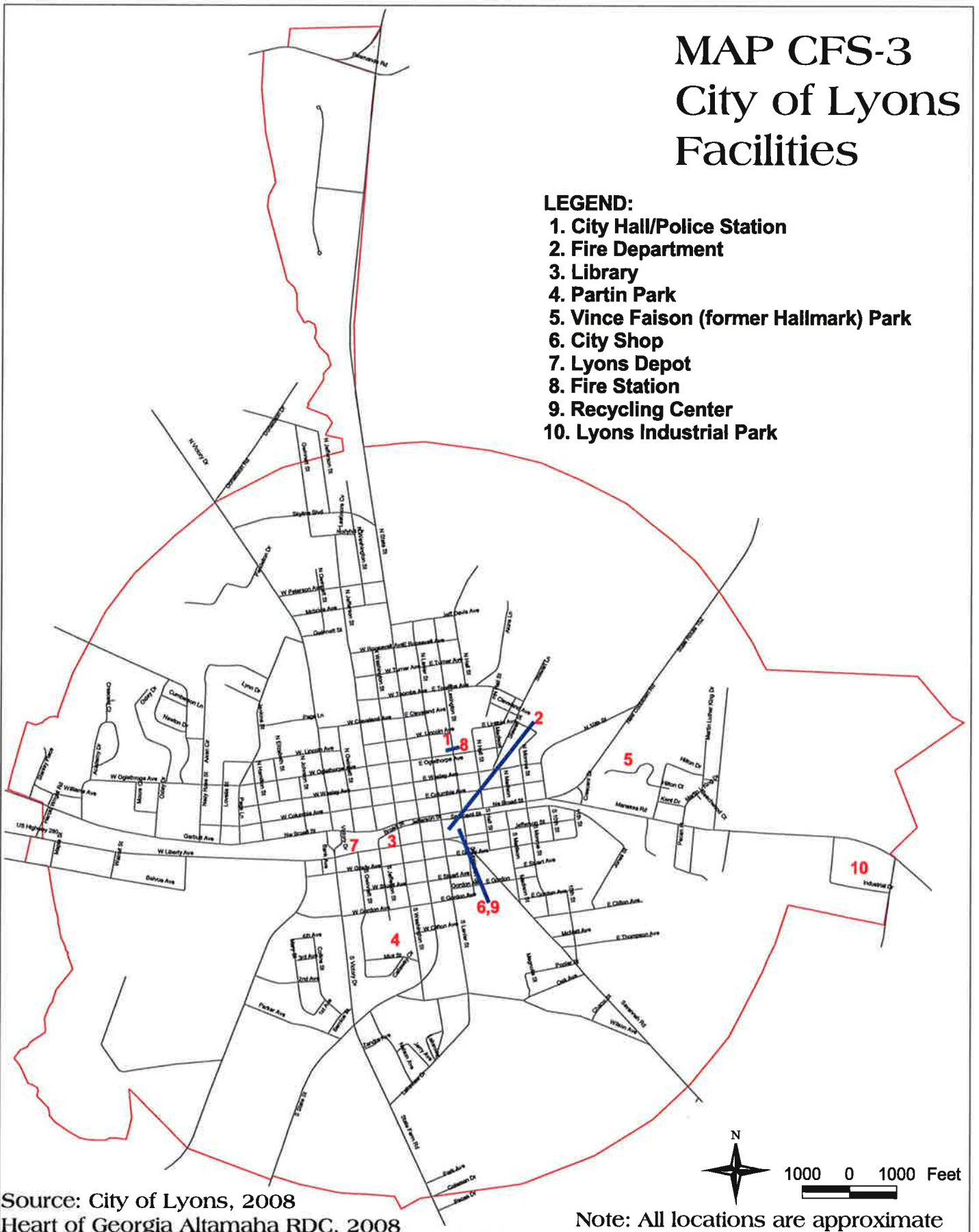
Source: Toombs County, 2008  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008

Note: All locations are approximate

# MAP CFS-3 City of Lyons Facilities

## LEGEND:

- 1. City Hall/Police Station
- 2. Fire Department
- 3. Library
- 4. Partin Park
- 5. Vince Faison (former Hallmark) Park
- 6. City Shop
- 7. Lyons Depot
- 8. Fire Station
- 9. Recycling Center
- 10. Lyons Industrial Park



Source: City of Lyons, 2008  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008

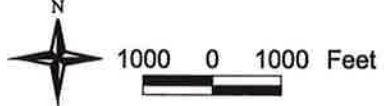
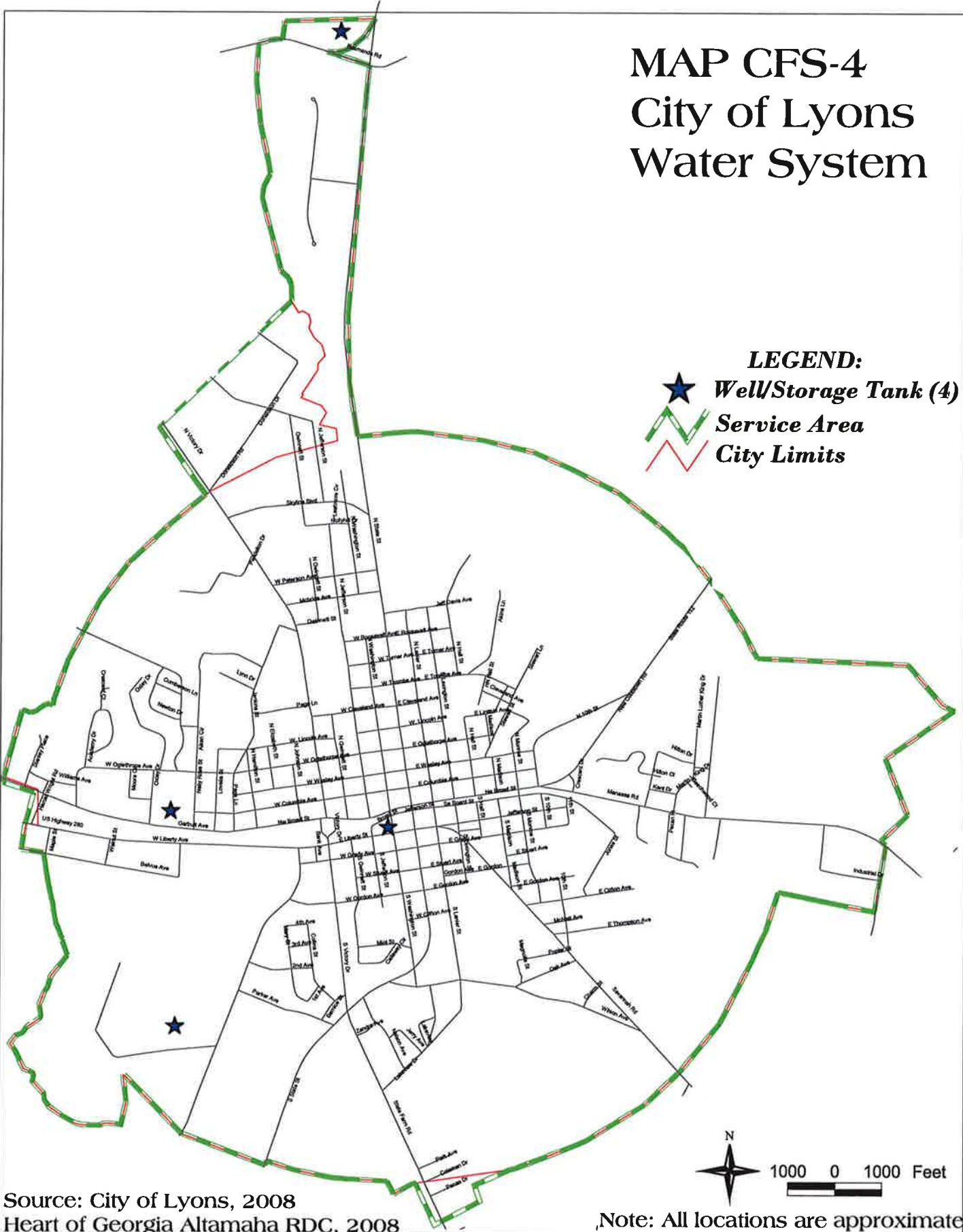
Note: All locations are approximate



# MAP CFS-4 City of Lyons Water System

**LEGEND:**  

**Well/Storage Tank (4)**  
**Service Area**  
**City Limits**

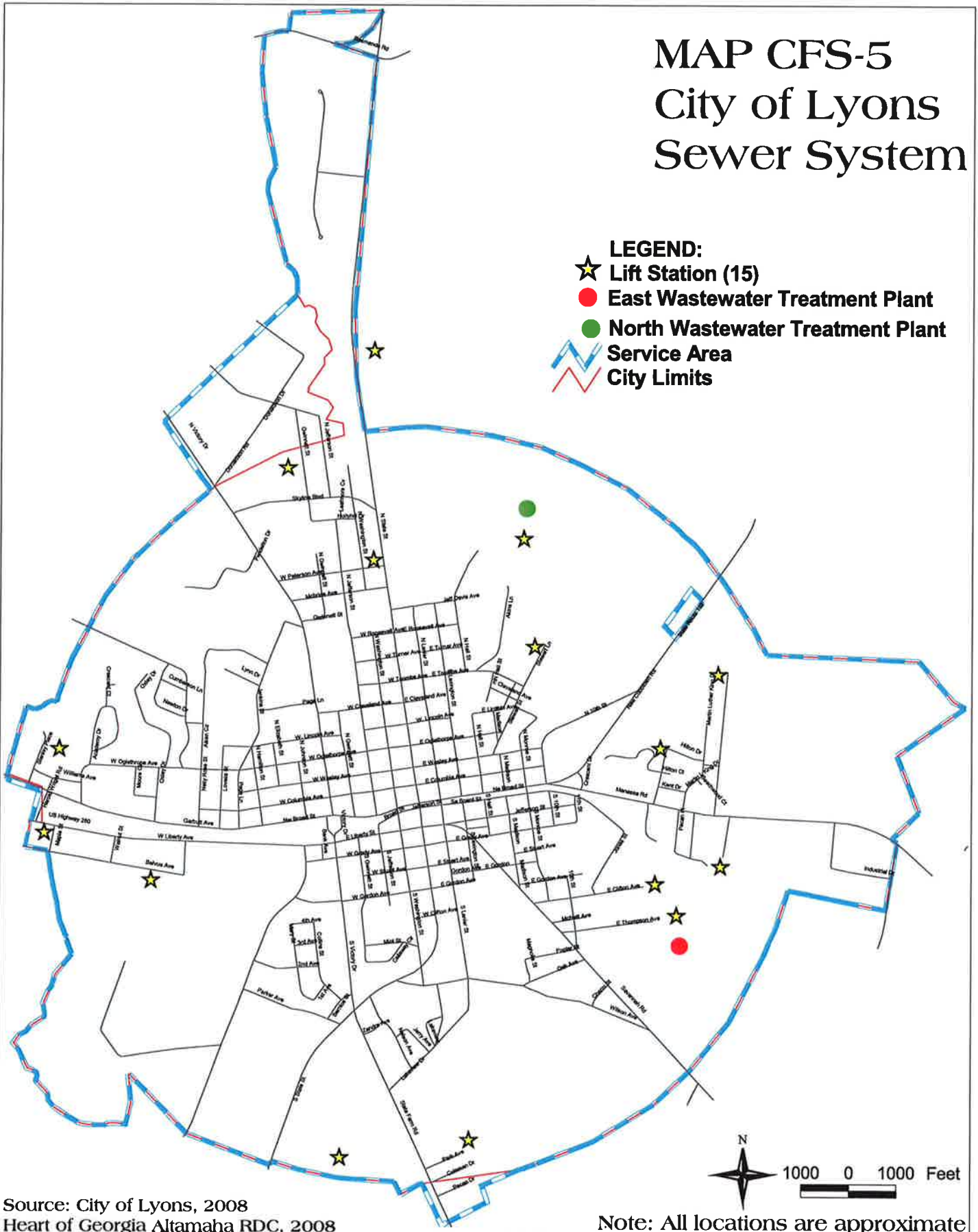


Source: City of Lyons, 2008  
 Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008

Note: All locations are approximate

# MAP CFS-5 City of Lyons Sewer System

- LEGEND:**
- ★ Lift Station (15)
  - East Wastewater Treatment Plant
  - North Wastewater Treatment Plant
  - Service Area
  - City Limits



Source: City of Lyons, 2008  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008

Note: All locations are approximate

# MAP CFS-6

## City of Santa Claus

### Facilities



#### LEGEND:

- 1. City Hall
- 2. Storage Facility

Source: City of Santa Claus, 2008  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008



200 0 200 Feet


Note: All locations are approximate

# MAP CFS-7 City of Santa Claus Water System



## LEGEND:

- 1. Well
- 2. Storage Tank

 Service Area (entire city & 3 customers/houses outside)

200 0 200 Feet  


Source: City of Santa Claus, 2008  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008



