

The Treutlen County/Soperton Joint Comprehensive Plan

Community Assessment and Community Participation Program

A Comprehensive Plan for Treutlen County and the City of Soperton, Georgia
in accordance with the Georgia Planning Act of 1989

Prepared By:

The Treutlen County Comprehensive Plan Executive
and Local Planning and Coordination Committees

Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center

June, 2006

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The Treutlen County/Soperton Joint Comprehensive Plan is a comprehensive plan prepared under the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning (Local Planning Requirements) of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. It is a joint plan for Treutlen County and its only municipality -- the City of Soperton. The plan was designed to meet the legislation's requirements for each local government to have a plan for its future growth and development in accordance with the state standards. It is a full update of the previously joint comprehensive plan first adopted in 1991, but is basically a new plan, prepared under new standards.

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

Treutlen County is a small, rural county in south central Georgia. It is located on I-16 about midway between Macon and Savannah. Its current population is only about 7,000 persons. The county was in a long period of decline/relative stability since its inception in 1918, and particularly after WWII, until the 1990s and still has not recovered to its 1930 population level. While this decline has been somewhat reversed in the last 10 years because of residential location, growth has remained modest, and the County faces many hurdles for its future growth. The county developed in its past because of its fields and forests and an agrarian economy and the arrival of the railroad. These abundant natural resources remain and to a large extent, Treutlen County's fields and forests and transportation are again keys to its future growth and development, although through different means. The county has potential for bedroom community growth and other development because of its location and quality of life. This plan focuses on strategies to take advantage of these assets and opportunities to prepare for and attract future growth and development compatible with the existing rural character and quality of life.

The Treutlen County/Soperton Joint Comprehensive Plan was developed in the true spirit and intent of the Georgia Planning Act in that it was prepared by the community with the assistance of planners and not vice versa. The Treutlen County Local Plan Coordination Committee, which oversaw the plan's development, was comprised of elected and appointed officials and interested public and private citizen leaders and stakeholders appointed by the governments. The resulting plan, when finalized, will delineate the goals, objectives, programs and projects the community wishes to pursue to continue the progress, growth, and development of the county as an attractive community in which to live and work.

Format

The plan is organized by the two main components required by the Georgia Planning Act and the "Local Planning Requirements": the *Community Assessment* and the *Community Agenda*. The plan does address the elements recommended for a comprehensive plan, even at the Basic Level at which Treutlen County and Soperton are required to plan. These include: Population; Economic Development; Natural and Cultural Resources; Community Facilities and Services; Housing; Land Use; and Intergovernmental Coordination. Under each element of the plan, there was an inventory and assessment to determine where the community was and had been, what were the current trends, and to help delineate and define issues and opportunities facing Treutlen County and Soperton. The first section of the comprehensive plan, the *Community Assessment*, accomplishes these steps and provides the foundation to decide what the community desires for its future growth and development, and how it plans to achieve its vision.

This *Community Assessment* and its examination of the community is organized by element and the requirements of the "Local Planning Requirements." The inventory and analysis in the main body of the text are those necessary to illustrate current conditions and trends and to help define potential issues and opportunities. More data of potential interest, detailed tables, and some additional maps are included in the Appendix.

A Community Participation Program as required by the Local Planning Requirements to identify the scope and techniques of planned public participation of the plan (most importantly, the *Community Agenda*) is also included. The final components of the plan will include the *Community Agenda* as well as other appendices to address the Treutlen County/Soperton Joint Solid Waste Management Plan and the Treutlen County Service Delivery Strategy. These planning documents are being prepared concurrently in accordance with Georgia Department of Community Affairs requirements and to insure consistency and coordination.

Plan Development

As stated, *The Treutlen County/Soperton Joint Comprehensive Plan* is being developed in accordance with the guidelines of the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning. It is being prepared with considerable community and public involvement, even at the *Community Assessment* stage. The Treutlen County/Soperton Joint Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee was comprised of elected and appointed members appointed by the Treutlen County Board of Commissioners and the City of Soperton. This Executive Committee was responsible for policy direction and direct local government input and supervision. The Local Plan Coordination Committee was comprised of the Executive Committee members and other representatives from public and private agencies, entities, and stakeholders important to the planning process. This process involved even more citizens. Representatives included those from the Chamber of Commerce/Development Authority, school system, Cooperative Extension, and other business and community leaders. This allowed for better coordination and a wider range of community input, both public and private.

The public hearing required after the draft *Community Assessment* is prepared and prior to its submittal was held on a joint basis May 24, 2006 at the Treutlen County Public Library. The Local Plan Coordination Committee met a number of times to review and help identify any potential issues and opportunities and to delineate potential character areas. There was extensive interaction and participatory techniques employed. A final meeting to review the entire *Community Assessment* in draft was also held. The Community Participation Program identified additional planned public and community involvement.

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

POPULATION

Introduction

Population is the initial element identified in the Minimum Standards as required in a local comprehensive plan. Planning would be quite different for a rapidly expanding population than for a declining or stable one. Early identification of existing trends can stimulate and bring forward strategies to reverse directions and direct changes. The Population Element provides local governments with the framework to inventory the numbers and characteristics of their population, to determine trends, and to assess problems and opportunities. Such information serves as a foundation for decision-making in other elements of the plan to determine the community service and infrastructure needs, economic development strategies, and housing necessary to support the existing and future population. Determination of needed lands to accommodate expected population and growth are also made possible. Local desires, environmental, and other constraints, of course, further factor into this decision-making.

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

important to note general size, scale, and trends rather than get caught up in specific numbers and slight discrepancies.

Total Population

Table P-1 and Charts P-1 through P-3 provide information on current, historic, and projected population levels for Treutlen County and Soperton in accordance with the Minimum Standards. Comparable information for Georgia and the United States is shown on Table P-1 and Chart P-1. Table P-1 and Chart P-1 also provide percentage of population change for comparison purposes, including those of Georgia and the U.S. Treutlen County has one municipality within its borders: Soperton, the county seat. Treutlen County is a rural, non-metropolitan area with planted pine plantations dominating its landscape. The county's pine forests, along with its location along GA 15, GA 29 and U.S. 221 and the Oconee and Ochopee Rivers, have largely influenced its growth patterns over the years. The decline of manufacturing in the county in recent years has dramatically slowed growth, but the county's location and its natural and cultural resources quite possibly hold the keys to future growth and development.

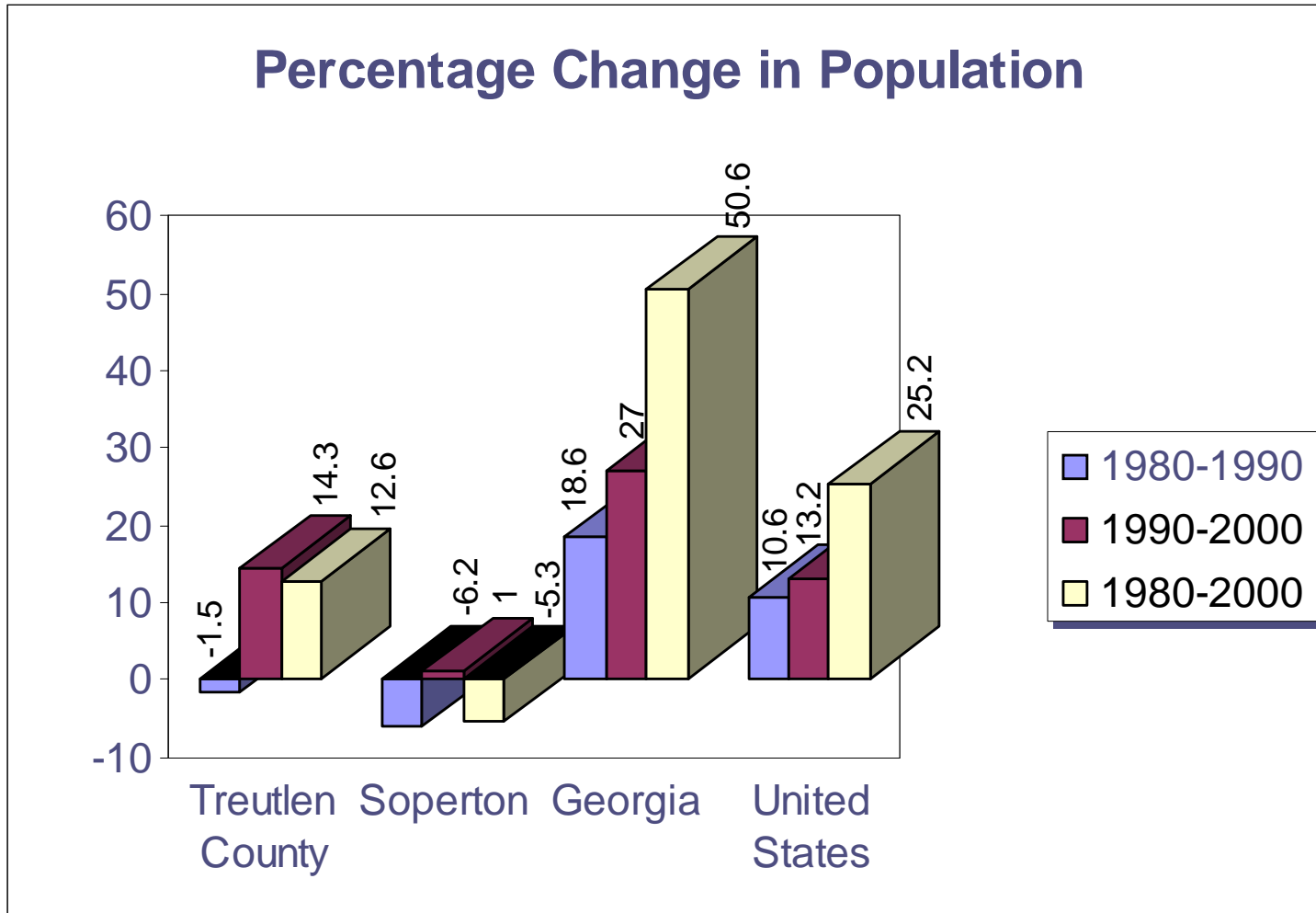
Table P-1 and Chart P-1 are included to demonstrate the historic and current population trends within Treutlen County and how county and city population changes compare at state and national levels. The table uses 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2003 (estimate) figures, as compiled by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for Treutlen County and Soperton to show recent growth trends. The chart uses the same data as that used in Table P-1 to show the percent change in population for each period. The information in the table and chart for Treutlen County shows that from the period between 1980 and 2000, the County growth (12.6 percent) fell well short of the national growth average of 25.2 percent. Moreover, the county's growth rate over this time was even more significantly less than that of Georgia, which grew at the rapid rate of 50.1 percent. Much of the county's shortfall, compared to state and national growth, can be attributed to the lack of significant economic growth, even decline in some cases, in the last two decades. In the period of 1980-1990, the County declined in population at a 1.5 percent rate, while the state (18.6 percent) grew at a rate that was nearly double that of the nation (10.6 percent) for the same period. The county rebounded to increase its growth rate from the period of 1990-2000 (14.3

TABLE P-1
HISTORIC POPULATION AND PERCENT CHANGE
Treutlen County, Soperton, Georgia, and U.S.
1980-2003

	1980	1990	1980-1990 % Change	2000	1990-2000 % Change	2003	2000-2003 % Change	1980-2000 % Change
Treutlen County	6,087	5,994	-1.5	6,854	14.3	6,986	1.9	12.6
Soperton	2,981	2,797	-6.2	2,824	1.0	2,770	-1.9	-5.3
Georgia	5,462,989	6,478,216	18.6	8,229,820	27.0	8,684,715	5.5	50.6
United States	224,810,192	248,709,873	10.6	281,421,906	13.2	290,809,777	3.3	25.2

Source: US Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1980, 1990, and 2000; www.census.gov, 2006.

CHART P-1



percent). The county growth rate was just over that of national growth (13.2) and just over 50 percent of state growth (27.0). Over the last two decades, the County has continued to experience growth at a rate significantly less than either the nation or the state. Again the county growth is only about 50 percent that of the nation, and 25 percent that of the state. The explosive growth in North Georgia and the Atlanta metropolitan area over the last twenty years tends to skew the data somewhat for the state as a whole, which has experienced population growth at twice the rate of the U.S. The U.S. is growing more than twice as fast as Treutlen County, while Georgia is growing four times as fast. However, the county is growing slightly despite its economic problems.

Chart P-2 depicts the percentage change in population for Treutlen County and its surrounding counties between 1980 and 2000. From 1980-1990, Treutlen County ranked fourth out of five (negative 1.5 percent) in comparison to the growth rate of its surrounding counties. Treutlen County's growth only surpassed Wheeler County (negative 4.9 percent) in percentage growth. Growth during this period ranged from a high of 8.1 percent in the regional growth center of Laurens County (Dublin) to a low of minus 4.9 percent in Wheeler County. Wheeler County reversed its 1980-1990 growth numbers and achieved the highest growth from 1990-2000 in comparison to its surrounding counties with a 26.0 percent increase. Much of Wheeler County's growth can be traced to the opening of the Wheeler Correctional Facility in the late 1990s with its inmate population of almost 1,500, as opposed to actual population growth. During the period 1990-2000, Treutlen County's growth (14.3 percent) had increased to third among its surrounding counties, even exceeding the growth experienced in Laurens County (12.2 percent). The Georgia Department of Corrections has a probation detention center located in Treutlen County that was constructed in the 1990s and currently houses 251 inmates. A significant portion of the county's growth during the 1990s was likely attributable to the opening of the facility. Overall, for the twenty year period of 1980-2000, Treutlen County ranked fourth out of the five listed counties with a 12.6 percent growth rate, exceeding only Emanuel County (5.0 percent).

Chart P-3 gives the projected percentage change in population for Treutlen County, Soperton, and Georgia for the years of 2005 through 2025. The HOGA RDC staff projections,

