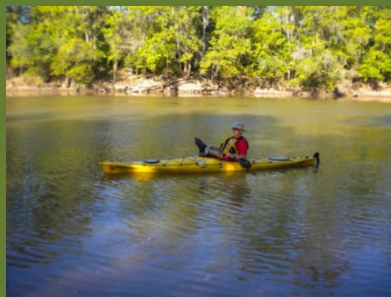


# GROWING BEYOND THE PINES TOGETHER



A Joint Comprehensive Plan for Treutlen County and Soperton, Georgia



August, 2016

# **Growing Beyond the Pines Together**

## **A Joint Comprehensive Plan for Treutlen County and Soperton, Georgia**

A Joint Comprehensive Plan for Treutlen County and the City of Soperton, Georgia, in accordance with the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 and the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs with an effective date of March 1, 2014



Prepared By:

The Treutlen County Joint Comprehensive Plan Coordination Committee  
The Treutlen County Local Governments

Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission

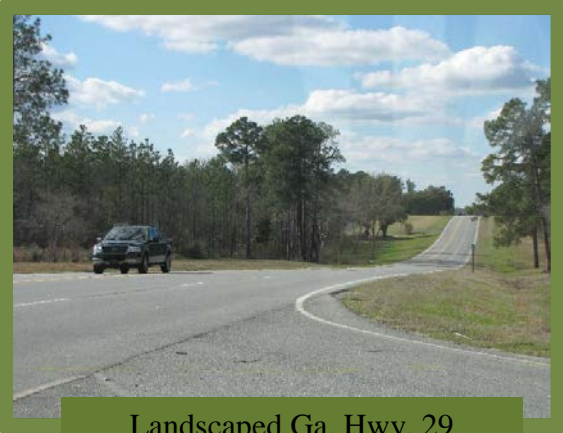
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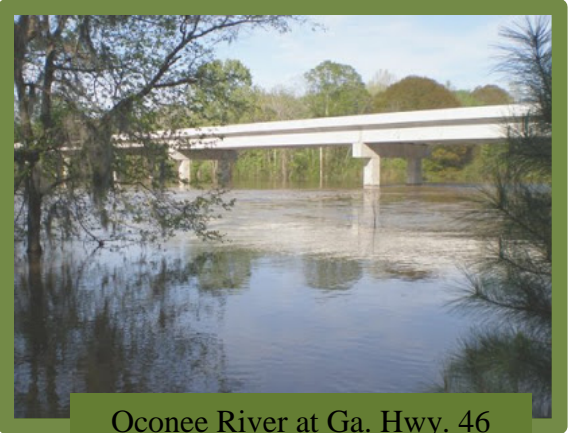
Old Pine Tree with Catfaces, James Fowler Property



Historic Railroad, Treutlen County



Landscaped Ga. Hwy. 29



Oconee River at Ga. Hwy. 46



Corn Harvesting, Treutlen County



Downtown Soperton Park



Million Pines Festival



Treutlen County High School

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# INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Growing Beyond the Pines Together -- The Treutlen County Joint Comprehensive Plan** is a comprehensive plan prepared under the current Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 adopted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) first with an effective date of January 1, 2013, and after minor changes, an effective date of March 1, 2014. It is a joint plan for Treutlen County and the City of Soperton.

Treutlen County is a small, rural county of about 7,000 persons located in central Southeast Georgia. It is also small in size as it is only about 200 square miles in land area. The community is located along I-16 just east of Dublin/Laurens County, almost midway between Atlanta and Savannah. Treutlen's only municipality, and its county seat, is Soperton, a small town of about 3,000 persons full of Southern charm, stately single-family homes, large yards, many trees, a safe environment, a lower cost of living, and a friendly, caring, and neighborly populace. The community describes itself as truly green and quiet, just off the beaten path, perfect for raising a family, retiring to a slower pace of living, or creating or expanding a business. Treutlen County is served by a Class I railroad, and has two available industrial sites with rail service which are located closer to I-16 than any other rail served industrial site in the entire Macon-Savannah I-16 corridor. The community does have much to offer and welcome the visitor, resident, or entrepreneur alike beyond its very apparent locational and transportation resource advantages.

Treutlen County is located amidst a year-round verdant landscape of towering Southern pines; a caressing, warm climate of friendly people, and healthy temperatures; and inviting and enchanting outdoor fun and adventure highlighted by the scenic, black waters of the Oconee and Ohoopsee rivers. The self-described next great small town is only a very short drive away from the larger, but still rural, micropolitan statistical areas of Dublin and Vidalia, along with easy access to the metropolitan areas of Macon and Savannah.

Not only is Treutlen County located in a comforting and relaxing sea of pine trees, it has a long history of leadership and stewardship related to the pine tree and its uses. Soperton is called “The Million Pines City” because a local Treutlen County resident, James Fowler, first planted pine seedlings rather than relying on random natural regeneration of his farm beginning in the 1920s. Fowler eventually planted about 7,000,000 pines. His farm was an outdoor laboratory for Charles Herty, who invented new, less destructive methods for farming turpentine from Southern pines with his Herty cup and other means, and who also developed a process to make paper from the pine trees. The first newspaper printed on paper created by using the Herty process was the local *The Soperton News*, and a copy of that issue resides in the Smithsonian. Treutlen County and Treutlen Countians were the center of the 20<sup>th</sup> century revival of turpentine, and the last turpentine commercially farmed in the U.S. came from a Treutlen County farm. In the late 2000s, the first commercial effort in the U.S. to produce ethanol from wood cellulose was initiated in Soperton, but has not yet proven successful. Soperton has celebrated a Million Pines Festival for almost 50 years, and it is recognized as one of the South’s best arts and crafts shows.

While the area surrounding and including Treutlen County/Soperton was settled early in Georgia history after Creek Indian cessions, Treutlen County itself is one of Georgia’s younger counties, created only in 1918 from Emanuel and Montgomery counties. Soperton actually was created earlier as a town in Montgomery because of the development of the Macon, Dublin, and Savannah Railroad in the late 1800s/early 1900s. Soperton’s City Hall is now located in the railroad’s former depot and has been there since 1972. Despite its many resources and assets, Treutlen County and Soperton have somewhat struggled to overcome the economic challenges and changes of the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. County population today remains somewhat less than that at county establishment. The community does have a top-rated school system, and continues to develop postsecondary opportunities, and other amenities. These assets, when combined with its locational advantages, family-friendly atmosphere, and overall high quality of rural, small town life, make it a yet-to-be discovered diamond in the rough with much potential to truly be the next great small town. The local governments, along with the entire community

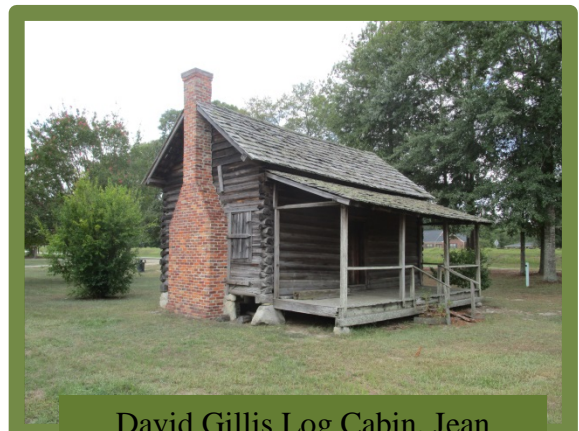
body, are cooperatively working to improve assets and address local issues to grow beyond the pines together.

While there is much to be optimistic about the future growth and development of the community, it has not yet been realized, and there are serious issues requiring attention. Much of historic downtown Soperton is vacant, the community has only limited industry and retail/service sectors, and the population has remained relatively stagnant. Almost sixteen (16) percent of Treutlen Countians are 65 or older, compared to about 13 percent in Georgia. Over a fourth (27.1 percent) of the population lives in poverty, compared to 18 percent in Georgia. Incomes overall are low. Per capita money income in the county, as measured by the Census Bureau from 2010-2014, (\$20,643) is about 81 percent that of Georgia (\$25,427). The county median household income for the same period (\$40,143) is also about 81 percent that of Georgia (\$49,342). Unemployment in the county was 8.2 percent, as an annual average in 2015, slightly higher when compared to the surrounding area, and much higher than Georgia's 5.9 percent. Such statistics have resulted in Georgia ranking Treutlen County as a 2016 Job Tax Tier 1 county. While this ranking is for Georgia's bottom 40 percent or so of counties needing an economic boost, it has the advantage of offering Georgia's largest tax breaks for job creation within Treutlen County, and thus a big incentive for business job creator entities and further economic improvement. Low incomes, high unemployment, and a limited tax base have long been concerns within Treutlen County.

The future Treutlen County will work hard together to take advantage of its assets and opportunities, and address its issues. It will strive to be recognized as an ideal location of rural family-centric living, a slower-paced high quality of small town life, a caring community pulling together, and a recognized gem of education, recreation, and overall rural life. The community will be a desired address for both business and residential growth, and an outstanding place to live, raise kids, work, recreate, or visit. Growth will be well managed and guided to locate near the existing and planned infrastructure and services of Soperton, and will be respectful and protective of the existing character and noted history, and the community's fields, forests, open spaces, and its unique and special natural and cultural resources. The community will truly be recognized as a special place and great small town of rural development and life known for its



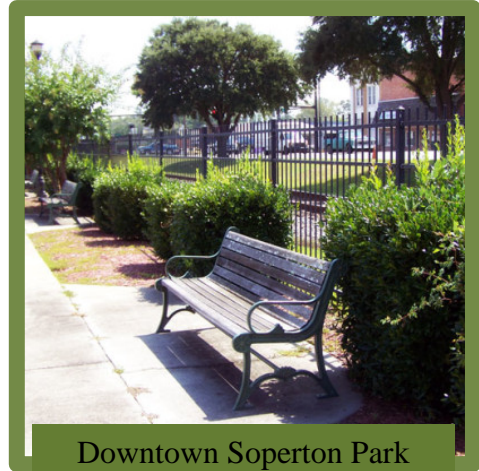
Governor Troup's Tomb



David Gillis Log Cabin, Jean Gillis Park



Antique Police Car, Downtown Soperton



Downtown Soperton Park



Historic Residence, Soperton



Treutlen County Library, Soperton



envious and coveted quality of life, its involved and caring citizenry, its cooperative spirit, and its educational, historic, and outdoor adventure opportunities. Many will enjoy the welcoming Southern hospitality, charm, and outstanding history, and living, working, playing, or doing business in Treutlen County.

The current DCA planning standards reduced and simplified requirements seeking to engender local plans more attentive to individual needs and generating more local pride, ownership, and use. This Treutlen County Joint Comprehensive Plan was developed with this as an overarching objective. It was intended to be a locally driven plan principally addressing local needs and cultivating widespread community interest, support, and buy-in, while meeting state standards. Even the title of this plan was chosen carefully to stimulate and encourage interest, reading, and implementation. “Growing Beyond the Pines Together” widely captures reference to Treutlen County’s rich history and heritage of pine tree farming, environmental leadership and local cooperation; numerous natural and cultural resources; its advantageous location; and transportation resources; its high quality of small town life; and to its future aspirations. This certainly should generate more curiosity and interest, and hopefully, more ownership and utilization, than the more bland “The Treutlen County Joint Comprehensive Plan.” The Treutlen County community wants to protect its heritage, rural character, and smalltown charm; enhance its economy; conserve its fields and forests and natural splendor; improve its infrastructure; support the local school system and other educational venues and opportunities; attract new residents and retirees; locate businesses and compatible jobs; celebrate its heritage; and grow tourism, among its guiding aims and principles outlined herein. The community truly wants to be a recognized as an exceptional rural smalltown widely known for its many attributes; its educational, recreational, and business opportunities; its quality-of-life; and its convenient location.

Previous Plans. This comprehensive plan is the third within the County prepared under the auspices of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. The first was adopted in 1991, and the second in 2006. Both of these previous plan efforts were intensively data and state requirement driven, although local objectives are outlined and portrayed. The second plan does contain some local information which may not easily be found elsewhere and may remain of use. At least these last

plans should remain, at least in hard copy, available from the Treutlen County local governments and the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission. At the time of this plan preparation, the 2006 plan and update are available in digital format on the state ([www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com)) and region ([www.hogarc.org](http://www.hogarc.org)) websites.

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

There are a variety of reliable public and private sources of data. Of course, the traditional source of official community data is the U.S. Census Bureau. Data on Soperton or Treutlen County, or any other jurisdiction is quickly accessed at [census.gov/quickfacts](http://census.gov/quickfacts) which provides a summary community profile on many popular data items, and links to even more data. Another quality source of data is the website, [www.statsamerica.org](http://www.statsamerica.org), which provides a compilation of primarily government data on many items for any county in any state of the U.S. The site is maintained by Indiana University in partnership with the federal Economic Development Administration. The University of Georgia maintains a website, [www.georgiastats.uga.edu](http://www.georgiastats.uga.edu), where county level data for nearly 1,300 variables related to a wide variety of subjects on population, labor, natural resources, government, health, education, and crime can be accessed. The data can be compared to other counties and the state as well as on a historical change basis, among various user options. The data is compiled from *The Georgia County Guide and the Farmgate Value Report* prepared by UGA's Extension Service. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs has available data for cities and counties under "Community Planning Resources," and will also prepare community data reports when requested. The State of Georgia has official labor and economic data and other links to state data at [georgiafacts.org](http://georgiafacts.org). Additional state sponsored economic data is available at [www.georgialogistics.com](http://www.georgialogistics.com). Excellent overall private data sources include [www.city-data.com](http://www.city-data.com),

and [www.usa.com](http://www.usa.com); while [www.headwaterseconomics.org](http://www.headwaterseconomics.org) is an excellent source for socioeconomic information, including data and interpretation.

Population Projections. The official 2010 Census population of Treutlen County was 6,885, up by only 31 persons from 2000's 6,854. This slight growth was significantly much less than that of Georgia's 18.3%, and also much less than that of the national U.S. rate of 9.7%. Treutlen County's population had grown by over 14 percent from 1990 to 2000. These numbers only highlight Treutlen's struggles and ongoing economic difficulties. Treutlen County's location, transportation access, history, pine trees, outstanding natural and historic resources, its family-friendly attitude, its heritage of progressive and cooperative leadership, its recreational opportunities, and its relaxed, high quality of life do offer hope and possibilities for the future. The U.S. Census Bureau estimate for 2015 Treutlen County population is 6,785, down by 1,000 persons, more than 14 percent from 2010. This suggests, as does the current unemployment rate, more significant local damage from the lack of production success at Range Fuels, and the great recession of the late 2000s than in many rural places, and does further highlight current economic difficulties and concerns. The high mark of population in Treutlen County was that recorded at creation in 1920. Treutlen County's 1920 population was 7,664. There have only been three decades in county history which have shown population growth, the 1930s, 1970s, and the 1990s (other than the slight growth of the 2000s). Treutlen County's location, its rich history, community spirit, abundant and outstanding natural resources, many working fields and forests, its outstanding and rich quality of small town life, and easy access to larger metro areas and Georgia's ports are positive factors and influences for a turnaround and for future growth and development, and a rebound in population. The 2015 Census population number is only an estimate, but is an alarm signal.

While past and present population levels are readily available on the world wide web, population projections are not so easily accessed. The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) is responsible for generating official state population projections for Georgia counties. Current OPB projections for Treutlen County from 2015 are 6,779 persons in 2030 and 6,593 persons in 2040, forecasting continuing decline. The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission (HOGARC) also prepares population projections which have proven to be

relatively accurate in the past. HOGARC’s population projections for Treutlen County, as noted in the 2013 Regional Assessment of its Regional Plan, show significantly higher projection population levels than current OPB or Regional Commission projections. More recent Regional Commission projections, which take into account lower 2015 Census estimates, unlike OPB, do however project some modest future population growth. These latest Regional Commission projections include 7,501 in 2030 and 7,867 in 2040. The Regional Commission projections indicate slow, but somewhat steady, expected population growth.

### **Population Projections, Treutlen County**

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>2040</b>
<b>OPB, 2015</b>	6,885	6,728	6,762	6,784	6,779	6,714	6,593
<b>HOGARC Regional Plan</b>	6,885	7,283	7,540	7,806	8,081	8,366	8,561
<b>Regional Commission</b>	6,885	6,785	7,152	7,324	7,501	7,682	7,887

Sources: State Office of Planning and Budget, 2015, Meaghan Ryan email, 2016; Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission Regional Plan, Regional Assessment, 2013; Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission staff projection, 2016.

Coordination with Other Plans. Treutlen County has an approved and adopted hazard mitigation plan prepared for the Federal Emergency Management Agency to remain eligible for federal disaster assistance. This Hazard Mitigation Plan’s preparation was coordinated with past comprehensive plan preparation. It is clear that the two most prominent hazards facing Treutlen County that can be influenced by the comprehensive plan are the hazard mitigation plan goals to reduce damage from flood hazards and wildfire, and thereby protect life and health. The comprehensive plan objectives to conserve the county’s river and stream corridors, to maintain healthy working forests and fields (including employing proper management techniques), to improve fire/emergency management and other public safety services, and to enhance growth management/code enforcement regulation are generally consistent with, and offer implementation to, the hazard mitigation plan.

The Treutlen County Joint Comprehensive Plan is also consistent with the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The Strategy’s goals and objectives to develop industrial parks; develop/improve local



Oconee River, Treutlen County



Iva Park, Soperton



Rural Residence, Treutlen County



Residential Streetscape, Soperton



Veterans Memorial Park,  
Downtown Soperton



Historic Downtown Soperton

infrastructure; enhance telecommunications infrastructure; retain existing businesses/industry; attract new industry; and spur non-traditional economic development, like tourism and downtown development, are repeated as principal goals in the Treutlen County Comprehensive Plan. The local plan is similarly supportive of espoused state economic goals.