Note: All locations are approximate

# MAP CFS-8 City of Santa Claus Sewer System



**LEGEND:**

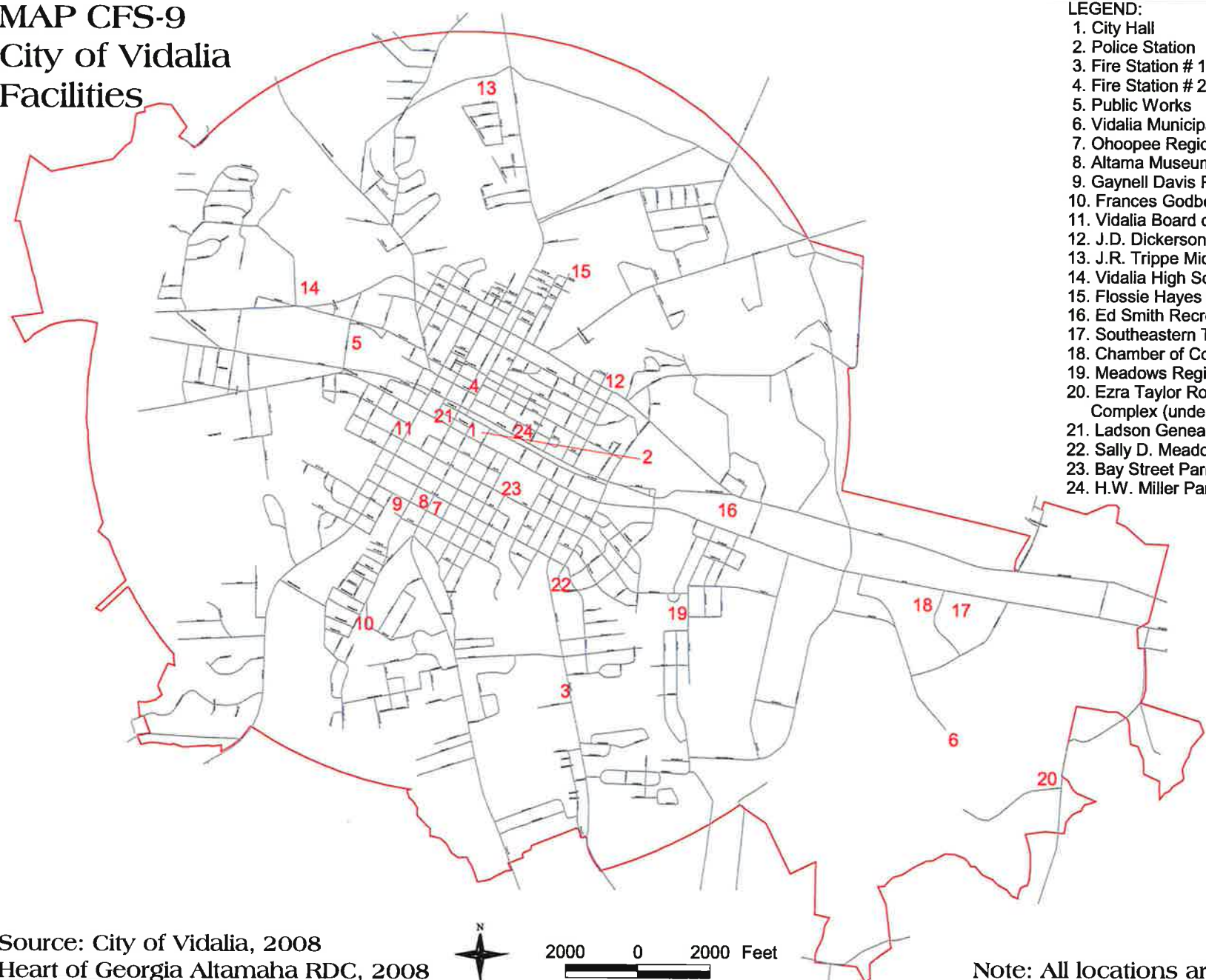
-  **Service Area**
-  **City Limit**
-  **Oxidation Pond**



Source: City of Santa Claus, 2008  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008

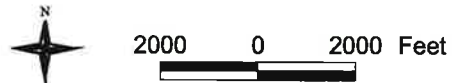
Note: All locations are approximate

# MAP CFS-9 City of Vidalia Facilities



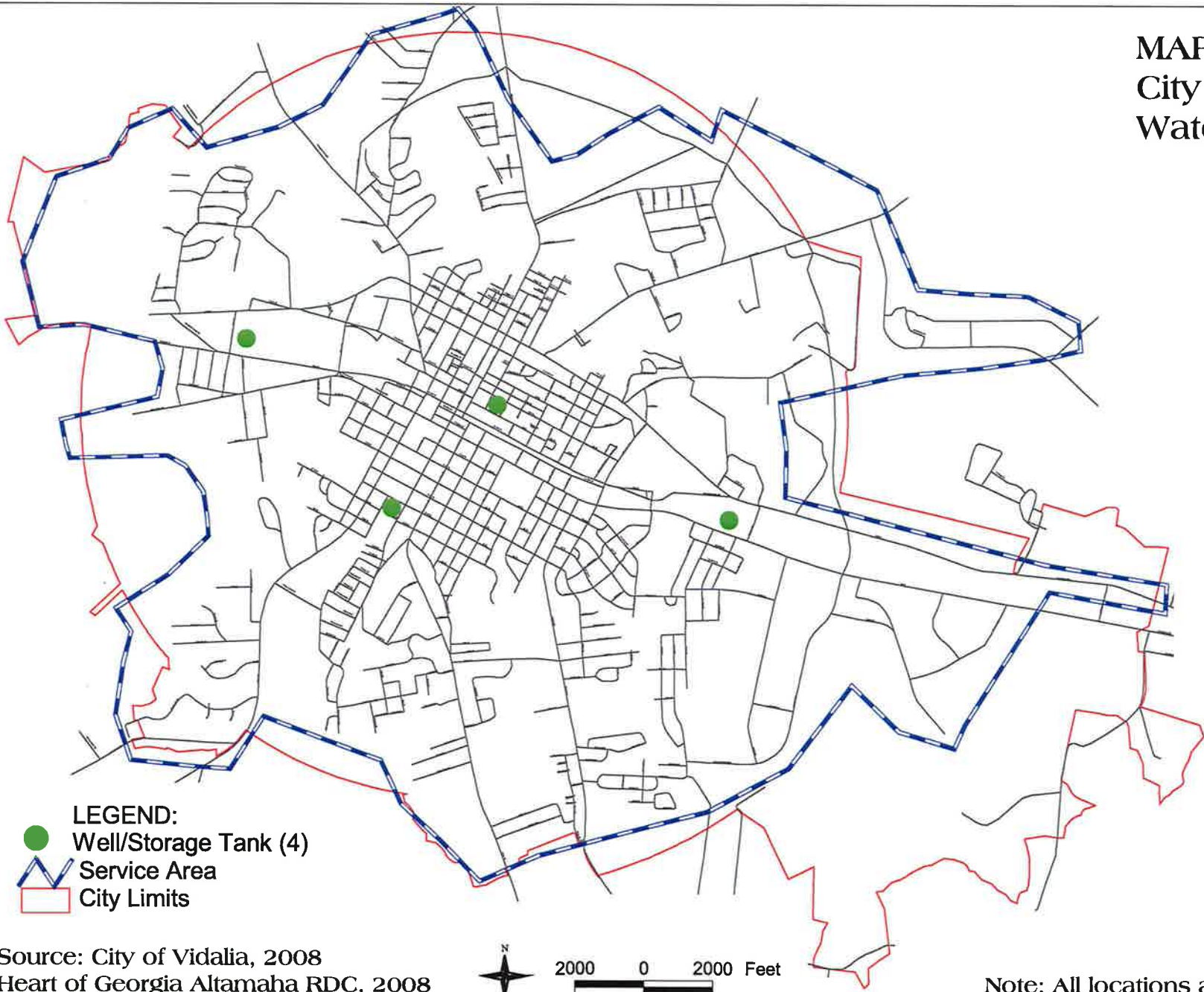
- LEGEND:**
1. City Hall
  2. Police Station
  3. Fire Station # 1
  4. Fire Station # 2
  5. Public Works
  6. Vidalia Municipal Airport
  7. Ochopee Regional Library
  8. Altama Museum of Art & History
  9. Gaynell Davis Park
  10. Frances Godbee Park
  11. Vidalia Board of Education
  12. J.D. Dickerson Primary School
  13. J.R. Trippe Middle School
  14. Vidalia High School
  15. Flossie Hayes Park
  16. Ed Smith Recreation Complex
  17. Southeastern Technical College
  18. Chamber of Commerce
  19. Meadows Regional Medical Center
  20. Ezra Taylor Road Recreation Complex (under development)
  21. Ladson Genealogical Library
  22. Sally D. Meadows Elementary
  23. Bay Street Park
  24. H.W. Miller Park

Source: City of Vidalia, 2008  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008



Note: All locations are approximate

**MAP CFS-10  
City of Vidalia  
Water System**



- LEGEND:**
- Well/Storage Tank (4)
  - ▬ Service Area
  - ▭ City Limits

Source: City of Vidalia, 2008  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008

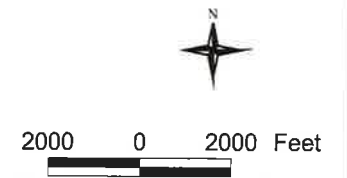


Note: All locations are approximate

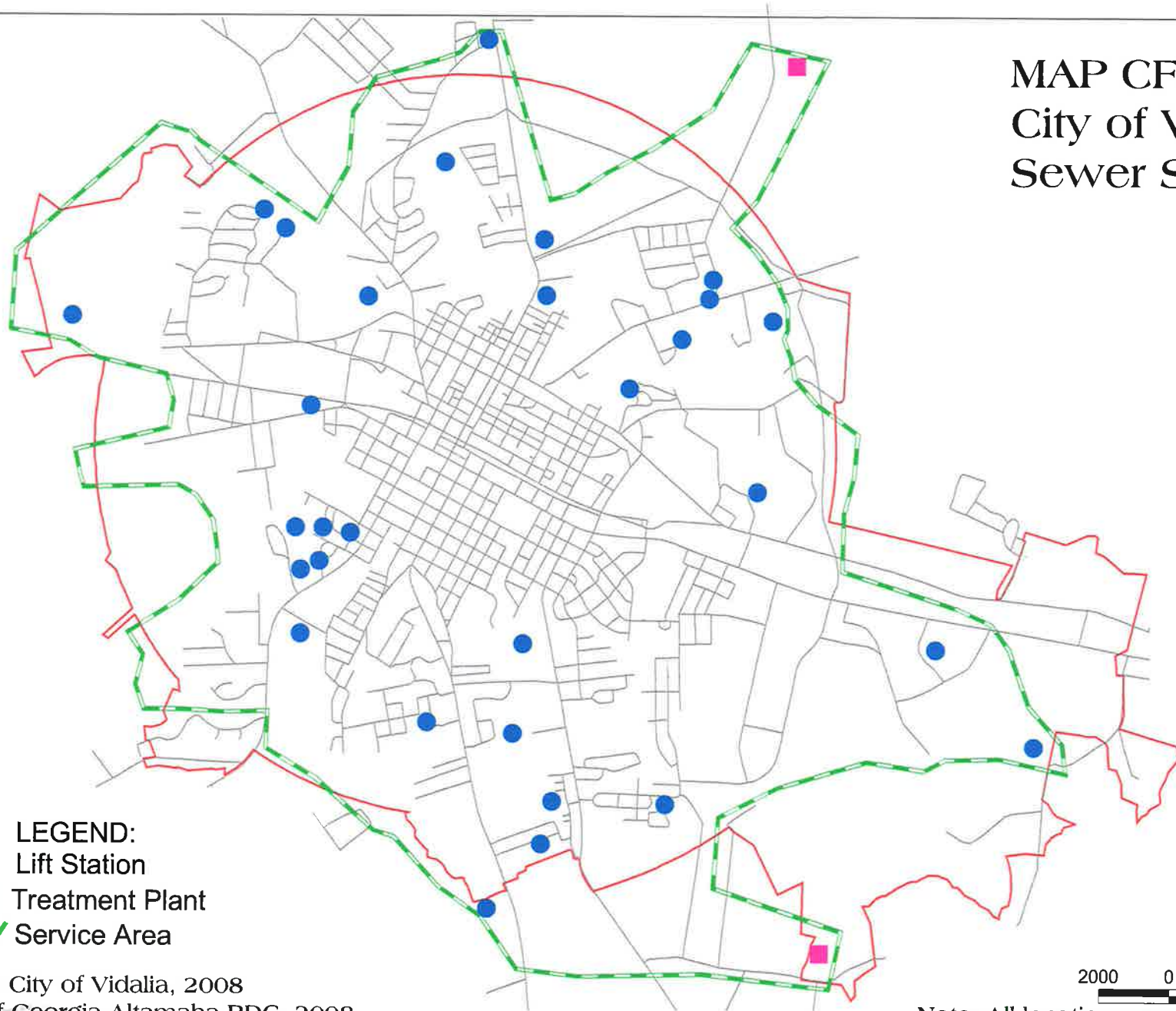
# MAP CFS-1 1 City of Vidalia Sewer System

- LEGEND:**
- Lift Station
  - Treatment Plant
  - ▬ Service Area

Source: City of Vidalia, 2008  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC, 2008



Note: All locations are approximate





## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION**

### **Relationship of Governmental Entities and Programs to Local Government Comprehensive Plan**

#### **Entities**

There are no apparent conflicts identified in Toombs County's joint comprehensive plan with the adjacent counties. The local comprehensive plan does call for working with neighboring counties where appropriate. For example, Toombs County participates with Montgomery County in a Joint Development Authority to promote economic development activities among and within both counties, as well as a joint E-911 system and EMS operation for the two counties. The City of Vidalia is participating with both Toombs and Montgomery counties in the Vidalia Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, which serves to attract and promote tourism for the general area. Toombs County also joined with Montgomery and Tattnall counties and Southeastern Technical College to form the state's first regional Entrepreneur Friendly Community program to promote the increased development of entrepreneurs and small businesses in the tri-county area. Southeastern Tech is also in the process of merging with Swainsboro Technical College. Toombs County is presently working with 10 other participating counties in the Altamaha River Partnership to promote increased nature-based tourism development along the river. The county is also participating with 12 other counties in Southeast Georgia in the Middle Coastal Unified Development Authority to attract increased economic and industrial development. All of the county's local governments also participate in regional efforts through the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center and the Regional Economic Development Academy.

Toombs County and its three municipalities generally work well with each other, and all are cooperating to improve the community. Meetings are held periodically among the chief elected officials of each government to discuss issues as they arise. The local governments in the county also work well with the Toombs County Board of Education, as does the City of Vidalia

with its own separate school system. Both school systems prepare their own separate Five-Year Facilities Plan and keep it updated annually, as well as participate in the state's first regional charter school along with Montgomery County and Southeastern Technical College. The local government comprehensive plan is consistent with the facilities plans of both school systems, and the County and the municipalities of Lyons and Vidalia work with the school systems on any needed infrastructure improvements. It identifies the Toombs County Development Authority as the main organization to oversee economic development activities for the county and the municipalities. The Toombs-Montgomery Development Authority is also an important coordination tool for promoting regional projects between the two counties. There currently are no independent special districts in Toombs County, and thus they are not applicable.