CHART P-2

Percentage Population Change Treutlen and Surrounding Counties

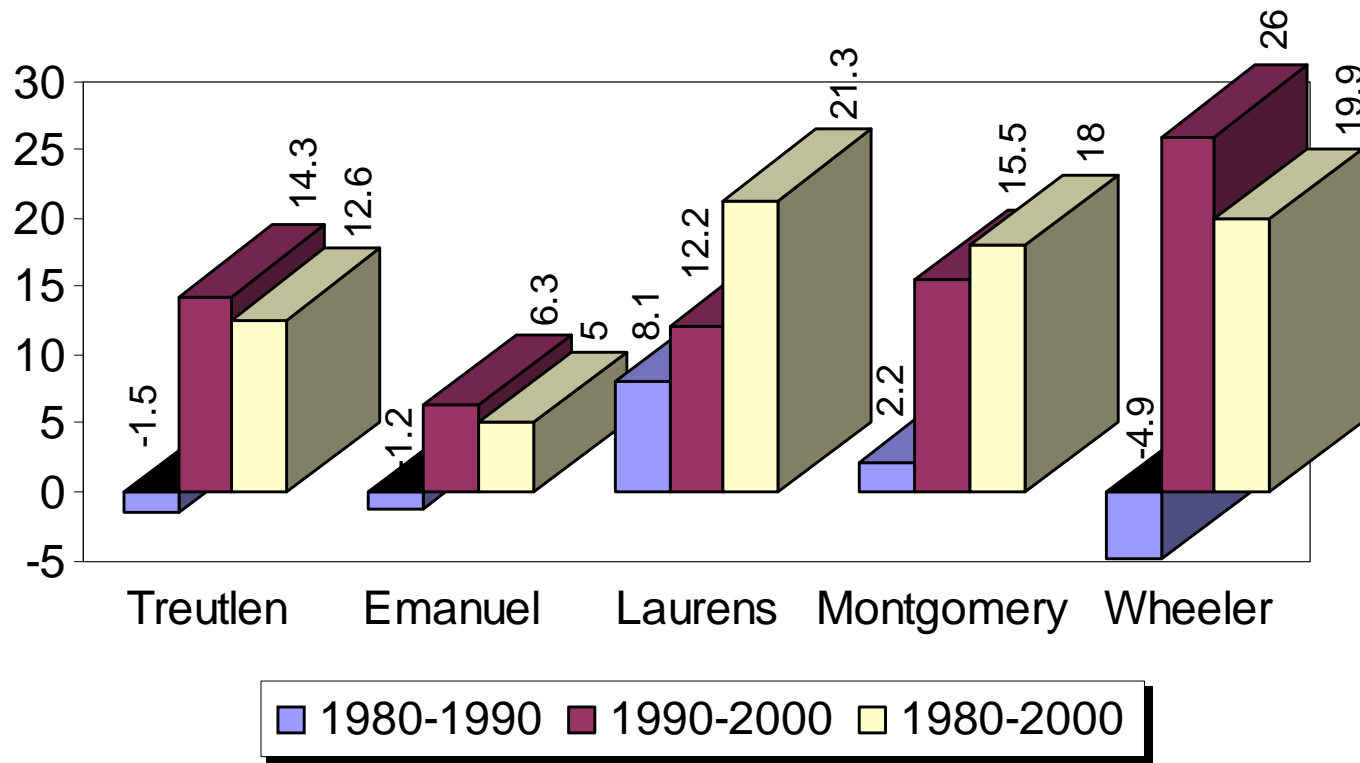
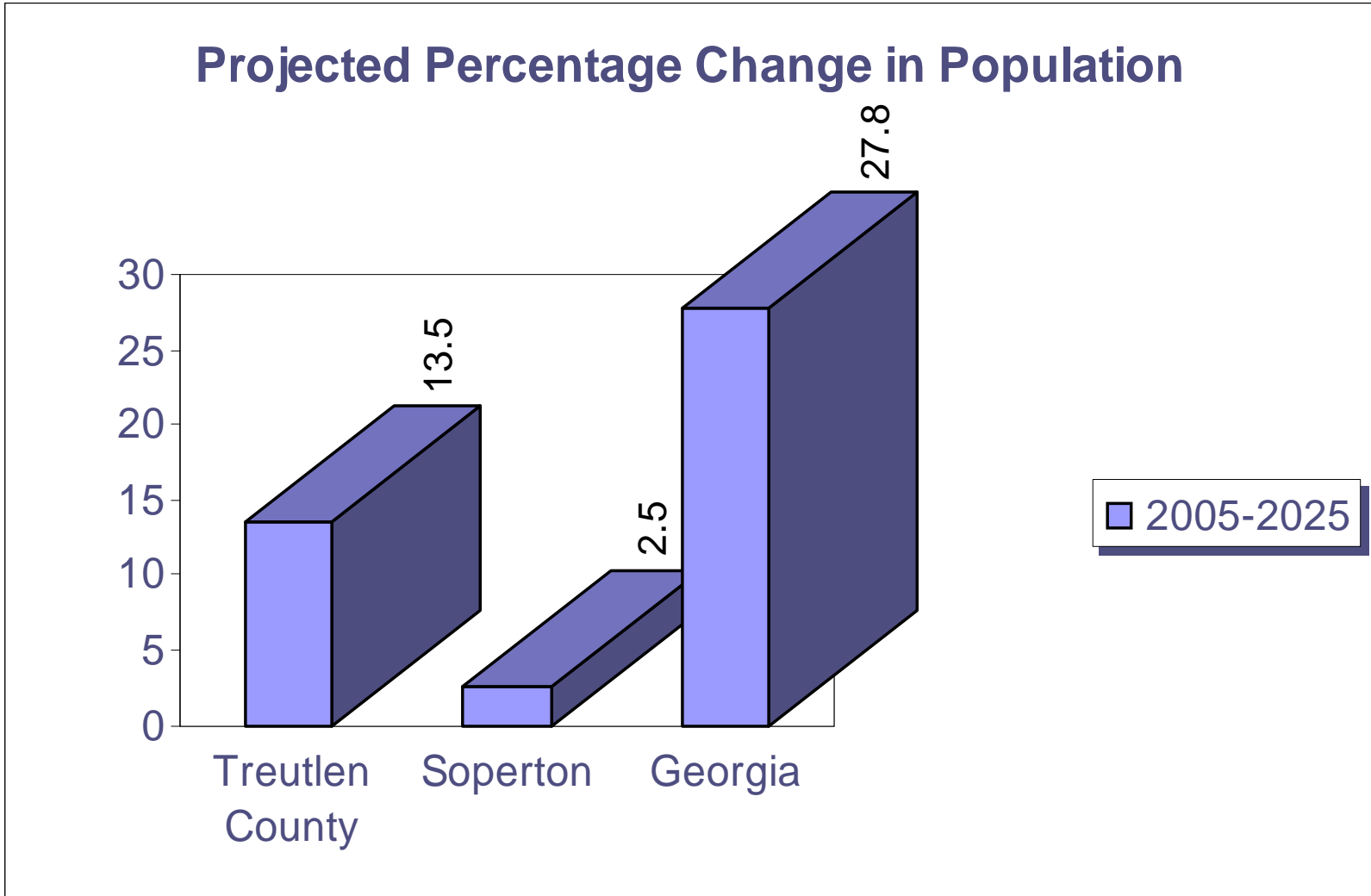


CHART P-3



using an exponential growth formula provided by Microsoft Excel and also adjusted for Census estimates, show that Treutlen County is projected to increase its percentage population by 13.5 percent from 2005-2025. The City of Soperton is projected to increase its percentage population during the same period by only 2.5 percent. The State of Georgia (27.8) is projected to more than double Treutlen County's projected percentage change and is projected to grow 11 times as much as the City of Soperton, as the recent trend of more rapid growth at the statewide level as opposed to locally is expected to continue into the foreseeable future.

Soperton. Table P-1 shows the historic, current, and projected populations for the only city located in Treutlen County. The population growth of Soperton can be described as fluctuating at best, although it has been on the decline for the most part. From 1980 to 1990, Soperton experienced a decrease of 6.2 percent of its total population, only to reverse itself and gain 1.0 percent from 1990 to 2000. These numbers cannot be easily explained, and could be Census anomalies. From 2000-03, Soperton is estimated to have again lost 1.9 percent (54 persons) of its population. From 1980 to 2000, Soperton exhibited a decrease of 5.3 percent, again according to Census numbers. The population decline experienced in the city over the last twenty years or so has remained slight but steady. This is likely the result of the general trend seen in other areas in recent years of more people desiring to live in the unincorporated areas as opposed to municipalities. The future projections through 2025 for the City of Soperton show that, although at a minimal rate, the population will increase slightly during the period from 2005 to 2025, as shown in Chart P-3.

Assessment

From 1980-2000, Treutlen County experienced population growth at a rate that was only about 25 percent that of the state and 50 percent of the nation as a whole. The county as a whole, unlike its lone municipality, continues to exhibit limited growth despite the significant lack of economic growth. What population growth that did occur was mostly the result of natural increase rather than the influx of new residents. The continuing growth, however limited, highlights the county's assets for growth, including its location, continuing public infrastructure investment, and its abundant natural and cultural resources. Among surrounding counties, Treutlen County ranked next to last from 1980 to 2000 with a growth rate of 12.6 percent, again

due in large part to sluggish economic growth. In real terms, the county as a whole is experiencing slow growth at best, but growth nonetheless. On the other hand, the City of Soperton has been losing population over the same time, likely the result of more people leaving the incorporated area for more rural locales. Future projections show current trends for the county continuing for the next 20-25 years or so, while the City of Soperton should see its decline begin to level off and somewhat reverse itself. Treutlen County (13.5 percent) and Soperton (2.5 percent) are both projected to see small increases in their population from 2005 to 2025, as shown in Chart P-3. These trends should continue, barring major economic development events occurring, be it the closing of another major employer, or the location of a major new establishment(s) bringing with it abundant jobs.

Households

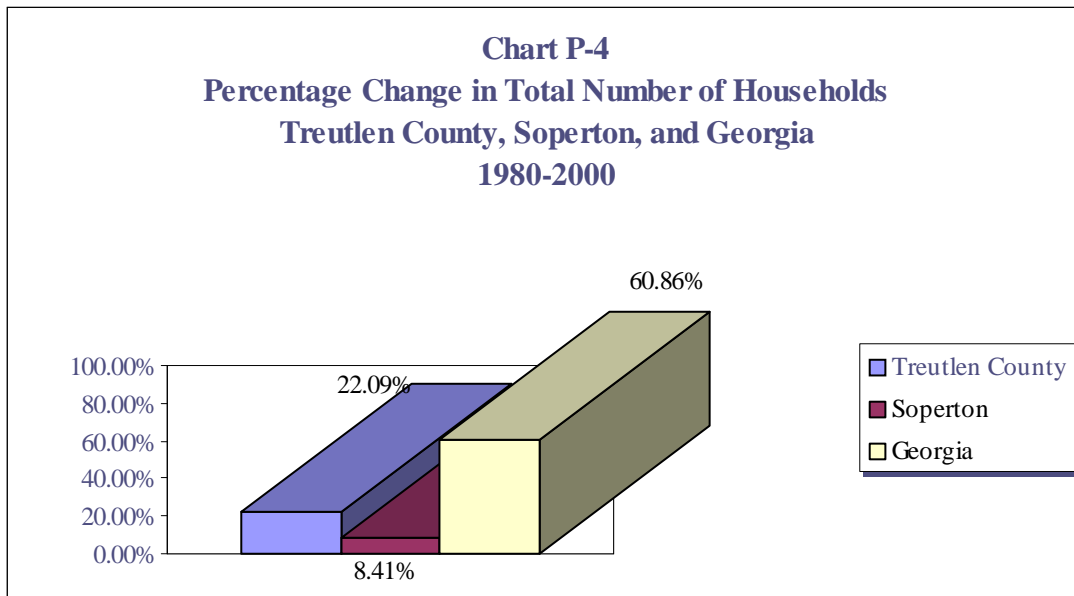
Table P-6 details the historic number of total households for Treutlen County, Soperton, and Georgia from 1980 to 2000. Chart P-4 shows the percentage change in the total number of households for Treutlen County, Soperton, and Georgia for the same time period.

As shown in Table P-6 and Chart P-4, the total number of households in Treutlen County increased by 458 from 1980 to 2000, which is an increase of just over 22 percent during that time. This is compared to a 12.6 percent increase in total population during the same period. In comparison, the total number of households in Georgia increased by almost 61 (60.86) percent, largely due to the explosive growth around the metro Atlanta area. This was nearly triple the rate of the county's growth. The greater household than population increase is reflective of the national trend of declining household size. Treutlen County is no exception to this rule, which had its average household size steadily decrease from 2.91 in 1980 to 2.74 in 1990 to 2.55 in 2000. The county had a noticeably higher average household size than the state in both 1980 and 1990. However, by 2000 Georgia's average household size of 2.65 was higher than Treutlen County's (2.55) for the first time. This trend is projected to continue through at least 2025 when Georgia is projected to have an average household size of 2.63 and Treutlen County's is projected to be 2.35, thus substantially widening the gap. Also, Treutlen County's average household size was higher than the national average in both of the last two decades, although by 2000 the county's average household size was slightly below that for the nation as a whole. This

TABLE P-6
TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS
Treutlen County, Soperton, and Georgia
1980-2000

Total Households	1980	1990	2000
Treutlen County	2,073	2,158	2,531
Soperton	1,011	1,008	1,096
Georgia	1,869,754	2,366,615	3,007,678

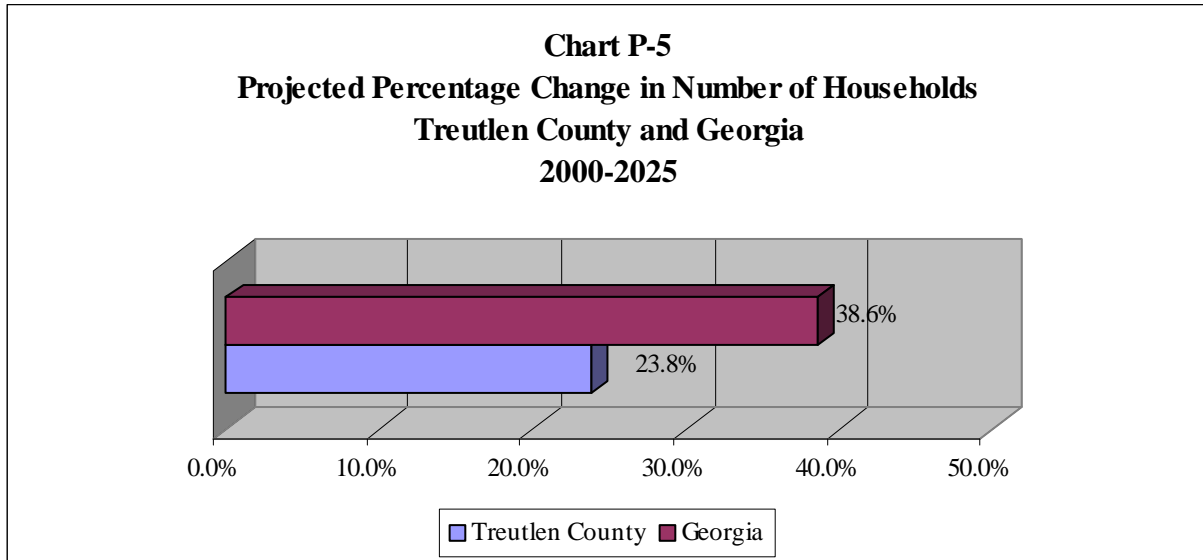
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983, www.census.gov, 2006 (STF 1 data was used to obtain 1990 figures. SF 1 data was used to obtain 2000 figures.).



trend is also expected to continue through 2025, with the county's average household size projected to be well below that of the U.S. It is interesting to note that with Georgia's booming population, the state's average household size is expected to remain slightly higher than the nation through 2025, as both are expected to remain fairly stable.

Households are expected to increase about 24 percent in Treutlen County to a total of 3,134 in 2025, based upon adjusted figures, as shown in Chart P-5. This is roughly only about two-thirds of the projected Georgia net increase of roughly 39 percent during the same period. While the county continues to see a slow but steady increase in the number of households and a decrease in average household size, which is expected to go from 2.55 persons per household in 2000 to 2.35 in 2025, it remains dramatically below that of the state's 2025 estimate of 2.63. Since households are equivalent to occupied housing units, a minimal amount of net housing units will be needed in the county to accommodate the number of households that are expected (See Housing Element for projected housing figures). The modest projected increase in population growth is not expected to put any substantial pressure on the local housing market.

Soperton. Total households increased only minimally during the period of 1980-2000 in Soperton, as shown in both Table P-6 and Chart P-4. Soperton experienced a net gain of just 85 households, or 8.41 percent, between 1980 and 2000. All of Soperton's household growth occurred during the 1990s as the city gained 88 households, after declining by 3 households, essentially becoming stagnant, between 1980 and 1990. This would be consistent with the general loss of population during this same time. These numbers might appear to be somewhat suspect, but could be the result of natural increase or the movement of some of the population to the unincorporated area of the county. The city's net growth over the last two decades was almost one-third the percentage increase seen at the county level. Future projections show that steady and minimal increases in the number of households are anticipated to continue for Soperton, again consistent with the slow projected population increase. The city is projected to add a net total of only 94 new households by 2025, or a gain of 8.58 percent from 2000. This would actually be nearly the percentage increase seen over the last two decades. This percentage gain would be one-third of the roughly 24 percent gain projected for the county. Average household sizes are expected to continue to decline in Soperton through 2025.



Assessment

Because of the trend of population migrating more to the unincorporated areas of Treutlen County, the county was actually the recipient of the largest actual and percentage increase in the number of households in the county from 1980-2000. Only minimal changes have occurred overall in Soperton, and its percentage growth is projected to remain well below that of the county through 2025. Prior to 2000, Treutlen County had a larger average household size than that of the United States and Georgia. Future trends project the county to continue to have a smaller average household size than both the state and the nation through 2025. The increased numbers of households in Treutlen County can be attributed to smaller household sizes within the County, as opposed to actual significant population growth. Slow but steady increases in the total number of households are anticipated for the county and the City of Soperton through 2025, with average household sizes expected to continue to decline through 2025. Together these projections do not reflect a significant increased demand for new housing. The modest population growth that is expected is not projected to be sufficient enough to warrant additional pressures on the local housing market.

Age Distribution

The current and historic population by age distribution for Treutlen County, Georgia, and the U.S. is shown in Table P-9. Chart P-6 displays the percentage of age distribution in 2000 for

Treutlen County, Georgia, and the U.S., based on Table P-9. The same information is shown for Treutlen County and the City of Soperton for 1980-2000 in Table P-11.