Regional Water Plan and Environmental Planning Criteria Consideration. Treutlen County is part of the Altamaha Regional Water Planning Council. The adopted regional water plan, *Altamaha Regional Water Plan* (2011), was considered by the Treutlen County Local Plan Coordination Committee and the local governments in preparation of this plan. This local comprehensive plan's objectives to maintain viable agriculture/forestry uses, protect/conservate natural resources, to enhance intergovernmental coordination and government/efficiencies, and upgrade local infrastructure all help implement, and maintain consistency with, the regional water plan. The vision of the regional water plan, "to wisely manage, develop and protect the region's water resources...to enhance quality of life..., protect natural systems..., and support the basin's economy," is inherent in this comprehensive plan's community vision and goals. In the Regional Water Planning Council's 2014 implementation report, Soperton's CDBG for sewer improvements was specifically cited as a supportive implementation activity. Other water/sewer improvements would also be supportive implementation.

Similarly, the Environmental Planning Criteria were also considered in the development of this comprehensive plan. The City of Soperton, is in compliance with the Environmental Planning Criteria, having adopted an implementing, consistent ordinance in 2001. Treutlen County has yet to adopt an implementing ordinance, but plans to do so in 2017. The City of Soperton, with the assistance of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, adopted the Region's model "Environmental Conservation, On-Site Sewage Management, and Permit" Ordinance. The Regional Commission's minimum planning standards require the adoption of an implementing ordinance within three years of the Regional Plan adoption which occurred in September, 2014.

Consistency with Quality Community Objectives. In 2011, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs changed its Quality Community Objectives to a more general listing and

summary of the 10 objectives. These include: Economic Prosperity, Resource Management, Efficient Land Use, Local Preparedness, Sense of Place, Regional Cooperation, Housing Options, Transportation Options, Educational Opportunities, and Community Health.

The Treutlen County Joint Comprehensive Plan directly espouses (many of) these objectives and therefore, is very consistent with, and supportive of them. This comprehensive plan has goals to achieve a brighter future and better community for Treutlen County, which is consistent with a quality community and the DCA Quality Community Objectives. The Treutlen County Local Plan Coordination Committee reviewed and considered these Quality Community Objectives at one of its meetings.

Community Involvement. As noted earlier, the Treutlen County local governments clearly wanted to take advantage of the new DCA planning standards to develop a broad-based community plan which would involve and excite all concerned, both public and private, with the future growth and development of Soperton and Treutlen County. To accomplish this, they created a steering committee, the Treutlen County Joint Comprehensive Plan Coordination Committee, of all local stakeholders who could be envisioned to help guide this plan's development, and make the community a better place to live, work, recreate, and learn. This committee did include elected and appointed members from the governing authorities, local economic development practitioners, and local government staff, as well as others concerned with community and economic development and other issues within the entire community. This Coordination Committee had notable participation; was actively involved in the development of all facets of this comprehensive plan; and had numerous opportunities to both help develop, review, and revise all components. The first orders of business at any Coordination Committee meeting were review of any revisions to previous elements based on committee input, and chances to return to and modify earlier elements, if desired. The initial meeting of the Local Plan Coordination Committee included a formal identification of strengths and weaknesses of the community, including opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis). This identification was utilized in developing all plan elements. The general public was offered the chance to participate at the two required public hearings (and with the Coordination Committee, if desired, after the initial public hearing). These hearings were advertised through unique wording to specifically

generate interest and participation. The initial public hearing was held near the beginning of the plan development process to explain the process, offer opportunity for further participation, and solicit input on an improved community vision and local issues/opportunities. It also received record participation. Drafts of the committee approved community vision, and issues and opportunities, were placed on community websites for feedback and input. The final public hearing was held after a plan draft was developed and reviewed by the Coordination Committee to allow citizen review, solicit any final input, and inform of pending submittal. A more detailed summary of community involvement is included in an appendix.

“Growing Beyond the Pines Together” is truly a locally developed guide to, and framework for, future growth and development of Treutlen County and Soperton designed to generate local pride and enthusiasm, to accentuate assets and improve weaknesses, and ultimately bring about a desired future which makes the Treutlen County community an improved place to live and work with an outstanding and enhanced quality of life. It is realized that to take advantage of opportunities and to make a difference will take time and considered effort, but it is felt this plan is pragmatic and practical in outlining a course and roadmap for steps and actions which can be achieved and which will move the community forward. The plan continues with delineation of the Community Goals element and a Community Vision which essentially and succinctly summarizes the community’s aspirations and plan’s objectives.





# COMMUNITY GOALS

The Community Goals Element is described in the State Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive planning as the most important part of the comprehensive plan. It is a concise summary of future community desires and wishes, and is an easily referenced roadmap for community leaders and all concerned with growth and development of the community and its future. The Treutlen County Joint Comprehensive Plan includes three of the four possible components detailed in the Minimum Standards for the required element. These include: a general Community Vision, separate municipal descriptions/visions, listing of Community Goals, and a description of Long Term Community Policies. These components seek to paint a picture of the desired future community, and answer the planning question, “Where does the community wish to go?” To some degree, the Long Term Community Policies also outline guidance strategy of, “How are we going to get where we desire to go, and also, what do we desire for other development parties to pursue?”

## COMMUNITY VISION

Treutlen County is a small, rural county in southeast Georgia located along I-16 between Macon and Savannah. The county's population is only about 7,000 persons, and it is only about 200 square miles in land area. It is one of Georgia's youngest counties (it was created in 1918 as the 154<sup>th</sup> Georgia county); it is one of Georgia's smallest counties (138<sup>th</sup> in land area); and one of the least populated in Georgia (145<sup>th</sup> in 2010). The economic base of the county has traditionally been related to agriculture and pine forests, and remains so to a large extent. The abundant natural resources of the county, its location, transportation resources, and its cooperative community spirit are keys to future growth.

Despite its small size, the Treutlen County community has much history, promise, and attraction. Soperton/Treutlen County is committed to working together to reenergize itself and realize its potential. The community is strategically located along the I-16 corridor about midway between Macon and Savannah. Unique locational advantages for business and industry are offered by the community. The community has two industrial sites with available electric and natural gas utilities, excess water and sewer capacity, and rail service. These sites are exceptional in that they are the closest to I-16 with available rail service in the entire Macon-Savannah I-16 corridor. Soperton and its industrial sites are located almost half-way between Atlanta, home of the busiest airport in the world, and Savannah, home of the U.S. East Coast's fastest growing port.

Soperton/Treutlen County is a quaint community offering the virtues of a caring, neighborly small town life, including stately homes, large yards, many trees, much outdoor beauty, a safe environment, and a significantly lower cost of living. The cost of living in Treutlen County matches its attractive, genteel slower pace of life. Property taxes are low, housing costs are very modest, and there is cheap, available land and homes for sale. Sperling's rates the Treutlen overall cost of living as 78.60, whereas the U.S. average is 100, and its housing cost at only 36 out of 100. There are an abundant variety of interesting attractions for outdoor enthusiasts, history buffs, and a relaxing and scenic quality of life. One can experience, and live

every day, true Southern charm, great Southern food, old-fashioned family values, grace, and hospitality. There is much to offer the visitor, resident, or entrepreneur amidst a verdant, year-round green landscape of whispering and towering Southern pines; mysterious and mirrored charms of the natural wonders of the scenic, blackwater Oconee and Ochopee rivers; the heartwarming sunshine and warm climate of brilliant, blue skies; and the friendly smiles of a compassionate, truly caring populace. This self-described next great small town is not the location of an isolated island. More urban amenities are less than 30 minutes away both east and west in the larger, but still rural, micropolitan statistical areas of Vidalia and Dublin, respectively. While Soperton is just refreshingly off the beaten and hectic path, it has four access points to I-16, the interstate to the metropolitan areas of Macon and Savannah, both less than two hours away. All the necessities are available locally; the community has an outstanding local school system with all new local schools, all of which have achieved five-star state superior rating and which works cooperatively with nearby postsecondary institutions; two local industrial sites with available utilities, including rail and natural gas; a local general aviation airport close to I-16 (in addition to access to larger ones in both Dublin and Vidalia); an active railroad; and many other quality amenities. Treutlen County and Soperton are truly, relatively hidden and undiscovered smalltown, rural gems with much to offer anyone seeking a slower-paced, but high quality of life, be they entrepreneur, visitor, working resident or retiree. There is also a cooperative can-do spirit and partnership shared by public and private officials alike.

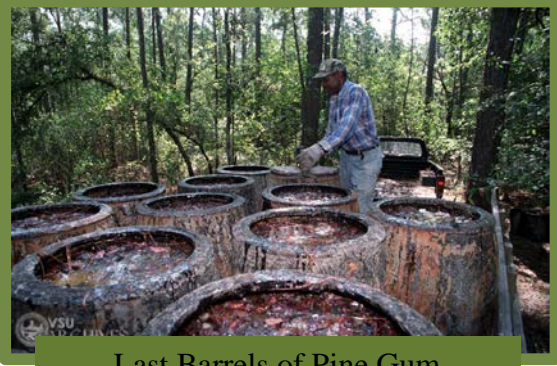
Treutlen County remains a largely rural county, with a landscape predominated by forestry, and to a lesser extent, agricultural uses. There has been limited growth. The highest population total (7,664) in Treutlen County was recorded in the 1920 Census, two years after its creation. The population remained relatively stable until World War II, but declined afterwards until 1970. There was some growth during the 1970s, but the population remained relatively stable until 1990. Since that time, Treutlen County has grown slightly because of its attractive location, smalltown charm, and attraction to residential development. The only municipality in the County is the City of Soperton which has slowly increased, and actually has gained in population, relative to the county.

The community has a surprising legacy of history, leadership, stewardship, and economic development related to the pine tree and other endeavors. Treutlen County is one of Georgia's

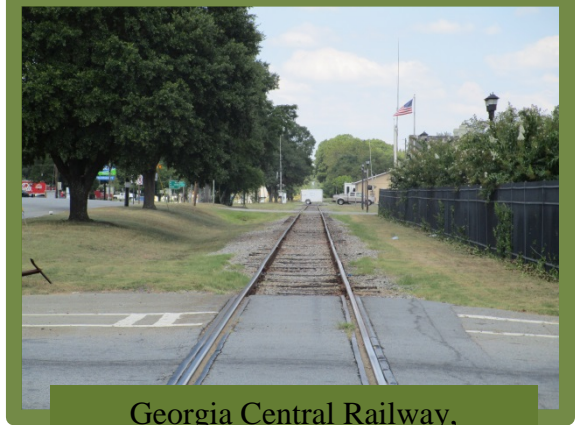
youngest counties, having been created in 1918 from portions of Emanuel and Montgomery counties. However, this status belies much history and uniqueness within the community. The county was named for John Adam Treutlen, the first governor of the State of Georgia, who vanished shortly after leaving office in January, 1778. He is believed to have been killed by British loyalists. The City of Soperton, the county seat and only currently incorporated municipality, traces its origins to the establishment of the Macon-Dublin-Savannah Railroad in the late 1800s, with the Dublin to Vidalia portion (through Soperton) finally completed in 1902. Soperton was incorporated as a town in late 1902, and was named for Benjamin Franklin Soper, who had founded the Southern Railway Mine and Milling Company, and was instrumental in the construction of the railroad.

The county's history has always been tied in some part to its vast green forests of Southern yellow pine. The county was originally Creek Indian hunting lands opened by the Treaty of Augusta of 1783. It was primarily settled by small scale farmers from the Carolinas in the early and mid 1800s who were attracted by naval stores and the lumber industry. Its Indian frontier history is attested by the fact that one of the last Georgia forts to protect citizens from Indian attacks was built in 1793 on Berryhill's Bluff on the Oconee River in Treutlen County, near Lothair. There are many known, as well as unrecorded, archaeological sites in Treutlen County. One of Georgia's early governors, George M. Troup, whose terms in office were noted for the removal of Creek Indians from the state, is buried in Treutlen County. The marked historic site, "Troup's Tomb," is located on the site of one of Governor Troup's many plantations, Rosemont Plantation, located near the Oconee River and the Lothair community in present-day Treutlen County (formerly Montgomery County).

Leadership, the pine tree, and the environment have always played key roles in the development and history of Treutlen County and continue to do so. The county was established through concerted efforts of local citizens, particularly Senator Neil Gillis, Sr., who wanted to better control their own destiny and commerce. He and his family created Soperton Naval Stores to produce turpentine and lumber. Senator Gillis' legislative efforts also helped fund and establish forestry management in Georgia. The history of forestry in Georgia, and arguably of the entire South, was transformed through efforts and cooperation from Treutlen Countians. A local resident, James Fowler, created history when in the 1920s he plowed under his cotton fields and



Last Barrels of Pine Gum  
Commercially Produced in US,  
Treutlen County



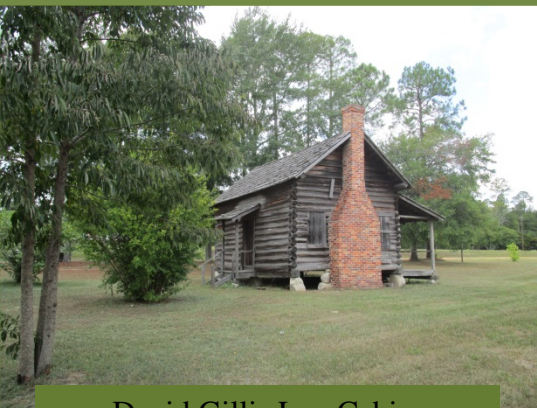
Georgia Central Railway,  
Downtown Soperton



Soperton City Hall (Old Macon,  
Dublin, & Savannah Railway Depot)



Treutlen County Courthouse



David Gillis Log Cabin,  
Jean Gillis Park



Historic Residence, Soperton

began planting pine trees as a crop. His efforts eventually resulted in the planting of seven million pine trees on 10,000 acres of his “Million Pines” Plantation. Fowler’s effort is the derivation of Soperton’s moniker, “The Million Pines City.” Fowler has been called the “father of modern Southern forestry.” The efforts are now celebrated in a large, well-respected arts and crafts festival, the “Million Pines Arts and Crafts Festival,” held since 1972 on the first full weekend in November. The festival has the reputation of being Southeast Georgia’s largest and finest such festival.

Fowler’s efforts and local cooperation with Charles H. Herty spurred a national reforestation movement, led to the Southern pulp and paper manufacturing industry, and some say, the industrialization of the South. Charles Herty, with monetary support from the Georgia legislature and heavy cooperation from Treutlen County, proved in 1932 in his Savannah, Georgia laboratory that an acidic sulfite process could be used to make newsprint and white paper from young Southern yellow pine trees. Herty had previously saved the Southern pine tree from extinction by his invention of the Herty cup and gutter system to extract naval stores and rosin rather than killing the pine trees with deep cuts. On March 31, 1933, the local Treutlen County weekly newspaper, *The Soperton News*, became the first newspaper in the nation ever printed on paper made from Southern pine trees. A copy of that newspaper is in the Smithsonian Museum. Between 1935 and 1940, 15 pulp and paper mills utilizing Southern pines were built in the southern United States, simultaneously helping the South’s devastated economy recover and fostering reforestation and the management of Southern pine forests as a renewable resource. It truly created the Southern pulpwood industry, and significantly increased the manufacturing base of the entire South’s economy. Treutlen County continues to offer opportunities related to its many pine trees.

The support of forestry management in Georgia, and other leadership support and advocacy for natural resources, conservation, and other development issues has been an ongoing legacy in Treutlen County. Senator Gillis’ son, Jim L. Gillis, Sr., was the first highway commissioner for the State of Georgia. Besides helping the Georgia economy by paving many roads, another accomplishment of note from Jim L. Gillis, Sr. was getting federal funding for a wide landscaped right of way for Georgia 29 north from Soperton during the FDR administration. It may have been one of the first highway beautification projects in the U.S.

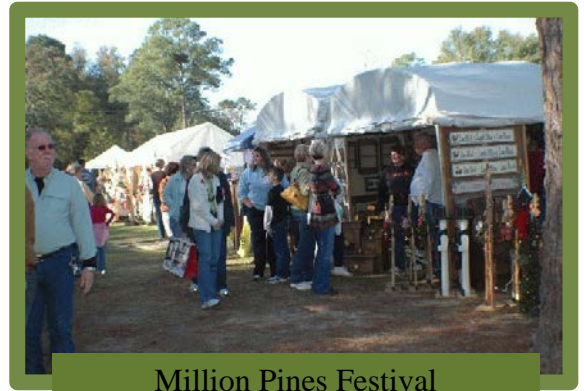
Senator Gillis' grandson, Senator Hugh M. Gillis, became the longest serving legislator in the entire United States before his retirement in 2004, providing 56 years of service and leadership, particularly to forestry, agriculture, and natural resources. Senator Hugh Gillis' brother, Jim L. Gillis, Jr., served for many decades on the Georgia Forestry Commission Board, and helped vigorously advance the idea for soil and water conservation through being a founding member of the Ochopee River Soil and Water Conservation District. He also provided local leadership to the city and county, as well as fostering the U.S. Soil and Water Conservation Service, now the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service. Mr. Jim L. Gillis, Jr. was also one of only two presidents of the American Turpentine Farmers Association, serving many years and helping maintain naval stores production as a viable industry in the U.S. well into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. He continued to serve conservation well into his 90s and has been recognized as the longest serving conservation district board member in the nation. It is appropriate that the last buckets of pine gum dipped for commercial turpentine in the United States were produced on Gillis property by Soperton Naval Stores in 2001. There has been other local leadership related to natural resources which continues today.