## **Programs and Requirements**

The Toombs County Service Delivery Strategy was updated in conjunction with the county's joint local comprehensive plan, and the Strategy is consistent with the comprehensive plan. The local comprehensive plan is also consistent with the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) implementation plans that were prepared under EPD requirements for Tiger, Swift, and Pendleton creeks and the Ochoopee River. The comprehensive plan's implementation policies/actions address supporting the local implementation of the TMDL plans. Other state and regional programs, such as the Coastal Zone Management Program, the Governor's Greenspace Program, the Appalachian Regional Commission, and Transportation for non-attainment areas, are not in effect in Toombs County and are not applicable.

## **Existing Coordination Mechanisms**

### **Entities**

There are several formal coordination mechanisms in existence between the county and adjacent counties. As mentioned earlier, Toombs County is currently involved with Montgomery County in a joint development authority that seeks to attract economic development

activities that would be beneficial to one or both counties. Both counties also participate in a joint E-911 system and EMS operation that is based in Toombs County. The City of Vidalia partners with both Toombs and Montgomery counties in the Vidalia Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, which serves as a means to promote increased tourism efforts in the area. The county is also an active member with 10 other counties along the Altamaha River in the Altamaha River Partnership to promote greater nature-based tourism development along the river, as well as with 12 other counties in the Middle Coastal Unified Development Authority to promote increased economic and industrial development in Southeast Georgia. As issues arise, the local government chief elected officials consult and/or meet with the appropriate administrator/chief elected official as needed. In matters involving the Toombs-Montgomery Development Authority, the local government chief elected officials, the Toombs County Manager, the Lyons City Administrator, and the Vidalia City Manager consult and/or meet with the president of the Toombs-Montgomery Development Authority and the president of the Toombs County Development Authority.

There are several formal coordination mechanisms existing between one or more local governments in the county. For example, the County and the cities of Lyons and Vidalia jointly contribute to the Toombs County Development Authority, with all three local governments appointing members to the Authority to oversee operations. All three local governments each contribute to the Authority's funding on an annual basis. Concerning the countywide E-911 service, the City of Vidalia has an agreement with the County to provide police dispatching service within its city limits. The County and the municipalities have a mutual aid agreement involving fire protection, while Vidalia also has a mutual aid agreement with the City of Swainsboro. The cities of Lyons and Vidalia provide fire protection within their municipal boundaries as well as a five-mile radius around each municipality, while the county provides fire protection to the unincorporated areas and to the City of Santa Claus by way of an agreement in which the county provides the service to the city in lieu of Santa Claus receiving SPLOST monies. The cities of Lyons and Vidalia as well as Montgomery County pay a daily per diem to Toombs County to house inmates in the Toombs County Jail. The county also provides law enforcement protection to the City of Santa Claus, while the cities of Lyons and Vidalia have their own police departments. The cities of Lyons and Vidalia have a mutual aid agreement with

each other for law enforcement protection, and both cities have a mutual aid agreement with the county. The Ochoopee Regional Library in Vidalia is jointly funded by the County and the cities of Lyons and Vidalia, with all three local governments each contributing a portion of the total local funding. In the area of recreation, the cities of Lyons and Vidalia both provide the service within their respective jurisdictions, with the South Toombs Recreation Department in the South Toombs area of the county near the community of Cedar Crossing and the Toombs Central Elementary School area also utilizing facilities and services of the Lyons Recreation Department. Adult recreation services in the county are now provided primarily through the City of Vidalia Recreation Department. The County provides for road maintenance service in the City of Santa Claus in exchange for SPLOST monies, while the cities of Lyons and Vidalia both provide the service within their respective jurisdictions. The County also provides solid waste collection and disposal service to the City of Santa Claus, while the other municipalities either provide the service themselves or contract for the provision of these services within their municipal areas. The County coordinates with Southeastern Technical College (STC) to provide skills training and other employment services through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program. STC is currently in the process of merging with Swainsboro Technical College, with STC proposed to serve as the main campus. The County and the City of Vidalia also assist STC with infrastructure improvements on an as needed basis. STC is in the process of establishing the state's first regional charter school, the Early College and Career Academy, which is a joint venture with school systems in the City of Vidalia and Toombs and Montgomery counties.

Meetings are held as needed among the appropriate administrator/chief elected officials to resolve any ongoing problems or conflicts. In matters involving the county school system, the chief elected officials, Toombs County Manager, and Lyons City Administrator are available to meet with the school superintendent to resolve issues, while in Vidalia the Mayor and City Manager are available to meet with the Vidalia City Schools Superintendent to resolve any issues that may arise. Matters involving the Development Authority are handled in regular meetings between the authority's president and the chief elected officials, County Manager, Lyons City Administrator, and Vidalia City Manager. Matters involving Southeastern Technical College are resolved through meetings including the chief elected officials, County Manager, the Vidalia City Manager, and the president of Southeastern Technical College. The joint comprehensive

plan preparation was coordinated by a formal executive committee and also a local plan coordination committee during the Community Agenda phase with public and private sector members appointed by all of the local governments.

## **Programs and Requirements**

Toombs County and the cities of Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia are all included in Toombs County's Service Delivery Strategy. These governments meet on a regular basis to discuss and resolve issues that arise within the various components of the Strategy. The TMDL implementation plans that have been prepared locally are not required to be implemented by the local governments at this time. There are current regional coordination mechanisms available through the Toombs-Montgomery Development Authority, the Vidalia Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Altamaha River Partnership, the Middle Coastal Unified Development Authority, and the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center. The local governments also actively participate in the RDC which provides a regional forum and means of cooperation, and the Regional Economic Development Academy serves as a forum to promote education and training while promoting economic development on a regional scale. Other state and regional programs are not applicable to Toombs County at this time.

## **Joint Planning and Service Agreements**

### **Entities**

The local governments in Toombs County have an inter-agency agreement concerning responses by the various agencies in times of local emergencies. Other joint planning and service agreements exist between the local governments in the areas of economic development, education, E-911, EMS, fire protection, jail, library, recreation, road/street maintenance, and solid waste. There currently are no other joint planning or service agreements between the local governments in Toombs County and adjacent local governments, the County or Vidalia City

school boards, and the development authority. The County and the municipalities have a joint service agreement in the area of law enforcement protection.

## **Programs and Requirements**

Under the county's Service Delivery Strategy, Toombs County and all of its municipalities have joint agreements concerning annexations, dispute resolution, and water/sewer service extensions. The Service Delivery Strategy, including these agreements, was updated concurrent with the joint local comprehensive plan. Other state and regional programs are not applicable to Toombs County.

## **Special Legislation and Joint Meetings or Work Groups for the Purpose of Coordination**

No special legislation or joint meetings or work groups are applicable to Toombs County involving other local entities or state programs, other than the Altamaha River Partnership and Middle Coastal Unified Development Authority mentioned earlier and the committees appointed to coordinate the joint comprehensive plan preparation. The local governments in the county do meet periodically to coordinate the countywide Service Delivery Strategy and keep it current, and there is regular coordination, both formal and informal, at the local government staff levels.

## **Local Government Parties or Offices With Primary Responsibility for Coordination**

### **Entities**

The chief elected officials from each local government, the Toombs County Manager, the Lyons City Administrator, and the Vidalia City Manager are the lead agents countywide for coordinating with administrators from the adjacent local governments, the county and city school superintendents, the Development Authority president, the president of the Toombs-Montgomery Development Authority, and the president of Southeastern Technical College.

## **Programs and Requirements**

The chief elected officials of each local government, the Toombs County Manager, the Lyons City Administrator, and the Vidalia City Manager are responsible for coordinating local issues under the countywide Service Delivery Strategy. Other state and regional programs are not applicable to Toombs County.

## **Issues Arising From Growth and Development Proposed In Nearby Governments**

At this time, there are a couple of potential issues arising from growth and development proposed in nearby governments or within the local governments in the county. One issue is the recent commercial/retail growth along U.S. 280 in the City of Vidalia, and the recent completion of the one-way pairing of U.S. 280 through much of Vidalia. Another related potential issue is the proposed construction of a new Meadows Regional Medical Center along U.S. 280 East and GA 292 East in Vidalia, which should serve to open up a new venue for future growth on the north side of U.S. 280 as well as along GA 292. Another issue is the possible future rehabilitation of a rail line between Vidalia and Swainsboro that would tie into a regional rail line that is owned by Vidalia and would connect the city with an industrial park in Swainsboro and a large proposed wood processing facility. Another issue connecting both cities is the planned merger between Southeastern Technical College and Swainsboro Technical College under a downsizing by the state of the number of technical college campuses statewide. Southeastern Tech would serve as the main campus, and its president would oversee both campuses. There is also a potential issue concerning the joint EMS service between Toombs and Montgomery counties as Montgomery County may choose to explore other options in the future. A final issue is the recent industrial growth in the new U.S. 1 Industrial Park north of Lyons, with which the county hopes to attract future industrial growth due to the park's relatively close proximity to I-16 to the north. No land use conflicts are present along the county's jurisdictional borders with adjacent counties. The county's comprehensive plan does not conflict with those of its

neighbors. The local plan is also consistent with the Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC's regional plan. The regional review hearing process for comprehensive plans is sufficient to obtain information about other local government plans and policies. Currently there are no service provision conflicts or overlaps or annexation issues in effect. The countywide Service Delivery Strategy is effective in addressing these issues.

### **Specific Problems and Needs Identified Within Each of the Comprehensive Plan Elements That Would Benefit From Improved or Additional Intergovernmental Coordination**

There are several areas within the Local Comprehensive Plan that could stand to benefit from strengthened coordination efforts. Regional efforts to promote economic development are well underway through ongoing participation in the Toombs-Montgomery Development Authority. Regional efforts to promote tourism and natural resource protection are well underway through ongoing participation in such regional groups as the Vidalia Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Altamaha River Partnership, the Middle Coastal Unified Development Authority, and the Magnolia Midlands group. These efforts need to be maintained and strengthened as appropriate. Greater coordination and commitment between the County, the Development Authority, the Vidalia Downtown Development Authority, and the Lyons Better Hometown Program could expand the resources available for consistent and steady economic development activities. A need also exists to strengthen the educational and skill levels of the local labor force to ensure that citizens have the skills needed for the kinds of development the county would like to attract. The relationship between the local governments of Toombs County, the Toombs County School System, the Vidalia City School System, the Region 9 Workforce Investment Board, and Southeastern Technical College to improve facilities and services should be expanded as needed. The need for potential coordination does exist concerning the enhancement of information sharing among all local governments as well as the potential for consolidating services. Greater coordination of efforts and cooperation in the area of solid waste, through participation in the Keep Georgia Beautiful program and other means as appropriate, could provide additional resources to enhance and expand local recycling and other waste reduction efforts. A significant need also exists in the area of land use planning. Toombs



County would stand to benefit from coordinated efforts among all jurisdictions in the coordination, establishment, and/or consolidation of comprehensive countywide land use regulations to address such areas as erosion and sedimentation control, manufactured housing, and codes enforcement. A countywide planning commission would be an effective tool toward developing a comprehensive and unified land development mechanism.

### **Adequacy of Existing Coordination Mechanisms With Related State Programs and Goals and Implementation Portions of the Local Comprehensive Plan**

The countywide Service Delivery Strategy was updated concurrent with the Local Comprehensive Plan. The local governments believe that the current Service Delivery Strategy provides a very effective and efficient delivery of local services. The Strategy addresses procedures for resolving land use and annexation issues, as well as infrastructure improvements such as water and sewer service extensions. The County's membership in the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center provides an avenue for improved coordination of these issues, both on a local and regional basis. Other state and regional programs are not applicable to Toombs County.

# HOUSING

## Introduction

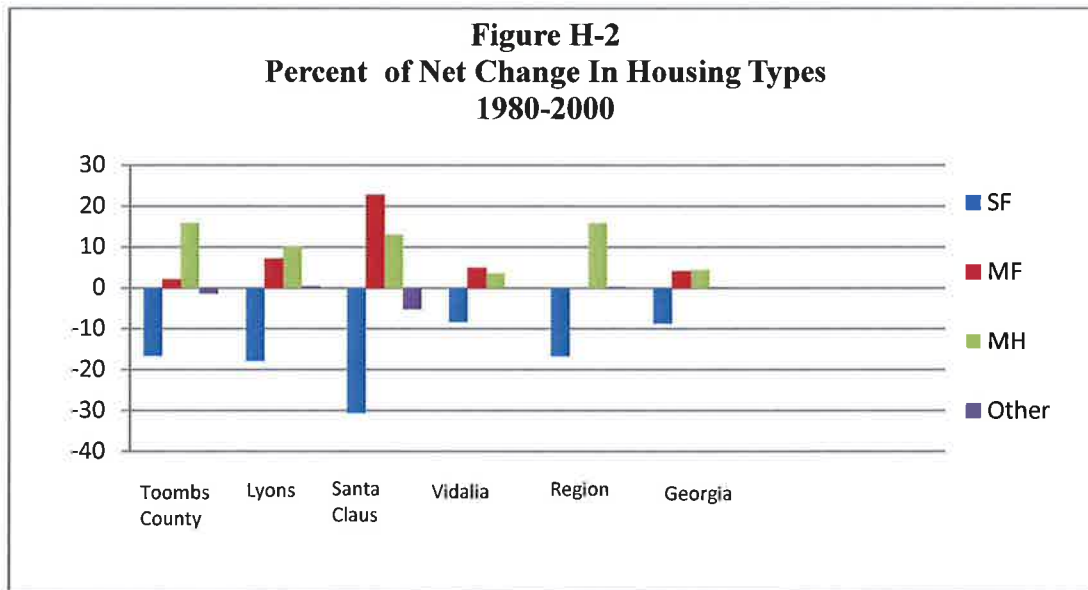
Housing is a key link in a comprehensive plan with important relationships to population, economic development, and land use. Growth of almost any sort usually means more people, and they need a place to live. Land must be available for development of a wide range of housing types; there needs to be choice in housing; and housing must be affordable and desirable. Improving the quality of life for people has to begin by ensuring decent, safe, and sanitary shelter. Availability and affordability of housing, and its quality and appearance have become issues important to continued economic development and social equity concerns in many communities. The condition of a community's housing may reflect the condition of the community itself.