Treutlen County is in some respects like most counties in terms of its age structure. A combination of two categories, the less than 25 and 25-54 categories, represented a combined 77.7 percent of the county's population in 2000. This trend is not just a county trend because these same two combined categories represent 78.9 percent of the U.S. population in 2000 and 82.3 percent of Georgia's population in 2000, as shown in Table P-9 and Chart P-6. However, all three experienced decreases in the less than 25 age population from 1980-2000 in terms of percentage of overall population. Treutlen County ranks slightly above the U.S. and significantly above Georgia in terms of its elderly percentage of total population at 13.2 percent in 2000, as shown in Table P-9 and Chart P-6. This county percentage, like the state and nation, is a decrease from the number in 1990. The county percentage was above the national number of 12.4 percent as well as the state number, which was at 9.6 percent in 2000. The county's percentage of those ages 55-64 was also slightly higher than both the state and the nation. The county's population is somewhat older than the state and slightly older than the nation, as shown in Table P-9 and Chart P-6.

Table P-11 shows the raw numbers from 1980-2000 for 10 age categories. In the five age categories from zero to 25, Treutlen County experienced an increase in all but the five to 13 age category. The City of Soperton experienced the opposite. The City experienced a decrease in all five age categories, with the biggest declines occurring in the pre-teen and teenage groups. There are three age categories between the ages of 25-54. For both Treutlen County and the City of Soperton, every age category experienced an increase except the ages of 25-34 (a decrease of 14 persons) in the City of Soperton. In the remaining two age categories (55-64 and 65 and older), an increase was experienced in both categories for Treutlen County and in one category for the City of Soperton. The age category 55-64 (a decrease of 10 persons) experienced a decrease in the City of Soperton.

TABLE P-9
HISTORIC POPULATION AGE DISTRIBUTION
Treutlen County, Georgia, and U.S.
1980-2000

	United States			Georgia			Treutlen County					
							Percent			Number		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	6,087	5,994	6,854
Less Than 25	41.4	36.5	35.3	43.5	39.7	36.7	43.6	38.6	37.9	2,651	2,315	2,598
Age 25-54	37.7	42.6	43.6	38.6	46.0	45.6	33.3	37.1	39.8	2,028	2,222	2,726
Age 55-64	9.6	8.4	8.6	8.5	3.8	8.1	9.3	8.9	9.1	564	535	622
Age 65 & Over	11.3	12.5	12.4	9.4	10.5	9.6	13.9	15.4	13.2	844	922	908

Source: US Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1983 (1980 data); www.census.gov, 2006 (1990 and 2000 data).

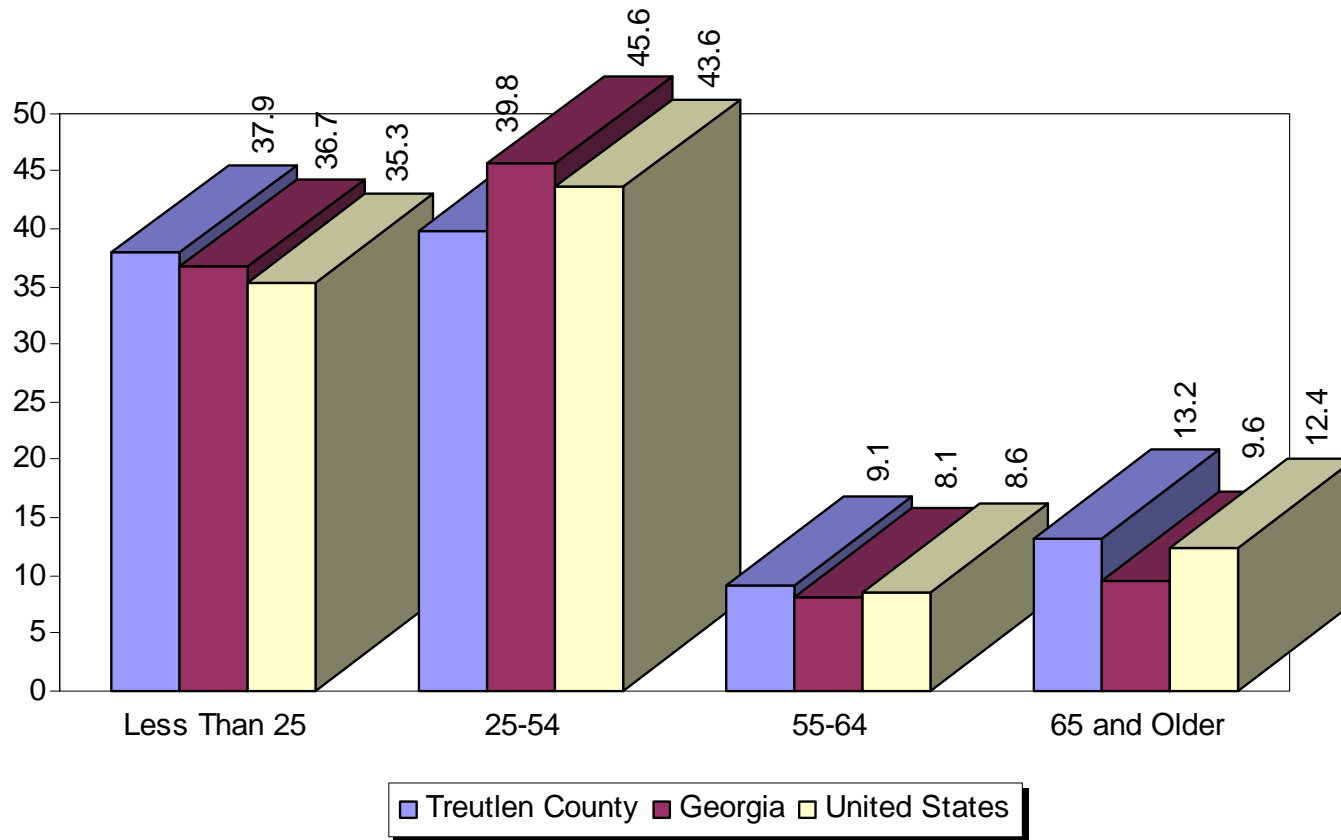
TABLE P-11
HISTORIC POPULATION BY AGE DISTRIBUTION
Treutlen County and Soperton
1980-2000

	Treutlen County			Soperton		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
TOTAL Population	6,087	5,994	6,854	2,981	2,797	2,824
0 – 4 Years Old	486	427	506	247	230	242
5 – 13 Years Old	1,031	953	956	520	449	418
14 – 17 Years Old	481	481	319	250	155	139
18 – 20 Years Old	285	285	417	156	139	125
21 – 24 Years Old	368	327	400	178	168	140
25 – 34 Years Old	843	844	930	394	391	380
35 – 44 Years Old	606	772	932	266	316	371
45 – 54 Years Old	579	606	864	269	246	317
55 – 64 Years Old	564	535	622	268	229	258
65 Years and Over	844	922	908	433	474	434

Source: US Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1983 (1980 data), www.census.gov, 2006 (1990 and 2000 data).

CHART P-6

Percentage of Age Distribution in 2000



Assessment

In Treutlen County and the City of Soperton, the historic population of those 65 years old and older and 25-54 increased slightly from 1980 through 2000. At the same time, the age categories of Less than 25 for both decreased. Every age category except Less than 25 increased in population for Treutlen County. If this trend continues in the future, the population of Treutlen County will continue to become older. These trends are typical for a rural area, which normally depicts a growing elderly population because of higher numbers in the middle age and older population age categories. This will present a challenge to local governments in that the older population requires different service needs than a younger population, particularly in terms of health care.

Racial Composition

Table P-16 and Chart P-7 deal with the current racial composition of Treutlen County, Georgia, and the United States. Table P-16 shows that as of 2000, the largest reported minority in Treutlen County, Georgia, and the U.S. were Blacks, which made up 33.1, 28.7, and 12.3 percent, respectively. There are about three times as many blacks (33.1 percent) in the county compared to the U.S. (12.3 percent) and just under five percent more than the state (28.7 percent). In Georgia, two categories (Black and White) combined to make up 93.8 percent of the total population, while in Treutlen County they combined to make up 98.8 percent in 2000. The largest race categories excluding whites and blacks is the Other category for the state and U.S. However, it is the Two or More Race category that is the largest for Treutlen County. From 1980-1990, all of the race categories experienced an increase for Georgia and the U.S. From 1980-1990, Whites, Blacks, and Asian or Pacific Islander race categories experienced a decrease in population in Treutlen County. The race categories of American Indian or Alaska Native, Other, and Hispanic Origin experienced an increase in population in Treutlen County from 1980-1990. Surprisingly, Treutlen County only experienced an increase of eight (71 to 79 persons) Hispanics from 1980-2000, unlike surrounding counties which experienced a significant increase. In 2000, Soperton was dominated by Whites and Blacks. Since 1980, the two categories

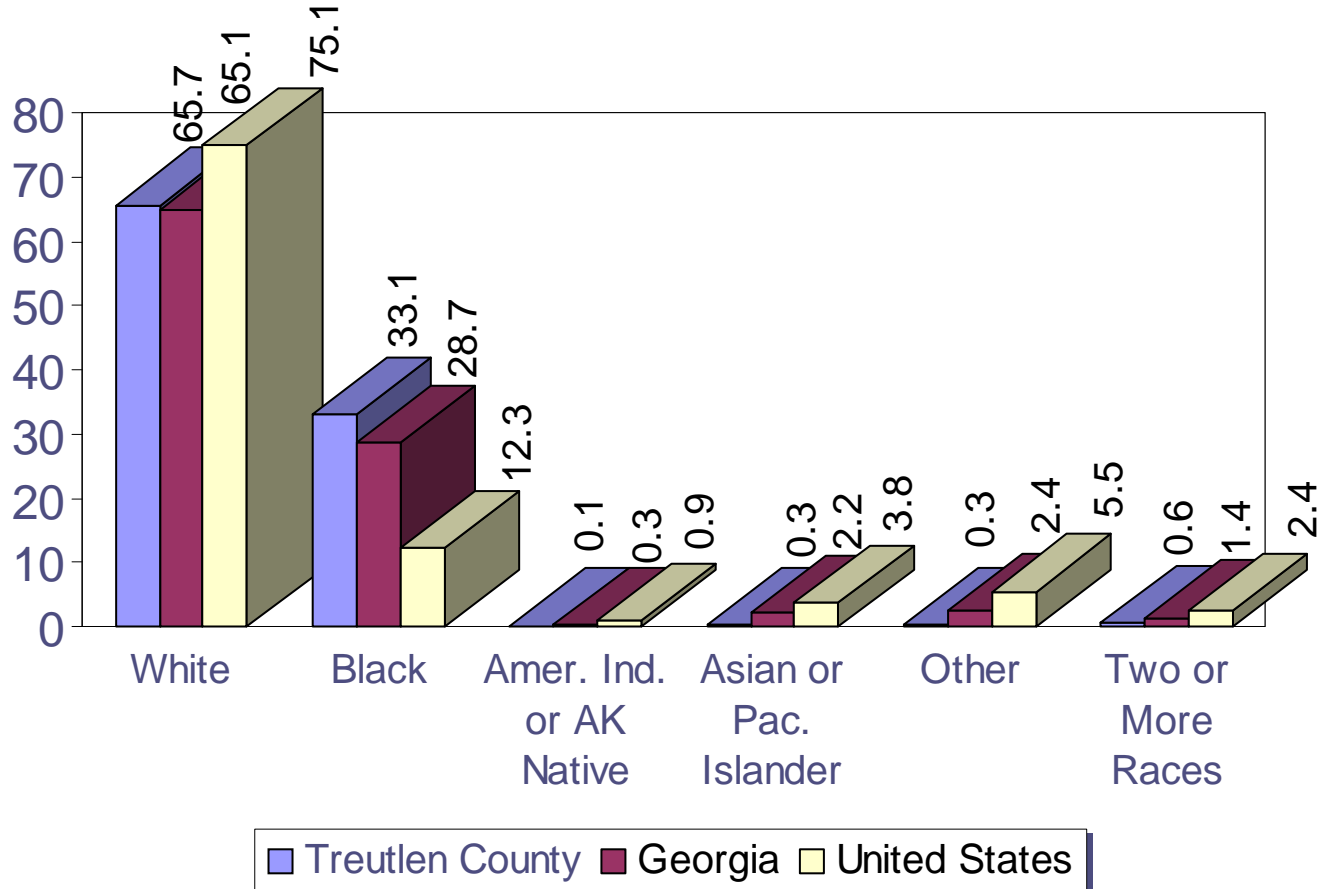
TABLE P-16
PERCENT OF POPULATION BY RACE
Treutlen County, Georgia, and U.S.
2000

	United States	Georgia	Treutlen County
TOTAL Population	100	100	100
White	75.1	65.1	65.7
Black	12.3	28.7	33.1
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.9	0.3	0.1
Asian or Pacific Islander	3.8	2.2	0.3
Other	5.5	2.4	0.3
Two or More Races	2.4	1.4	0.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2006.

CHART P-7

Percent of Population By Race in 2000



have declined in the percentage of the population. From 1980-1990, Whites and Blacks also decreased in Soperton, while the other race categories (except Asian or Pacific Islander) either remained the same or slightly increased.

Assessment

The racial composition of Soperton, Treutlen County, Georgia, and the U.S. in 2000 is dominated by the Whites and Blacks. However, since 1980 the two categories have declined in the percentage of the population. From 1980-1990, Whites and Blacks also decreased in population for Soperton, while the other race categories (except Asian or Pacific Islander) either remained the same or slightly increased. Treutlen County only experienced minimal growth in its Hispanic population (8 persons) from 1980-2000. All of the other race categories are expected to grow at a slow and steady pace which will cause the White and Black categories to decrease in the future. This may present interesting challenges to local governments in terms of language and cultural barriers, education, and other service provisions.

Educational Attainment

Tables P-21 and P-22 and Charts P-8 and P-9 provide information on current and historic education levels of the adult population in Treutlen County and Soperton. In Table P-21 and Chart P-8, Georgia is included for comparisons in educational attainment of the percentage of persons 25 and older. Table P-22 and Chart P-9 compare the educational attainment of persons 25 and older in Treutlen County to those in surrounding counties and the State of Georgia.

Treutlen County has a less educated population in comparison to the state, as shown in Table P-21. This is not all that unexpected with the county being a predominantly rural area, where lower educational levels are common. In 2000, Treutlen County lagged behind the state in every category. However, the county has made improvements in most categories since 1980. The exceptions are those with a ninth to twelfth grade education but who did not complete the requirements to receive a high school diploma, which rose slightly (21.9 percent to 23.6 percent), those with an Associate Degree (down from 4.0 percent to 3.1 percent), and those with a

TABLE P-21
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT
Percent of Persons Age 25 and Older
Treutlen County, Soperton, and Georgia
1980-2000

Category	TOTAL Adult Population 25 & Over	Less Than 9 th Grade	9 th to 12 th Grade (No Diploma)	High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	Some College (No Degree)	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
Treutlen County								
1980	3,436	45.1	21.9	20.5	6.3*	NA	8.1	2.6
1990	3,674	26.5	20.8	33.9	8.5	4.0	4.1	2.2
2000	4,292	14.9	23.3	39.7	10.6	3.1	5.2	3.3
Soperton								
1980	1,630	41.8	22.1	19.6	6.8*	NA	5.7	4.0
1990	1,620	29.3	18.7	35.5	6.4	3.8	3.5	2.8
2000	1,778	16.2	22.6	42.6	8.5	2.3	4.8	3.0
Georgia								
1980	3,085,528	23.7	19.9	28.5	13.3*	NA	8.5	6.1
1990	4,023,420	12.0	17.1	29.6	17.0	5.0	12.9	6.4
2000	5,185,965	7.6	13.8	28.7	20.4	5.2	16.0	8.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1983, www.census.gov, 2006 (STF 3 data was used to obtain 1990 figures. SF 4 data was used to obtain 2000 figures.).