Another Treutlen Countian, Georgia Representative L.L. "Pete" Phillips, served in the Georgia legislature from 1969 until his death in 1986, and was widely cited as one of Georgia's leading experts on environmental issues at the time of his passing. Rep. Phillips was attributed by the then Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources as having authored or co-authored many of Georgia's early environmental laws. These included the landmark 1975 Erosion and Sedimentation Act, which helped convince many that environmental stewardship did not mean impairing economic growth. He also helped establish Georgia's Environmental Facilities Authority, which has helped many Georgia local governments build wastewater treatment plants; the Dam Safety Act of 1978; and the Shoreline Assistance Act of 1979, among others. This appreciation of the many captivating natural resources of the county, and their potential benefits for economic development and sustaining contributions to an outstanding rural quality of life, remains important to the community.

Treutlen County and Soperton still have an enviable leadership who work closely together to take advantage of its attractive location, abundant natural resources, interesting history, smalltown charm, and unlimited opportunities. The community is tirelessly working



Planted Pines, Treutlen County



Million Pines Festival



Landscaped Ga. Hwy. 29,  
Treutlen County



Oconee River Canoe Trail  
Sign at Dead River Landing



Pine Tree Timber Harvesting,  
Treutlen County



Historic Downtown Soperton



together to move beyond just pines. Treutlen County and Soperton see its location along I-16 between Macon and Savannah, half-way between Atlanta and Savannah, and near the local rural growth centers of Vidalia and Dublin, as its principal future opportunities for growth. The community's rail-served industrial sites located near I-16 are unique attractors which set the local community apart. The rural quality of life; the abundant natural and cultural resources, including the Oconee and Ochopee rivers, Sand Hill and Wildwood lakes, other natural beauty, many historic landmarks; and the availability of relatively inexpensive land will facilitate such growth. The community is currently home to several sustainable and renewable industries, and is conducive to industries of many types including logistics, warehousing, agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, and bio-technology. In 2013, the Treutlen County Development Authority was successful in locating Florida Hardware Farm Equipment, Inc., a division of Florida Hardware Company, LLC to Soperton. The farm equipment company was established to manufacture an improved quality of gates and livestock equipment than those that had previously been imported from China. Florida Hardware Farm Equipment has quickly become the largest gate manufacturer in the Southeast, a resounding testament to high quality in materials, manufacture, and the local workforce. East Coast Asphalt also recently located an asphalt plant adjacent to the railroad and Georgia 15/29 in eastern Treutlen County because of the community's locational advantages.

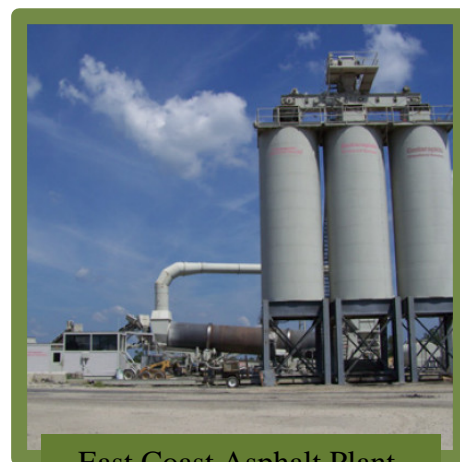
Treutlen County and Soperton will continue to be a rural, but growing community in the future with increasing residents and further economic growth and development of new business and industry, while maintaining its Southern charm and rural quality of life. The community will continue to move beyond the pines together. Treutlen County seeks to optimize its strategic location between Macon and the port of Savannah, and to attract new residential and economic growth, and additional visitors and tourists from I-16 into a revitalized Soperton. Soperton and its fringes would be the location of intense commercial and industrial growth, with a vibrant, thriving, and revitalized downtown of bustling commercial activity. Revitalizing downtown Soperton is an ongoing priority effort of the community. Where appropriate, the City of Soperton will assemble various ownership interests, and partner with the private sector to redevelop downtown parcels with new businesses and services. Downtown development will be guided and facilitated by an active, involved downtown development authority. The community desires Soperton's downtown revitalization to serve both as a source of community pride and a calling

card for further community development. The I-16 interchanges of the community would be developed with quality commercial developments inviting travelers to stop and explore Treutlen County/Soperton. The community would have a well-developed and utilized industrial park near I-16. Georgia Highway 29 would be an aesthetically pleasing, well-landscaped gateway into Soperton, appropriate to its history and with development responsive to the community vision and respective of the natural and cultural environment. Georgia 15 and U.S. 221 would provide similar quality gateways into Soperton.

Treutlen County would build on its rich history with enhanced tourism centered on the Million Pines Arts and Craft festival, the Million Pines Plantation and its importance to forestry in Georgia, other rehabilitated historic landmarks, and the pristine beauty of the Oconee and Ohoopsee rivers. It would be the goal to promote balanced, managed commercial, industrial, and residential growth utilizing upgraded, enhanced transportation assets; improved community facilities and services, including schools, postsecondary education opportunities, parks and recreation facilities, and water/sewer/ technology; and an expanded hospitality sector. This vision would be accomplished through investment in public infrastructure and services, implementation of a multi-faceted economic development strategy, and through appropriate land use regulation. The community will still be a beautiful oasis surrounded by mesmerizing outdoor beauty and a year-round green landscape heavily populated by towering, green Southern pines, but will move together beyond the pines to be so much more. Treutlen County would be an even better place to live, work, and visit, but would maintain its Southern charm and rural, high quality of life. The community will truly be recognized as the “great small town” which works together for the good of all.



Treutlen County High School



East Coast Asphalt Plant,  
Treutlen County

# Soperton

## Description

The City of Soperton is a small town of just over 3,000 persons located in central southeast Georgia at the intersection of U.S. Highway 221 and Georgia Highways 15, 29, 46 and 56, only about 4 to 6 miles south of Interstate 16. It is the county seat of Treutlen County and the county's only incorporated municipality. The community describes itself as a special place just off the beaten path with much interesting history and opportunity. The community is one with well kempt, quaint, and attractive single-family homes with many trees and large yards, an abundance of old-fashioned Southern charm, hospitality, and a caring, family-oriented atmosphere and character. It boasts outstanding schools, extensive park and recreation facilities, and many other appealing amenities. Even though the community describes itself as just off the beaten path, and there is a genteel, slower paced and lower cost of living, more urban choices are less than one-half hour's drive away. With four access interchanges to I-16, close-by rail service, and a convenient location close to half-way between Macon and Savannah, there is much local opportunity for the commuter or entrepreneur alike. The community is surrounded by outstanding outdoor beauty, including a verdant sea of pine trees and abundant outdoor fun and adventure amongst its fields, forests and along the blackwater Oconee and Ochoopee rivers. Much of Soperton's intriguing history is associated with pine trees and appropriately, the City's moniker is "The Million Pines City." Since 1972, the community has celebrated the Million Pines Festival, and this festival enjoys the reputation as one of the South's best arts and craft shows. The festival is held annually the first full weekend in November.

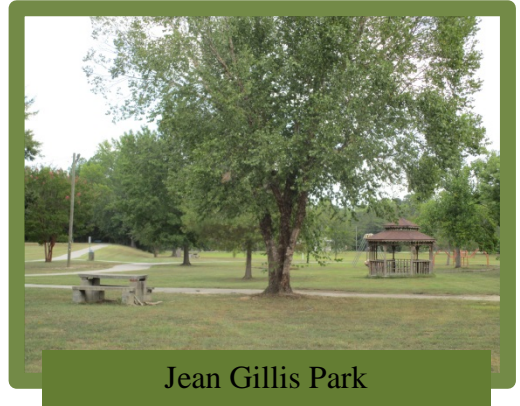
Originally, Soperton was located in Montgomery County and was primarily settled by Revolutionary War soldiers and other pioneers after Creek Indian cessions. The David D. Gillis log house, the oldest home in the City which predates the town's founding, is now located and restored in one of the town's large parks, the primarily passive 16-acre Jean Gillis Memorial Park. The David Gillis house was originally located on South Third Street or the road from Mount Vernon. The Macon, Dublin, and Savannah Railway's completion in

January, 1902 between Dublin and Vidalia led to the founding of the Town of Soperton. The original lands of Soperton are said to have been owned by the State of Georgia but deeded by Governor Herschel Johnson to a local citizen group. The town, founded as a railroad station on the Macon, Dublin, and Savannah Railway, was granted a charter by the Georgia General Assembly on December 17, 1902 with Ben Gillis appointed as the first mayor. The town limits were described as “one-half mile from the Macon, Dublin, and Savannah Railway Depot.” In August, 1910 the Georgia General Assembly changed the town limits from a one-half mile circle around the depot to a three-quarters mile circle from the depot. Soperton predates the establishment of Treutlen County, which was set forth as a proposed constitutional amendment under an act authored by local legislator Senator Neal Gillis in August, 1917, creating it from Emanuel and Montgomery counties. This amendment was formally ratified by voters in November, 1918. The Act establishing Treutlen County identified Soperton as the county seat. Soperton was changed from a town to a city charter in 1920.

Soperton is named for Mr. Benjamin Franklin Soper who founded the Southern Railway Mine and Milling Company, and who was instrumental in the construction of the Macon, Dublin, and Savannah Railway. The City of Soperton is known as the “Million Pines City” thanks to local farmer James Fowler, who became the father of modern tree farming when he began planting slash pine seedlings on his lands beginning in 1926. Fowler eventually planted about 7,000,000 pines on his 10,000 acres. He also cooperated with Charles Herty, and his lands were utilized as a laboratory by Herty which resulted in both the modernization and revival of naval stores turpentine, and the creation of the process to make newsprint from Southern pines. The first paper made from Fowler’s trees with the Herty process was used to publish the local weekly paper, *The Soperton News*, on March 31, 1933. The significance of this event is immortalized as a copy of that newspaper is displayed in the Smithsonian Institution. The Gillis family of Soperton was important not only to county creation, but also to naval stores, conservation, Georgia political history, and local community development. It is appropriate that the last naval stores farmed commercially in the United States came from Treutlen County Gillis lands in 2001. More recent local history of pine tree development and use was made when Range Fuels attempted to establish the nation’s first commercial biofuels plant made from wood cellulose in Soperton in the late 2000s. While the initial efforts and technology were not successful on a production scale, the plant remains operational under new



Soperton City Hall



Jean Gillis Park



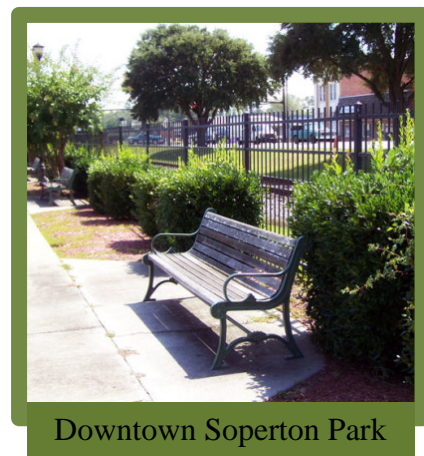
Historic Community House, Iva Park



Iva Park



Historic Downtown Soperton



Downtown Soperton Park

management as a laboratory for new methods and technologies, and could prove successful in the future.

Much of the interesting local history is celebrated by Soperton and Treutlen County in many venues beyond the Million Pines Festival, which also has a visitors center in Iva Park. The community operates a historic welcome center at the Georgia 29/I-16 interchange in a renovated log cabin, built in 1845, the Curt Barwick House, which served as a post office until the late 1800s. As mentioned earlier, the oldest house in town has been restored and is located in Jean Gillis Park. The Treutlen County Historical Society operates the J. Clayton Stephens Museum of Local History in the historic Fowler-Lawton House in Soperton. Since 1972, the original Macon, Dublin, and Savannah Railway Depot has served as Soperton's City Hall. This historic ambience and overall, outstanding small town quality of life of Soperton has manifested continuing population growth within the city even as county population has stagnated. Soperton's population grew from 469 in 1910 to 1,033 in 1920, and steadily increased, with only minor blips, to an all time high of 3,115 at the 2010 Census. County population has slowly increased since 1990, but 2010's County population of 6,885 is still well shy of the 7,664 population in 1920 at county establishment.

## **Vision**

The City of Soperton desires to remain a quiet, attractive Old South small town which continues to modernize its infrastructure, facilities, and amenities to attract more families and businesses while retaining its charm, history, and family-oriented atmosphere. The community will seek to attract more residents, visitors, and business and industry by taking advantage of its location and I-16 proximity, and through improvements centered on downtown revitalization. While extending and improving its facilities and transforming its downtown, Soperton will carefully protect its historic ambience, family-oriented values, its intrinsic beauty, and its comforting and caring character.

## Needs

- Downtown revitalization
- Water system extension and improvements
- Sewer system extension and improvements
- Industrial park improvements
- I-16 interchange development
- Street and streetscape improvements
- Recreation/park improvements
- Enhanced postsecondary education opportunities
- Land use management regulation

## Opportunities

- Downtown Soperton
- I-16
- Million Pines Festival/History
- Historic building stock
- Existing parks
- Local museums
- Oconee and Ochoopee rivers
- Award-winning local school system



## Community Goals

### Economic Development

- Continue to develop/enhance local leadership
- Cooperate/coordinate with existing local, regional, and state agencies
- Nurture existing businesses/industries
- Attract new businesses/industry/jobs
- Support compatible development of its I-16 interchanges
- Continue to maintain/develop existing industrial parks through technological, infrastructure, and other enhancements
- Maintain/upgrade/extend wastewater/other infrastructure, as needed
- Address continuing education/job skills improvements
- Support continued downtown revitalization of Soperton
- Enhance/grow tourism
- Seek compatible development supportive of community's rural character and quality of life
- Continue to improve transportation access/quality
- Maintain viability/support/enhance forestry/agricultural uses
- Seek broadband/fiber communications availability upgrades



Treutlen County Development  
Authority

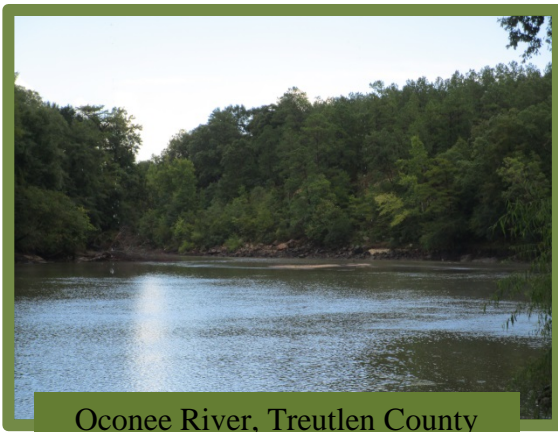


Georgia Central Railway Bridge  
over Ga. Hwy. 29



## Natural and Cultural Resources

- Seek compatible growth/development/utilization respective of environment and natural/cultural resources of Treutlen County
- Maintain open spaces/rural character/landscapes/agricultural/forestry uses
- Conserve/protect/better utilize Ohoopie and Oconee rivers
- Protect significant natural resources of Treutlen County
- Support existing/encourage development of new nature-based, recreation, agri-tourism, and heritage tourism opportunities
- Rehabilitate/utilize/adaptively use historic resources/heritage of Treutlen County
- Continue downtown revitalization of Soperton
- Continue support for Million Pines Arts and Crafts Festival
- Seek to develop Million Pines Plantation/Fowler Museum



## Housing

- Improve housing quality/appearance
- Increase quantity of new and existing quality housing
- Improve appearance/safety of blighted properties
- Encourage diverse housing mix
- Utilize state/federal programs
- Encourage compatible new residential location
- Encourage infill residential development in Soperton
- Guide compatible housing development location through planning/infrastructure/regulation
- Improve community's appearance/aesthetics



Historic Residence, Soperton



Historic Residence, Soperton



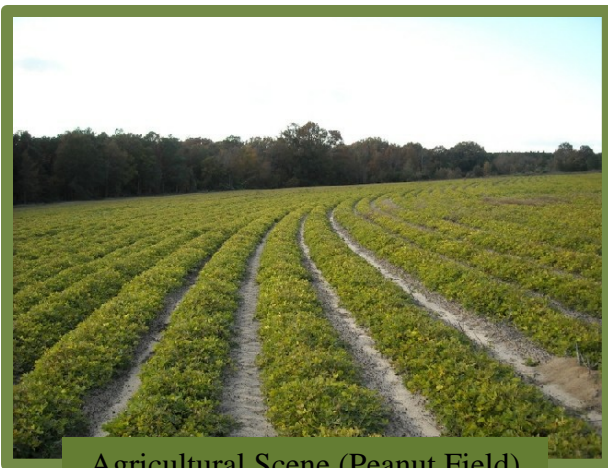
Rural Residence, Treutlen County



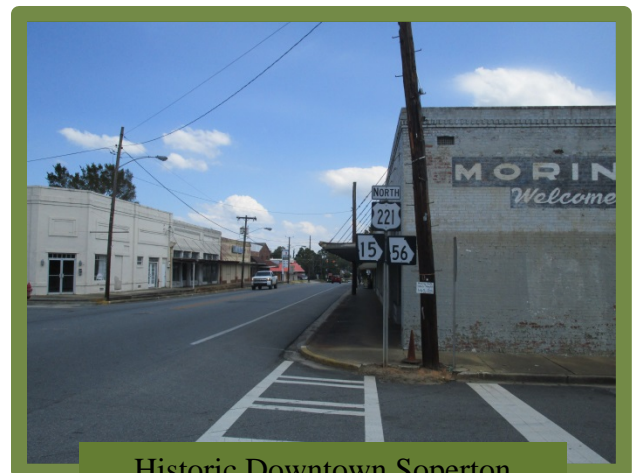
Residential Streetscape, Soperton

## Land Use

- Plan/direct future growth and development
- Promote compatible development/utilization
- Preserve rural character/quality of life
- Maintain forestry and agriculture as viable, functioning land uses
- Continue to encourage intense development/land uses in or near Soperton where appropriate/easily served by infrastructure
- Encourage/guide development of County's I-16 interchanges and gateways/corridors
- Continue to develop local industrial parks, including extension of infrastructure to parks and toward I-16
- Encourage development which enhances existing commercial areas
- Maintain Downtown Soperton as economic/social/governmental center
- Enhance existing/develop new recreation facilities/opportunities
- Pursue alternative regulations/codes to address local land use issues, as needed