## Housing Types and Mix

### Composition of Housing Stock

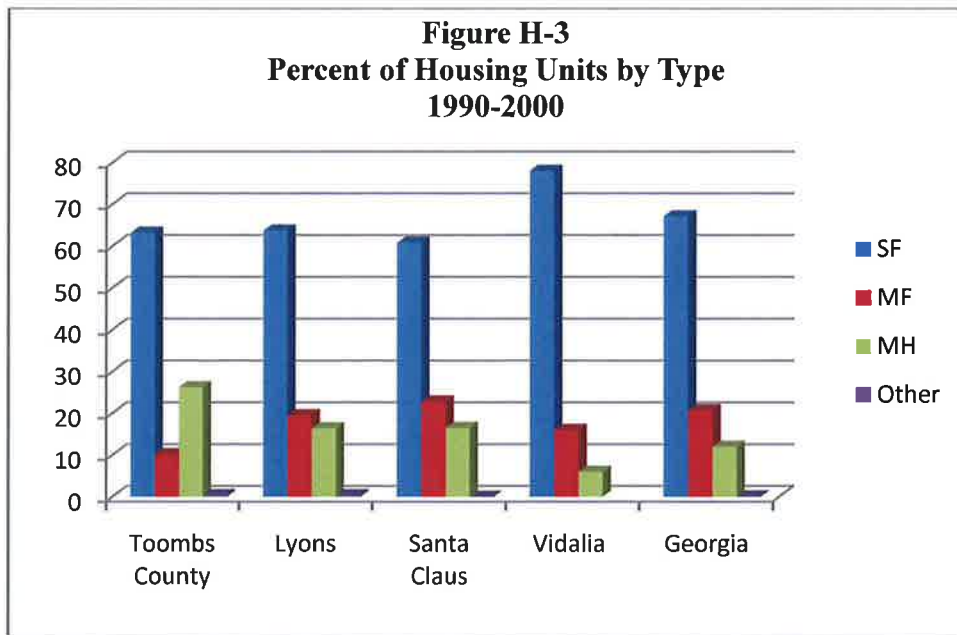
As shown on Table H-1, Toombs County's total housing units increased by 33.9 percent (2,876 units) from 1980-2000 (8,495 to 11,371 units), about one-half the rate of Georgia's increase. The county's population grew at 15.4 percent compared to the state's 50 percent during the period. Toombs County gained 409 single-family homes (6.0 percent) from 1980-2000, while Lyons gained 138 units (11 percent), Vidalia gained 387 single-family homes (11.6 percent), but Santa Claus lost 5 (-9.4 percent) during the period. This compares to the state's 44 percent gain. The county gained 476 multi-family units (69.2 percent), while Lyons gained 159 such units (8.1 percent), and Vidalia gained 331 multi-family units (77.2 percent). Santa Claus gained 18 multi-family units in this time (100 percent). Georgia more than doubled such units during the 20-year period. Manufactured homes county-wide increased by 2,101 units from 1980-2000, (more than a 3 times gain in the county, 2 times in Lyons, 1 time in Santa Claus, and 3 times in Vidalia). This compares to Georgia's 2.5 times increase during the period. The dramatic growth of

manufactured housing reflects the popularity of this lower cost housing option, which allows home ownership for more residents, as well as the availability of land upon which to locate such units.



Source: Table H-2

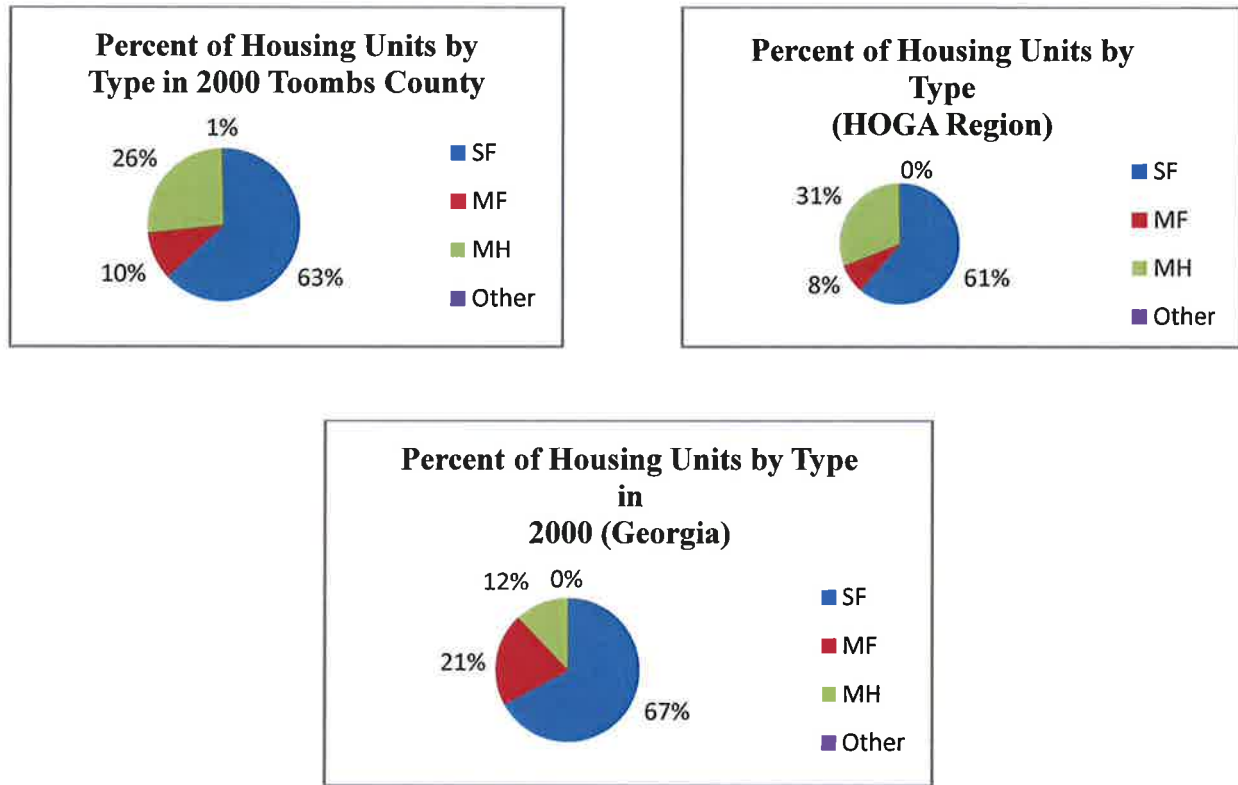
Table H-2 shows that from 1990-2000, Toombs County gained 1,419 net total housing units, 572 single-family homes and 923 manufactured housing units, while losing 19 multi-family units and 57 other housing units. During the same period, Lyons gained 63 units, including 39 manufactured homes and 35 multi-family units, while losing 5 single-family units and 6 other housing units. Santa Claus gained 8 housing units, including 9 manufactured homes and one (1) multi-family unit; two (2) single-family units were lost during this time period. Vidalia gained 213 total housing units, including 305 single-family units; while losing 72 multi-family units, three (3) manufactured homes, and 17 other housing units. Georgia had a net increase of 76 of 100 new housing units as single-family units for the decade, as compared to Toombs County’s 38 of 100 units.



Source: Table H-2

As shown on Table H-2, Toombs County had more manufactured housing (26.2 percent) in 2000 than the state (12 percent); however, the county had less than the region (30.6 percent). Nearly 62 out of 100 net new housing units in the county were manufactured homes compared to 10 of 100 for the state. Region 9 had the most manufactured housing of any region in Georgia. As to be expected due to ample available land, the county had the greatest percentage of manufactured homes (26.2 percent) compared to 16.4 percent for Lyons, 16.5 percent for Santa Claus, and six (6) percent for Vidalia.

**Figure H-4**  
**Percent of Housing Units by Type**  
**Toombs County, Region, and Georgia in 2000**



Source: Table H-2

The municipalities in Toombs County have experienced a decline in the percentage of single-family units since 1980. The percentage of single-family housing units dropped 16.6 percent in the county (79.8 to 63.2), while Lyons declined 17.9 percent (81.6 to 63.7) and Vidalia by 8.3 percent (86.3 to 78). Santa Claus experienced the greatest decline at 30.6 percent (91.4 to 60.8). This compares to a 16.7 percent decline within Region 9 (78.2 to 61.5) and the state’s 8.7 percent (75.8 to 67.1). Multi-family housing units increased from 1980 to 1990 and declined slightly from 1990 to 2000, except in Lyons. Toombs County experienced a 3.8 percent increase from 1980 to 1990, but in 2000 the percentage decreased to 10.2 percent. Santa Claus experienced a drastic increase from no multi-family units to 23.9 percent in 1990, with the percentage declining slightly to 22.8 percent in 2000. Multi-family units in Vidalia increased by 7.2 percent in 1990, the percentage declined slightly to 22.8 percent in 2000. Lyons experienced

an overall steady increase of multi-family housing; from 1980 to 1990 these units increased by 5.9 percent and continued to increase by 1.3 percent in 2000.

### **Projected Housing Increases**

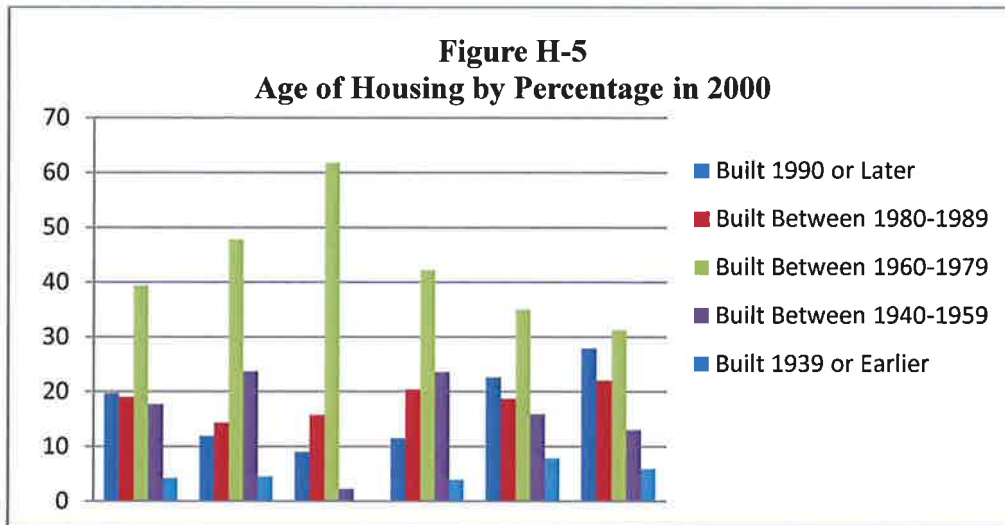
Table H-3 provides projections for future housing in Toombs County by jurisdiction and type. Toombs County is expected to gain about 4,894 housing units (occupied) or 49.5 percent by 2030, while Lyons' gain is expected to be about 581 housing units (37.6 percent). Santa Claus is projected to gain 17 housing units (21.5 percent). A gain of 2,065 housing units (50 percent) is projected in Vidalia. A considerable increase in occupied single-family housing units is projected by 2030 for the county at 34.4 percent (2,228 units), while a larger percentage increase is expected in Vidalia (53 percent, 1,742 units) and Santa Claus (41.6 percent, 20 units). Lyons is projected to have the smallest increase in single-family housing county-wide by 2030 at 12.9 percent (12 units). Multi-family housing units are projected to increase gradually by 2030, approximately 454 or six (6) percent of the total. 7,470 projected occupied housing units will be multi-family. Lyons is expected to gain a significant amount of manufactured homes, 338 units (142 percent). This is relatively higher than elsewhere county-wide. Although, Lyons has a higher percentage of projected manufactured homes; the county is expected to gain 2,478 such units (103.5 percent). Vidalia is projected to gain 101 (43.2 percent) such units; Santa Claus reported no such units, nor is expected to gain any manufactured housing units by 2030.

## **Condition and Occupancy**

### **Age of Housing Units**

Table H-4 shows that most of Toombs County's housing (39.4 percent) was built between 1960-1979, while about 48 percent of Lyon's, 62 percent of Santa Claus, and 42 percent of Vidalia's dates from this period. Toombs County has generally older housing stock than the state and the Region. In 2000, about 39 percent of Toombs County housing was built in the last 25 years, compared to 26.2 percent for Lyons, 24.7 percent for Santa Claus, and 31.9 percent for Vidalia. Nearly 19 (18.5) percent of Vidalia's housing stock was more than 60 years old, as

compared to lower percentages in the county (4.2 percent), Lyons (4.6 percent), and Santa Claus where no such units existed. The gradual decrease in the percentage of historic residences (built in 1939 or earlier) in Lyons (-2.3 percent) is slightly higher than the state (-2.2 percent). This compares to the county's (-3.4 percent) and Vidalia's (-3.6 percent).