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

Chart P-8
2000 Educational Attainment Levels (Percent of Adult Population Age 25 or Older)
Treutlen County, Soperton, and Georgia

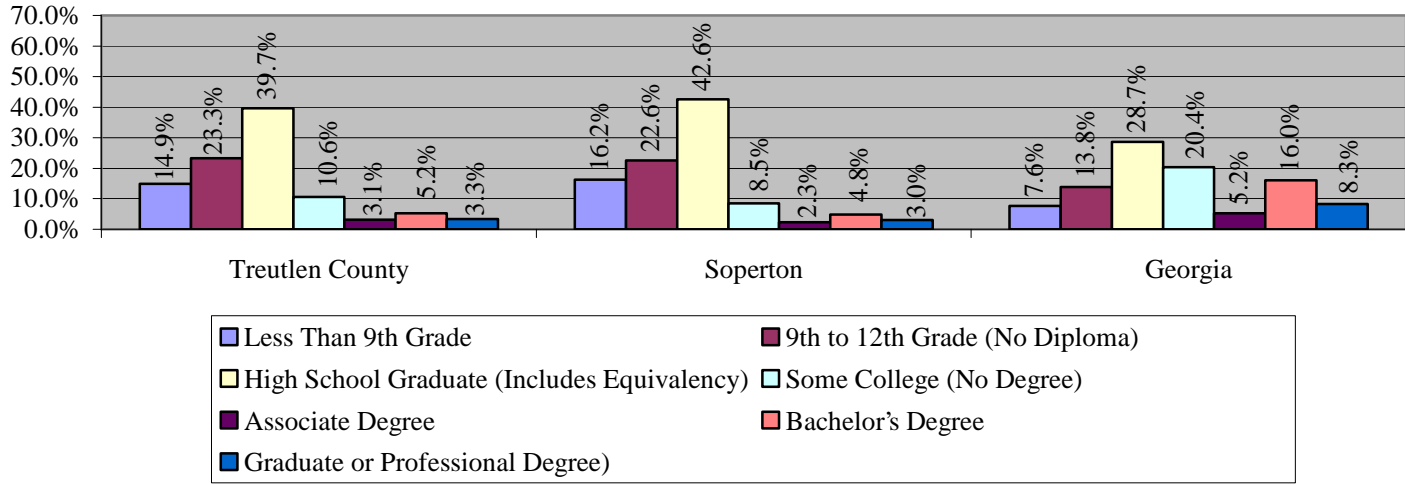


TABLE P-22
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT
Percent of Persons Age 25 and Older
Treutlen County, Surrounding Counties, and Georgia
1980-2000

County	TOTAL Adult Population 25 & Over	Less Than 9 th Grade	9 th to 12 th Grade (No Diploma)	High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	Some College (No Degree)	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
Treutlen								
1980	3,436	45.1	21.9	20.5	6.3*	NA	8.1	2.6
1990	3,674	26.5	20.8	33.9	8.5	4.0	4.1	2.2
2000	4,292	14.9	23.3	39.7	10.6	3.1	5.2	3.3
Emanuel								
1980	11,715	37.7	23.9	23.4	7.8*	NA	4.7	2.6
1990	12,419	22.8	24.6	30.0	9.9	3.7	5.4	3.6
2000	13,465	15.0	23.5	35.2	13.2	3.0	5.2	4.8
Laurens								
1980	21,391	30.5	23.8	26.2	9.7*	NA	6.0	3.8
1990	24,964	18.3	20.7	33.6	11.0	4.4	7.2	4.8
2000	28,875	10.6	19.1	37.1	14.9	3.9	8.9	5.5
Montgomery								
1980	3,736	33.0	25.1	28.2	6.6*	NA	7.1	3.2
1990	4,304	19.1	23.5	32.0	11.4	3.9	6.5	3.6
2000	5,108	9.3	19.3	39.4	14.4	4.2	8.9	4.6
Wheeler								
1980	2,963	41.1	22.1	21.2	8.1*	NA	4.3	3.2
1990	3,040	21.4	21.9	33.6	11.7	2.9	5.8	2.8
2000	4,144	15.4	16.7	41.8	15.5	3.4	4.4	2.8

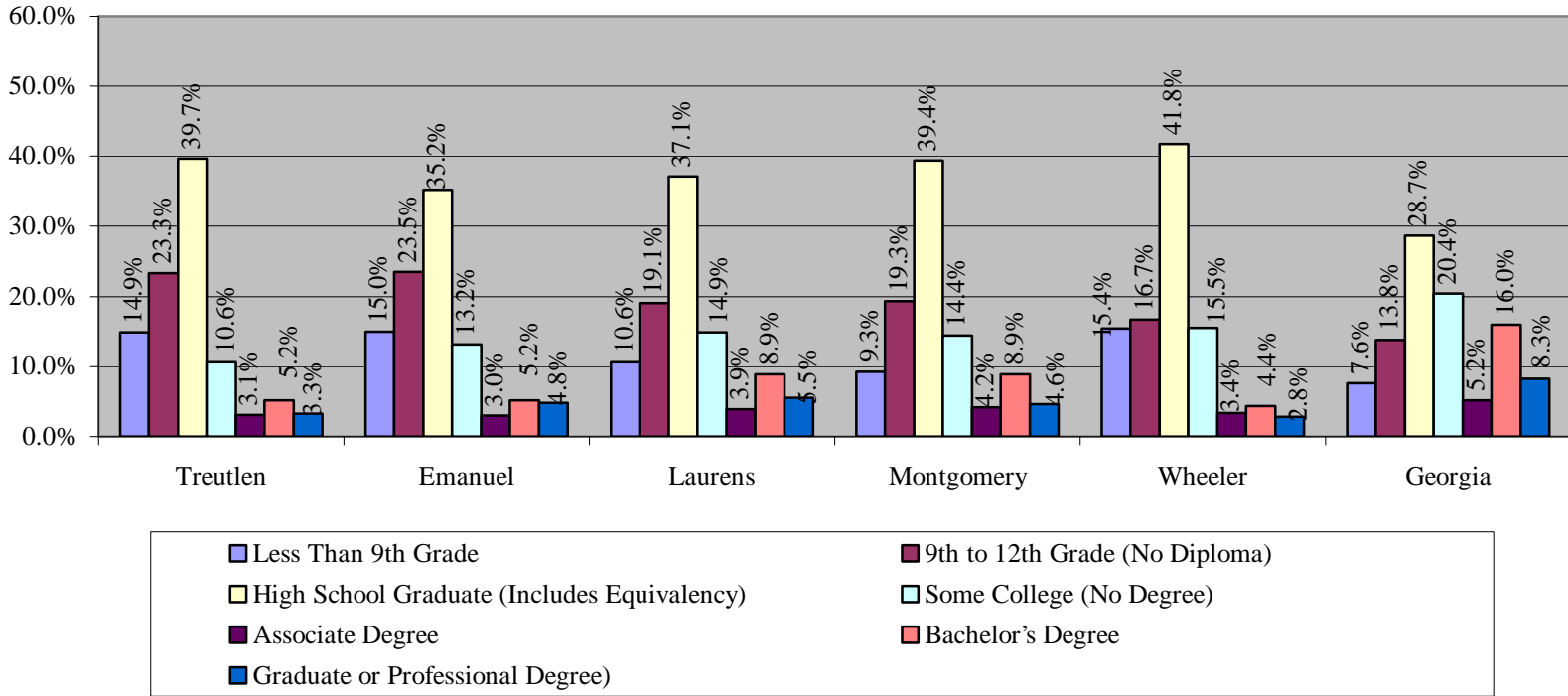
TABLE P-22 (Cont'd)
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT
Percent of Persons Age 25 and Older
Treutlen County, Surrounding Counties, and Georgia
1980-2000

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

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, www.census.gov, 2004 (STF 3 data was used to obtain 1990 figures. SF 4 data was used to obtain 2000 figures.).

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

Chart P-9
2000 Educational Attainment Levels (Percent of Adult Population Age 25 or Older)
Treutlen County, Surrounding Counties, and Georgia



Bachelor's Degree (down from 8.1 percent to 5.2 percent). Over the last two decades, the percentage of county residents with less than a ninth grade education has declined by almost two-thirds (45.1 percent to 14.9 percent). However, this is still nearly twice the rate of Georgia as a whole (7.6 percent). The county has seen slight increases in the percentage of residents with a college degree, particularly those with Some College but no degree and those with a Graduate or Professional Degree, but those percentages are still well below statewide figures. On a more positive note, more county residents now have at least a high school level education (61.9 percent) than those who do not (38.2 percent).

In terms of surrounding counties, Treutlen County consistently has had less college graduates in its population than most of its neighbors, particularly the regional growth center of Laurens County and Montgomery County, which is home to Brewton-Parker College. The county's educational attainment levels for the most part only exceeded those of Wheeler County. In terms of residents with a graduate degree, Treutlen County at 3.3 percent ranks only above Wheeler among all counties in 2000, and trailed the remaining counties noticeably, as shown in Table P-22 and Chart P-9. The same is also true when comparing those with a Bachelor's Degree. Treutlen County and all its surrounding counties trail the Georgia rate of those with an Associate Degree (5.2 percent), a Bachelor's Degree (16.0 percent), and a Graduate Degree (8.3 percent). Conversely, only Emanuel County (15.0 percent) and Wheeler County (15.4 percent) had a higher percentage of those with less than a ninth grade education than did Treutlen County in 2000 (14.9 percent). Treutlen County also had a higher percentage of residents with a ninth to twelfth grade education but no high school diploma (23.3 percent) than the other counties, with the exception of Emanuel County (23.5 percent).

Soperton. Soperton's 2000 percent of those without a high school diploma was 38.8 percent, which was slightly higher than the county as a whole (38.2 percent), likely due in part to an older population in the city than in the unincorporated area. The city also had a lower percentage of college-educated residents (10.1 percent) than the county (11.6 percent). Soperton had a slightly higher rate of those 25 years old and older with less than a 9th grade education in 2000 than the county, 16.2 percent to 14.9 percent, and a slightly higher percentage of those with a high school diploma (42.6 percent to 39.7 percent).

Assessment

Treutlen County continues to lag behind in efforts to have a more educated population than Georgia. From 1980-2000, Treutlen County saw a decrease in the percentage of the population with no high school diploma, and an increase in those who had at least a high school diploma. However, these trends seem to be well behind state and national trends, where both are both seeing its numbers of those with only a high school diploma decrease, but those moving on to the college level increase. For those in Treutlen County and Soperton who are moving on to college-level education, there are increasing numbers of those receiving degrees of some type over the last decade, if only slightly so, although those percentages have not rebounded to 1980 levels. In any case, these numbers are considerably behind the state as a whole. These trends bear serious consequences in that they present barriers for the county to attract economic development. The overall low skill levels of the local population must be addressed for the county to attract the kind of growth it desires. Fortunately, there are some programs in place to address the skill levels of the labor force. These will be discussed in the Economic Development element.

Income

Per capita incomes for Treutlen County, Georgia, and the U.S. from 1980-2000, as shown in 1996 dollars, are shown in Table P-24, and per capita incomes for all three in addition to the City of Soperton, as shown in actual dollars, are included in Table P-25. Chart P-10 shows Treutlen County's per capita income as a percentage of that of Georgia and the U.S. in 1996 dollars from 1980 to 2000, while Chart P-11 shows the percentage change in per capita income for all three from 1980 to 2000. Table P-29 shows the percentage of household income distribution for Treutlen County and makes a comparison with the state, while Table P-30 shows the percentage distribution of household income for the City of Soperton. Chart P-12 depicts the 2000 percentage distribution of household income for the county, city, and the state to highlight ongoing trends.

TABLE P-24
PER CAPITA INCOME
Treutlen County, Georgia, and the U.S.
1980-2025

Income per Capita (1996 \$)	1980	1990	2000
Treutlen County	\$5,597	\$10,633	\$15,115
Georgia	\$8,426	\$17,407	\$28,103
United States	\$10,062	\$19,188	\$29,760

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System, 2004.

TABLE P-25
PER CAPITA INCOME
Treutlen County Governments, Georgia, and the U.S.
1980-2000

Income per Capita (actual \$)	1980	1990	2000
Treutlen County	\$4,831	\$7,865	\$13,122
Soperton	\$4,638	\$7,466	\$12,367
Georgia	\$6,402	\$13,631	\$21,154
United States	\$7,298	\$14,420	\$21,587

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, www.census.gov, 2006 (STF 3 data was used to obtain 1990 figures. SF 4 data was used to obtain 2000 figures.).

Chart P-10
Treutlen County Per Capita Income
as a Percentage of Per Capita Income of Georgia and the U.S.
1980-2000

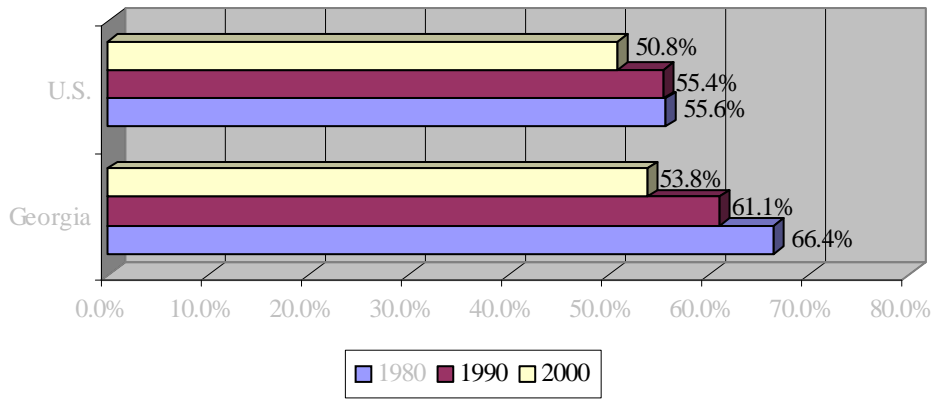


Chart P-11
Percentage Change in Per Capita Income (In 1996 Dollars)
Treutlen County, Georgia, and the U.S.
1980-2000

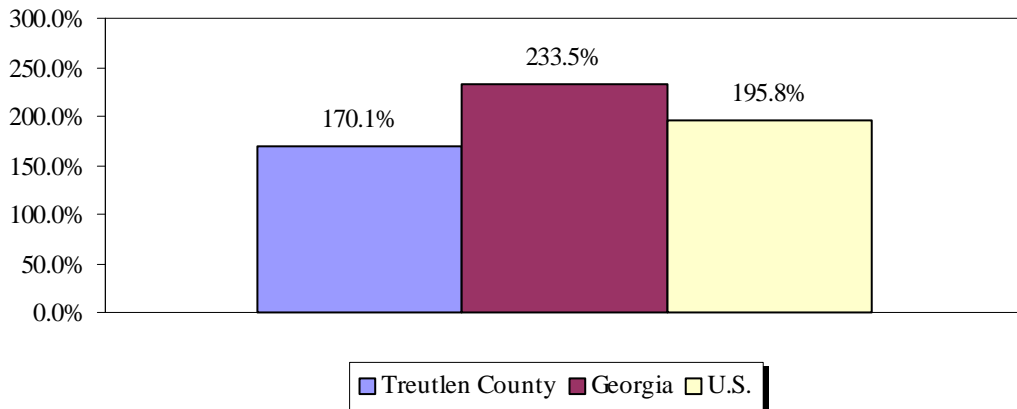


TABLE P-29
HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION BY PERCENTAGE
Treutlen County and Georgia
1980-2000

Category	Treutlen County			Georgia		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
TOTAL Households	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Income less than \$5,000	28.32%	15.99%	NA	16.20%	7.90%	NA
Income \$5,000 - \$9,999	20.42%	14.95%	24.58%	17.10%	8.87%	10.13%
Income \$10,000 - \$14,999	15.76%	12.12%	8.90%	16.28%	8.62%	5.85%
Income \$15,000 - \$19,999	14.79%		7.60%	14.19%	8.87%	5.91%
Income \$20,000 - \$29,999			15.13%	11.53%	17.13%	12.74%
Income \$30,000 - \$34,999	14.31% ^{1/}	40.09% ^{4/}	6.98%	8.23%	7.90%	6.22%
Income \$35,000 - \$39,999			6.62%	5.53%	6.77%	5.87%
Income \$40,000 - \$49,999	3.30% ^{2/}	11.26% ^{2/}	10.23%	3.36%	11.03%	10.85%
Income \$50,000 - \$59,999			7.96%	2.04%	7.61%	9.24%
Income \$60,000 - \$74,999		3.56% ^{5/}	4.74%	1.47%	6.85%	10.48%
Income \$75,000 - \$99,999		1.22%	3.88%	2.57%	4.63%	10.36%
Income \$100,000 or more	3.10% ^{3/}	0.81%	3.37%	1.52%	3.81%	12.34%

^{1/} Includes the \$20,000-\$29,999 and \$30,000-\$34,999 income categories.

^{2/} Includes the \$35,000-\$39,999 and \$40,000-\$49,999 income categories.

^{3/} Includes the \$50,000-\$59,999, \$60,000-\$74,999, \$75,000-\$99,999, and \$100,000 or more income categories.

^{4/} Includes the \$15,000-\$19,999, \$20,000-\$29,999, and \$30,000-\$34,999 income categories.

^{5/} Includes the \$50,000-\$59,999 and \$60,000-\$74,999 income categories.