Agricultural Scene (Peanut Field)



Historic Downtown Soperton

## Community Facilities and Services

- Maintain/upgrade/expand infrastructure/services, as needed
- Utilize infrastructure upgrades to guide growth to Soperton/desired locations
- Maintain/upgrade/extend water/wastewater infrastructure and services to new schools, industrial parks, I-16, and Tarrytown, as needed
- Improve/promote transportation access/quality
- Continue to upgrade educational facilities/services and coordinate school locations with community plans/infrastructure
- Continue to develop cooperative educational programs and local postsecondary educational opportunities with nearby educational institutions
- Continue to seek consolidation of services
- Provide/maintain adequate local government facilities/services
- Enhance existing and develop new parks/recreation facilities/activities
- Increase access and facilities on the Oconee and Ohoopie rivers, especially Dead River Landing
- Encourage/support state-of-the-art solid waste management, recycling, and codes development/enforcement in conjunction with improving community appearance
- Continue to upgrade local public safety/fire/emergency medical facilities/services
- Improve broadband technology/internet access availability



Antique Police Car/Water Tower,  
Downtown Soperton



Soperton-Treutlen County  
Recreation Complex

## Intergovernmental Coordination

- Maintain/enhance local, regional, state cooperation
- Seek sharing/cooperation/consolidation in service delivery
- Develop enhanced cooperative educational relationships and local programs with nearby postsecondary educational institutions



## **Long Term Community Policies**

### Economic Development

The community will work together to continue the development and enhancement of leadership committed to making Treutlen County/Soperton a better place to live and work

The community will cooperate and coordinate with existing local, regional, and state agencies to improve Treutlen County/Soperton

The community will support and promote programs for business/industry retention and growth and attraction of new economic development opportunities

The community will maintain agriculture/forestry as viable economic uses through traditional and alternative enterprises, such as value-added agribusiness, agri-tourism, exporting, and nature based tourism

The community will support compatible economic development of its I-16 interchanges

The community will continue to develop its industrial parks, including extension of infrastructure, particularly wastewater, to those parks and towards I-16

The community will encourage utilization of the old Range Fuels plant by LanzaTech or others through new technology

The community will work together to improve the educational and skills levels of the local work force

The community will enhance cooperative programs and relationships with Southeastern and Oconee Fall Line technical colleges, East Georgia and Georgia Military colleges, the Southeastern Early Career Academy, and others as appropriate, to expand local educational opportunities

The community will continue to seek transportation improvements (highway, airport, rail, transit, bicycle and pedestrian) to enhance and support economic development efforts

The community will pursue capacity improvements to Internet access/service and facilities supportive of state-of-the-art fiber-optics, and broadband technology

The community will cooperate to revitalize/maintain Downtown Soperton as a vibrant, functioning commercial, governmental, and social center

The community will seek to enhance existing tourism venues and to develop further facilities, infrastructure, and support services to grow tourism as an important component of the local economy

The community will seek development compatible with its existing rural character and quality of life

### Natural and Cultural Resources

The community will work to promote growth and development which is compatible with and maintains the existing rural character, open spaces, and landscapes of the County

The community will seek development which is respectful of and compatible with the environment and natural and cultural resources of the County

The community will work to conserve and protect the Ochoopee and Oconee rivers and other important natural resources, and to continue forestry and agriculture as important, viable land uses within the County

The community will seek to promote and develop greater compatible economic use of its parks, lakes, rivers, and other natural and cultural resources

The community will make it a priority to rehabilitate, utilize, and encourage public and private adaptive use/reuse of historic buildings, places, and landmark structures to enhance its sense of place and unique character, and to further tourism/economic development

The community will continue to support the long running Million Pines Festival in celebration of its local forestry heritage and consider other related tourism/economic development efforts, such as development of a Million Pines/Fowler museum

### Housing

The community will work toward both improving the quality of existing housing and increasing the quantity of quality housing, new and old

The community will address mitigation of blighted properties through rehabilitation, removal, or other means to improve the appearance and safety of such residences

The community will seek to encourage a diverse mix of housing, including affordable, rental, and compatible workforce housing

The community will encourage the use of state and federal programs to improve availability of quality housing, and to encourage homeownership

The community will seek to encourage compatible new residential location within the County

The community will encourage the location of infill residential development within the city of Soperton

The community will provide guidance to and for location of compatible housing developments through planning, infrastructure location, and regulation

The community will seek to improve its appearance and aesthetics through litter prevention/education and control, landscaping/beautification, and other means

### Land Use

The community will plan/direct future growth and development, and encourage growth compatible with its community vision and existing character

The community will encourage growth which preserves its rural character and maintains forestry and agriculture as viable, functioning land uses

The community will continue to encourage intense development/land uses to locate in Soperton and its fringes where appropriate and easily served by the community's infrastructure

The community will seek to encourage and guide development of its I-16 interchanges and its gateways/corridors to create a sense of place, to invite/attract people to Soperton, and to support compatible economic development

The community will continue to develop its industrial parks, including extension of infrastructure, particularly wastewater, to those parks and towards I-16

The community will seek to encourage development which will enhance/redevelop existing commercial areas and maintain Downtown Soperton as a center of economic, social, and governmental activity within the County

The community will enhance existing recreation facilities and develop new facilities/uses which will complement/promote tourism and the community's character/vision

The community will pursue alternative regulations/codes to address aesthetics, nuisance, environmental, and/or other local land use issues, as needed

### Community Facilities and Services

The community will maintain, upgrade, and expand infrastructure and services to enhance its quality of life, to facilitate its community vision, and to attract desired, compatible economic growth and development

The community will utilize infrastructure improvements to guide growth to Soperton and desired locations and to help bring about its community vision



The community will seek the extension and improvement of water and wastewater infrastructure and services to the new Treutlen schools, industrial parks, I-16, and the City of Tarrytown

The community will seek transportation improvements (all types, including highway, rail, airport, bike, and pedestrian) compatible with and supportive of the community's vision and plans

The community will continue to improve public safety services and facilities, including crime prevention, law enforcement, fire service, Emergency Medical Services, and Emergency Management Agency, to support future populations and to improve quality of service

The community will continue to upgrade its educational facilities, and will coordinate school locations with community plans and infrastructure service

The community will continue to develop local facilities and cooperative programs to complement the local school system efforts and further enhance local postsecondary educational opportunities

The community will continue to seek consolidation of services to improve/enhance service provision, and to use limited financial resources more effectively and efficiently

The community will maintain adequate local government administrative facilities, including renovating the historic Treutlen County Courthouse, developing a new Soperton municipal facility downtown, and maintaining technologically up-to-date and comprehensive community websites

The community will enhance existing parks and develop new parks/recreational facilities and uses to further complement/promote tourism and the community's character/vision

The community will redevelop and improve facilities and oversight of the County-owned Dead River Landing on the Oconee River to more fully realize its potential as a recreation and tourism resource

The community will continue to support its cultural facilities, programs, and events and provide enhanced facilities, service, and programs as feasible

The community will encourage and support state-of-the-art solid waste management, recycling activities and initiatives, codes development/enforcement, and other efforts to improve community appearance

The community will pursue development/upgrades to broadband technology facilities and services countywide

Intergovernmental Coordination

The community will continue to cooperate locally, regionally, and on the state level to improve, develop, expand, grow, and plan for the desired future Treutlen County and Soperton expressed and outlined in its community vision and comprehensive plan

The community will continue the pursuit of shared and consolidated services

The community will further enhance and expand cooperative educational relationships with, and local programs of, nearby postsecondary educational institutions

# **NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The Needs and Opportunities Element is required of all local governments by the Minimum Standards and Procedures. The community needs are those weaknesses or liabilities which have to be addressed, changed, or mitigated to help achieve the desired community future. The community opportunities are strengths and assets which can be utilized as starting points and foundations to easily accentuate or capitalize on to move the community forward on its desired future path. The Needs and Opportunities Element generally answers the planning question, “Where are we currently?” The answers can provide the compass point guidance necessary to begin and advance along the improvement journey. The Treutlen County Joint Comprehensive Plan identifies each community goal as an issue for improvement, and further identifies local needs and opportunities, as appropriate, for each issue.

## Needs and Opportunities

### Needs:

- Continuing development/enhancement of local leadership (Economic Development (ED))
- Cooperation/coordination with existing local, regional, and state agencies (ED, Community Facilities and Services (CFS), Intergovernmental Coordination (IC))
- Existing business/industry support (ED, Natural and Cultural Resources (NCR), CFS, IC)
- New business/industry/jobs attraction/creation (ED, Land Use (LU), CFS, IC)
- Compatible development of I-16 interchanges and gateways/corridors in Treutlen County (ED, LU, CFS, IC)
- Continuing maintenance/development of existing industrial parks through technological, infrastructure, other enhancements (ED, CFS, IC)
- Water/wastewater/other infrastructure maintenance/upgrades and service extension to industrial parks/sites, toward I-16, new schools, and Tarrytown, as needed (ED, NCR, Housing (HO), CFS, IC)
- Extension of water/wastewater infrastructure to new 129 acre industrial site on GA 29 (ED, CFS, IC)
- Extension of water/wastewater service to GA 29 and I-16 Interchange (ED, CFS, IC)
- Continuing education/job skills improvements, including expansion and enhancement of efforts with the Southeastern Early College and Career Academy, Southeastern and Oconee Fall Line technical colleges, East Georgia and Georgia Military colleges, and others (ED, CFS, IC)
- Continued downtown Soperton revitalization support (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Completion of reactivation of the Soperton Downtown Development Authority (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Completion of Downtown Soperton streetscape and parking improvements (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)

- Acquisition/redevelopment of Downtown Soperton city shops on West Railroad Avenue (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Repair of fountain in Downtown Soperton park and completion of landscaping upgrade (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Local tourism enhancement/growth through existing events/venues and development of additional facilities, infrastructure, and support services (ED, NCR)
- Continued support for annual Million Pines Arts and Crafts Festival (ED, NCR, IC)
- Establishment of Wildlife Management Area in Treutlen County (ED, NCR, LU, IC)
- Development of Million Pines Plantation as a museum/tourist venue (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Local lodging development (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- More restaurants, including franchise ones (ED, LU, CFS, IC)
- Compatible development supportive of community's rural character/landscapes/open spaces/community vision/quality of life (ED, NCR, LU, CFS)
- Exploration of developing alternative, compatible, and coordinated land use regulations to address aesthetics/nuisances/environmental or other issues (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Continuing improvement of transportation access/quality (all types, including highway, rail, airport, bike, and pedestrian) (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Forestry/agricultural uses viability/enhancement/support (ED, NCR, LU, IC)
- Broadband/fiber availability upgrades (ED, CFS, IC)
- Compatible growth/development/utilization respective of environment and natural and cultural resources (ED, NCR, LU, CFS)
- Ochopee and Oconee rivers conservation/protection (ED, NCR, IC)
- Continuing protection of County's significant natural resources (ED, NCR, LU, IC)
- County adoption/enforcement of model Environmental Conservation Ordinance for protected rivers, wetlands, and groundwater recharge areas (NCR, LU, IC)
- Support for existing and new development of nature-based, recreation, agri-tourism, and heritage tourism opportunities utilizing county's parks, lakes, rivers, and other natural/cultural resources (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Construction of local farmer's market in Soperton (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Historic resources preservation/reuse (ED, NCR, HO, CFS, IC)

- Housing quality/appearance improvements (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Increased quantity of new/existing quality housing (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Mitigation of blighted properties through rehabilitation, removal, or other means to improve appearance and safety (ED, NCR, HO, CFS, IC)
- Support for diverse housing mix, including affordable, rental, and compatible workforce housing (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- State/federal programs utilization (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Encouragement of compatible new residential location (ED, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Infill residential development in Soperton (ED, HO, CFS, IC)
- Utilization of planning/infrastructure/regulation to guide location of housing development (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Development of measures to address removal/prevention of abandoned mobile homes/other eyesores in County (NCR, HO, LU, IC)
- Adoption of Georgia Uniform Construction Codes and housing/codes enforcement program (NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Improvement of community's appearance/aesthetics through litter prevention/education/control, landscaping, beautification, and other means (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Retiree attraction (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Landscaping/restoration of GA Highway 29 historic gateway (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Planned future growth/development (LU, CFS, IC)
- More intense development/land uses in/near Soperton where appropriate/easily served by infrastructure (ED, LU, CFS, IC)
- Enhancement of existing and development of new recreation facilities (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Development of land use management/zoning ordinances in Soperton compatible with other County alternative land use regulations (LU, IC)
- Utilization of Soperton City Council to assist in growth management education, evaluation of options, and the like (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Utilization of existing and new infrastructure location to guide desired/compatible growth/development (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)

- Expansion of Soperton's wastewater system to newly annexed areas (ED, CFS, IC)
- Addition of water filtration system to improve quality of Soperton's water (CFS, IC)
- Replacement of both water and wastewater trunk lines in portions of south and west Soperton (HO, CFS, IC)
- Completion of 2010 TIA Band 2 and implementation of Band 3 Local Projects (ED, CFS, IC)
- Existing sidewalk improvements and development of new sidewalks in Soperton (CFS, IC)
- Acquisition of County Road Department equipment, including front end loader (CFS)
- Acquisition of backhoe, dump truck, and upgraded grass maintenance equipment (CFS, IC)
- Explore potential options for increased utilization of local community airport (ED, CFS, IC)
- Completion of airport runway resurfacing (ED, CFS, IC)
- Continued airport improvements (ED, CFS, IC)
- Continued maintenance/upgrades to retain quality local educational facilities/services/technology (ED, CFS, IC)
- Coordination of school facility locations with community plans/infrastructure (LU, CFS, IC)
- Enhancement of local postsecondary educational opportunities (ED, CFS, IC)
- Continued efforts to seek sharing/cooperation/consolidation in delivery of services (ED, CFS, IC)
- Maintenance of adequate local government administrative facilities and provision of needed services (CFS, IC)
- Renovations to historic Treutlen County Courthouse (NCR, CFS)
- New Soperton municipal facility downtown (NCR, LU, CFS)
- Construction of new Community Center as part of new municipal annex (NCR, LU, CFS)
- Updated hardware and software systems for all City of Soperton departments (CFS, IC)
- Updated, comprehensive community websites (CFS, IC)

- Parks/recreation facilities/activities maintenance/improvements/development (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Installation of new playground equipment at new Soperton-Treutlen Recreation Complex (CFS, IC)
- Construction of two new soccer fields and other facilities as needed at new Soperton-Treutlen Recreation Complex (CFS, IC)
- Redevelopment/improvement of Dead River Landing on the Oconee River (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- After school youth program development (CFS, IC)
- Local solid waste/recycling facilities/programs/initiatives enhancement in conjunction with community appearance improvements (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Development of manned greenbox (solid waste drop-off) locations (CFS)
- Continued upgrades to local public safety/fire/emergency medical facilities/services (CFS, IC)
- Purchase of new self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) gear for volunteer fire department (CFS, IC)
- Purchase of one new firefighting vehicle annually for County (CFS, IC)
- Acquisition of a new firefighting vehicle and a new rescue vehicle for Soperton (CFS, IC)
- Construction of local firefighter training facility (CFS, IC)
- Continued maintenance/enhancement of local, regional, state cooperation (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)



## Opportunities:

- Excellent 5-Star Superior rated local schools, including new facilities, programs, technology, the Southeastern Early College and Career Academy, and new superintendent (ED, CFS, IC)
- Southeastern and Oconee Fall Line technical colleges, East Georgia and Georgia Military colleges, and their programs (ED, CFS, IC)
- Heart of Georgia Altamaha Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program (ED, IC)
- Existing businesses/industries, such as Florida Hardware Farm Equipment, Inc. and East Coast Asphalt (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Existing agricultural/forestry uses (ED, NCR, LU, IC)
- Location along I-16 corridor (with 4 interchanges) midway between Macon and Savannah port (ED, LU, CFS, IC)
- U.S. 221 and GA highways 15, 29, 46 (ED, CFS, IC)
- Near Dublin and Vidalia growth centers (ED)
- Local general aviation airport (ED, CFS, IC)
- Class I railroad service (ED, CFS, IC)
- Existing industrial parks/sites (Treutlen County Industrial Park) with available electric and natural gas utilities, excess water/wastewater capacity, and rail service (ED, CFS, IC)
- Soperton supplies City of Tarrytown with water (ED, CFS, IC)
- Water service extended to new Treutlen High School (ED, CFS, IC)
- Downtown Soperton revitalization (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Reactivation of Soperton Downtown Development Authority (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Historic commercial buildings in Downtown Soperton (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Completion of Downtown Soperton streetscapes and parking improvements (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)

- Local tourism events, such as annual Million Pines Arts and Crafts Festival (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Welcome Center housed in historic Curt Barwick Log House (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Million Pines Plantation (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- 2010 TIA funded improvements, including completion of Band 1 and some Band 2 Local Projects (ED, CFS, IC)
- Completion of Soperton sidewalk improvements (CFS, IC)
- Historic GA 29 Gateway (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Significant natural resources, including Ochopee and Oconee rivers (ED, NCR, LU, IC)
- Community's rural character/quality of life/vision (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Local cultural/historic resources, such as Treutlen County Courthouse, Troup's Tomb, David D. Gillis Log House, the Curt Barwick House, J. Clayton Stephens Museum of Local History, Downtown Soperton, and the old school gyms (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Historic existing housing stock (NCR, HO, LU, CFS)
- Availability of CHIP, CDBG, and other state/federal programs to upgrade housing and related infrastructure (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Available sites for infill residential development in Soperton (NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Retiree attraction through quality of life/amenities promotion and development of attractive housing options (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Ample available, undeveloped land (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Strong local financial institutions, such as Bank of Soperton (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Strong local governments/leadership/partnerships (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- New Soperton-Treutlen County Recreation Complex with four new baseball/softball fields and concession stand (LU, CFS, IC)
- Jean Gillis Memorial Park with recently upgraded lighted walking trail (CFS, IC)
- Iva Park (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- County-owned Dead River Landing on the Oconee River (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Recently constructed DFCS building (CFS, IC)
- Recently acquired County sanitation truck (CFS, IC)
- County Annex building re-roofed (CFS)

- Upgraded Soperton Police vehicles/equipment (CFS, IC)
- New County firefighting pumper truck (CFS, IC)
- Existing local, regional, and state partnerships, including Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic prosperity is a key to community improvement. A community's comprehensive plan seeks at its core to make the community a better place to live, work, and recreate. To improve quality of life, there is a need for income and an increased tax base to help enhance the ability to afford needed and desired improvements, and afford better housing and a higher standard of living. Commerce and economic development have a major influence on overall population growth and development. The relationship is quite evident in Treutlen County. Treutlen County's heyday came from pine trees entrepreneurship and railroad establishment, resulting in its population high in 1920. Leadership, attracting job diversity, and keeping agriculture relevant and vital, along with highways and location, have relatively stabilized growth in the county, despite suffering major setbacks and job and population loss associated with the decline of turpentine and the railroads, and the growth of larger nearby urban centers.