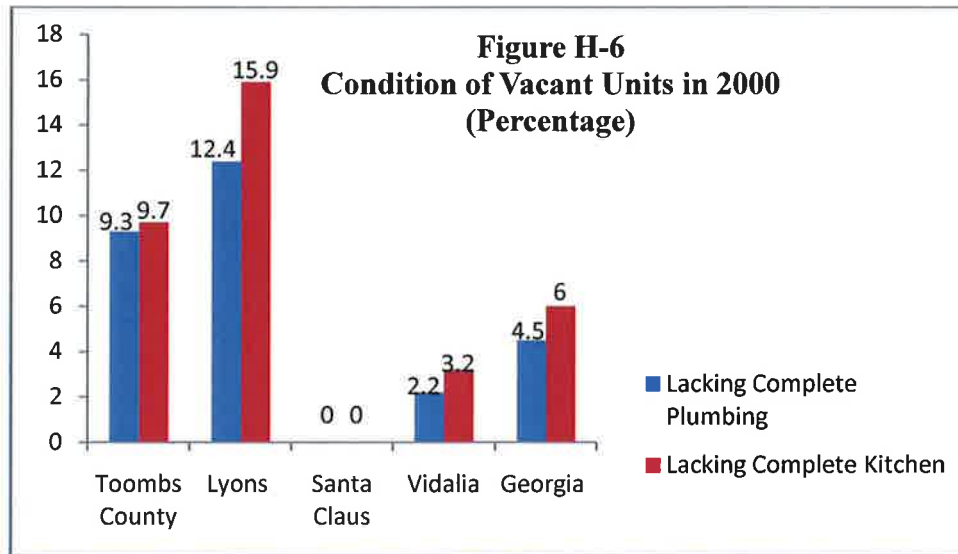
Source: Table H-4

### Quality of Housing Stock

Table H-5 shows that there has been a gradual decrease (-0.2 percentage points) in units lacking complete plumbing in Lyons since 1980, but an even more substantial decrease in such units in the county (down by 3.3 percentage points) and Vidalia (down by 3.1 percentage points). The county's rate of 1.9 percent and Lyons rate of 4.3 percent in 2000 remained much higher than Georgia's 0.9 percent, while Vidalia's rate of 0.5 percent was lower than the state. Santa Claus reported no units lacking complete plumbing in 2000. Approximately 3.1 percent of occupied units in Lyons, 0.8 percent in the county, and 0.2 percent in Vidalia lacked complete plumbing. This compares to 0.9 percent for the Region in 2000, and 0.6 percent for the state. The U.S. Census Bureau defines complete plumbing as having hot and cold piped water, a flush toilet, and a tub or shower within the dwelling.

Some 1.8 percent of the county's, 4.5 percent of Lyon's, and 0.6 percent of Vidalia's housing units lacked complete kitchen facilities in 2000. This ranges from nearly one to four times more likely than the state's (1.0 percent). Santa Claus reported no such units in 2000.

Complete kitchen facilities, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, consist of a sink with piped water, a stove, and refrigerator located inside the housing unit.



Source: Table H-5

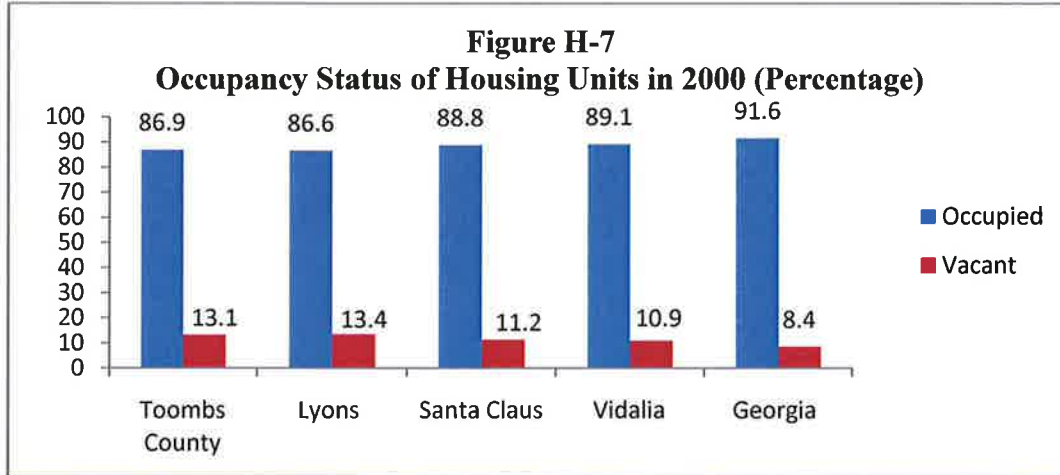
Overcrowding, which the U.S. Census Bureau defines as more than one person per room is a problem in Toombs County, except in Santa Claus and Vidalia. The county’s 5.5 percent and Lyon’s 6.7 percent in 2000 is relatively higher than the Region (4.7 percent) and the state (4.8 percent). The number of overcrowded housing units in the county increased from 451 in 1990 to 544 in 2000, causing a percentage increase of 1. However, in Lyons the number of overcrowded housing units decreased from 131 in 1990 to 107 in 2000, causing a percentage decrease of 0.7. Santa Claus’ rate of 4.5 percent and Vidalia’s rate of 3.3 percent were substantially lower than the Region, state and the rest of the county.

Poverty and blight is generally scattered throughout Toombs County and its municipalities because of the widespread low incomes. There are concentrated areas needing housing rehabilitation on Grand/East Martin Luther King Streets and North Fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) Avenue in Vidalia. Additional identified areas of poverty include Columbia Street in Lyons.



### Housing Tenancy

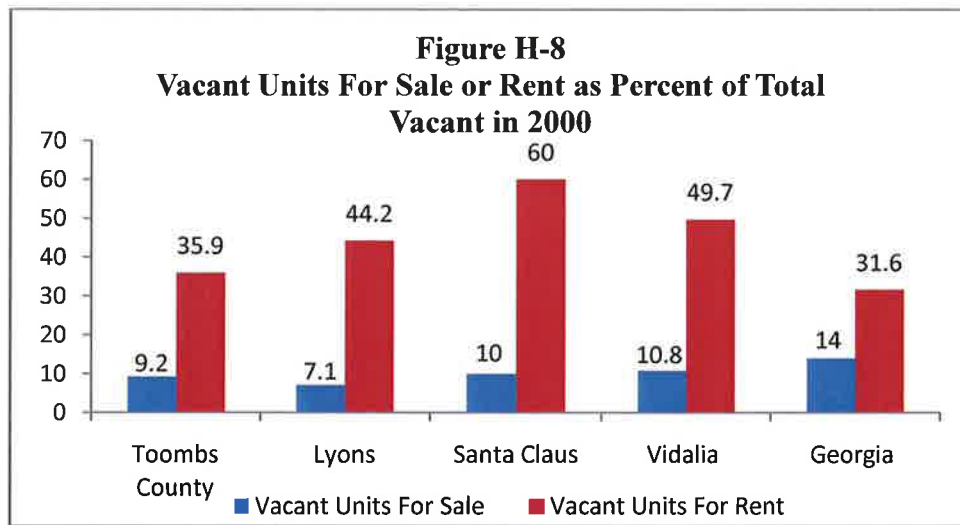
As shown on Table H-6, just over 66 percent of the county’s occupied housing units were owner occupied (34.5 percent renter occupied), while Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia had even fewer owner occupied units at 53.6 percent, 62 percent, and 55.6 percent, respectively (less than the Region’s 73.6 percent or Georgia at 67.5 percent). Lyons had the most renter occupied units county-wide at 46.4 percent, followed by Vidalia’s 44.4 percent, and Santa Claus’ 38 percent. Toombs County had an owner vacancy rate of 2.1 percent in 2000, as compared to 2.0 percent for Lyons and Santa Claus, 2.3 percent for Vidalia, 2.1 percent for the Region, and 1.9 percent for Georgia. About 137 vacant units were listed as available for sale in 2000, including 17 in Lyons, one (1) in Santa Claus, and 55 in Vidalia. In terms of renter vacancy rate, Santa Claus’ 16.7 percent was higher than Toombs County’s 13.6 percent, Lyons’ 12.9 percent, and Vidalia’s 12 percent. This compares to 14.1 percent for the Region and 8.2 percent for Georgia. Approximately 536 units were available for rent county-wide, with more than 47 percent (253 units) located in Vidalia.



Source: Table H-6

Vacant housing units were much less likely to be for sale in Toombs County (9.2 percent), Lyons (7.1 percent), Santa Claus (10 percent), or Vidalia (10.8 percent) than in the state (14 percent). They were much more likely to be for rent in Santa Claus (60 percent) than in Vidalia (49.7 percent), Lyons (44.2 percent), elsewhere in the county (35.9 percent), Region

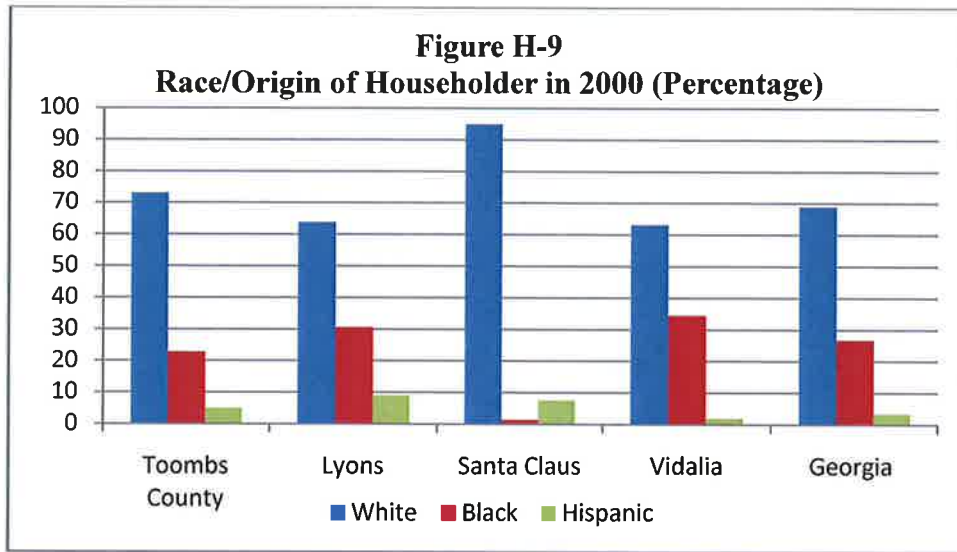
(25.9 percent), or Georgia (31.6 percent). Vacant housing units in Santa Claus were much more likely (70 percent) to be for sale or rent than in Toombs County as a whole (45.1 percent). The lack of homes on the market in unincorporated Toombs County is largely due to the housing stock's age and condition and to families retaining control over an old home place, even if vacant. About 3 percent of vacant housing units in the county are designated for migratory workers, 3.3 percent for Lyons, and 0.2 percent for Vidalia. This compares to 1.2 percent for the Region and 0.4 percent for the state. These types of housing units continue to increase gradually, to accommodate the growing number of migrant agriculture workers. No such units were reported for Santa Claus in 2000.



Source: Table H-7

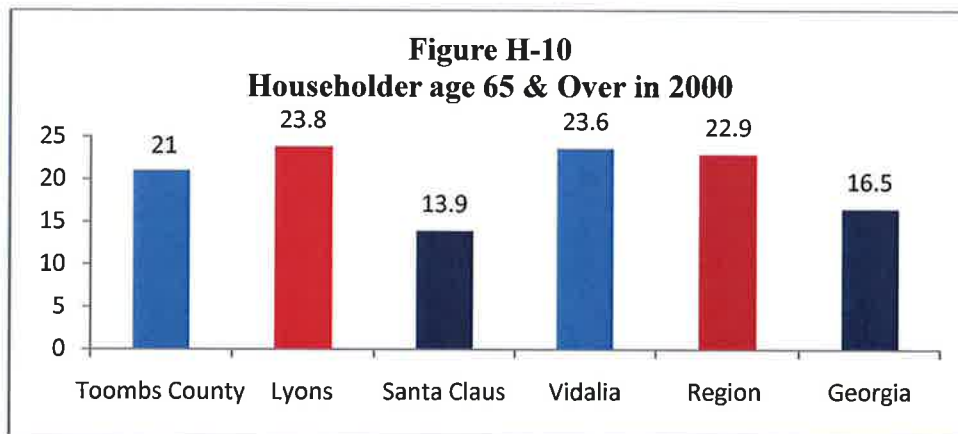
## Householder Characteristics

Householders in Toombs County were predominantly white (73.1 percent), with 22.8 percent black, and 4.12 percent Hispanic in 2000. Vidalia had the highest percentage of black householders countywide at 34.4 percent, while Lyons' percentage was 30.6 percent. This is slightly higher than in the Region (24.6 percent) or state (26.7 percent). Santa Claus had the lowest black population at 1.3 percent. Lyons' percentage of Hispanic householders (9.0) was higher than Santa Claus (7.6 percent), the county (5.0 percent), Region (4.8 percent), state (3.4 percent), or Vidalia (2.0 percent).



Source: Table H-6

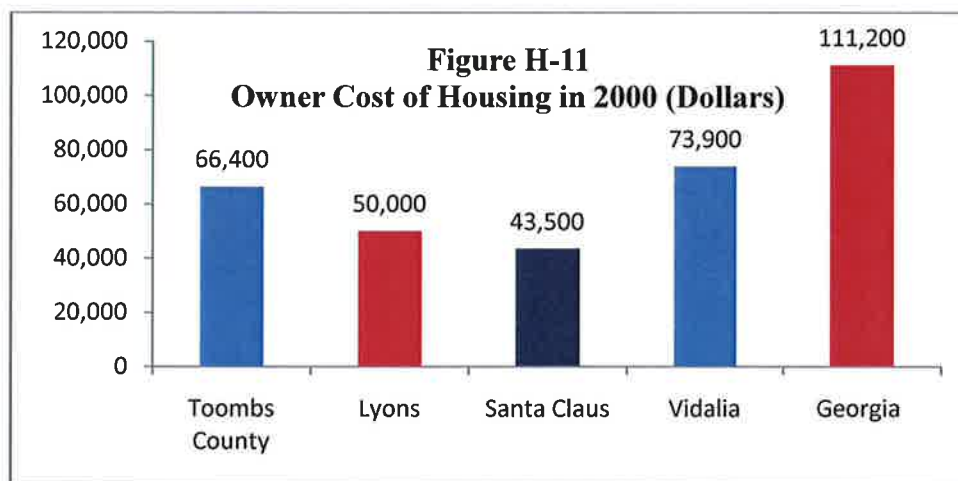
Householders within Lyons (23.8 percent) and Vidalia (23.6 percent) were more likely to be 65 or over than those in the Region (22.9 percent), as compared to the county (21 percent) and Santa Claus (13.9 percent). Householders within Toombs County jurisdictions were much more likely than those in the state (nearly 4.5 to 7.3 percentage points more) to be seniors. The high percentage of elderly householders has potential implications in terms of housing condition, such as the inability financially and physically to make repairs. Other issues include the need for accessibility adaptations and elderly support services if they remain in their homes. It also means there will be more occupied housing becoming vacant in Toombs County, and an opportunity to utilize them in marketing for potential new residents.