TABLE P-30
HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION BY PERCENTAGE
Soperton
1980-2000

Category	Soperton		
	1980	1990	2000
TOTAL Households	NA	100.00%	100.00%
Income less than \$5,000	NA	22.35%	NA
Income \$5,000 - \$9,999	NA	17.80%	30.39%
Income \$10,000 - \$14,999	NA	10.98%	10.13%
Income \$15,000 - \$19,999	NA		
Income \$20,000 - \$29,999	NA		
Income \$30,000 - \$34,999	NA	33.33% ^{1/}	31.00% ^{1/}
Income \$35,000 - \$39,999	NA		
Income \$40,000 - \$49,999	NA	9.99% ^{2/}	17.29% ^{2/}
Income \$50,000 - \$59,999	NA		
Income \$60,000 - \$74,999	NA	3.07% ^{3/}	8.30% ^{3/}
Income \$75,000 - \$99,999	NA	1.38%	1.22%
Income \$100,000 or more	NA	1.09%	1.66%

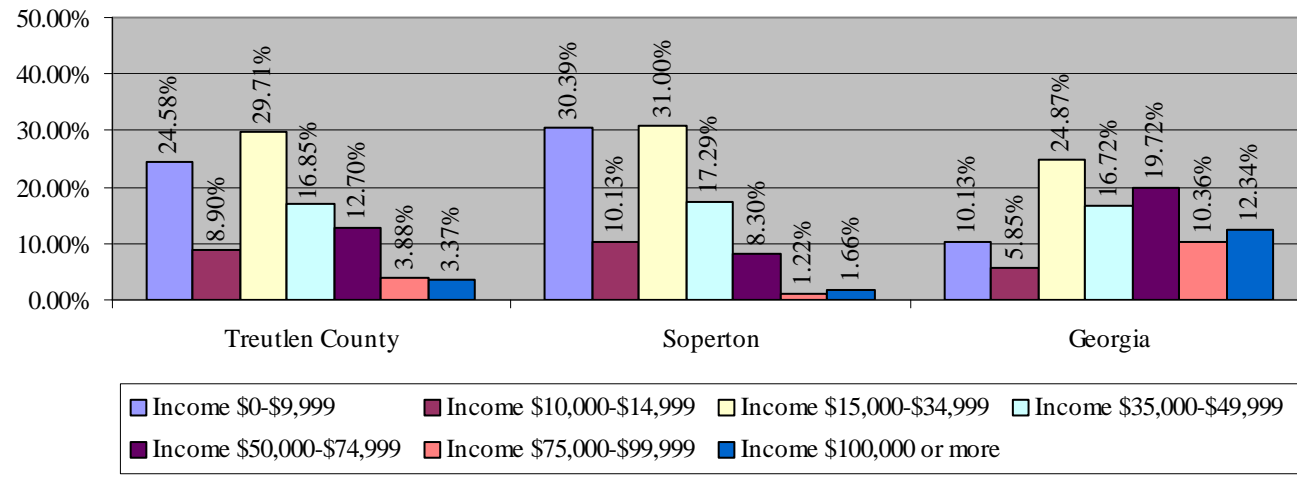
^{1/} Includes the \$15,000-\$19,999, \$20,000-\$29,999, and \$30,000-\$34,999 income categories.

^{2/} Includes the \$35,000-\$39,999 and \$40,000-\$49,999 income categories.

^{3/} Includes the \$50,000-\$59,999 and \$60,000-\$74,999 income categories.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983, www.georgiaplanning.com, 2006.

Chart P-12
2000 Household Income Distribution by Percentage
Treutlen County, Soperton, and Georgia



From 1980 to 2000, Treutlen County's per capita income increased significantly less than Georgia and the U.S. in 1996 dollars in terms of absolute numbers, as shown in Table P-24. In absolute numbers, Treutlen County's per capita income increased by \$9,518, or 170 percent, to \$15,115 from 1980 to 2000, as shown in Chart P-11. At the same time, Georgia's per capita income increased by \$19,677, or 233.5 percent, to \$28,103 between 1980 and 2000, and the U.S. per capita income increased by \$19,698, or 195.8 percent, to \$29,760. Treutlen County's 1980 per capita income of \$5,597 was 66.4 percent of the state's 1980 per capita income and 55.6 percent of the national per capita income, as shown in Chart P-10. By 2000, however, the gap between the county's per capita income and that of the state and the nation had widened somewhat, as the county's per capita income had become 53.8 percent of Georgia's per capita income and 50.8 percent of the U.S. figure. Georgia's per capita income, which was 83.7 percent of U.S. per capita income in 1980, was 94.4 percent of the nation's per capita income by 2000, as the state's strong economy helped to generate healthy income growth for the state as a whole. Based on actual dollars, the county's per capita income is failing to keep up with the growth of the state and nation as a whole, while the state continues to close the gap with the rest of the U.S.

As shown in Table P-29 and Chart P-12, by 2000 Treutlen County had the highest percent, by far, of its household income distribution in the less than \$10,000 income category, which was approximately one-fourth of the county's households and was twice as high as the percentage for Georgia. The distribution of income by households is much more diverse at the state level than is the case locally. The apparent differences between the State and Treutlen County can also be seen in the higher income categories, those ranging from \$60,000 and upwards. Treutlen County had a combined 11.99 percent of households in this category in 2000, while the state had 33.18 percent of its households located within one of these three combined categories. Simultaneously, more than one-half (56.21 percent) of the county's households had incomes of under \$30,000, compared to 34.63 percent at the state level. Next to those households with incomes of less than \$10,000, the second highest income group countywide was those households with incomes between \$20,000-\$29,999, comprising roughly one-sixth (15.13 percent) of the county's total households. The one-fourth of the county's households alone with

incomes of less than \$10,000 in 2000 was down by almost one-half from 48.74 percent in 1980, but it remains an indication that poverty was and still is a significant concern locally.

Soperton. By 2000 as shown in Table P-25, Soperton's per capita income was some \$800 (in current dollars) less than the county as a whole. The city's per capita income was some 94 percent of the county's. Soperton's per capita income in 1980 was approximately \$200 less than the county as a whole, before falling further to \$400 below the county in 1990. Soperton's per capita income experienced a slightly lower absolute and percentage increase than the county as a whole over the last two decades (\$7,729, or 166.65 percent, vs. \$8,291, or 171.62 percent). Possible causes of such relatively low-income figures in the city can be attributed to a lack of educational attainment, the increasing elderly population, and the high percentage of minority residents who tend to have lower incomes than the population as a whole. Table P-30 shows that in 2000, household incomes in the city were largely distributed in the lowest income categories, even more so than in the rural areas of the county. Some one-third of Soperton's households (30.39 percent) in 2000 had incomes of less than \$10,000. Some 40 percent of households in the city had incomes of less than \$15,000, and over 70 percent had incomes of less than \$35,000. On a slightly more positive note, just under one-fifth (17.29 percent) of the city's households had incomes between \$40,000-\$49,999, indicating a fair number of middle-income households is present despite the high percentages of lower income households. These figures indicate relatively high numbers of poverty and low-income households still exist within the city and the county to a significant extent.

Assessment

Although Treutlen County's per capita income has increased markedly over the last two decades, the results continue to show incomes, both per capita as well as household, that are significantly behind that of the state and nation. As can be predicted, a majority of the income distribution for Treutlen County and the City of Soperton falls in the \$0-\$29,999 range, with a substantial number falling below \$10,000. The higher income ranges experienced little growth from 1980-2000, whereas the same categories on the state level doubled in some instances over the same period. However, incomes remain relatively low in the county, indicating a sizable portion of households remain in poverty. This is to be expected given the relatively low

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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Economic development is one of the major factors, if not the most important factor, that defines a community's overall health and vitality. A community undertakes comprehensive planning to make itself a better place to live and work, and improve its overall quality of life. Most often this requires economic prosperity, the enhancement of the tax base, wages, and available jobs. These enhancements provide the dollars required for community infrastructure and service improvements, better housing, and a higher standard of living.

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

This plan element addresses the state of economic development of the Treutlen County community, including its lone incorporated city of Soperton. The economic base, labor force, local economic resources, and ongoing economic trends of the community are examined through a community assessment and the identification by the local community of issues and opportunities that require further attention. The inclusion of economic data, as required for ten years prior to the plan and for twenty years beyond plan preparation, has been satisfied to the best of the community's ability. Almost all economic data is presented at the county level, because such data for rural areas is generally only available at that level, and economic planning generally only makes sense at that level. Only limited data would be available for Soperton. The county as a whole is truly an inseparable economic entity, most significant economic activity centers on Soperton, and local economic resources and activities generally take place on a joint

countywide basis. It has been accepted for a long time in Treutlen County that the economic fate of both local governments is intertwined, and that the local economy could not be analyzed or developed except on a countywide basis.

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

The organization of this element of the plan is structured to comply with guidelines established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The element continues with an analysis and assessment of the economic base, labor force, local economic development resources, and recent and ongoing economic trends of the countywide community. It concludes with a listing of major findings that summarize the key points of analysis, and a summary of needs assessment addressing potential issues and opportunities that the community may wish to address in the forthcoming community agenda portion of the comprehensive plan.

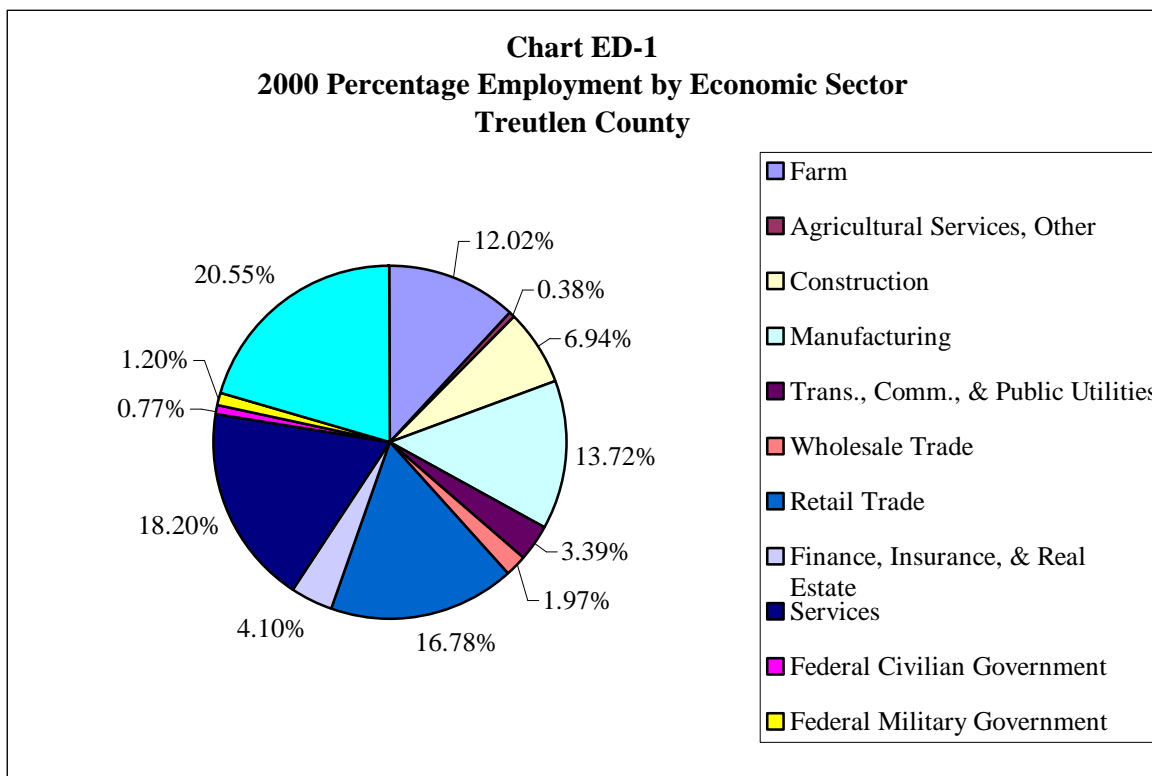
Economic Base

Overall Description/Trends. Treutlen County is a rural county in southeast Georgia with a past and present intricately tied to transportation and agriculture. Nearly 80 percent of its land area is in timberlands. With the changes in agricultural technology over the last fifty years, almost one-eighth of the county's employment is still in agriculture or related activities. The county's early development can be traced to the Oconee River's access to its pine forests, and later development to railroads and Interstate 16. Treutlen County's future economic development may similarly be tied to these features. Its biggest assets include its agricultural and forestry land base and other natural resources, and its transportation access. The county has shown small, almost stagnant growth, at a rate much slower than that of the state or the U.S as a whole.

Data from the private econometrics firm of Woods and Poole are illustrated in Charts ED-1 through ED-14 to illustrate the Treutlen County economic base and compare it to the Georgia economy. While one may take issue with specific numbers, especially in future projections, (this will be discussed again shortly) these data are important to denote recent trends and local economic influences and differences with the state. As might be expected, there are major differences between the local and state economic bases as well as widely divergent growth patterns.

In isolation, the Treutlen County economy has exhibited generally modest growth in the last twenty years. Employment has grown from 1,726 workers in 1980 to 1,903 in 1990 to 1,830 in 2000. Total earnings have increased (in constant 1996 dollars) from \$27.2 million in 1980 to \$29.8 million in 1990 to \$34.2 million in 2000. While this growth has remained positive (which may not be said of all rural areas), it pales in comparison to state or national growth. From 1980 to 2000, Treutlen County's total employment grew approximately 6 percent, while total earnings increased by 25.6 percent. This county employment growth was far less than that of the U.S. (45.5 percent) and about one-twelfth of Georgia's (76.9 percent). County total earnings increase for the period was only one-third that of the U.S. (75.9 percent) and about one-fifth that of Georgia's (141.2 percent). This is certainly evidence that while the county economy was not completely stagnant, it fell much behind that of the state and nation in terms of both employment and earnings.

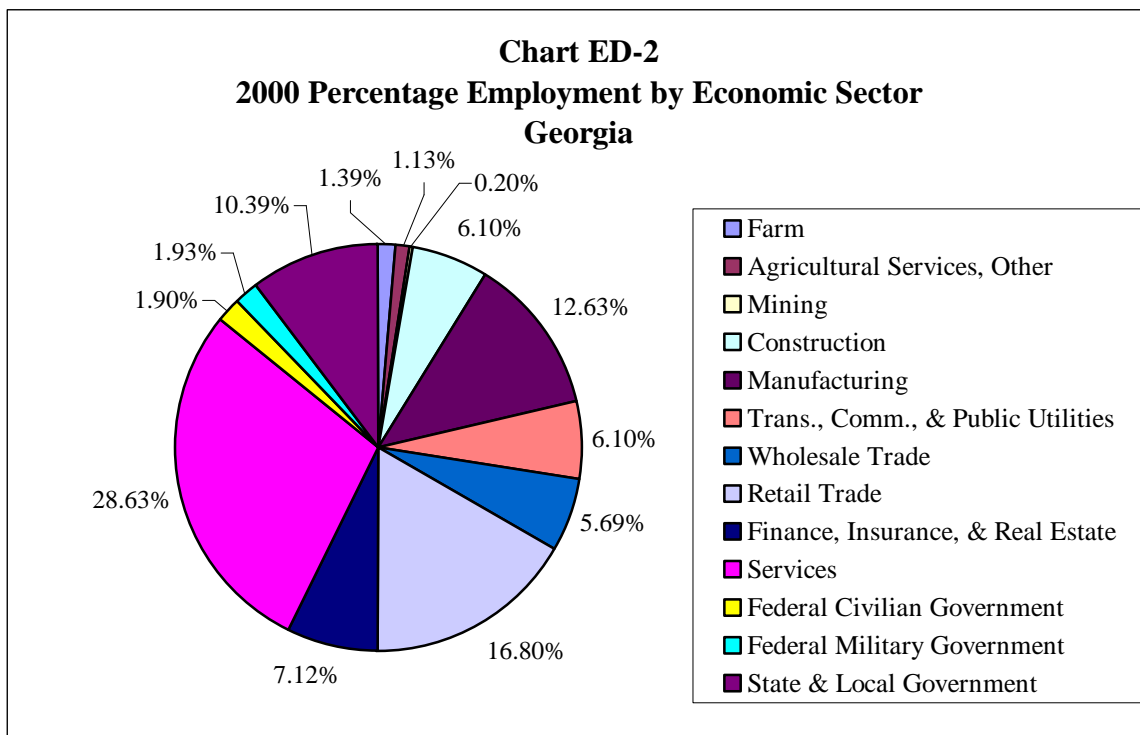
Employment By Sector. The detail of employment by sector shown for Treutlen County in Chart ED-1 and its comparison with Georgia in Chart ED-2 reveal major differences in the three economies. The top five sectors of employment in Treutlen County in 2000 were, in descending order: State and Local Government, Services, Retail Trade, Manufacturing, and Farming. Georgia's top five 2000 employment sectors were the same as those for the U.S. These were Services, Retail Trade, Manufacturing, State and Local Government, and Finance/ Insurance/Real Estate. Prior to 2000, Manufacturing was the top employment sector in Treutlen County in 1980 and 1990, while Farming was second in 1980 and fifth in 1990. State and Local Government was third in 1980 and second in 1990. In 1990, Georgia began the switch from an economy that was led in employment by the manufacturing sector to an economy where the services sector employed the greatest number of people. Simultaneously, Treutlen County was beginning to transition away from an economy with agriculture as the primary employer. In the state as a whole, this change had occurred some decades ago.



Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2003.

In terms of percentages, farming jobs were more than eight and one-half times as prevalent in Treutlen County in 2000 as Georgia, and more than six times as prevalent as the U.S. Other sectors with a larger presence in Treutlen County in 2000 than in Georgia were construction (just slightly above Georgia’s percentage), manufacturing (more than one full percentage point greater than that of Georgia), and state and local government (almost double that of Georgia). On the other hand, the local services, finance/insurance/real estate, and transportation/communications/public utilities sectors in Treutlen County in 2000 were about one-half that of Georgia, and the local wholesale trade sector was about two-thirds less than the state.

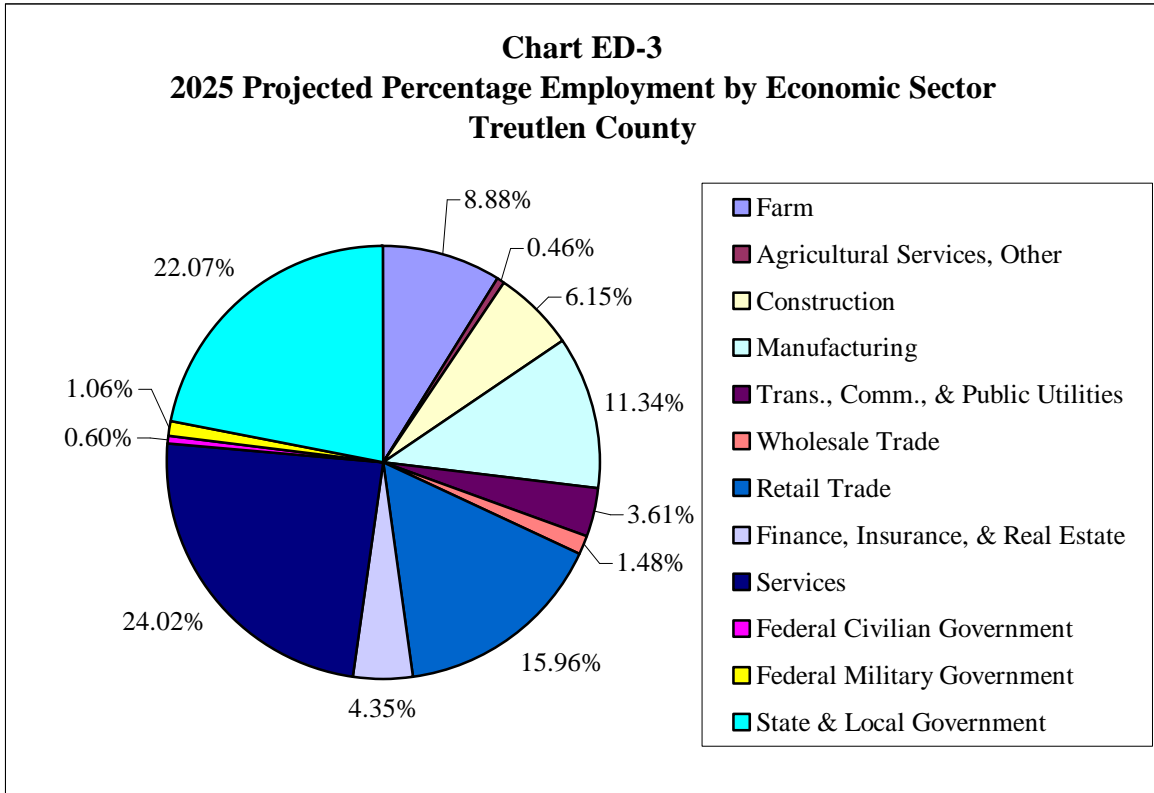
The change that has taken place in the Treutlen County economy over the last 20 years has been quite significant. As of 2000, some 80 percent of the local economy’s total employment can be found in just five sectors: State and Local Government, Services, Retail Trade, Manufacturing, and Farming. Between 1980 and 2000, employment in the Services sector increased by more than double (8.23% to 18.2%), and Retail Trade employment increased



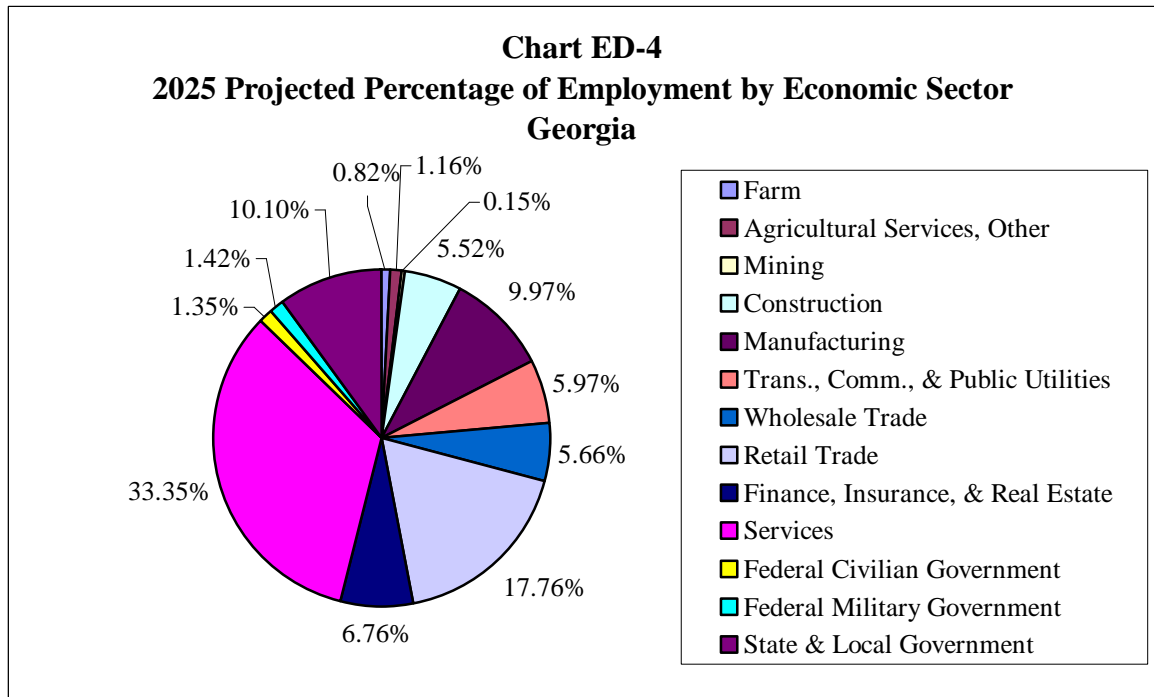
Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2003.

more than 40 percent (11.94% to 16.78%). On the other hand, substantial declines were found in the Farm (19.29% to 12.02%) and Manufacturing (26.88% vs. 13.72%) sectors, indicating a decreasing reliance on two historically important components of the local economy.

At the same time, both the state and national economies have experienced fundamental shifts as well. The largest increase in Georgia’s employment between 1980 and 2000 was in the Services sector (18.3% vs. 28.63%), while the steepest decline was found in the Manufacturing sector (19.25% vs. 12.63%). This mirrors the change in the national economy over the same time period, as the economy at both the state and federal level shifts away from a manufacturing-based economy to one that is more service-based. Between 1980 and 2000 the Services sector increased in terms of total employment in the U.S. from 21.89 percent to 31.75 percent. Simultaneously, the Manufacturing sector’s share of total U.S. employment dropped from 18.19 percent to 11.61 percent, as that sector has experienced hard times over the last 20 years due to technological changes and an increasingly competitive global economy.



Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2003.



Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2003.

If future projections supplied by Woods & Poole are any indication, as illustrated in Charts ED-3 and ED-4, the ongoing trends taking place at the local, state, and national level should continue. Total employment in Treutlen County should increase by about one-fifth between 2000 and 2025, which again should be significantly less than that seen at the state (41.7 percent) or U.S. (about 35 percent) levels. By 2025, the three largest sectors of employment in Treutlen County are projected to be in the Services (24.02 percent), State & Local Government (22.07 percent), and Retail Trade (15.96 percent) sectors. These three sectors combined are expected to comprise some 60 percent of Treutlen County's total employment. From 2000 to 2025, the Services sector is forecast to experience the largest increase in terms of its share of total employment in Treutlen County (18.2% vs. 24.02%), mirroring the current trend at the state and national levels of a more service-based economy. The Farm sector (12.02% vs. 8.88%) is projected to continue its steep decline from previous years as the economy continues to become less dependent on agriculture. The Manufacturing sector (13.72% vs. 11.34%) is expected to continue a slow but steady decline in terms of its share of total employment. However, projections call for the actual number of those employed in manufacturing to stabilize in Treutlen County beginning in 2010 and continuing through 2025, indicating that perhaps the deteriorating health of this sector over the last couple of decades may begin to level off as other sectors grow, thus leading to a lesser percentage of total employment belonging to manufacturing jobs.

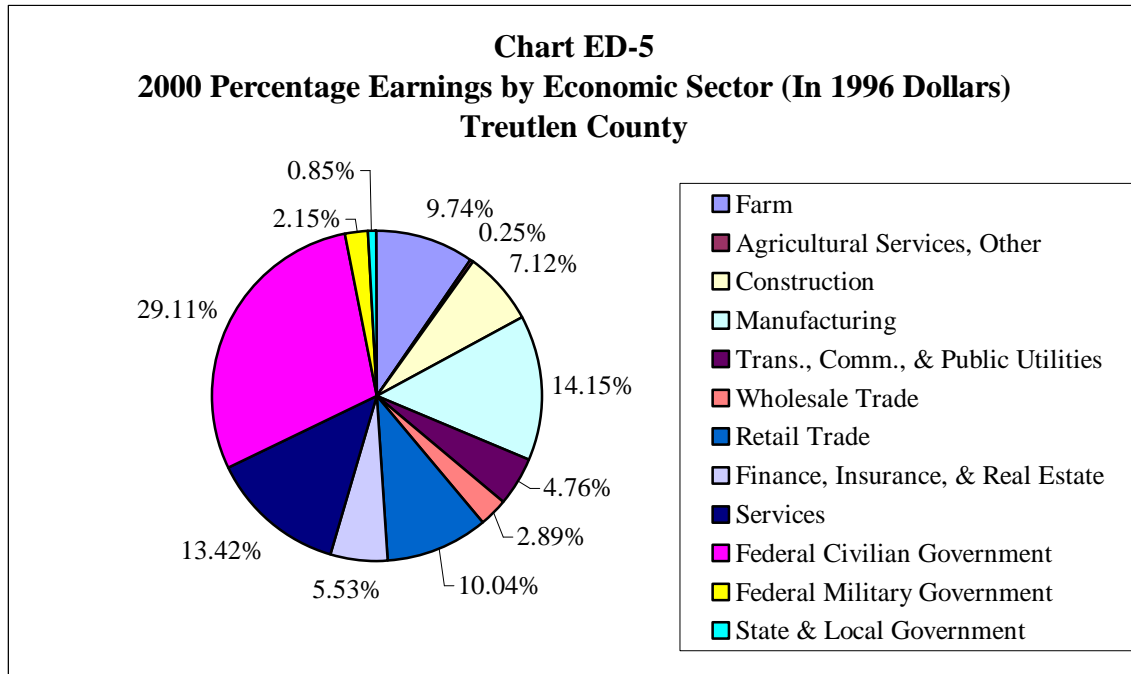
The state of Georgia's economy over the next 25 years is projected to head in much the same direction as it has been. By 2025, the largest sectors of employment in Georgia are projected to be in the Services (33.35 percent), Retail Trade (17.76 percent), and State & Local Government (10.10 percent) sectors; comprising more than 60 percent of Georgia's total employment. The Services sector is projected to continue to see the biggest increase statewide between 2000 and 2025 (28.63% vs. 33.35%), with the Retail Trade sector being the only other one forecasted to see significant growth. Manufacturing is projected to decline the greatest among all sectors in terms of its share of total employment, although as in Treutlen County, Woods & Poole projects that things should begin to turn around in terms of actual numbers employed beginning in 2000. The same is true at the federal level, with the dip in the number employed in manufacturing leveling off in 2000 and slowly increasing thereafter through 2025. As dependent as Georgia is becoming on services-oriented businesses, the U.S. economy is becoming even more so, with just under 40 percent of total employment nationwide projected to be in the Services sector by 2025.

Earnings By Sector. In terms of 2000 earnings, the three highest employment sectors in Treutlen County were State and Local Government, Manufacturing, and Services. The State and

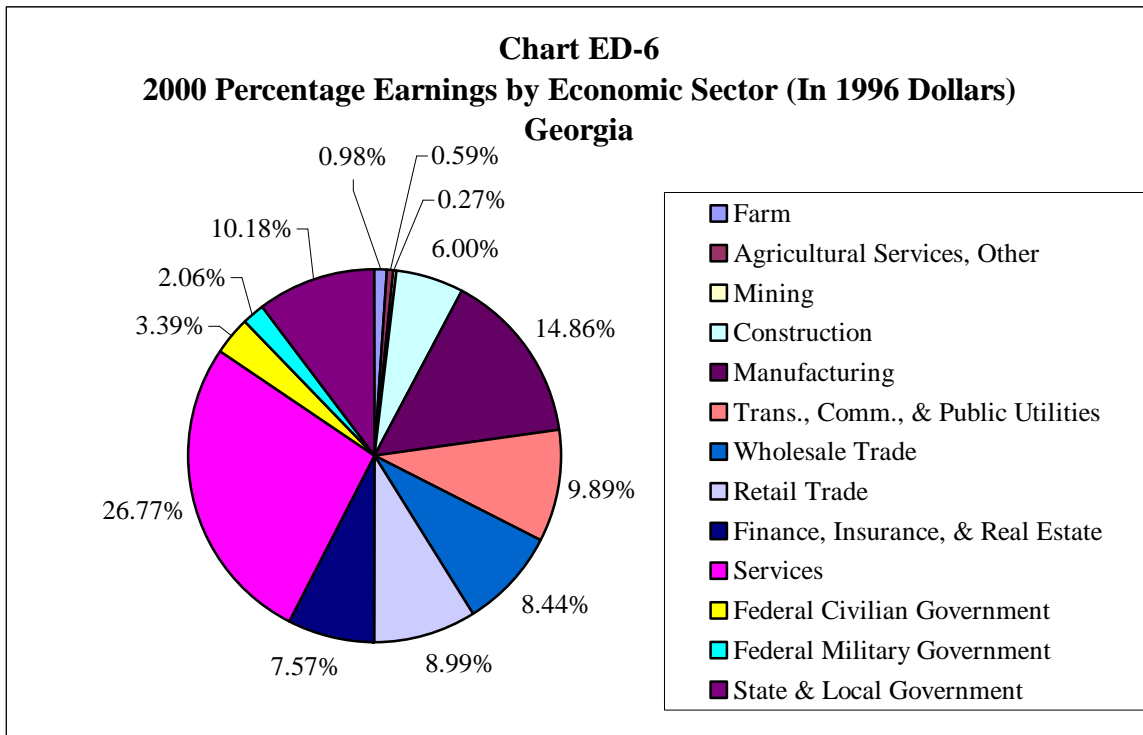
Local Government sector is the highest sector by far in terms of total earnings, more than twice as high as that for the manufacturing sector, despite being second in total employment. While second in total employment, the Services sector is only third in total earnings, attributable to the lower wage jobs that are commonly found in this sector. The same can be said for retail trade, which is third in total employment but fourth in total earnings. Although on the decline, agriculture remains important to the local economy, being fifth in terms of total earnings as well as total employment. It is significant to note the top three sectors provided about 60 percent of Treutlen County 2000 earnings. State and Local Government alone provided nearly one-third of total earnings (29.12 percent). Charts ED-5 and ED-6 illustrate the state of total earnings in Treutlen County as of 2000. Between 1980 and 2000, earnings in the Manufacturing sector declined by almost one-half as a percent of total earnings in Treutlen County (25.63% vs. 14.15%), accompanying the decline in total employment. This was also the case with Farming (18.18% vs. 9.74%). On the other hand, State & Local Government earnings increased by roughly one-third as a percentage of total earnings (20.43% vs. 29.12%). Other significant gains in terms of percentages were found in Construction (3.88% to 7.12%) and Services (7.28% to 13.42%).