Treutlen County is an early frontier area of Georgia, settled in the late 1790s and early 1800s, but not formally separated as a county until 1918. Its longleaf pine forests were at first considered less than desirable lands, but were still the source of commerce -- questionable and deceptive land speculation. The abundant natural resources were soon realized to be another opportunity, and a profitable lumber and naval stores industry resulted. Treutlen County has been at the forefront of modern forestry, championing artificial regeneration and the planting of pine seedlings through James Fowler and his million pines, and being a real-life laboratory for Charles Herty. Transportation and access to markets were always important, first through the Oconee and Ohoopie rivers and later the advent of railroads. The development of the Macon, Dublin, and Savannah Railroad through the county led to the establishment of Soperton, and stimulated the establishment and heyday of Treutlen County development. Farming interests developed as the forests were cut, but forestry remains the mainstay. The local economy received further boosts from transportation with the coming of major highways, most notably I-16, U.S. 221, and Georgia Highways 15, 29, and 46. Despite the importance of Treutlen County to Georgia forestry and its long history of leadership, the transformation of time and economy

have not been particularly kind to Treutlen County. Much of its downtown is now vacant, and there is only limited industry. However location, small town charm, outdoor scenic beauty, transportation resources, a low cost of living, and quality of life are local economic strengths and opportunities available today for supporting and developing additional economic development opportunities.

There are continuing and outstanding needs for Treutlen County's economic development. Soperton's downtown is largely abandoned. Incomes in Treutlen County remain very low, although higher than that of some neighboring counties. The per capita money income in Treutlen County as reported by the Census Bureau for 2010-2014 is \$20,643, about 81% that of Georgia as a whole. Median household income is \$40,143, also about 81% that of Georgia. More than one in four (27.1%) of Treutlen County citizens are in poverty, compared to about 18% in Georgia as a whole. This high poverty has persisted for a number of decades. There are needs for more jobs. Unemployment in the county was 8.2% in 2015, compared to 5.9% in the state. Almost 60 percent of county workers work outside Treutlen County, including 19% in neighboring Toombs County, and 17% in neighboring Laurens County. However, over 80 percent of local jobs are filled by Treutlen residents. Job skills of local residents are also a concern; over 25% of local residents are without a high school diploma compared to 15% statewide. Transfer payments represent about 35% of total personal income compared to about 17% statewide. These type of statistics do create opportunity for businesses to receive Georgia's largest tax credits for job creation as they place Treutlen County in Georgia's Job Tax Credit Tier 1 (lowest 40 percent or so of counties).

There are opportunities and cause for hope and optimism for economic development in Treutlen County as well. Employment within the county remains concentrated within service providing (65%), government (31%), and agricultural, forestry, fishing (5%) sectors. This reflects the stability and importance of agriculture and forestry and local schools within the county. There remain unrealized opportunities related to Treutlen County's location, transportation resources, its abundant fields and forests and outstanding natural resources of the county, and potential tourism. The cost of living in Treutlen County is relatively very low, particularly housing, and the crime rate is low making it even more attractive as a place to live

for families and new residents and retirees, especially in the context of a caring and cooperative citizenry, attractive open spaces, and a verdant landscape punctuated by outstanding historic and natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities. There are recent signs that these advantages are bearing fruit. Florida Hardware Company located a farm equipment operation in Soperton in 2013, and it has quickly become the largest gate manufacturer in the Southeast. East Coast Asphalt has similarly located an asphalt plant along Georgia 15/29 in eastern Treutlen County to utilize the community's locational advantages.

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

#### Address Low Educational Levels/Improve Jobs Skills

Treutlen County will continue to support its outstanding school system, the Southeastern Early College and Career Academy, Southeastern and Oconee Fall Line technical college programs, East Georgia and Georgia Military college programs, and regional Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act programs. It will develop public/private partnerships through its Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce, civic groups, and continuing intergovernmental cooperation.

#### Retain Local Graduates

This is best accomplished by the development of increased job opportunities and enhancing local educational levels/job skills. Treutlen County will continue cooperative efforts through local schools, the Southeastern Early College and Career Academy, Southeastern and Oconee Fall Line technical colleges, East Georgia and Georgia Military colleges, the Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce, and state and regional agencies.

### Support/Enhance/Maintain Viability of Agriculture/Forestry Uses

The community has much important history associated with the pine tree, and will support efforts to create additional markets, explore alternative crops, and seek value-added businesses which keep such uses viable and profitable. Even though, the Range Fuels attempt to produce ethanol from pine trees did not initially succeed, the plant does remain open under new management and could be revived with more viable technology in the future. The marketing and development of agri-tourism and nature-based tourism are other means.

### Address/Improve Infrastructure Needs

The Treutlen County community will jointly work to solve any infrastructure deficiencies, including highway needs, and otherwise address water/sewer and other needs, particularly for fire protection. The lack of appropriate broadband telecommunications access will also be addressed. There are particular needs to expand infrastructure to the industrial park/school areas and towards I-16.

### Revitalize Downtown Soperton

The historic fabric and the many available buildings in Soperton allow for much opportunity. Their historic nature allows for development incentives, preservation of unique character, and enhanced quality of life. Community projects in historic structures create civic pride and enhance community cooperation. They also can stimulate complementary private investment. There is much potential downtown for new development. The Treutlen community views downtown revitalization as one of its most desired and initial steps on the road to recovery and growth.

### Nurture Existing Businesses/Entrepreneurs

The Treutlen County community will work through its Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce, and in cooperation with Southeastern and Oconee Fall Line technical colleges and state agencies, to meet local needs and encourage expansions and new local

business development. Special efforts will be made for agricultural/forest and retail service interests. Florida Hardware Farm Equipment, with its large and growing market, represents a special opportunity.

#### Attract New Businesses

The Treutlen County community, through its Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce, and intergovernmental cooperation, will seek compatible business and industrial development. The community will participate in state designation programs, and will continue to work together to explore all opportunities afforded by its location and other resources. State tax credits and local tax incentives for job creation will be marketed. The recent locations of Florida Hardware and East Coast Asphalt are evidence that more success can be realized.

#### Develop/Enhance Tourism

Treutlen County's outstanding history with the pine tree, its rivers and outdoor amenities; many historic structures; the Million Pines and other potential festivals; its location along I-16, U.S. 221, and Georgia 15/29 and 46 as well as its farms and scenic countryside offer much increased potential and opportunities to increase visitors. The maintenance and improvement of the historic landscaped Georgia 29 gateway would also be an asset/calling card.

#### Improve Transportation Access/Quality

The recently passed regional T-SPLOST will result in many needed local resurfacing and other road improvements which will enhance the community as a place to live and work. It may open up other opportunities for job creation, as well. The widening of Georgia 15 under Georgia's GRIP program would bring more usage and travelers to the county, as well as would upgrades to U.S. 221 and Georgia 29. These and other improvements could enhance local travel and make business markets more accessible. It would also make it even easier to live in Treutlen, but work in nearby urban growth centers. Promotion of trails and bicycling and other tourism



would also help quality of life and economic development. The repurposing/improvement of the Treutlen airport could also be an economic stimulus.

#### Develop/Improve Local Industrial Park/Site

The community has two available industrial park sites and other buildings or areas to market. The two industrial parks do require further improvement and marketing. The rail service available and proximity to I-16 are major advantages which can be further exploited.

#### Promote Quality of Life/Civic and Community Pride/Location

Treutlen County has an opportunity to promote its small town and rural character and quality of life through its Chamber and other means. The welcoming, family atmosphere; low crime rate; low cost of living; the attractive homes; the many, active civic clubs; the recreational facilities and opportunities; and the landscape and outdoor amenities are all easy selling cards. The overall county location and ease of access to larger urban areas further contribute to ease of promotion of the county as an excellent place to live, visit, or do business.

#### Enhance Intergovernmental and Community Cooperation

The Soperton/Treutlen community working together has long been a local hallmark, and there is strong sentiment to continue to cooperate and work strongly together. “Together” was chosen as part of this plan’s title for that reason. Community efforts working together both within the county, and through neighbors, nearby postsecondary educational institutions, the region, and state agencies can only facilitate success and scope of effort. An active chamber of commerce and many civic groups can only make public/private partnerships easier to achieve and more successful. Active participation in regional economic, tourism, and natural resource partnerships offers much potential and benefit.

### Address Growth Management/Rural Character Preservation

A well planned community and one which appears neat, orderly, and attractive supports and encourages additional investment. Attractive community appearance as evidenced by well kempt homes and the historically landscaped Georgia 29 has long been a local hallmark. The community has developed limited individual land use regulations to address specific issues and nuisances, but more stronger, general, and coordinated efforts and joint code enforcement are needed. The community can also utilize infrastructure location and civic organizations and programs to assist.

## LAND USE

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

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

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

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

plans or options can be precluded or prevented by such uncontrolled growth, while other ill-advised consequences or burdens upon the general public can result.

A community's land use planning efforts are an attempt to provide a policy guide and framework or blueprint for desired growth and development. Sound planning provides for managed growth and development, allowing for necessary land use and development, but guiding it in such a manner that balances and protects resources, systems, and other aspects of the landscape important to the community. Such planning tries to lessen, mitigate, or avoid inconsistencies, inefficiencies, or conflicting land use efforts. Existing patterns and trends of land uses, community investment in and location of facilities and services, important natural and cultural constraints, and overriding community desires are considered and accommodated in developing and delineating the desired pattern of growth and development.

Soperton and Treutlen County are united in their vision and desires for continued quality growth compatible and complementary to their outstanding small town and its family-friendly atmosphere. It is a rural county with abundant natural and cultural resources, great natural beauty, envious location, excellent transportation access, and many assets for growth. The community has a long history of agricultural/forestry and environmental leadership, an involved and caring citizenship, family centered activities, and working together for community advancement. The community has enjoyed only limited growth, but continues to absorb ongoing economic challenges and to remain relatively stable in population. The community's vision for its future growth and development is one that maintains this heritage and culture, leadership, and attractive small town quality of life, and one that protects and utilizes its natural and cultural resources and landscape as well as its human advantages and cooperative citizen involvement. The aim is to continue to rebound and to attract new quality growth and development conducive and compatible with the abundant beauty, family fun, outdoor adventure, and community caring. Land uses would continue to look similar to those existing, and the small-town, family-friendly rural character would be maintained. Downtown Soperton would be a revitalized source of pride full of rehabilitated and new structures, and viable businesses. Educational opportunities, on the local, and technical college levels, would be nurtured and enhanced. Infrastructure and amenities would be expanded and developed to support and attract both population and business growth,

primarily in or adjacent to Soperton and related developed areas, as well as I-16 interchanges. Agricultural and forestry uses would be kept viable and remain the principal land uses of the county. The outstanding natural and cultural resources would be protected and utilized for increased tourism. The Million Pines Festival and other means would celebrate the important forestry-related and other history of the community. These rural open landscapes would be an integral component of the economy of the county, and the preservation of rural character and a quality of life supportive of open space and natural and cultural resource protection. Commercial and industrial growth would be compatible and supportive of continued agricultural/forestry uses, and would maintain the high quality of life and small-town, rural character while providing additional jobs and economic opportunity. All of this would be components of a concerted strategy to attract new residents, retirees, and economic development supportive and complementary to existing uses and character which further adds to the outstanding small town quality of life and amenities now present.

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

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

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

Existing Land Uses. Existing land use patterns for Treutlen County and the City of Soperton are depicted on the following maps. A table depicting the existing distribution of land use acreages is shown below.

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

- **Residential.** The predominant use of land within the residential category is for single-family and multi-family dwelling units.
- **Commercial.** This category is for land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities, located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building.
- **Industrial.** This category is for land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction activities, or other similar uses.
- **Public/Institutional.** This category includes certain state, federal or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc. Examples of institutional land uses include colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals, etc.
- **Transportation/Communications/Utilities.** This category includes such uses as major

transportation routes, public transit stations, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, airports, port facilities or other similar uses.

- **Park/Recreation/Conservation.** This category is for land dedicated to active or passive recreational and conservation uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, other wild lands, golf courses, recreation centers or similar uses.
- **Agriculture.** This category is for land dedicated to farming (fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock production, etc.), agriculture, or similar rural uses.
- **Forestry.** This category is for land dedicated to commercial timber, pulpwood production, or other woodland use.

**Existing Land Use Distribution, 2016  
(Acres)**

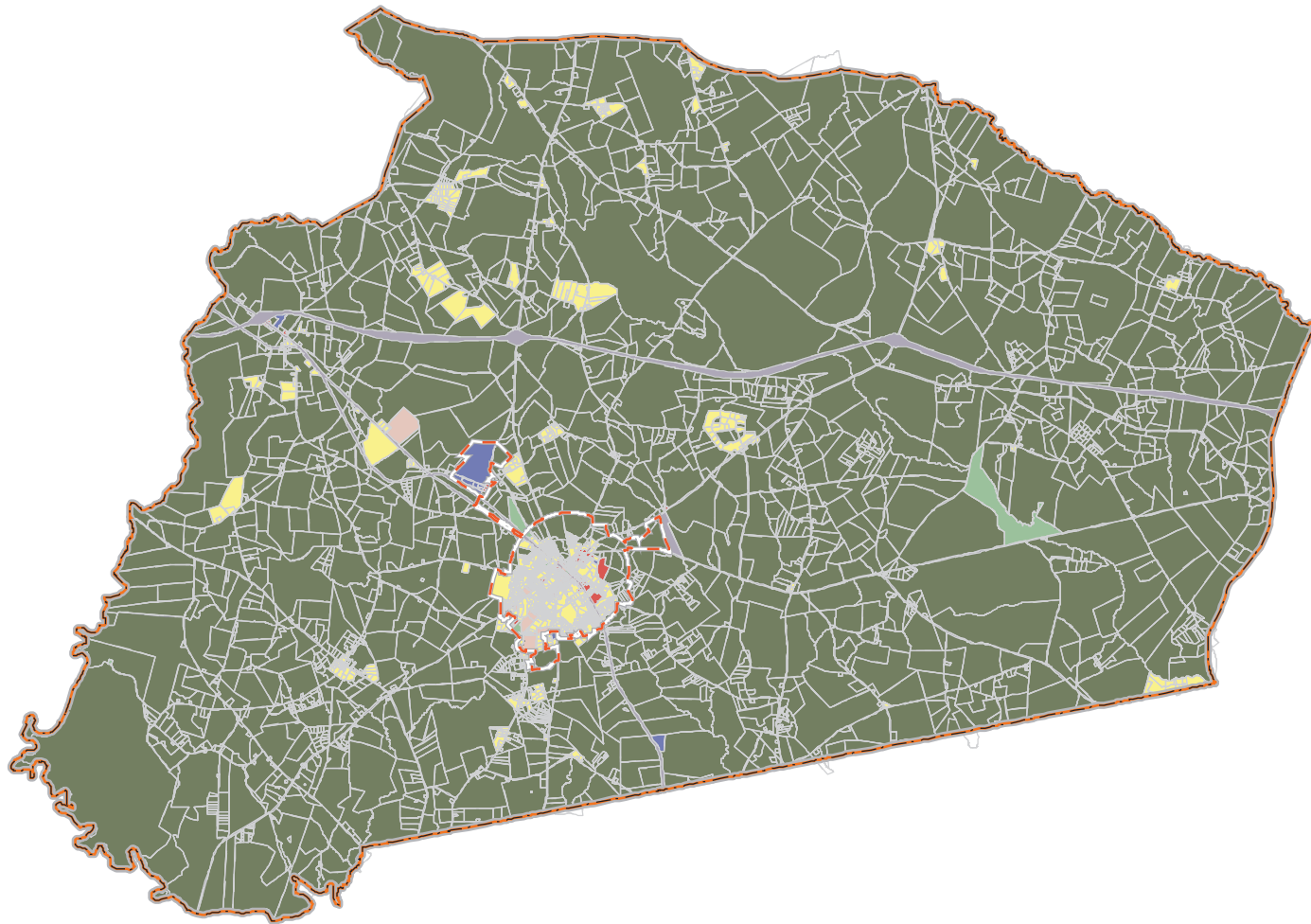
**Treutlen County**

<b>Land Use Category</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
<b>Agriculture</b>	22,810	17.61
<b>Commercial</b>	157	0.12
<b>Forestry</b>	97,998	75.65
<b>Industrial</b>	300	0.23
<b>Park/Recreation/Conservation</b>	490	0.38
<b>Public/Institutional</b>	237	0.18
<b>Residential</b>	3,405	2.63
<b>Transportation/Communications/Utilities</b>	4,146	3.20
<b>Total</b>	129,543	100.00

Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission Geographic Information System, 2016.