Source: Table H-6

## Cost of Housing

Table H-8 shows the median owner specified value of housing in Toombs County was \$66,400 (59.7 percent of the state's \$111,200) in 2000. Vidalia had the highest median value county-wide at \$73,900, while Santa Claus was the lowest at \$43,500. Lyons' median owner specified value in 2000 was \$50,000. Toombs County's median owner specified value was more than four adjacent counties, Appling (\$63,700), Candler (\$62,700), Emanuel (\$50,800), and Treutlen (\$56,600). Montgomery (\$67,300) and Tattnall (\$67,300) counties median owner specified value was slightly higher than Toombs. The median mobile home value in Toombs County was \$22,600, the fifth lowest value in the Region after Treutlen, Telfair, Jeff Davis, and Wilcox counties. This was still more than 33 percent less than Georgia's median manufactured home value of \$33,600. Existing homes in the county (177) sold for an average price of \$80,611, more than the Region's average of \$71,937. The average purchase price for Georgia (\$150,625) almost doubles that of Toombs County. Two (2) new homes county-wide sold for an average price of \$48,597 in 2000.



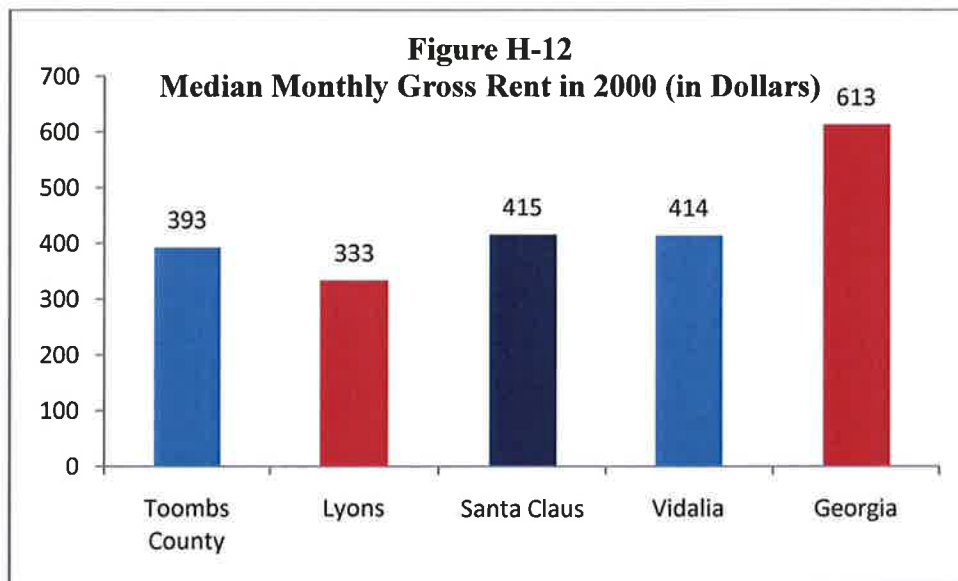
Source: Table H-8

The monthly owner cost of housing in Toombs County for those with a mortgage was about 25 to 40 percent of the state (\$1,039) in 2000. The median in the county was \$734 compared to \$750 in Santa Claus and \$781 in Vidalia. It was the lowest county-wide at \$622 in Lyons. More than 45 percent of owners county-wide in Toombs County did not have a mortgage in 2000, compared to 46.2 percent for the Region and 24.7 percent for the state. Lyons' 51.1

percent of owners without a mortgage was the highest county-wide and significantly more than the Region and greater than two (2) times the state’s rate.

The cost of living difference with Georgia ranged from 3.1 to 42.1 percent less within the county for those lacking a mortgage. It was higher in Vidalia (\$251) than elsewhere in the county (\$228). Santa Claus had the lowest cost of living at \$150. The large number of less costly manufactured housing units and the older housing stock within Toombs County help explain the lower housing costs. These lower values and costs could be utilized in residential marketing.

Median monthly gross rent within Toombs County was \$393 compared to \$415 in Santa Claus and \$414 in Vidalia. It was the lowest county-wide at \$333 in Lyons. The county compares higher to its neighboring counties in terms of median gross rent (from \$40 to \$97 more than Appling, Candler, Emanuel, Montgomery, Tattnall, and Treutlen counties). Gross rent is defined as contract rent plus utilities. Approximately 8.9 percent of renters in the county as well as 9.5 percent of Lyons renters were more than likely to not pay cash rent than those in the Region (13.9 percent). Only 3.2 percent of renters in Vidalia did not pay cash rent, while there were no such renters reported in Santa Claus.

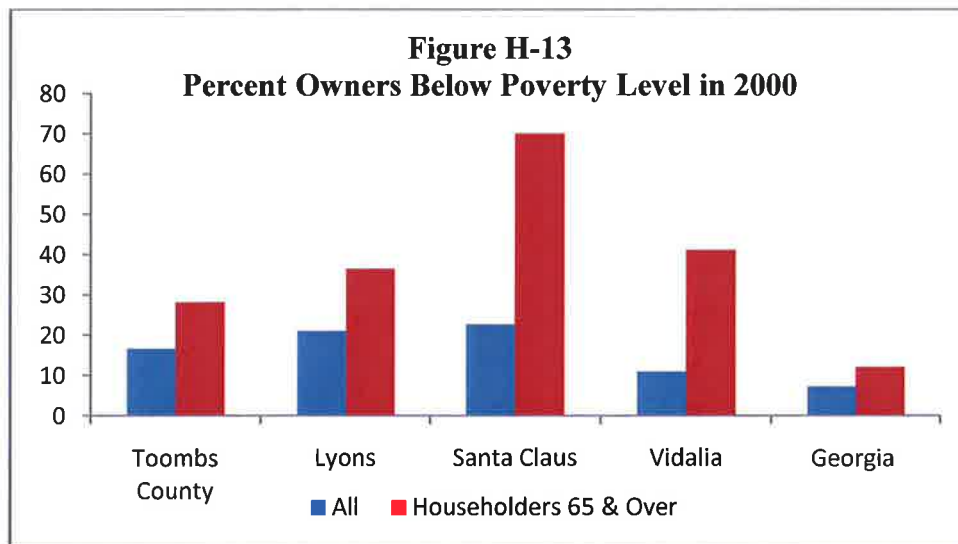


Source: Table H-9

## Cost-Burdened Households

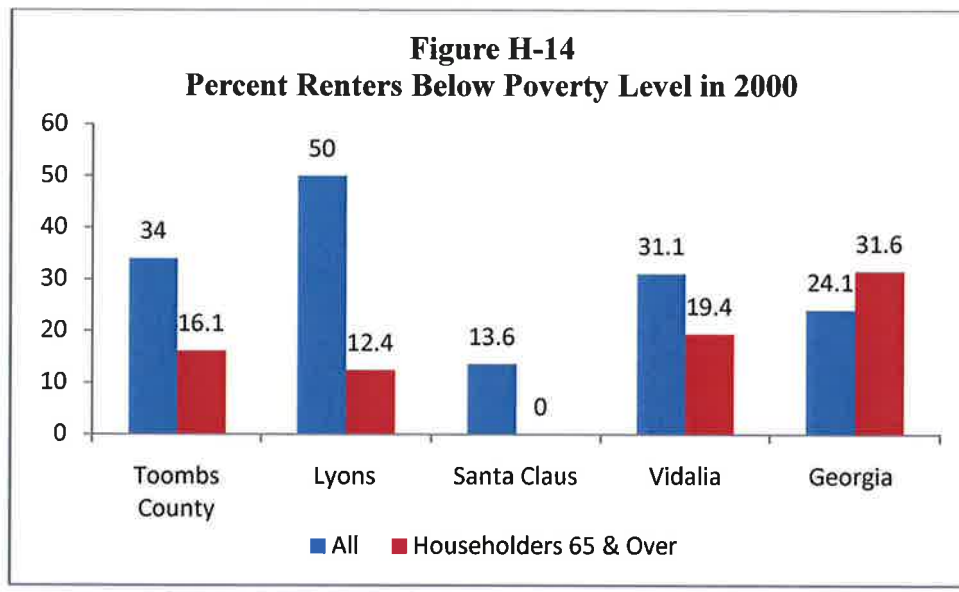
Owner householders in Toombs County (21 percent) were more likely to be cost burdened than those in the Region (18 percent), but just as likely as the state (21 percent). Lyons owner householders (25.2 percent) were more likely to be cost burdened than others county-wide, while those in Vidalia were the least likely at 19.5 percent, as compared to Santa Claus' 24.3 percent. The U.S. Census Bureau defines cost burdened as paying more than 30 percent of one's gross income for housing cost.

Homeowners within the county were more likely to live in poverty than those in Georgia as a whole (16.6 percent for the county, 21 percent for Lyons, 22.7 percent for Santa Claus, and 11 percent for Vidalia). The poverty statistics for elderly homeowners were even higher with more than one (1) in four (4) or 28.1 percent of the county's elderly homeowners living below the poverty level. Approximately 36.4 percent of senior homeowners in Lyons lived below the poverty line in 2000, compared to 70 percent for Santa Claus, 41.1 percent for Vidalia, and 12 percent for the state. These statistics confirm low incomes in the county, but also implications for housing conditions. Many of these homeowners will not be able to afford housing improvements without financial assistance.



Source: Table H-8

About 18 percent of renters in Toombs County were cost burdened in 2000. Santa Claus' rate was slightly higher at 22.7 percent, while Vidalia's was even greater at 34.4, as well as Lyons at 41.5 percent. In 1999, 15.2 percent of renters in the county were severely cost burdened, defined as spending 50 percent or more of one's income on housing costs. Toombs County was the 10<sup>th</sup> lowest of 17 counties in Region 9 where renters were more likely to be severely cost burdened. Its percentage was slightly lower than Georgia's 16.5 percent. Renters in Lyons (50 percent) were twice as likely as those in the state (24.1 percent) to live below the poverty line. This compares to county renters (34 percent) and Vidalia renters (31.1 percent) living below the poverty line; Santa Claus renters were the least likely at 13.6 percent. Approximately 16 percent of county seniors who rent lived below the poverty line (about one-half less than the state's 31.6 percent); while 12.4 percent of Lyons and 19.4 percent of Vidalia's senior renters lived in poverty. Santa Claus reported no such renters.



Source: Table H-9

There are 240 units of public housing in Toombs County (approximately 9.21 units/1,000 persons). The Lyons Housing Authority manages the 130 units that are located in 13 sites around Lyons. One (1) unit is utilized as a police substation to monitor suspicious activity. There is currently an invitation to bid on improving seven units located on Crescent Drive, Collins Road, and Cobbtown Road. The seven units will be completely renovated. The Vidalia Housing Authority manages 110 units within three (3) sites. All of the public housing units are monitored

and well-maintained through yearly inspections from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

## **Special Housing Needs**

As the elderly population of Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia grows, there will be an increasing need for assistance to aging homeowners with normal maintenance and repairs, as well as accessibility adaptations and services provided for those who remain in their own homes. The availability and cost of such assistance is a concern for those on fixed incomes and/or those who cannot physically make the repairs themselves. Often in small rural communities, such as Toombs County and its cities, family members, neighbors, and/or churches provide volunteer assistance to meet the needs of elderly homeowners. The needs may also be lessened because of the large numbers of homes without a mortgage. Homeowners may be able to afford repairs even if they have lower incomes. The local senior center and the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Area Agency on Aging provide further assistance with obtaining needed services.

Elderly housing facilities for those unable to remain in their own home in Toombs County consist of three (3) nursing homes: Bethany Home Nursing Center of Vidalia (168 beds), Meadows Nursing Center (35 beds), and Toombs Health and Rehabilitation (144 beds). There are also six (6) personal care homes: Bethany Assisted Living, Inc. (48 beds), Fuller House (3 beds), Morning Glory (4 beds), Precious Care Home (15 beds), Southern Magnolia Women's Home (12 beds), and Summer's Landing (48 beds).

There may be a market for additional public and/or private development of retirement housing for Toombs County's elderly population and attracting retirees, including congregate housing for both those who can function independently, as well as those who need care. Development of retirement housing needs to take place within or near Lyons and Vidalia where infrastructure and services are readily available.

Homelessness is generally not a major issue in Toombs County. The God's Storehouse-Jesus Inn is a food and clothing shelter and homeless shelter in Vidalia. The shelter is open



nightly to help people recover from homelessness and despair toward personal and spiritual wholeness. Two additional homeless shelters are located approximately 97 miles from Toombs County: the Macon Rescue Mission located in Macon and Union Mission in Savannah. The Refuge Domestic Violence Shelter, Inc. in Vidalia provides shelter and counseling to victims of domestic violence. There were 259 police actions taken in Toombs County in 2000 in response to domestic violence.

There were an estimated 2,737 migrant and seasonal farm workers in Toombs County in 1994. It is known that this figure has increased substantially in recent years, but an accurate count is difficult to obtain due to cultural differences and language barriers, as well as the illegal immigration issue. It was estimated in the late 1990s that Georgia had at least 100,000 migrant workers. There are USDA programs to assist with migrant housing needs. At least one farming operation in Toombs County, Stanley Farms of Lyons, is known to have utilized federal funds to renovate housing for migrant farm workers. Telamon Corporation provides housing assistance to migrant and seasonal farm workers through a USDA Section 516 Farm Labor Housing Loan and Grant Program. The program assists farmers with repairs and upkeep, and provides temporary assistance to workers that cannot afford to pay utility bills or those facing possible eviction.