Georgia's 2000 top three sectors in terms of earnings were Services, Manufacturing, and State & Local Government. However, Georgia's top three sectors provided nearly 50 percent of total earnings, and Services alone accounted for over one-fourth (26.77 percent) of total earnings, as shown in Chart ED-6. Between 1980 and 2000, earnings in the Manufacturing sector declined by nearly one-third at the state level in terms of its share of total earnings. The Services sector's share increased by nearly 70 percent over that same time.

In 2000, the top three sectors in terms of earnings at the national level were Services, Manufacturing, and State & Local Government. These three sectors combined to make up some 55 percent of total earnings nationwide. Interestingly, while Retail Trade was one of the top employers in the U.S., it only made up just fewer than 9 percent of total earnings. This is a reflection of the low-paying jobs that are often found in this particular sector. The changes in total earnings at the national level mirror closely those found in Georgia, with Manufacturing steeply declining in terms of its share of the total and Services sharply rising.



Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2003.

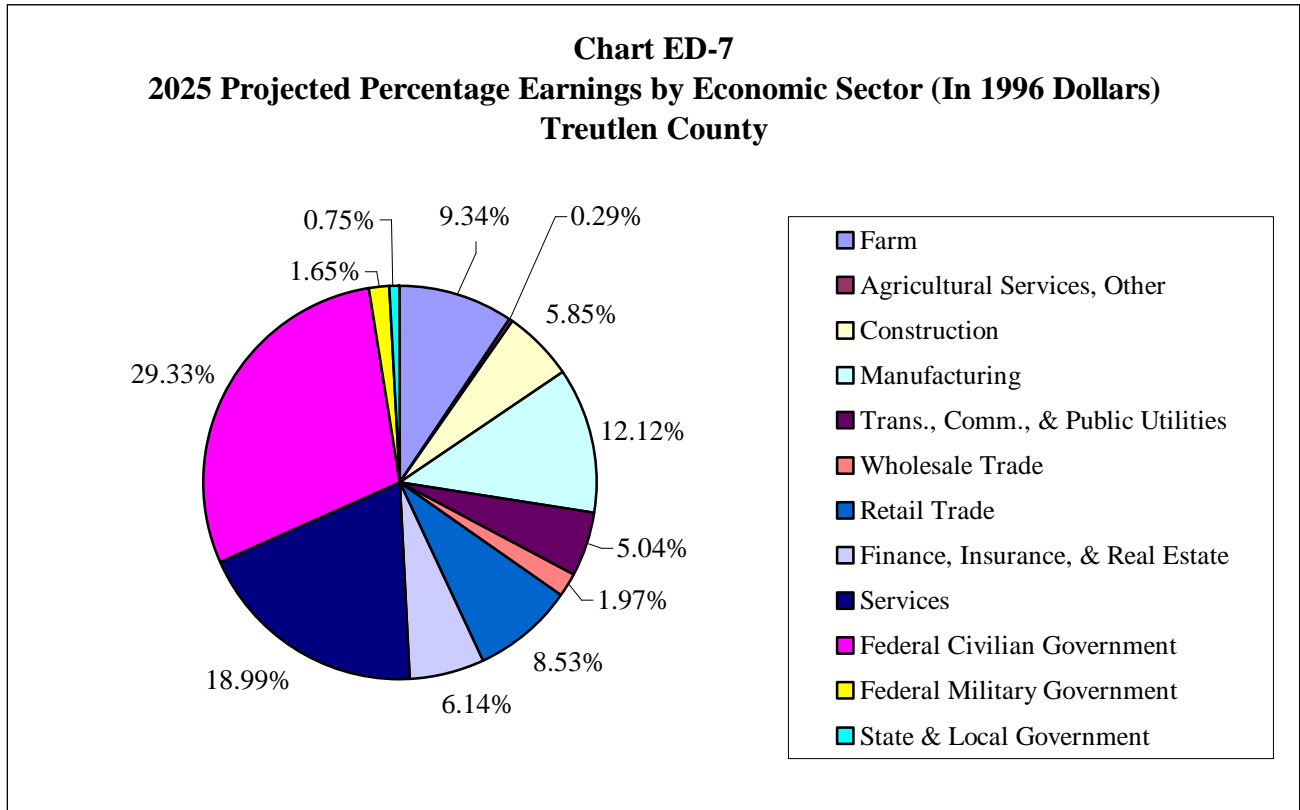


Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2003.

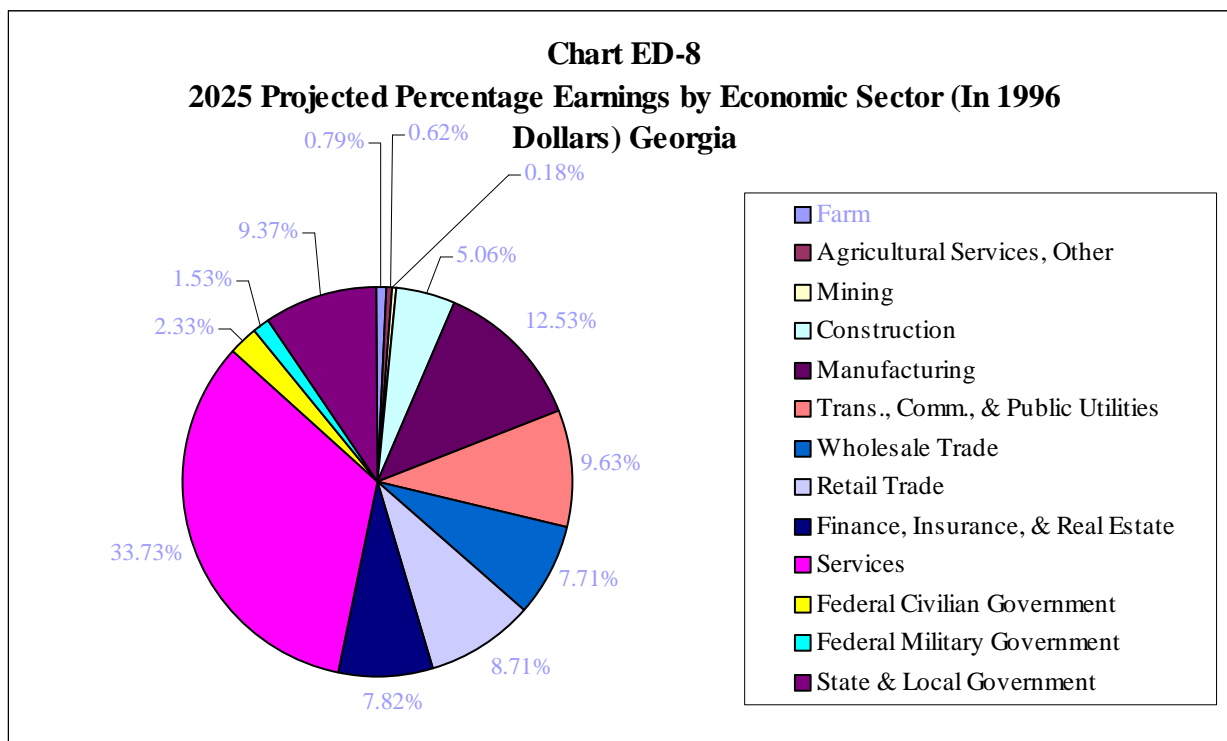
Chart ED-7 also highlights future projections for Treutlen County, as supplied by Woods & Poole. By 2025, approximately 6 in 10 (60.54 percent) of Treutlen County's total earnings are projected to be found in just three sectors: State & Local Government, Services, and Manufacturing. This mirrors the projections for total employment, with Manufacturing replacing the lower paying Retail Trade sector and Services and State and Local Government swapping positions. While still first in total earnings (29.33 percent), the State and Local Government sector's share of total county earnings is expected to level off somewhat. While government jobs should still be a stable source of employment, they are not likely to produce great numbers of new jobs unless expansions or new openings occur sometime in the future. While the county's economy is expected to become more service-oriented, it is interesting to note that earnings in that sector are projected to only account for about one-fifth of the county's total earnings by 2025 as compared to about one-fourth of total county employment. This is reflective of the lower wages that are common in many services industries. Although still quite important to the local economy, earnings in Farm and Manufacturing jobs are expected to continue to slowly decline as employment numbers level off.

Chart ED-8 also shows projections for Georgia's total earnings through 2025. Almost one-half (46.26 percent) of Georgia's total earnings by 2025 are projected to be in the Services and Manufacturing sectors, with service-oriented industries on the rise statewide and a large number of people still employed in manufacturing despite steady declines. The Services sector alone is expected to make up one-third (33.73 percent) of Georgia's total earnings, and it is the only sector expected to have any appreciable increase in terms of the percentage of the state's total earnings between 2000 and 2025. This seems to indicate that services will continue to increase its stronghold on the state's economy for the next couple of decades.

National projections closely resemble those indicated for Georgia. As in Georgia, almost one-half (49.61 percent) of the U.S. total earnings by 2025 are forecast to be in the Services and Manufacturing sectors. These figures closely resemble the projected share of total employment for both sectors respectively. Other than services, the Financial/Insurance/Real Estate sector is the only other sector projected to show any increase in terms of its share of total earnings over the next twenty years.



Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2003.



Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., 2003.

The future of the Treutlen County economy as illustrated by Charts ED-1, ED-3, ED-5, and ED-7 is not very rosy. These Woods and Poole projections show total employment continuing to grow, albeit slowly, through 2025, adding over 300 jobs. Earnings would continue to grow in the county, increasing by nearly 50 percent to over \$50 million in 2025. The existing chasm between the local and state economy would get larger. By 2025, Georgia’s economy is expected to offer nearly 40 percent more jobs than it did in 2000 with almost 75 percent more earnings. Georgia’s economy is expected to top that of the nation, but the national economy is still projected to provide about 35 percent more jobs in 2025 than in 2000, with two-thirds more earnings. The same four sectors of the Treutlen County economy with larger presence than the state in 2000 (farming, manufacturing, state and local government, and construction) are projected by this econometrics firm to remain even more so in 2025. This projection holds true despite a predicted steady decline over the entire period in farming jobs. Significantly, other sectors already much weaker in the county in 2000 than in the state are expected to fall farther behind with many being 50 percent or more smaller than the state in 2025.

Detailed Economic Sector Inventory and Analysis

Agriculture and Agribusiness. Agriculture and agribusiness, including forestry, has historically been the most important economic sector in Treutlen County, but it is steadily on the decline locally as is the case throughout Georgia and the U.S. As described earlier, Treutlen County's yellow pine forests played an important role in the development of the county, and nearly 80 percent of its current land area is in timberlands, predominantly slash and loblolly pine plantations.

The face of agriculture continues to change in Treutlen County as elsewhere as it becomes more mechanized and concentrated in larger operations on fewer acres. A rather startling picture is the loss of farms, more than double, since 1964. At the same time, however, lands dedicated to cropland and pasture have also decreased somewhat over roughly the last 40 years. According to the 2002 U.S. Census of Agriculture, from 1964 to 2002 Treutlen County lost more than one-half of its farms. Between 1992 and 2002 there was a slight increase, according to the 2002 Census of Agriculture, indicating that perhaps the decline in the number of farms was beginning to level off at least to some extent. By 2002 there were just 182 farms in Treutlen County valued at \$1,371 per acre. Many small, family-owned farms have had to give way to larger, more corporate-owned operations due to higher production costs resulting from the changes in technology and increased competition from other countries.

Along with these trends, agriculture is the weakest it has been in the county since 1964 in terms of gross sales. Much of the acreage of cropland/pasture loss has been planted in pine trees. The Woods and Poole projections showed that farming in 2000 provided about 12 in 100 local jobs whereas it provided only about 1 in 100 for the state as a whole. The \$10.6 million in agricultural sales in 2002 was down markedly from \$13.4 million in 1992 and was down by more than one-half from \$23.7 million in 1982, reflecting that farm earnings are experiencing a decline as jobs are fewer than in previous years. Much of these earnings can be attributed to large amounts of land being in timber production. The forests and natural resources of the county do offer opportunities for the development of value-added enterprises and recreation-based hunting and fishing enterprises. Agriculture will never provide the employment opportunities necessary to support large population numbers, but will remain a very important economic impact in the county, especially if nurtured and properly supported.

Manufacturing. The manufacturing sector remains an important part of the economy of Treutlen County, although its decline over the last two decades has been more severe than that seen at the state or national levels. Manufacturing provided nearly one-third (29.01 percent) of county jobs and over one-fourth of earnings (27.60 percent) in 1990, although by 2000 the manufacturing sector provided less than one-seventh (13.72 percent) of county jobs and just over one-seventh (14.15 percent) of county earnings. This larger than normal reliance on one sector has suffered from a global economy that has made this particular sector to become far more competitive now than 10 or 20 years ago, with increasing competitiveness likely to continue.

Treutlen County had 4 mainly small industries as of 2001, all located either in Soperton or in the county's industrial park near I-16, which provide only about 190 jobs total. The vast majority of these jobs are held by a single employer, General Fibers and Fabrics, which specializes in synthetic carpet backing and employs 172 persons in the county's industrial park. The garment industry had been a very important component of the local economy, although its influence has waned considerably in recent years as it has been decimated by foreign competition. The garment industry as a whole in the U.S. is very unhealthy and is suffering greatly due to foreign competition with cheap labor costs. This manufacturing sector has virtually vacated the county at this time, with the prospects for luring any major employers in this sector back to the county almost non-existent. The low wages of this sector are somewhat of a handicap.

The transportation access, abundant water supply, and the vast forests and agricultural potential are among many assets for growth of manufacturing in the county. Value-added industries utilizing forest or agricultural products and firms needing international shipping for export are potential manufacturing concerns that could flourish in Treutlen County.

Government. This sector was defined to include local, state, and federal offices and institutions such as the local public school system and the state probation detention facility. However, the Woods and Poole data shown in Tables ED-1, ED-2, ED-5 and ED-6, do show even with limitations, that state and local government alone was the leading local economic employment sector and the leading earnings sector. State and local government alone was shown in 2000 to provide nearly 1 in 5 local jobs, and about 1 in 3 local dollars of earnings.

The Woods and Poole data may not reflect the full impact of individual establishments in this sector on the local economy. According to a Georgia Department of Labor Area Labor Profile for Treutlen County that was conducted in 2001, 23 separate offices with over 400

employees were operational in Treutlen County. This is almost one-fifth of local employment. The Treutlen Probation Detention Center is currently the fifth largest employer in Treutlen County. Much of the growth in local employment since 1990 as indicated by the Woods and Poole data has taken place in this sector, since this sector was second only to the services sector in employment growth during the 1990s in terms of actual numbers of employees. This sector provides much stability to the local economy. Growth projections for this sector look to be small but steady as reflected in the Woods and Poole data, as there is positive potential for growth through population expansion, expansion of service, and the securing of new governmental functions.

Services. The services sector in Treutlen County is an increasingly important presence in the local economy, much as it is at the state and national levels. However, growth at the local level has not been nearly as robust as that at the state and national levels over time. Actual employment in this sector more than doubled in Treutlen County between 1980 and 2000. As of 2000, it was second in employment and third in earnings countywide, but still well below state figures. Services are an essential element of modern daily living, whether they are industrial, medical, physical, or social. Although services are expanding in the county, the lack of extent of services locally, compared to the state or nation, could be the result of several factors. These may include the self-reliance of a rural population, the same lack of an outlying population that has plagued retail trade, the lack of population growth since 1980 when services have exploded nationally, and the lack of available training. The upward movement of this sector locally does provide opportunity and room for further growth and expansion. Professional services are limited. An aging population offers potential markets for medical and support services. There are already identified needs for more physicians. However, there is no hospital or medical facility in the county, and some physicians actually come from other counties to see patients on certain days of the week. This is an option that needs to continue to be explored. The increase in technology and computer use provides a need for new types of services. The availability of the Swainsboro Technical College provides a source for training in specific service areas that may be identified by the community.