Treutlen County is a small, rural county in central Southeast Georgia, and although created as one of Georgia's youngest counties in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (1918), it has a long

# Treutlen County Existing Land Use



## Legend

- SopertonCityLimits
- CountyBoundary
- TaxParcels13

## Land Use

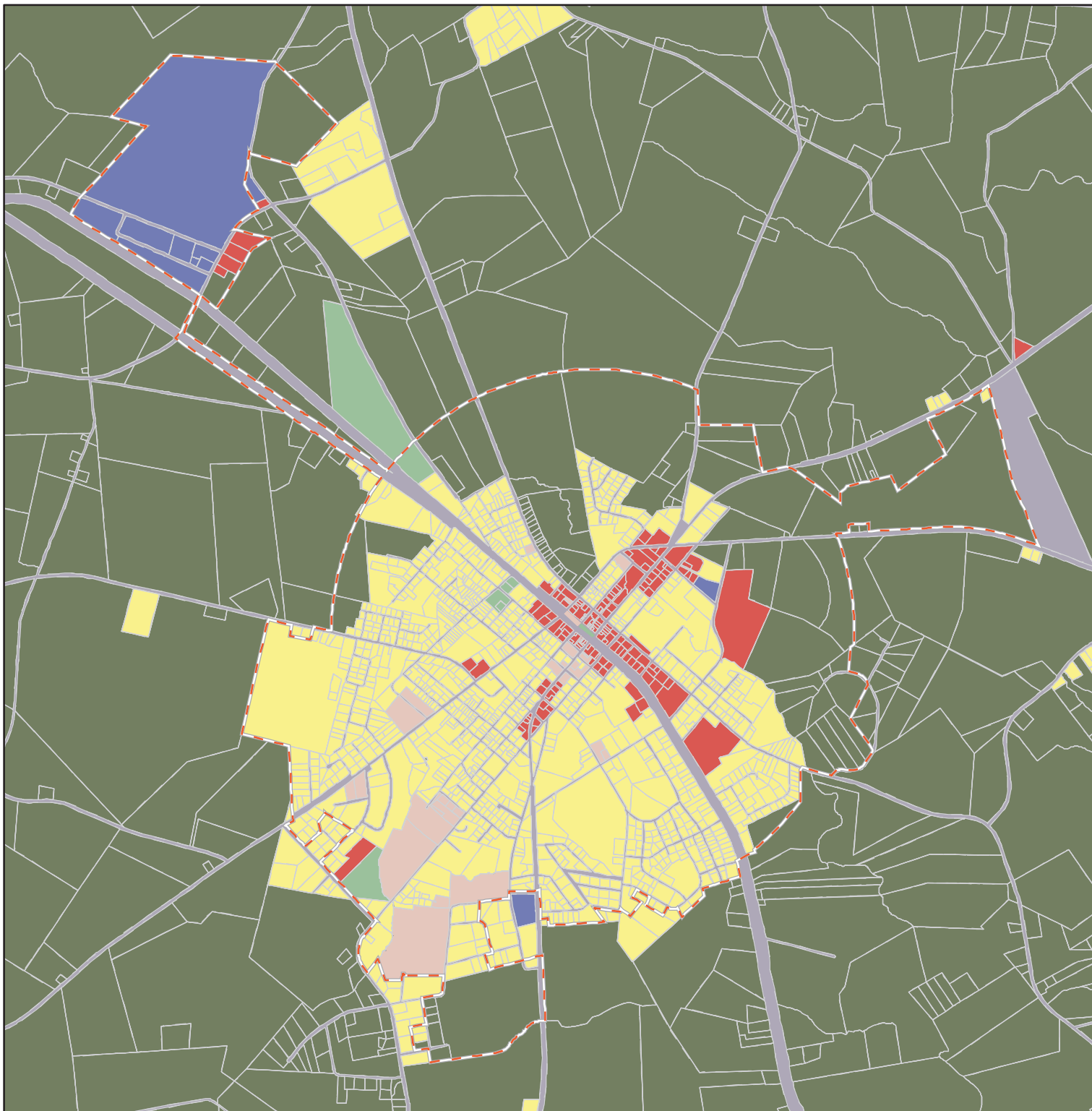
- Agriculture/Forestry
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Parks/Recreation/Conservation
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities

0 0.75 1.5 3 4.5 6 Miles





# City of Soperton Existing Land Use



## Legend

- SopertonCityLimits
- CountyBoundary
- TaxParcels13

## Land Use

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



Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC, 2016

history of growth and development primarily because of its abundant Southern pine forests, fertile fields, compelling landscape, outstanding natural and cultural resources, location, and early frontier settlement. Treutlen County was created from lands of historic Montgomery and Emanuel counties. Its initial settlement and development centered on the Oconee and Ochoopee rivers and the area's longleaf pine forests. The county's heyday of growth, and the impetus for development of Soperton and the establishment of the county, was related to the development of the Macon, Dublin, and Savannah Railroad. Soperton was actually a formal town before Treutlen County was created. Because of the decline of the railroads, the emergence of the automobile and the growth of nearby rural urban centers in Dublin and Vidalia, the Great Depression and a continuing host of similar economic challenges, the county's population has struggled to expand throughout its history. The high point of Treutlen County population remains 1920's 7,664.

The community has used extraordinary leadership, its location, and its forests to be able to absorb the continuing economic challenges and to even maintain relative stability. Treutlen County has produced a number of political leaders, particularly the Gillis family, which have influenced both Georgia history and county development. The community is considered the epicenter of modern forestry and 20<sup>th</sup> century turpentine farming because of local farmer James Fowler's planting of millions of slash pine seedlings and Charles Herty's use of Fowler's timberlands as an outdoor laboratory to develop more efficient methods of turpentine and means to make paper from Southern pines. The location of state and federal highways, and the important I-16, through the county were also influenced by Treutlen Countians. All of this has served to at least allow Treutlen County to continue to maintain relative economic stability despite the continuing challenges which have beset the county.

Location, agriculture/forestry, transportation resources, and cooperative leadership remain key to the county's economy, and future growth and development. The natural resources of the county, including its forests, fields, and scenic rivers/open spaces; its highway location along I-16, U.S. 221, and Georgia Highways 15, 29, and 46; location near growth centers like Dublin and Vidalia; the family-oriented Old-South charm and caring populace; and the cooperative community spirit continue to be resilient assets and opportunities which portend well for continued rebound, and future growth and development within Treutlen County.

As a result, a slow, but steady, growth/development is expected to be realized within Treutlen County. There continues to be much potential for residential and business growth and more diverse economic development by embracing and augmenting its backdrop of facilitating location, improving community and educational resources, committed leadership, involved citizenry, impressive heritage, abundant natural resources, and great natural beauty. The community truly does expect to enjoy success and bring about expanding growth and development by “growing beyond the pines together.”

Most current growth is concentrated in or near Soperton, including residential, commercial, and industrial. Recent commercial growth has concentrated along the Georgia 29 (Main Street) corridor. There has been limited industrial growth. Florida Hardware located in an existing vacant industrial building and East Coast Asphalt next to the railroad along Georgia 29 East. The existing industrial park sites, located west of Soperton along Georgia 29 West with direct access to I-16, would be the logical place for most new industrial and supportive commercial development. Other major/commercial growth attractors and locations would include the four I-16 interchanges, and existing vacant commercial/old industrial sites in downtown Soperton.

Residential growth within the county has been relatively limited, with no major concentrations, except that generally the southern/eastern area of Treutlen adjacent to Soperton and Georgia 29 has seen some growth. The new Treutlen County High and other schools, are all located along Georgia 29 West and would be an attraction for new residential growth. There are infill development opportunities throughout Soperton. Redevelopment neighborhood areas within Soperton include the West Canady Avenue Neighborhood.

These development trends and growth patterns are expected to continue. The county’s future land uses will closely resemble existing land uses. Agricultural, forestry, and conservation uses will continue to predominate the landscape, and maintain the outstanding existing small-town and rural character and appealing small town quality of life.

Future land use maps for Treutlen County and the City of Soperton are included following this description.

Land Use Goals. Treutlen County and the City of Soperton seek future growth and development respective of its small-town and rural character, abundant natural and cultural resources and agricultural/forestry/conservation uses, and the comforting quality of life. It desires balanced growth patterns which maintain and keep viable existing agricultural, forestry and conservation uses, which sustain its heritage, abundant natural and cultural resources, and which are otherwise compatible and complementary of existing uses and scale of development. The community has chosen the following land use goals to help bring about its desired future and delineated community vision.

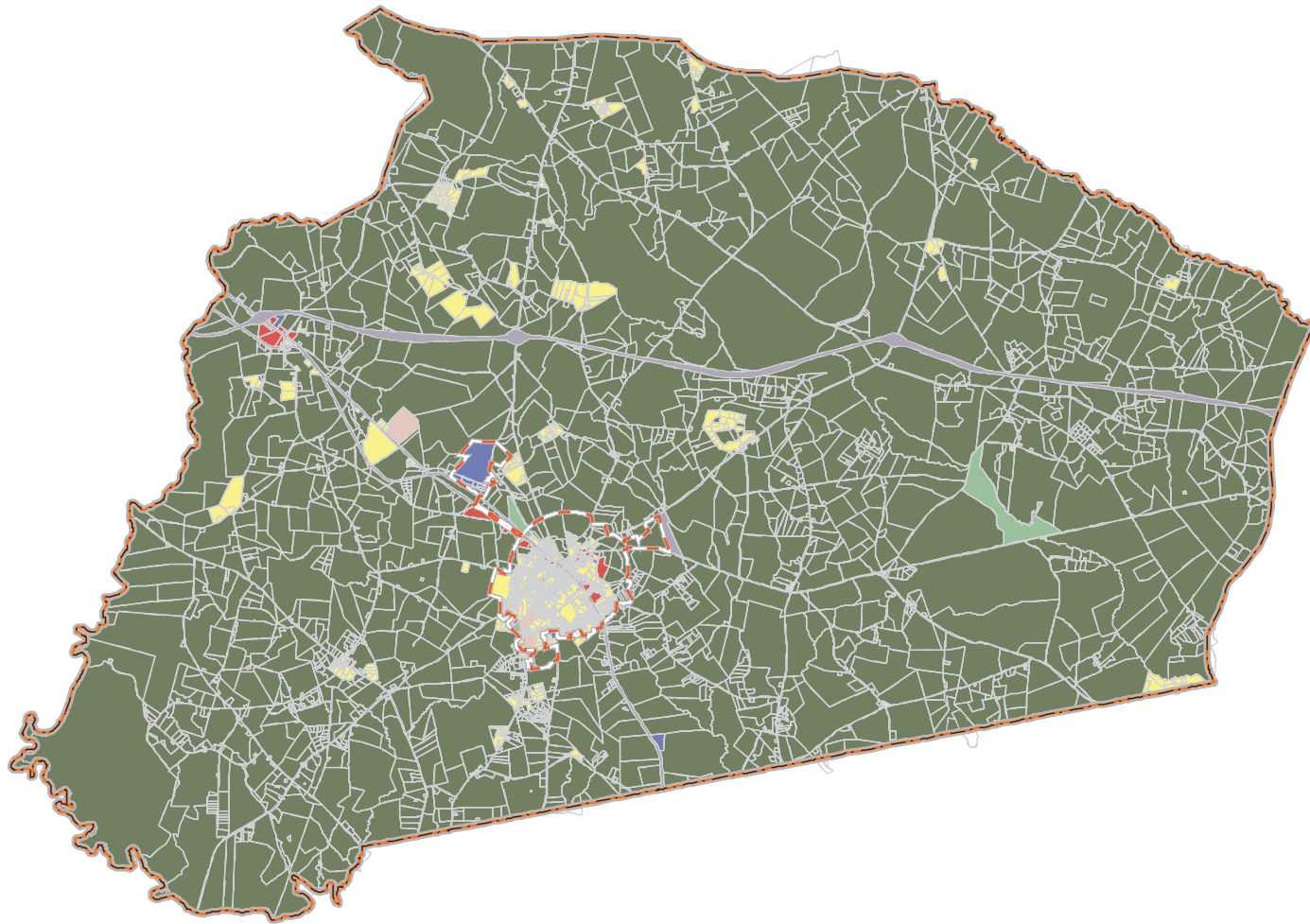
#### Address Growth Management/Guide Compatible Development

A well planned community and one which appears neat, orderly, and attractive supports and encourages additional investment. The community has a long history of landscaped, well-kempt homes and the historic landscaped, wide Georgia Highway 29 gateway. The community has developed only limited individual land use and building regulations to address specific issues and nuisances, but more general and coordinated efforts and joint code enforcement are needed. The community can also utilize infrastructure location; improvement of facilities and services; support of agricultural, forestry, and conservation uses; downtown revitalization; and involvement of its citizenry to assist.

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

As noted above, Treutlen County and Soperton have only limited land use regulations, road acceptance/subdivision ordinances, a manufactured home ordinance, and others to address specific issues or nuisances. Soperton has only limited land use management and building code enforcement. These ordinances need update, expansion, coordination, and joint collaboration/code enforcement/countywide development permitting to initiate a more comprehensive and coordinated approach for land use management.

# Treutlen County Future Land Use



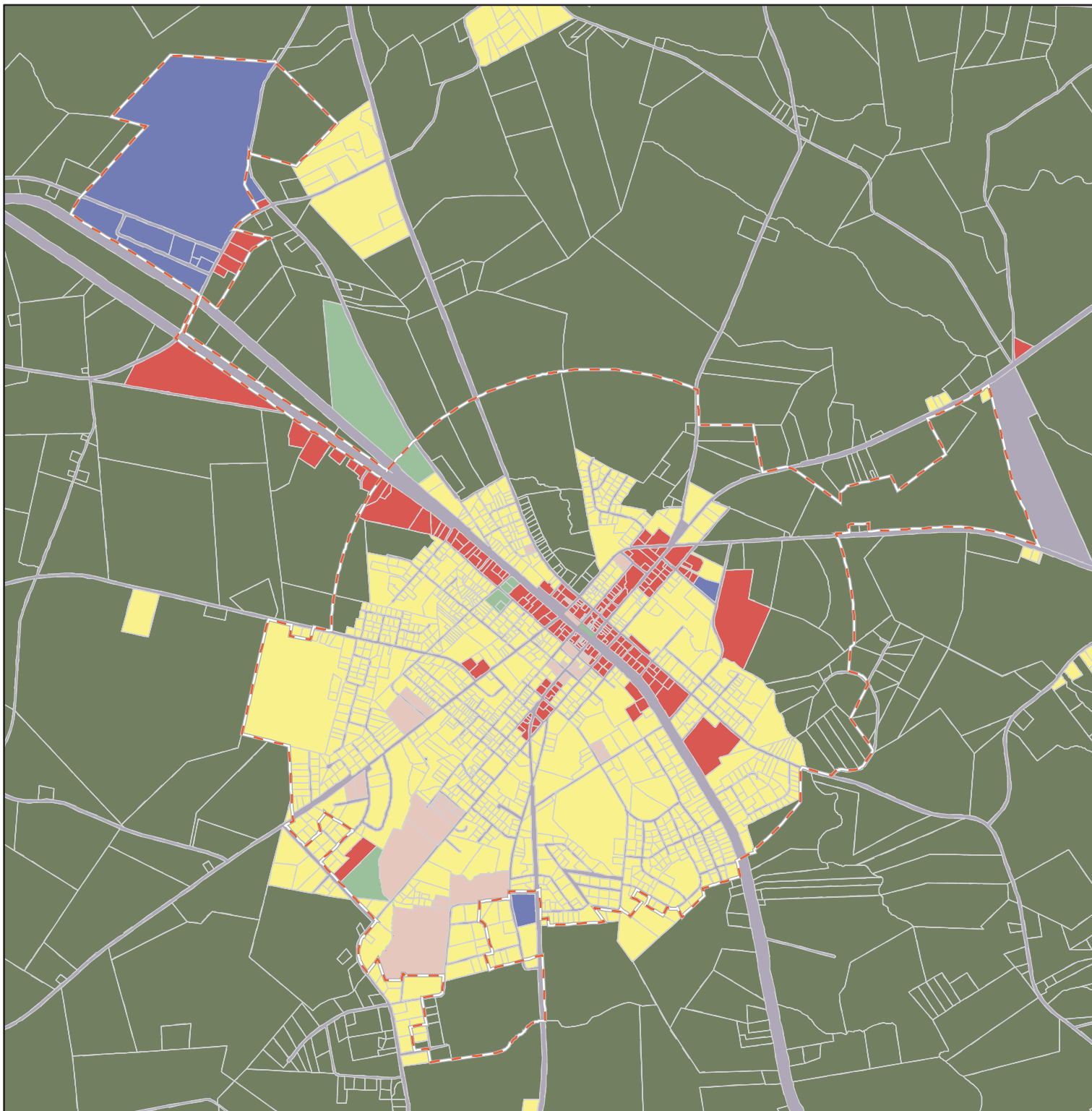
## Legend

- SopertonCityLimits
- CountyBoundary
- TaxParcels13
- Agriculture/Forestry
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Parks/Recreation/Conservation
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities



0 0.75 1.5 3 4.5 6 Miles

# City of Soperton Future Land Use



## Legend

- SopertonCityLimits
- CountyBoundary
- TaxParcels13
- Agriculture/Forestry
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Parks/Recreation/Conservation
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 Miles



Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC, 2016

### Maintain Open Spaces/Agricultural/Forestry Uses/Rural Character/Quality of Life

Development of new markets, supporting creation of alternative crops and uses, celebrating the heritage of these uses, providing professional support, and attracting compatible agribusiness or other supportive economic development ventures all can help achieve this. The Florida Hardware farm equipment/gate business is an excellent example of a compatible venture. Developing and supporting outdoor events/facilities/festivals, making the Oconee and Ochopee rivers more accessible, and encouraging additional tourism will further help.