An estimated 34.7 percent of the adult population of Toombs County has some type of mental, physical, or developmental disability that may or may not require special housing needs. Six (6) facilities in Toombs County provide services needed to minimize the impact of mental illness and mental retardation. Pineland Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Addictive Disease Services, Toombs Adult Mental Health Day Service, Pitzer House, Harper House, Toombs Service Center, and Toombs Counseling Center specialize in monitoring and providing services to those in need of help.

A total of 43 cases of HIV/AIDS were reported in Toombs County from 1981-2000. Although no special housing is currently provided within the Toombs community for this population, the Toombs County Wellness Center provides housing assistance through the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS program (HOPWA). The HOPWA program receives funding from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and can be used towards housing costs, utility payments, and emergency shelter via motel accommodations.

An estimated 2,323 adults in Toombs County were in need of substance abuse treatment in 2001. Toombs/Tattnall C&A Day Service is a component of Pineland which provides flexible services which include assessment, individual, group and family therapy, education, relapse prevention, follow-up components, nursing and physician services. There are two substance abuse residential treatment facilities within the county: Vidalia Georgia Chemical Dependency and Lyons Drug Treatment. John's Place is another residential treatment facility that specializes in substance abuse; it is a 16-bed facility located in Statesboro.

## **Jobs-Housing Balance**

Current and historic data on characteristics of Toombs County's population that impact housing needs in the county and its cities, such as age, household size, income, average wages, migrant workers, and commuting patterns of the resident and nonresident workforce are addressed in the Population and Economic Development elements of this plan. Housing supply and affordability issues will not be constraining elements to expected growth. On the converse, the housing market in the county will support and should help attract growth and development. There is a somewhat limited availability of housing for immediate occupancy, but ample land in the unincorporated area is available for development or location. The number of subdivisions in Toombs County has increased in recent years, developers are beginning to focus on building multiple single-family homes in close proximity to each other and perspective homeowners welcome the idea.

Overall Toombs County does not have major housing issues, especially ones which will prevent, or have limiting influences to, expected accommodation of future growth and development. Some special housing needs, particularly for the elderly and low income, do exist. There are also needs for housing rehabilitation, quality developments, additional apartments, affordable starter homes, and a need for subdivision and manufactured housing ordinances and code enforcement.

**TABLE H-1  
TOOMBS COUNTY  
TYPES OF HOUSING UNITS, 1980-2000**

	Single Family			Multi-Family			Manufactured Housing			Others			Total		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
<b>Toombs County</b>	6,781	6,618	7,190	688	1,183	1,164	876	2,054	2,977	150	97	40	8,495	9,952	11,371
<b>Lyons</b>	1,303	1,170	1,165	197	321	356	97	260	299	0	14	8	1,597	1,765	1,828
<b>Santa Claus</b>	53	50	48	0	17	18	2	4	13	3	0	0	58	71	79
<b>Vidalia</b>	3,326	3,408	3,713	429	832	760	92	287	284	7	17	0	3,854	4,544	4,757

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1980, 1990, 2000), [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

**TABLE H-2  
TOOMBS COUNTY  
PERCENTAGE OF TYPES OF HOUSING UNITS, 1980-2000**

	Single Family			Multi-Family			Manufactured Housing			Others		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
<b>Toombs County</b>	79.8	66.5	63.2	8.1	11.9	10.2	10.3	20.6	26.2	1.8	9.7	0.4
<b>Lyons</b>	81.6	66.3	63.7	12.3	18.2	19.5	6.1	14.7	16.4	0	0.8	0.4
<b>Santa Claus</b>	91.4	70.4	60.8	0	23.9	22.8	3.4	5.6	16.5	5.2	0	0
<b>Vidalia</b>	86.3	75.0	78	11.1	18.3	16	2.4	6.3	6	0.2	0.4	
<b>Region</b>	78.2	67.6	61.5	N/A	N/A	7.6	14.7	23.3	30.6	N/A	N/A	0.3
<b>Georgia</b>	75.8	64.9	67.1	16.6	22.7	20.7	7.6	12.4	12.0	N/A	N/A	0.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1980, 1990, 2000), [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov); Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC staff, 2006.

**TABLE H-3**  
**Current and Projected Occupied Housing Units By Type**  
**2000-2030**  
**Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia**

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>
<b>Toombs County</b>						
<b>SF</b>	6,476	7,061	7,400	7,785	8,217	8,704
<b>MF</b>	993	1,043	1,073	1,103	1,147	1,195
<b>MH</b>	2,394	3,222	3,697	4,088	4,477	4,872
<b>O</b>	14	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	9,877	11,326	12,120	12,976	13,841	14,771
<b>Lyons</b>						
<b>SF</b>	1,073	1,090	1,109	1,139	1,169	1,202
<b>MF</b>	278	290	298	308	328	350
<b>MH</b>	238	358	430	480	528	576
<b>O</b>	6	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	1,595	1,738	1,837	1,927	2,025	2,128
<b>Santa Claus</b>						
<b>SF</b>	48	60	62	64	66	68
<b>MF</b>	18	24	25	26	27	28
<b>MH</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>O</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	66	84	87	90	93	96
<b>Vidalia</b>						
<b>SF</b>	3,318	3,773	4,076	4,410	4,734	5,060
<b>MF</b>	667	707	731	755	795	837
<b>MH</b>	234	274	294	310	325	335
<b>O</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	4,219	4,754	5,101	5,475	5,854	6,232

Note: SF is Single-Family; MF is Multi-family; MH is Manufactured Housing; O is Other.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov); Projections made by Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC Staff, 2006.

**TABLE H-4  
TOOMBS COUNTY  
AGE OF HOUSING BY PERCENTAGE**

	Built 1990 or later			Built 1980-89			Built 1960-79			Built 1940-59			Built 1939 or earlier		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
<b>Toombs County</b>	N/A	N/A	19.7	N/A	28	19	N/A	46.8	39.4	N/A	17.6	17.7	13.8	7.6	4.2
<b>Lyons</b>	N/A	N/A	11.9	N/A	24.1	14.3	N/A	45.6	47.8	N/A	23.5	23.7	12.0	6.9	4.5
<b>Santa Claus</b>	N/A	N/A	9.0	N/A	33.8	15.7	N/A	62.3	61.8	N/A	3.9	2.2	N/A	0	0
<b>Vidalia</b>	N/A	N/A	11.5	N/A	23.6	20.4	N/A	48.1	42.2	N/A	20.9	23.6	0.4	7.5	3.9
<b>Region</b>	N/A	N/A	22.6	N/A	N/A	18.7	N/A	N/A	35.0	N/A	N/A	15.9	N/A	N/A	7.8
<b>Georgia</b>	N/A	N/A	27.9	N/A	32.1	22.0	N/A	41.7	31.3	N/A	18.1	13.0	14.7	8.1	5.9

\*Includes housing units built from 1990 to March, 2000.

\*\*Includes housing units built from 1980 to March, 1990.

<sup>2/</sup>Includes housing units built from 1960 to March, 1980.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1980, 1990, 2000), [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov); Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC staff, 2006.

**TABLE H-5  
TOOMBS COUNTY  
CONDITION OF HOUSING, 1980-2000**

	Lacking Complete Plumbing Facilities						Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities						Overcrowded Units						
	1980		1990		2000		1980		1990		2000		1980		1990		2000		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<b>Toombs County</b>																			
Total Units	444	5.2	100	1.0	218	1.9	N/A	N/A	146	1.5	210	1.8							
Occupied Units	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	79	0.8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	65	0.7	N/A	6.4	451	4.5	544	5.5	
Vacant Units	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	139	9.3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	145	9.7			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Lyons</b>																			
Total Units	70	4.4	47	2.7	79	4.3	N/A	N/A	53	3.0	82	4.5							
Occupied Units	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	50	3.1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	45	2.8	51	3.1	131	7.4	107	6.7	
Vacant Units	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	29	12.4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	37	15.9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Santa Claus</b>																			
Total Units	N/A		N/A	0	0	0	N/A		N/A	3.9	0	0							
Occupied Units					0	0					0	0	N/A		N/A	1.4	3	4.5	
Vacant Units					0	0					0	0							
<b>Vidalia</b>																			
Total Units	140	3.6	8	0.2	22	0.5	N/A	N/A	56	1.2	30	0.6							
Occupied Units					10	0.2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	13	0.3	N/A	5.8	186	4.1	140	3.3	
Vacant Units					12	2.2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	17	3.2							
<b>Region</b>																			
Total Units		7.5		1.7		2.5		N/A		N/A		N/A							
Occupied Units						0.9						0.7		N/A		N/A		4.7	
Vacant Units																			
<b>Georgia</b>																			
Total Units	75,618	3.8	28,462	1.1	29,540	0.9	71,793	3.6	24,014	0.9	31,717	1.0							
Occupied Units	59,491	3.2	22,921	1.0	17,117	0.6			16,794	0.7	15,161	0.5		5.3		4.0		4.8	
Vacant Units	16,127	11.4	5,541	2.0	12,423	4.5			7,220	2.7	16,556	6.0							

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1980, 1990, 2000), [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov); Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC staff, 2006.

**TABLE H-6  
TOOMBS COUNTY  
OCCUPANCY STATUS OF HOUSING UNITS, 1980-2000**

	Toombs County						Lyons					
	1980		1990		2000		1980		1990		2000	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total Housing Units	8,495	100	9,952	100	11,371	100	1,597	100	1,765	100	1,787	100
Occupied Housing Units	7,672	90.3	8,804	88.5	9,877	86.9	1,454	91	1,600	90.7	1,547	86.6
Vacant Housing Units	823	9.7	1,148	11.5	1,494	13.1	143	9	165	9.3	240	13.4
Owner Occupied Units	4,884	63.7	5,689	64.6	6,467	65.5	790	54.3	872	54.5	829	53.6
Renter Occupied Units	2,788	36.3	3,115	35.4	3,410	34.5	664	45.7	728	45.5	718	46.4
Owner Vacancy Rate		1.4		2.3				2.1		1.4		
Renter Vacancy Rate		9.5		10.2				7.4		8.0		
Owner to Renter Ratio of Vacancy												
White Householder	5,965	77.8	6,714	76.3	7,217	73.1	1,065	73.2	1,057	66.1	989	63.9
Black Householder	1,682	21.9	1,902	21.6	2,251	22.8	386	26.5	457	28.6	474	30.6
Other Race Householder	53	1.0	188	2.1	409	4.1	8	1.0	86	5.4	84	5.5
Hispanic Householder			182	2.1	496	5			90	5.6	139	9
Householder Age 65 or Over	N/A	N/A	973	11.1	2,070	21	N/A	N/A	217	13.6	368	23.8



**TABLE H-6  
TOOMBS COUNTY  
OCCUPANCY STATUS OF HOUSING UNITS, 1980-2000  
(continued)**

	Santa Claus						Vidalia					
	1980		1990		2000		1980		1990		2000	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total Housing Units	58	100	71	100	89	100	3,854	100	4,544	100	4,676	100
Occupied Housing Units	53	91.4	62	87.3	79	88.8	3,621	94.0	4,132	90.9	4,167	89.1
Vacant Housing Units	5	8.6	9	12.7	10	11.2	226	6.0	412	9.1	509	10.9
Owner Occupied Units	48	90.6	39	62.9	49	62.0	2,080	57.4	2,388	57.8	2,315	55.6
Renter Occupied Units	5	9.4	23	37.1	30	38.0	1,541	42.6	1,744	42.2	1,852	44.4
Owner Vacancy Rate	N/A	N/A		0.0				1.2		2.9		
Renter Vacancy Rate	N/A	N/A		20.7				8.1		9.4		
Owner to Renter Ratio of Vacancy												
White Householder	N/A	N/A	61	98.4	75	94.9	2,510	69.3	2,816	68.2	2,632	63.2
Black Householder	N/A	N/A	0	0	1	1.3	1,098	30.3	1,269	30.7	1,434	34.4
Other Race Householder	N/A	N/A	1	1.6	3	3.8	36	1.0	47	1.1	101	2.5
Hispanic Householder	N/A	N/A	1	1.6	6	7.6	N/A	N/A	20	0.4	85	2.0
Householder Age 65 or Over	N/A	N/A	5	8.1	11	13.9	N/A	N/A	482	11.7	985	23.6

**TABLE H-6  
TOOMBS COUNTY  
OCCUPANCY STATUS OF HOUSING UNITS, 1980-2000  
(continued)**

	Region						Georgia		
	1980		1990		2000		1980	1990	2000
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	%	%	%
Total Housing Units	86,488	100	98,346	100	115,484	100	100	100	100
Occupied Housing Units	N/A		N/A		98,923	85.7	92.3	89.7	91.6
Vacant Housing Units	N/A		N/A		16,561	14.3	7.7	10.3	8.4
Owner Occupied Units	N/A		N/A		72,840	73.6	65.0	64.9	67.5
Renter Occupied Units	N/A		N/A		26,083	26.4	35.0	35.1	32.5
Owner Vacancy Rate	N/A		N/A			2.1	1.7	2.5	1.9
Renter Vacancy Rate	N/A		N/A			14.1	7.9	12.2	8.2
Owner to Renter Ratio of Vacancy	N/A		N/A		0.36		0.37	0.34	.44
White Householder	N/A		N/A			73.0	75.8	74.2	68.9
Black Householder	N/A		N/A			24.6	23.5	24.3	26.7
Other Race Householder	N/A		N/A			2.4	0.7	1.5	4.4
Hispanic Householder	N/A		N/A			4.8	1.0	1.3	3.4
Householder Age 65 or Over	N/A		N/A			22.9	18.6	17.9	16.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1980, 1990, 2000), [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov); *Georgia State of the State's Housing: Service Delivery Region 9*, UGA, 2003.

**TABLE H-7  
TOOMBS COUNTY  
VACANCY STATUS OF HOUSING UNITS, 1980-2000**

	Toombs County						Lyons					
	1980		1990		2000		1980		1990		2000	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total Vacant Housing Units	673	100	1148	100	1494	100	143	100	165	100	240	100
For Sale Only	67	10.0	134	11.7	137	9.2	17	11.9	12	7.3	17	7.1
For Rent	291	43.2	353	30.7	536	35.9	53	37.1	63	38.2	106	44.2
Rented or Sold, Not Occupied	71	10.5	41	3.6	129	8.6	N/A	N/A	8	4.8	16	6.7
For Seasonal, Rec., or Occasional Use	N/A	N/A	152	13.2	198	13.3	N/A	N/A	4	2.4	11	4.6
For Migratory Workers	185	27.5	7	0.6	38	2.5	N/A	N/A	0	0	8	3.3
Other Vacant	N/A	N/A	461	40.2	456	30.5	73	51	78	47.3	82	34.2
Vacant Units for Sale Only as % of Units for Rent or Sale	N/A	18.7	N/A	27.5	N/A	20.4	N/A	24.3	N/A	16	N/A	13.8
Vacant, built 1950-59	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	196	13.1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	57	24.5
Vacant, built 1940-49	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	181	12.1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	20	8.6
Vacant, built 1939 or Earlier	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	56	3.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	19	8.2
Vacant Lacking Compl. Plumbing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	139	9.3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	29	12.4
Vacant Lacking Compl. Kitchen	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	145	9.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	37	15.9

	Santa Claus						Vidalia					
	1980		1990		2000		1980		1990		2000	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total Vacant Housing Units	N/A	N/A	9	100	10	100	226	100	412	100	509	100
For Sale Only	N/A	N/A	0	0	1	10.0	26	11.5	71	17.2	55	10.8
For Rent	N/A	N/A	6	66.7	6	60.0	135	59.7	180	43.7	253	49.7
Rented or Sold, Not Occupied	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0	14	6.2	14	3.4	50	9.8
For Seasonal, Rec., or Occasional Use	N/A	N/A	0	0	1	10.0	9	4.0	16	3.9	27	5.3
For Migratory Workers	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	1	0.2	1	0.2
Other Vacant	N/A	N/A	3	33.3	2	20.0	42	18.6	130	31.6	123	24.2
Vacant Units for Sale Only as % of Units for Rent or Sale	N/A	N/A		0		14.3		16.1		28.3		17.9
Vacant, built 1950-59	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	88	16.4
Vacant, built 1940-49	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	113	21.0
Vacant, built 1939 or Earlier	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	8	1.5
Vacant Lacking Compl. Plumbing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	12	2.2
Vacant Lacking Compl. Kitchen	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	17	3.2

**TABLE H-7**  
**TOOMBS COUNTY**  
**VACANCY STATUS OF HOUSING UNITS, 1980-2000**  
**(continued)**

	Region						Georgia					
	1980		1990		2000		1980		1990		2000	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total Vacant Housing Units	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	16,561	100	156,698	100	271,803	100	275,368	100
For Sale Only					1,549	9.4	20,915	13.3	38,816	14.3	38,440	14.0
For Rent					4,292	25.9	55,897	35.7	115,115	42.4	86,905	31.6
Rented or Sold, Not Occupied					1,359	8.2	16,598	10.6	20,006	7.4	20,353	7.4
For Seasonal, Rec., or Occasional Use					2,052	15.1	30,485 <sup>1/</sup>	19.5 <sup>1/</sup>	33,637	12.4	50,064	18.2
For Migratory Workers					207	1.2			617	0.2	969	0.4
Other Vacant					6,652	40.2	32,263	20.6	63,612	23.4	78,637	28.6
Vacant Units for Sale Only as % of Units for Rent or Sale	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		26.5		27.2		25.2		30.7
Vacant, built 1950-59	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A		26,859	9.8
Vacant, built 1940-49	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A		16,238	5.9
Vacant, built 1939 or Earlier	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A		20,958	7.6
Vacant Lacking Compl. Plumbing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3,762 <sup>2/</sup>	4.9	N/A		12,423	4.5
Vacant Lacking Compl. Kitchen	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A		16,556	6.0

<sup>1/</sup> Includes migratory.

<sup>2/</sup> Includes only vacant for sale or rent, lacking complete plumbing.

<sup>3/</sup> Includes seasonal and migratory only.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1980, 1990, 2000), [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov); *Georgia State of the State's Housing: Service Delivery Region 9*, UGA, 2003.

**TABLE H-8  
TOOMBS COUNTY  
OWNER COST OF HOUSING, 1980-2000**

	Toombs County						Lyons					
	1980		1990		2000		1980		1990		2000	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Owner Specified Value												
Less than \$50,000			1,815	51.2	1,380	34.1			425	61.2	378	50.1
\$50,000 - \$99,999			1,428	40.3	1,846	45.7			233	33.6	273	36.2
\$100,000 or more			302	8.5	815	20.2			36	5.2	104	13.8
Median	\$26,400		\$49,100		\$66,400		\$25,200		\$42,500		\$50,000	
Median Purchase Price of Single Family Units												
Monthly Owner Costs Not Mortgaged	N/A	N/A	1707	47.4	1,823	45.1	N/A	N/A	338	47.9	386	51.1
Less than \$300	N/A	N/A	266	7.4	59	1.5	N/A	N/A	81	11.5	18	2.4
\$300-\$499	N/A	N/A	670	18.6	314	7.8	N/A	N/A	168	23.8	99	13.1
\$500-\$699	N/A	N/A	429	11.9	614	15.2	N/A	N/A	56	7.9	102	13.5
\$700-\$999	N/A	N/A	361	10	749	18.5	N/A	N/A	36	5.1	91	12.1
\$1,000 or More	N/A	N/A	168	4.7	482	11.9	N/A	N/A	26	3.7	59	7.8
Median with Mortgage	N/A	N/A	\$505		\$734		N/A	N/A	\$394		\$622	
Median without Mortgage	N/A	N/A	\$160		\$228		N/A	N/A	\$167		\$216	
Owner Housing Costs as % <sup>1/</sup>												
Less than 20%			2,315	64.3	2,389	59.2			428	60.7	453	60
20-29%			632	17.6	709	17.6			130	18.4	85	11.3
30% or More			604	16.8	848	21			127	18.0	190	25.2
Owner Occupied Households Below Poverty Level			N/A	N/A	1,077	16.6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	187	21.0
Owner Occupied Householder 65 Years or Over Below Poverty Level	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	303	28.1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	68	36.4

**TABLE H-8  
TOOMBS COUNTY  
OWNER COST OF HOUSING, 1980-2000  
(continued)**

	Santa Claus						Vidalia					
	1980		1990		2000		1980		1990		2000	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Owner Specified Value												
Less than \$50,000	N/A	N/A	23	63.9	25	67.6			865	42.8	529	25.3
\$50,000 - \$99,999	N/A	N/A	13	36.1	10	27.0			939	46.5	1136	54.2
\$100,000 or more	N/A	N/A	0	0	2	5.4			215	10.6	430	20.6
Median	N/A	N/A	\$39,300		\$43,500		\$29,700		\$55,400		\$73,900	
Median Purchase Price of Single Family Units	N/A	N/A										
Monthly Owner Costs Not Mortgaged	N/A	N/A	10	26.3	14	45.9	N/A	N/A	946	45.8	825	39.4
Less than \$300	N/A	N/A	14	36.8	2	5.4	N/A	N/A	110	5.3	27	1.3
\$300-\$499	N/A	N/A	6	15.8	4	10.8	N/A	N/A	392	19	101	4.8
\$500-\$699	N/A	N/A	6	15.8	4	10.8	N/A	N/A	248	12.0	361	17.2
\$700-\$999	N/A	N/A	2	5.3	10	27.0	N/A	N/A	249	12.1	475	22.7
\$1,000 or More	N/A	N/A	0	0	3	8.1	N/A	N/A	119	5.8	306	14.6
Median with Mortgage	N/A	N/A	\$300		\$750		N/A	N/A	\$544		\$781	
Median without Mortgage	N/A	N/A	\$128		\$150		N/A	N/A	\$169		\$251	
Owner Housing Costs as % <sup>1/</sup>												
Less than 20%	N/A	N/A	22	57.9	19	51.3			1,333	64.6	1,235	58.9
20-29%	N/A	N/A	10	26.3	9	24.3			325	15.7	415	19.8
30% or More	N/A	N/A	6	15.8	9	24.3			391	18.9	408	19.5
Owner Occupied Households Below Poverty Level	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10	22.7					253	11.0
Owner Occupied Householder 65 Years or Over Below Poverty Level	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7	70					104	41.1

**TABLE H-8  
TOOMBS COUNTY  
OWNER COST OF HOUSING, 1980-2000  
(continued)**

	Region						Georgia					
	1980		1990		2000		1980		1990		2000	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Owner Specified Value												
Less than \$50,000								69.2		27.6		9.5
\$50,000 - \$99,999								26.3		46.6		34.2
\$100,000 or more								4.5		25.7		56.3
Median						N/A	\$36,900	N/A	\$71,300	N/A	111,200	N/A
Median Purchase price of Single Family Units					\$71,937						150,625	
Monthly Owner Costs Not Mortgaged	N/A		N/A		18,722	46.2		32.0		29.7		24.7
Less than \$300					798	2.0		27.4		4.1		0.6
\$300-\$499					3,332	8.2		27.6		12.8		3.9
\$500-\$699					6,099	15.1				15.4		9.5
\$700-\$999					6,685	16.5				20.5		21.3
\$1,000 or More					4,847	12.0		13.0 <sup>2/</sup>		17.6		39.9
Median with Mortgage							\$340		\$737		\$1,039	N/A
Median without Mortgage							\$107		\$182		\$259	N/A
Owner Housing Costs as % of income <sup>1/</sup>	N/A		N/A									
Less than 20%						63.4				55.5		54.8
20-29%						17.8				24.6		23.3
30% or More						18.8				19.3		21.0
Owner Occupied Households Below Poverty Level	N/A		N/A					11.1	139,479	9.1	146,893	7.2
Owner Occupied Householder 65 Years or Over Below Poverty Level	N/A		N/A						64,320	19.2	49,363	12.0

<sup>1/</sup> Does not add to 100% because does not include households "not computed."

<sup>2/</sup> Includes \$500 or more.

<sup>3/</sup> Includes \$300 or more.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1980, 1990, 2000), [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov); *Georgia State of the State's Housing: Service Delivery Region 9*, UGA, 2003.

**TABLE H-9  
TOOMBS COUNTY  
RENTER COST OF HOUSING, 1980-2000**

	Toombs County						Lyons					
	1980		1990		2000		1980		1990		2000	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Monthly Gross Rent												
No Cash Rent	219	7.9	299	10.2	296	8.9	39	58.7	45	6.2	67	9.5
Less than \$200	2,091	75	806	27.5	319	9.6	555	83.6	244	33.8	80	11.3
\$200-\$299	127	4.6	683	23.3	466	14.1	26	3.9	179	24.8	164	23.3
\$300-\$499	25	0.8	931	31.7	1,462	44.1	9	1.4	237	32.8	287	40.7
\$500 or More	9	0.3	215	7.3	773	23.3			17	23.5	107	15.3
Median	\$74		\$276		\$393		\$70		\$261		\$333	
Gross Rent as % of Income <sup>1/</sup>												
Less than 20%	N/A	N/A	934	31.8	1,099	33.2	N/A	N/A	214	29.6	188	26.6
20-29%	N/A	N/A	593	20.2	667	20.2	N/A	N/A	121	16.8	133	18.8
30% or More	N/A	N/A	1,025	34.9	1,113	17.6	N/A	N/A	332	46	292	41.5
Renter Occupied Households Below Poverty Level			N/A	N/A	1,160	34	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	354	50
Renter Occupied Householder 65 Years or Over Below Poverty Level	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	187	16.1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	44	12.4

	Santa Claus						Vidalia					
	1980		1990		2000		1980		1990		2000	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Monthly Gross Rent												
No Cash Rent	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0	74	4.8	90	5.3	61	3.2
Less than \$200	N/A	N/A	0	0	1	4.5	1,266	8.2	480	28.4	211	11.1
\$200-\$299	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0	95	6.2	383	22.6	217	11.4
\$300-\$499	N/A	N/A	20	80	17	77.3	17	1.1	571	33.7	854	44.7
\$500 or More	N/A	N/A	5	20	4	18.1	8	0.1	169	10	566	29.6
Median	N/A	N/A	\$386		\$415		\$73		\$281		\$414	
Gross Rent as % of Income <sup>1/</sup>												
Less than 20%	N/A	N/A	14	56	11	50	N/A	N/A	572	33.8	647	33.9
20-29%	N/A	N/A	6	24	6	27.2	N/A	N/A	400	23.6	452	23.7
30% or More	N/A	N/A	5	20	5	22.7	N/A	N/A	585	34.6	657	34.4
Renter Occupied Households Below Poverty Level	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	13.6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	593	31.1
Renter Occupied Householder 65 Years or Over Below Poverty Level	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	115	19.4



**TABLE H-9  
TOOMBS COUNTY  
RENTER COST OF HOUSING, 1980-2000  
(continued)**

	Region						Georgia					
	1980		1990		2000		1980		1990		2000	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Monthly Gross Rent												
No Cash Rent	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3,493	13.9		6.1		5.1		6.1
Less than \$200	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3,448	13.7		42.9		12.1		6.0
\$200-\$299	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4,293	17.1		32.2		12.3		5.8
\$300-\$499	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	9,860	39.2		17.5		35.9		20.9
\$500 or More	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4,062	16.1		1.2		34.6		61.2
Median	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		\$211		\$433	N/A	\$613	N/A
Gross Rent as % of Income <sup>1/</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A								
Less than 20%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	8,333	33.1				30.4		33.0
20-29%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4,485	17.8				25.8		23.0
30% or More	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7,949	31.6				37.0		35.4
Renter Occupied Households Below Poverty Level	N/A		N/A		N/A		N/A	29.0	218,716	26.4	235,800	24.1
Renter Occupied Householder 65 Years or Over Below Poverty Level	N/A		N/A		N/A		N/A		43,886	43.6	32,366	31.6

<sup>1/</sup> Does not add to 100% because does not include households “not computed.”

<sup>2/</sup> Includes \$300 or more.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1980, 1990, 2000), [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)