### Develop/Improve Recreation/Leisure Use Facilities and Encourage Utilization/Access/Tourism for Natural/Cultural Resources

The Ocmulgee River, Ochopee River, the Million Pines Festival, and local preserved landmarks and buildings all have much history and much more potential for recreation and tourism within the county. Increased recreational and outdoor usage through continued park and trail development, promotion, and growth of tourism of many kinds offers much unrealized potential to both enhanced economic utilization and conservation of the county's significant natural and cultural resources. It can also attract more visitors, and more residents, and build a larger audience of citizen support for protection and enhancement of these resources. Further promotion and development of pine tree history and the Million Pines Festival holds additional promise. Improvement of local recreational and biking facilities, museums and other cultural events, enhancement of events or festivals, and development of biking facilities or trails out of Soperton could also reap benefits. Despite significant past success, there is even more unrealized major potential.

### Encourage Infill Development/Downtown Revitalization

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

well as areas with readily available infrastructure. Available historic buildings located in downtown Soperton or elsewhere are avenues for preservation of character and heritage and opportunities for economic and community development utilizing existing served areas. The revitalization of downtown Soperton is a principal goal of local elected officials and community citizenry. Attractive and relatively low-cost historic homes are a potential attraction for retirees and families alike.

#### Improve Community Appearance

Treutlen County and the City of Soperton have much intrinsic natural and cultural beauty and Old South, family-friendly charm attractive to residential location and tourism. The community has long been admired for its well-kempt attractive appearance and landscaping. These attributes are actually utilized by the Chamber of Commerce in its promotional materials. Landscaping/beautification efforts, general clean-up, and rehabilitation/upgrade of existing structures/areas will serve to mitigate any issue, and to accent and highlight opportunities and appealing attributes.

#### Seek Compatible Development/Utilization

Growth supportive, not disruptive through use, scale, or intensity, of the community's existing rural character, small-town atmosphere, extant heritage, abundant natural and cultural resources, and current agricultural/forestry/conservation uses is desired. Protection from degradation or inappropriate development is to everyone's advantage. At the same time pristine and natural scenic beauty is protected, there can be enhanced and increased access. This will both support economic development and the admired local quality of life.



# COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAMS

The Community Work Program Element is the chosen implementation strategy which the community has identified to begin its path toward improvement and its desired future growth and development. These are the immediate steps the community has chosen to address identified community issues, needs, and opportunities, and begin the journey to achieve the desired community vision. This plan element answers the questions, “How are we, as a community, going to get where we desire, given where we are?” The Treutlen County Joint Comprehensive Plan includes a separate community work program for each local government involved, as well as a report of accomplishments on their previous work program. The Long Term Policies identified under the Community Goals element identifies implementation activities and ideals which may take longer than five years, or because of circumstances involved, including finances, are not envisioned to begin in the near future.

# **TREUTLEN COUNTY**

**Treutlen County  
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program  
Report of Accomplishments**

Element	Initiation Year	Description	Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	Status/Comments
			Y/N	Year	Y/N	Est. Comp. Date	Y/N	Est. Int. Date	Y/N	
ED, IC	2014	Pursue funding to construct a pad ready site at the Treutlen County Industrial Park							Y	The Treutlen County Industrial Park does not have enough space to construct a pad ready site. A new industrial park located on Georgia Highway 29 is currently marketed for new industry.
ED, IC	2012	Pursue the acquisition of additional land for the Industrial Park							Y	Surrounding land in the area is not likely to become available for many years. A new industrial park located on Georgia Highway 29 is currently marketed for new industry.
ED, NCR, CFS, LU	2012	Pursue the landscaping and restoration of Georgia Highway 29 as a historic, unique gateway					Y	2018		This item has been postponed due to lack of funding, but remains an important project to the County.
ED, NCR, HO, LU, IC	2015	Explore the development of alternative, compatible, and coordinated land use regulations					Y	2019		Extensive land use regulations is not desired but the County will continue to explore land use regulations as needed.
NCR	2013	Seek the establishment of a State Public Fishing Area or Wildlife Management Area					Y	2020		The establishment of a State Public Fishing area is not financially feasible, however the County will continue to seek the establishment of a Wildlife Management Area.
NCR	2012	Adopt and enforce a model ordinance based on the Georgia DNR's Part V Environmental Planning Criteria for wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and river corridors					Y	2017		The adoption of an ordinance has been postponed but remains a priority for the County to remain in compliance of minimum planning standards.

**Treutlen County  
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program  
Report of Accomplishments**

Element	Initiation Year	Description	Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	Status/Comments	
			Y/N	Year	Y/N	Est. Comp. Date	Y/N	Est. Int. Date	Y/N		
NCR, LU	2016	Seek funding to develop the Million Pines Plantation as a museum/tourist venue						Y	2019		This item has been postponed due to a lack of funding, but is still a project to be completed once appropriate funding is allocated.
NCR, LU	2012	Seek funding as needed to renovate, promote, and utilize the Welcome Center as a focal point in attracting visitors								Y	This item has been dropped for being politically infeasible.
CFS	2012	Complete the construction of the new DFCS building	Y	2012							Action was completed as scheduled.
CFS	2012	Seek to have green box locations monitored on a rotating basis	Y	2013							Locations are currently monitored. The County will seek to establish manned convenience centers/drop-off sites in the future.
CFS	2013	Investigate the feasibility of establishing a curbside municipal solid waste collection program								Y	The County seeks to establish manned convenience centers for solid waste collection.
CFS	2013	Pursue the construction of a local Farmers Market								Y	This project has been dropped for being a City of Soperton project.
CFS	2012	Acquire a sanitation truck	Y	2014							The County acquired a sanitation truck in 2014
CFS	2014	Seek the purchase of a front end loader						Y	2018		Action has been postponed due to lack of funds.
CFS	2012	Pursue a new roof for the county annex building	Y	2014							Action was completed in 2014.
CFS	2012	Purchase new self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) gear for the volunteer fire department						Y	2018		Action has been postponed due to lack of funds.
CFS	2015	Seek to acquire a new firefighting vehicle	Y	2016							A pumper truck was purchased in 2016.

**Treutlen County  
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program  
Report of Accomplishments**

Element	Initiation Year	Description	Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	Status/Comments
			Y/N	Year	Y/N	Est. Comp. Date	Y/N	Est. Int. Date	Y/N	
CFS	2012	Coordinate with Soperton as necessary to complete the expansion of the water system to the Treutlen County Industrial Park	Y	2012						Water and sewer are now located in the Treutlen County Industrial Park.
HO, IC	2014	Pursue the adoption of Georgia's Uniform Construction Codes countywide, including the development of a coordinated and unified housing/ codes enforcement program							Y	Item was dropped due for not being politically feasible.
LU, IC	2015	Establish a countywide planning committee or formal planning commission to assist in growth management education, guidance and evaluation of regulation options							Y	Item was dropped for not being politically feasible.
LU, IC	2014	Conduct a public education and information gathering campaign to discuss the need and benefits of land use regulation							Y	Action item was dropped due to lack of land use regulation pursuit.
LU, IC	2016	Develop specific new ordinances identified by the Planning Committee or otherwise as needed to protect existing resources and development, to prevent nuisances and uses disruptive to the community's plans and vision, and to encourage quality growth					Y	2017		The County will continue to adopt ordinances as needed to protect the health and safety of its citizens. Item has been recorded in the new Community Work Program to reflect the present ordinance identifying entity.
LU, IC	2016	Seek to consolidate the various county land use regulations and separate ordinances into a more comprehensive and unified land development ordinance							Y	A unified land development ordinance is not politically feasible at this time.
LU, IC	2012	Develop measures which accomplish the removal and prevention of abandoned mobile homes and other eyesores in the county					Y	2018		The current mobile home ordinance does not address the ability to remove or prevent abandoned mobile homes. The County will conduct research into the feasibility of amending the ordinance.

**Treutlen County  
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program  
2017 – 2021**

Activity	Years							Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Each Year	Beyond 2021	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Pursue the landscaping and restoration of Georgia Highway 29 as a historic, unique gateway		X						X		Dev. Auth., GDOT	\$300,000 (Total)	X	X	X	
Explore the development of alternative, compatible, and coordinated land use regulations			X					X	X	Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission	NA				
Seek the establishment of a Wildlife Management Area				X				X		DNR	\$300,000	X	X		
Adopt and enforce a model ordinance based on the Georgia DNR's Part V Environmental Planning Criteria for wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and river corridors	X							X			NA				
Seek funding to develop the Million Pines Plantation as a museum/tourist venue			X					X		Dev. Auth., DNR (HPD)	\$500,000	X	X		
Seek the purchase of a front end loader		X						X		USDA (Rural Dev't)	\$150,000	X	X	X	
Purchase new self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) gear for the volunteer fire department		X						X		FEMA, GEMA	\$75,000	X	X	X	
Develop specific new ordinances identified by the County Commission or otherwise as needed to protect existing resources and development, to prevent nuisances and uses disruptive to the community's plans and vision, and to encourage quality growth	X							X			\$2,000	X			

**Treutlen County  
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program  
2017 – 2021**

Activity	Years							Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Each Year	Beyond 2021	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Develop measures which accomplish the removal and prevention of abandoned mobile homes and other eyesores in the county		X						X			\$1,000 (Enforcement)	X			
Develop manned green box(solid waste drop-off) locations			X					X			\$100,000 SPLOST	X			
Install new playground equipment at the Soperton-Treutlen Recreation Complex	X							X		SPLOST	\$75,000	X	X		
Purchase one new firefighting vehicle per year						X		X			\$150,000 GEMA, FEMA	X	X	X	
Expand water and sewer infrastructure to new 129 acre industrial site on GA 29			X					X	X	Chamber, IDA, DCA (OneGeorgia), USDA Rural Dev't, DEcD	\$300,000	X	X	X	
Extend water and sewer service to GA 29 and I-16 Interchange					X			X	X	Chamber, IDA, DCA (OneGeorgia), USDA Rural Dev't, DEcD	\$500,000	X	X	X	
Complete TIA Band 2 Projects (Anderson Pond Rd., Old Dairy Rd – Womack Rd., Rosemont Church Rd.)	X	X	X					X		GDOT TIA	\$580,000	X	X		
Complete TIA Band 3 Projects (Ohoopie Bend Rd., Deer Run Rd., Tobacco Trail, Norristown Rd., Secret Forest Rd.)				X	X		X	X		GDOT TIA	\$548,000	X	X		
Resurface and Remark runway at the Treutlen County Airport	X							X		GDOT	\$80,000	X	X		
Seek funding for continued Treutlen County Airport improvements					X			X		GDOT	\$200,000	X	X		
Conduct research and analysis study of renovations to county owned Dead River Landing				X				X			\$5,000	X			
Upgrade/maintain community website(s)						X		X	X	RC	\$1,000	X			

**CITY OF SOPERTON**



**City of Soperton  
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program  
Report of Accomplishments**

Element	Initiation Year	Description	Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	Status/Comments
			Y/N	Year	Y/N	Est. Comp. Date	Y/N	Est. Int. Date	Y/N	
ED, LU	2014	Reactivate the Soperton Downtown Development Authority			Y	2017				The City is prepared to appoint members to the authority once it has been officially reactivated. Legal paperwork is currently being completed.
ED, NCR, HO, LU, IC	2015	Explore the development of alternative, compatible, and coordinated land use regulations					Y	2019		Land use regulations have not changed but remain an interest to the City.
CFS	2012	Complete the expansion of the water system to newly annexed areas	Y	2014						Water service was expanded to the area of the new Treutlen County High School in 2014.
CFS	2012	Complete the expansion of the sewer system to newly annexed areas					Y	2019		The City has not expanded the sewer system but will attempt to do so as funding is available.
CFS	2016	Pursue funding to add a water filtration system					Y	2020		Item was postponed due to lack of funds.
CFS	2014	Seek funding to construct a firefighter training facility					Y	2018		Item was postponed due to lack of funds.
CFS	2016	Pursue the establishment of a full-time fire department							Y	The City does not believe this item will be financially feasible during this reporting period.
CFS	2016	Seek to acquire a new firefighting vehicle					Y	2019		Item was postponed due to lack of funds.
CFS	2014	Pursue funding to acquire a new rescue vehicle					Y	2018		Item was postponed due to lack of funds.
CFS	2013	Seek funding to construct a new municipal complex					Y	2019		Item was postponed due to lack of funds.

**City of Soperton  
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program  
Report of Accomplishments**

Element	Initiation Year	Description	Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	Status/Comments
			Y/N	Year	Y/N	Est. Comp. Date	Y/N	Est. Int. Date	Y/N	
CFS	2012	Seek to complete streetscape and parking improvements in the downtown area			Y	2017				Projects are underway or have been completed on U.S. Hwy. 221, Louisiana Ave., and MLK Jr. Drive.
CFS	2012	Seek funding for sidewalk improvements and the development of new sidewalks			Y	2017				Sidewalk improvements will be completed in 2017.
CFS	2014	Seek funding for the lighting of the walking trail at the Jean Gillis Memorial Park	Y	2014						Action was completed with SPLOST funding.
CFS	2014	Upgrade the walking trail at the Jean Gillis Memorial Park	Y	2014						Action was completed with SPLOST funding.
CFS	2013	Pursue the construction of a new Community Center						Y	2020	This item remains a priority for the city but has not been politically feasible.
CFS	2013	Pursue the construction of a local Farmers Market						Y	2017	Item has been postponed due to lack of funding.
CFS	2016	Seek to upgrade police vehicles and equipment	Y	2015						The City purchased two police vehicles in 2014, and one police truck in 2015.
CFS	2013	Construct a new concession stand at the Recreation Complex	Y	2015						Item is complete.
CFS	2013	Pursue upgrades to the Recreation Complex, including replacing dugouts, installing new fencing, and the construction of an additional baseball/softball field	Y	2016						The city decided to pursue the development of a new recreation complex and has completed the construction of four new baseball/softball fields at the new location.
CFS	2016	Seek to acquire the athletic facilities at the former Treutlen High School upon completion of new athletic facilities at the new high school							Y	This action item is no longer feasible due to the continued use of the facilities by the Treutlen County Board of Education.

**City of Soperton  
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program  
Report of Accomplishments**

Element	Initiation Year	Description	Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	Status/Comments
			Y/N	Year	Y/N	Est. Comp. Date	Y/N	Est. Int. Date	Y/N	
CFS	2013	Seek to resurface 8.1 miles of city streets in accordance with 2010 TIA Project Investment List and the DOT LMIG program	Y	2016						Band 1 TIA projects are complete. Band 2 TIA projects are underway. Item has been recorded in the new community work program as two separate items to differentiate completion times for TIA Band 2 and 3 projects.
CFS	2013	Seek to pave 2 miles of city streets in accordance with 2010 TIA Project Investment List	Y	2016						Band 1 TIA projects are complete.
HO, IC	2015	Pursue the adoption of Georgia's Uniform Construction Codes countywide, including the development of a coordinated and unified housing/codes enforcement program							Y	Action item was dropped and is not considered to be politically feasible.
LU, IC	2015	Establish a countywide planning committee or formal planning commission to assist in growth management education, guidance and evaluation of regulation options							Y	Action item was dropped and is not considered to be politically feasible.
LU, IC	2014	Conduct a public education and information gathering campaign to discuss the need and benefits of land use regulation							Y	Action item was dropped due to lack of land use regulation pursuit.
LU, IC	2016	Develop specific new ordinances identified by the Planning Committee or otherwise as needed to protect existing resources and development, to prevent nuisances and uses disruptive to the community's plans and vision, and to encourage quality growth					Y	2017		The City will continue to adopt ordinances as needed to protect the health and safety of its citizens. Item has been recorded in the new Community Work Program to reflect the present ordinance identifying entity.

**City of Soperton  
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program  
Report of Accomplishments**

Element	Initiation Year	Description	Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	Status/Comments
			Y/N	Year	Y/N	Est. Comp. Date	Y/N	Est. Int. Date	Y/N	
LU, IC	2016	Seek to consolidate the various county land use regulations and separate ordinances into a more comprehensive and unified land development ordinance							Y	Action item was dropped and is not considered to be politically feasible.
LU, IC	2016	Develop comprehensive land use management or zoning ordinances in Soperton compatible with alternative land use regulations developed countywide							Y	Action item was dropped and is not considered to be politically feasible.
LU, IC	2012	Develop measures which accomplish the removal and prevention of abandoned mobile homes and other eyesores in the county	Y	2012						The City has adopted ordinances pertaining to vacant mobile home prevention and maintenance.

**City of Soperton  
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program  
2017 – 2021**

Activity	Years							Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Each Year	Beyond 2021	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Reactivate the Soperton Downtown Development Authority	X								X	DDA	NA				
Explore the development of alternative, compatible, and coordinated land use regulations			X					X	X	Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission	NA				
Complete the expansion of the sewer system to newly annexed areas			X						X	DCA (CDBG), GEFA, USDA Rural Dev't.	\$500,000	X	X	X	
Pursue funding to add a water filtration system				X					X	GEFA, USDA Rural Dev't.	\$5 Million (Total)	X	X	X	
Seek funding to construct a firefighter training facility		X							X	USDA Rural Dev't, GEMA, FEMA	\$500,000	X	X	X	
Seek to acquire a new firefighting vehicle			X						X	GEMA, FEMA	\$165,000	X	X	X	
Pursue funding to acquire a new rescue vehicle		X							X	GEMA, FEMA	\$125,000	X	X	X	
Seek funding to construct a new municipal complex			X						X		\$800,000 SPLOST	X			
Seek to complete streetscape and parking improvements in the downtown area	X								X	GDOT	\$400,000	X	X	X	
Seek funding for sidewalk improvements and the development of new sidewalks	X								X	GDOT	\$400,000	X	X	X	
Pursue the construction of a new Community Center				X					X		\$800,000(Total)(Part of new municipal complex)	X			
Pursue the construction of a local Farmers Market	X								X	USDA	\$100,000	X		X	

**City of Soperton  
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program  
2017 – 2021**

Activity	Years							Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Each Year	Beyond 2021	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Develop specific new ordinances identified by the City Council or otherwise as needed to protect existing resources and development, to prevent nuisances and uses disruptive to the community's plans and vision, and to encourage quality growth	X								X		\$2,000	X			
Acquire and redevelop downtown city shops on West Railroad Ave.	X								X	DDA	\$200,000	X	X		X
Update hardware and software systems across all city departments	X								X		\$15,000	X			
Purchase a backhoe	X								X		\$65,000	X			
Purchase a dump truck		X							X		\$100,000	X			
Upgrade grass maintenance equipment	X								X		\$25,000	X			
Replace water lines in south and west portions of Soperton			X	X					X	DCA CDBG, USDA Rural Dev't	\$400,000	X	X	X	

**City of Soperton  
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program  
2017 – 2021**

Activity	Years							Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Each Year	Beyond 2021	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Replace sewer trunk lines in south and west portions of Soperton				X	X				X	DCA CDBG, USDA Rural Dev't	\$500,000	X	X	X	
Construct two new soccer fields and other facilities as needed at the Soperton-Treutlen Recreation Complex		X							X	SPLOST	\$250,000	X	X		
Install new playground equipment at the Soperton-Treutlen Recreation Complex	X							X	X	SPLOST	\$75,000	X	X		
Repair fountain in downtown park and complete landscaping upgrade			X							DDA, SPLOST	\$50,000	X	X		
Complete TIA Band 2 Projects (Westend Dr., Omega St., Strait St., Sessions St., Woodland Dr., Texas Ave., Edwin St., Florida Ave., Canady Ave., Arch St.)	X	X	X						X	GDOT TIA	\$567,952	X	X		
Complete TIA Band 3 Projects (Pitus Rd., Alpha Rd., Faith Circle, Florida Ave. Ext., Kelly St., Ivy Circle, Maple St., Clover St., Berry St., Norman St., Varnedo St.)				X	X		X		X	GDOT TIA	\$414,174	X	X		
Upgrade/maintain community website(s)						X		X	X	RC	\$1,000	X			
Expand water and sewer infrastructure to new 129 acre industrial site on GA 29			X					X	X	Chamber, IDA, DCA (OneGeorgia), USDA Rural Dev't, DEcD	\$300,000	X	X	X	
Extend water and sewer service to GA 29 and I-16 Interchange					X			X	X	Chamber, IDA, DCA (OneGeorgia), USDA Rural Dev't, DEcD	\$500,000	X	X	X	

# **APPENDIX**



## **APPENDIX**

### **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

The Local Planning Requirements established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) encourage and require that each element of the comprehensive plan “be prepared with considerable opportunity for involvement and input from stakeholders, local leadership, and the general public.” The Treutlen County local governments took this requirement to heart and placed increased emphasis on getting community leaders, stakeholders, and the general public involved. The need for strong community involvement from a broad spectrum of stakeholders was emphasized by the Regional Commission in communications with the local governments. As a result, the local governments put forth considerable effort for broad community involvement and participation in this comprehensive plan’s development.

The local governments coordinated establishment of a steering committee which they called the “Local Plan Coordination Committee” approximately one to two months ahead of the scheduled first committee meeting, and invited through formal e-mail and direct contact as many stakeholders and community leaders as they could envision. Regional Commission planning staff had previously counseled the local governments to make such efforts a priority a number of times, including in a plan implementation meeting held in late November, 2015, in the letter offering Regional Commission plan preparation assistance, and in direct communication and follow-up for plan development organization. DCA’s Suggested Community Plan Stakeholder List, some specific known local candidates, and a model invitation for stakeholder participation were provided for local government use. In addition to local government direct contact, the local governments involved local media and their public meetings to notify the general public and any other interested parties to participate. The official public advertising of the required public hearing further invited all those interested to participate. Similar efforts by the local media and local governments occurred prior to the final committee meeting and public hearing to review the draft plan prior to its formal submittal.

These considerable efforts for achieving meaningful community involvement were considered a success by the local governments. The committee meetings participation did include numerous appointed and elected local officials, local economic development practitioners, other local agencies and organizations, and many others. The first committee meeting, as well as the first public hearing, included a strengths/weakness (SWOT analysis) exercise. The results of these strengths/weaknesses exercises were also reviewed at the second committee meeting. In standard practice, the first order of business at each committee meeting was to review all prior committee inputs and their summary by staff for committee amendment before moving to the next input topic. Much community involvement and input was provided in all facets and elements of the comprehensive plan's development. The local governments were very pleased both with the community involvement/input and the results.

The actual documents utilized or published during the community involvement and comprehensive plan preparation process are provided in this appendix. These include the local government stakeholder invitation, the local government official public hearing advertisements, and the Local Plan Coordination Committee meeting agendas. A list of stakeholders invited to participate in the comprehensive plan preparation process and a list of active participants on the Local Plan Coordination Committee and involved in plan preparation are also included.

## **Treutlen County Stakeholder Invitation**

The Treutlen County Board of Commissioners, in conjunction with the City of Soperton, is initiating a process to prepare a new countywide joint comprehensive plan in accordance with Georgia law. While this plan is necessary to maintain local government eligibility for state grants, loans, and permits, it is also an important blueprint for addressing local concerns, and establishing a guide for community growth and development. We need the assistance and involvement of the entire community, both public and private.

You have been identified as someone involved and important to Treutlen County and its future. You are invited and encouraged to participate on the Treutlen County Joint Local Plan Coordination Committee which will help develop our new joint comprehensive plan. The first meeting of this Committee will be Tuesday, February 23, 2016 at 10:30 a.m. at the Soperton City Hall Council Room. The plan development process will involve about five (5) meetings of the Committee over the next few months.

Please participate in this important process with us, or send someone else from your organization in your stead.

If you have any questions, please call Doug Eaves at 912-529-3664 or Thomas Shephard at 912-529-6173. Please RSVP to the County or City at one of these numbers if you are willing to assist us in this important endeavor.

**PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

**Treutlen County-Soperton Joint Comprehensive Plan  
“The Future of All of Treutlen County”**

The local governments of Treutlen County and the City of Soperton are in the initial stages of a process to develop a new joint comprehensive plan in accordance with state law. It is desired that this plan not only meet state requirements, but also truly express the Community’s wishes for the future growth and development of the Community.

Please come to this meeting and express your desires about the Community’s future vision, the issues and opportunities facing the Community, and what should be done to make Treutlen County and the City of Soperton better places to live and work. What should be the Community’s guiding principles, and what can be done to generate local pride and enthusiasm about the future of all of Treutlen County?

**PUBLIC HEARING DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, March 15, 2016 at 5:30 p.m.**

**LOCATION OF PUBLIC HEARING: Soperton City Hall Council Room**

Please attend, voice your opinions, and be involved. Help your community be proud about its future. All persons with a disability or otherwise needing assistance should contact Treutlen County Board of Commissioners, 1830 Martin Luther King Jr., Drive, Soperton, Georgia 30457, or call (912) 529-3664.

## **PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

### **Treutlen County-Soperton Joint Comprehensive Plan “Growing Beyond the Pines Together”**

The local governments of Treutlen County and the City of Soperton are in the process of finalizing a new joint comprehensive plan in accordance with state law.

The comprehensive plan is titled “Growing Beyond the Pines Together” to generate interest and enthusiasm, and to summarize its aspirations. The plan outlines a community vision, identifies needs and opportunities, and delineates long term policies and a community work program to provide a guide and blueprint for future growth and development within the community. The plan is in draft finalization before submittal to the state for review.

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

**PUBLIC HEARING DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, August 30, 2016 at 5:30 p.m.**

**LOCATION OF PUBLIC HEARING: Soperton City Hall Council Chambers**

Please attend and voice your opinions. Help your community achieve a better future. All persons with a disability or otherwise needing assistance should contact Treutlen County Board of Commissioner’s Office, 1830 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, Soperton, Georgia 30457, or call (912) 529-3664 or City of Soperton, 1973 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, Soperton, Georgia 30457, or call (912) 529-6173.

**TREUTLEN COUNTY-SOPERTON JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
LOCAL PLAN COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
Soperton City Hall Council Room, Soperton, GA  
February 23, 2016  
AGENDA**

**Introductions**

**Background/Committee's Purpose**

**Proposed Timetable of Plan Development**

**Community Strengths/Weaknesses Identification (SWOT)**

**Next Meeting**

**Draft Community Vision Review**

**Issues and Opportunities Input**

**TREUTLEN COUNTY-SOPERTON JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
LOCAL PLAN COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Soperton City Hall Council Room, Soperton, GA**

**March 22, 2016**

**AGENDA**

**Draft Community Vision Review**

**Issues and Opportunities Input**

**Next Meeting – Tuesday, April 12, 2016 at 2:30 p.m.**

**Revised Draft Community Vision Review**

**Draft Issues and Opportunities Review**

**Goals/Policies Input**

**TREUTLEN COUNTY-SOPERTON JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
LOCAL PLAN COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
Soperton City Hall Council Room, Soperton, GA  
April 12, 2016  
AGENDA**

**Revised Draft Community Vision Review**

**Revised Draft Issues and Opportunities Review**

**Long Term Policies Input**

**Next Meeting – Tuesday, May 10, 2016 at 2:30 p.m.**

**Revised Community Vision Review**

**Revised Issues and Opportunities Review**

**Revised Draft Long Term Policies Review**

**Economic Development/Land Use/Plan Coordination**



**TREUTLEN COUNTY-SOPERTON JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
LOCAL PLAN COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
Soperton City Hall Council Room, Soperton, GA  
May 10, 2016  
AGENDA**

**Revised Community Vision Review**

**Revised Issues and Opportunities Review**

**Revised Draft Long Term Policies Review**

**Economic Development Issues Discussion**

**Plan Coordination**

**Land Use Discussion**

**Next Meeting – Late June. Date to be determined. Draft Plan Review.**

**TREUTLEN COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
LOCAL PLAN COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
Soperton City Council Chambers  
August 30, 2016  
AGENDA**

**Draft Plan Review**

**Submittal Discussion**

**Public Hearing – August 30, 2016, Soperton City Council Chambers, 5:30 p.m.**

## **Stakeholders Invited to Participate in Treutlen County Joint Comprehensive Plan Preparation Process**

Treutlen County Board of Commissioners

City of Soperton

Treutlen County Board of Education

Southeastern Technical College

Oconee Fall Line Technical College

East Georgia College

Georgia Military College

Treutlen County Development Authority

Soperton-Treutlen County Chamber of Commerce

Treutlen County Farm Bureau

Treutlen County Cooperative Extension

Georgia Power

Altamaha EMC

Georgia Forestry Commission

Treutlen County Emergency Management Agency

Local Fire Departments

Soperton Police Department

East Coast Asphalt

Florida Hardware and Farm Equipment, Inc.

Treutlen County Sheriff's Department

Treutlen County Public Works

Local Banks

Local Churches

Local Civic Clubs

Treutlen County Health Department

*The Soperton News*

Treutlen County Board of Assessors

Treutlen County Library

Treutlen DFACS

Treutlen County Boot Camp

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

**Active Participants in Treutlen Local Plan  
Coordination Committee Meetings and Plan Preparation**

Treutlen County Board of Commissioners  
Alvin Wheeler, Chairman  
Cashaunda Smith, County Commissioner  
Doug Eaves, County Manager

Florida Hardware and Farm Equipment, Inc.  
Robert Tucker, Plant Manager

City of Soperton  
Royce Fowler, Mayor  
Izell Stephens, Jr., City Council  
Thomas Shepard, City Clerk

Treutlen County Board of Education  
Cheryl Conley, School Superintendent

Treutlen County Development Authority  
John Lee, Executive Director  
David Roberts

Soperton-Treutlen Chamber of Commerce  
Justine Gillis

Treutlen County Health Department  
Justine Gillis, Board Member

*The Soperton News*  
Jonathan Finley, Editor  
Alison Beck, Editor  
Candice Tucker

Treutlen County Cooperative Extension  
Robert McDade, County Agent

Bank of Soperton  
Maury Beasley, President/CEO  
Gloria Holt, Vice-President

**RESOLUTION**

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

**WHEREAS**, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs has established "Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning," effective March 1, 2014, under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 for coordinated and comprehensive planning, including standards and procedures for the preparation of local comprehensive plans and implementation thereof, community involvement, and coordinated review; and

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

**WHEREAS**, this coordinated and comprehensive planning process has resulted in the development of a new joint comprehensive plan, *Growing Beyond the Pines Together*, for Treutlen County and the City of Soperton; and

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

**WHEREAS**, the Treutlen County Joint Comprehensive Plan, *Growing Beyond the Pines Together*, has now been certified by this review as adequately addressing the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning and meeting all requirements as established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989; and

**WHEREAS**, Treutlen County is now desirous of adopting *Growing Beyond the Pines Together* as its official comprehensive plan under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, and as a general policy guide to its future growth and development;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Treutlen County Board of Commissioners hereby approves and adopts the Treutlen County Joint Comprehensive Plan, *Growing Beyond the Pines Together*, as Treutlen County's official local comprehensive plan under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, as amended, and thus replacing its previous comprehensive plan adopted in 2006.

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

**SO RESOLVED**, this 4<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2016.

**BY:** 

**ATTEST:** 

**RESOLUTION**

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

**WHEREAS**, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs has established "Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning," effective March 1, 2014, under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 for coordinated and comprehensive planning, including standards and procedures for the preparation of local comprehensive plans and implementation thereof, community involvement, and coordinated review; and

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

**WHEREAS**, this coordinated and comprehensive planning process has resulted in the development of a new joint comprehensive plan, *Growing Beyond the Pines Together*, for Treutlen County and the City of Soperton; and

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

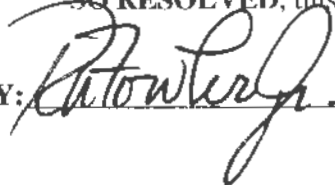
**WHEREAS**, the Treutlen County Joint Comprehensive Plan, *Growing Beyond the Pines Together*, has now been certified by this review as adequately addressing the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning and meeting all requirements as established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989; and

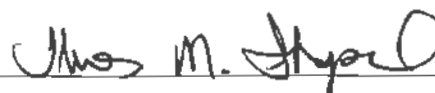
**WHEREAS**, the City of Soperton is now desirous of adopting *Growing Beyond the Pines Together* as its official comprehensive plan under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, and as a general policy guide to its future growth and development;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Soperton hereby approve and adopt the Treutlen County Joint Comprehensive Plan, *Growing Beyond the Pines Together*, as the City of Soperton's official local comprehensive plan under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, as amended, and thus replacing its previous comprehensive plan adopted in 2006.

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

SO RESOLVED, this 18<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2016.

BY: 

ATTEST: 

Douglas Eaves  
County Manager

Tom Everett  
County Attorney



Alvin Wheeler  
Chairman

Kimberly Edge  
Vice-Chairman

Cashaunda Smith  
Forrest Edge  
Cali Hollis

## TREUTLEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Mr. Brett Manning, Executive Director  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission  
5405 Oak Street  
Eastman, Georgia 31023

September 1, 2016

RE: Treutlen County Joint Comprehensive Plan  
Submittal

Dear Brett:


Treutlen County and the City of Soperton have completed preparation of a new joint comprehensive plan, "Growing beyond the Pines Together" under the 2014 Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Please consider this letter as formal submittal and request for review of this joint comprehensive plan in accordance with the Planning Standards.

As noted in the plans "Introduction and Executive Summary," this joint comprehensive plan has been developed with appropriate public and community involvement. This community involvement included both a broad-based steering committee, and the holding of the two required public hearings, one near plan initiation, and one after completion of preparation of the plan in draft form.

We formally certify that both the Altamaha Regional Water Plan and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria were considered during the process of developing this comprehensive plan. This consideration process is summarized in the plans "Introduction and Executive Summary."

Please initiate formal review for our joint comprehensive plan in accordance with the DCA Minimum Standards for both of our governments. If you have any questions concerning our submittal, please contact Doug Eaves, Treutlen County Manager, at (912) 529-3664 or [deaves@planttel.net](mailto:deaves@planttel.net), on behalf of both of us.

Sincerely,

  
Alvin Wheeler, Treutlen County  
Commission Chairman

  
Royce Fowler, Mayor  
City of Soperton

Enclosure: "Growing Beyond the Pines Together"  
Treutlen County is an equal opportunity employer and provider. TDD - 1-800-255-0056  
1830 MLK Drive • Soperton, Georgia 30457 • (912) 529-3664 • FAX (912) 529-6062 • [treutlenboc@planttel.net](mailto:treutlenboc@planttel.net)