Other Sectors. The remaining sectors of the local economy have a significantly lower percentage presence than in the state. This includes the steadily growing and second largest sector of the Georgia and U.S. economy, the retail trade sector. Woods and Poole predicts this sector to grow in employment in the county, but not as rapidly as has been the case in Georgia and the U.S. Construction and wholesale trade are rather limited areas of the current local economy, although the local construction sector closely resembles the current state figures in

terms of percentage of total employment. The lack of population and jobs growth severely curtails an abundance of new opportunities for construction work, and the lack of close proximity to a major market limits the ability of wholesale establishments to develop.

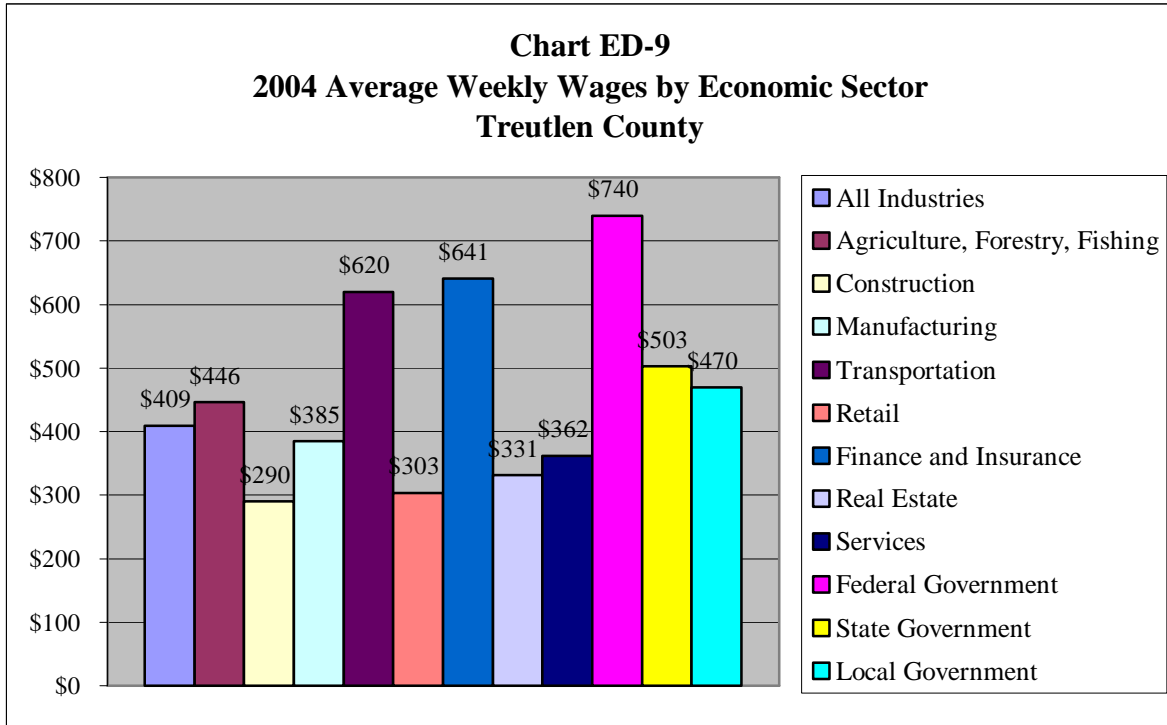
Labor Force

Average Weekly Wages

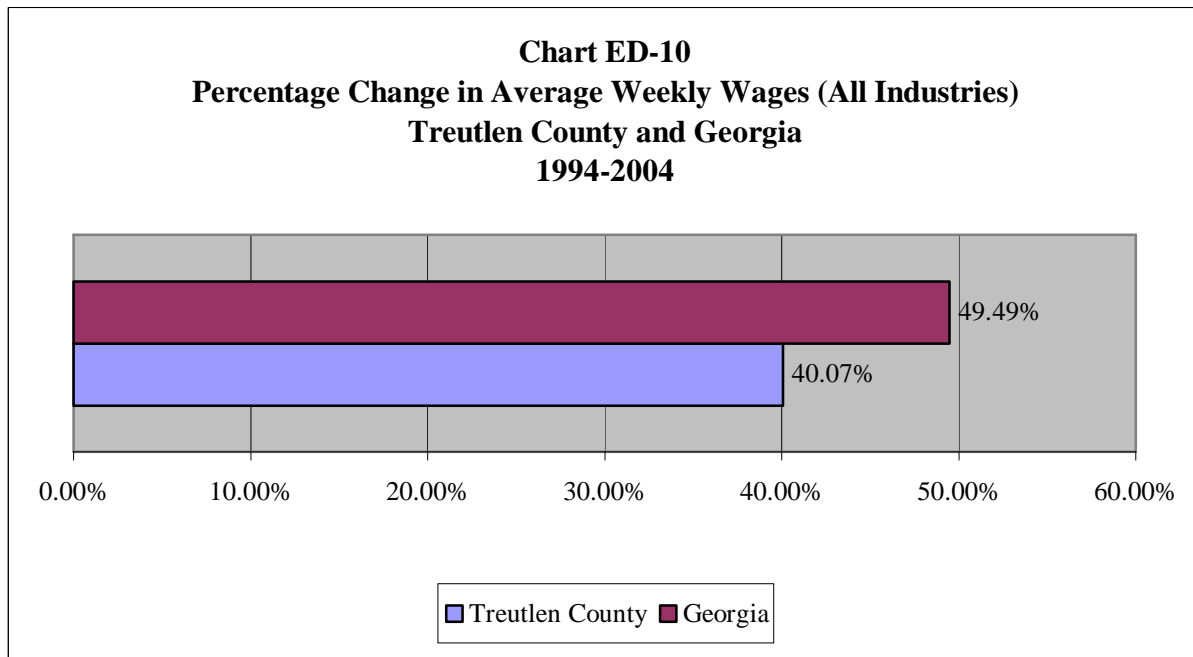
Average weekly wages for all economic sectors in Treutlen County with comparisons to Georgia are illustrated in Charts ED-9 and ED-10. This data is shown for the years 1994 through 2004. These figures confirm an economy not keeping pace with that of the state. Averages for all sectors show overall wages in Treutlen County that were on average \$195 per week behind the state in 1994, falling to \$319 per week behind by 2004. Growth in overall average weekly wages was slightly higher in Georgia (45.86 percent) than in Treutlen County (40.07 percent) between 1994 and 2004. Average overall wages in 2004 in Treutlen County were slightly more than 56 percent of Georgia's, with only the Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing sector in Treutlen County being higher than the state's total for that respective sector. In 2004, the highest wages in Treutlen County were in the Federal Government (\$740), Finance and Insurance (\$641), and Transportation (\$620) sectors. The next closest sector was State Government (\$503). Georgia's highest average weekly wages in 2004 were in the following sectors: Utilities (\$1,315), Communications (\$1,181), Financial and Insurance (\$1,174), and Wholesale (\$1,085).

Agriculture, forestry, and fishing wages are the only ones in Treutlen County that are on the same level with the state, with wages in this sector being over 103 percent of the state's average. This is likely the influence of more demand for forestry jobs in the county than most other sectors. Local government wages in the county are about 76 percent that of the state. This is reflective of lower overall wages and less skilled jobs of a rural government. State and federal government wages locally are about 70-80 percent that of the state. It is interesting to note that these areas with higher local wages are all sectors with greater local presence than in the state, thus they are function in part, of supply and demand.

The remaining sectors of the local economy have significantly lower (most 30 or more percent less) wages than the state. These same sectors had much lower employment and earnings presence locally than in the state as a whole. Thus, there are few jobs locally and supply of workers exceeds demand providing no pressure for higher wages. General economic



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



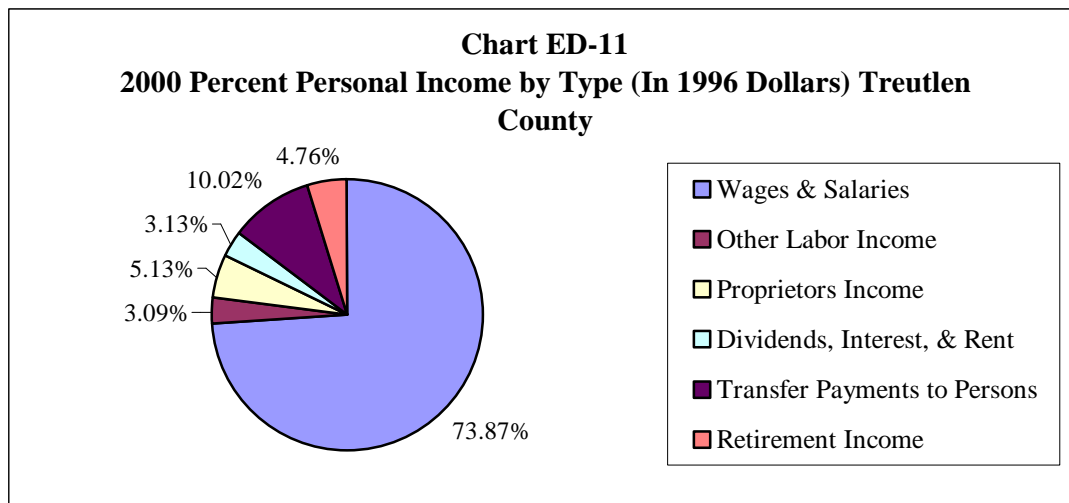
Sources: Georgia Department of Labor, Covered Employment and Wages Series, 2006; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006.

development and the creation of more job opportunities will lessen this situation and tend to put higher pressure on wages through efforts to attract workers.

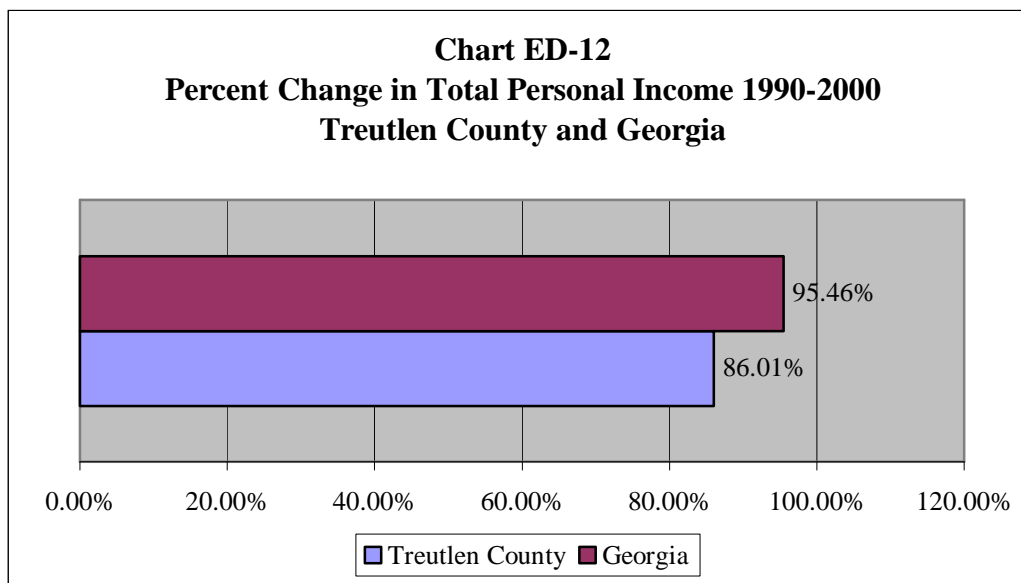
Sources of Personal Income

Chart ED-11 shows the current personal income by type for Treutlen County as of 2000, as supplied by the U.S. Census Bureau. Chart ED-12 provides the percentage change of total personal income from 1990 through 2000 for Treutlen County and Georgia. Current data for total personal income shows a significant increase for the county over the last decade. The two sources of personal income with major differences between the county and state are wage and salary income and transfer payments. There is somewhat less "Other Labor" and "Proprietor's" income in the county than in the state.

Wage and salary county income are currently less than five percentage points that of the state in terms of percentages, with a slight increase from 71.66 percent of the county's total personal income in 1990 to 73.87 percent in 2000. Without a growth in the demand for jobs, there is no pressure being placed on wages and salaries to significantly increase. Between 1990



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2004.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2004.

and 2000, meanwhile, Georgia's total personal income nearly doubled (95.46%) as Treutlen County's increased by 86 percent. Transfer payments to households were the source of more than 1 out of every 10 dollars of county personal income in 2000, compared to only about 1 out of every 25 dollars of personal income in the state in 2000. This indicates greater county reliance on social security, unemployment insurance, food stamps, and other sources of governmental assistance as might be expected in a low wage, generally poor economy. While this is a stable source of income, it is not the type conducive to produce substantive economic growth and job creation.

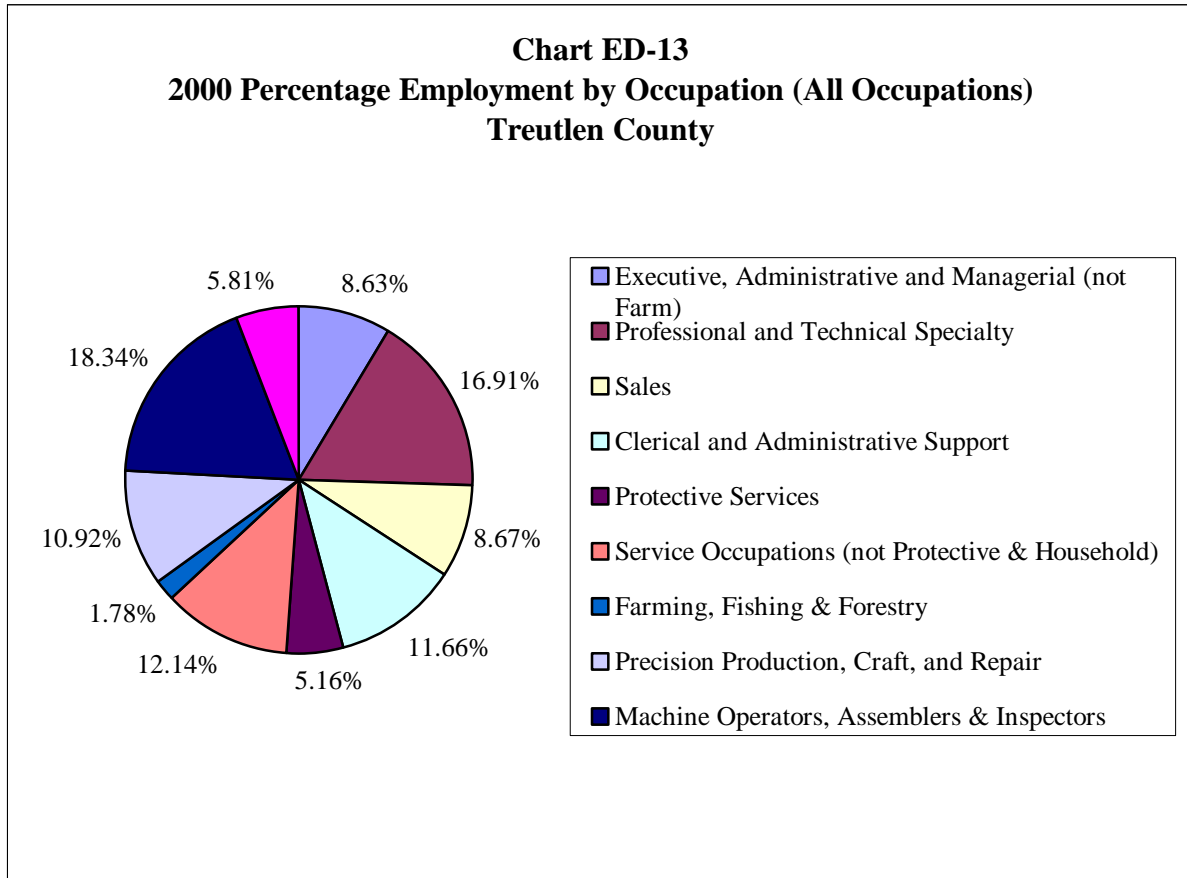
Employment by Occupation

Current employment of the local labor force by occupation (or types of job held) is shown in Chart ED-13, with information at the state level provided in Chart ED-14, and the percentage change over the last decade for Treutlen County, Soperton, and Georgia shown in Chart ED-15. The minimal growth in the availability of local jobs is seen here once again. From 1990 to 2000, total employment by occupation actually declined slightly in Treutlen County (-6.56 percent, a loss of 162 jobs), while growing statewide at a rate of 24.18 percent. The City of Soperton experienced a similar decline as well, with a loss of 39 jobs over the last decade (-3.99 percent).

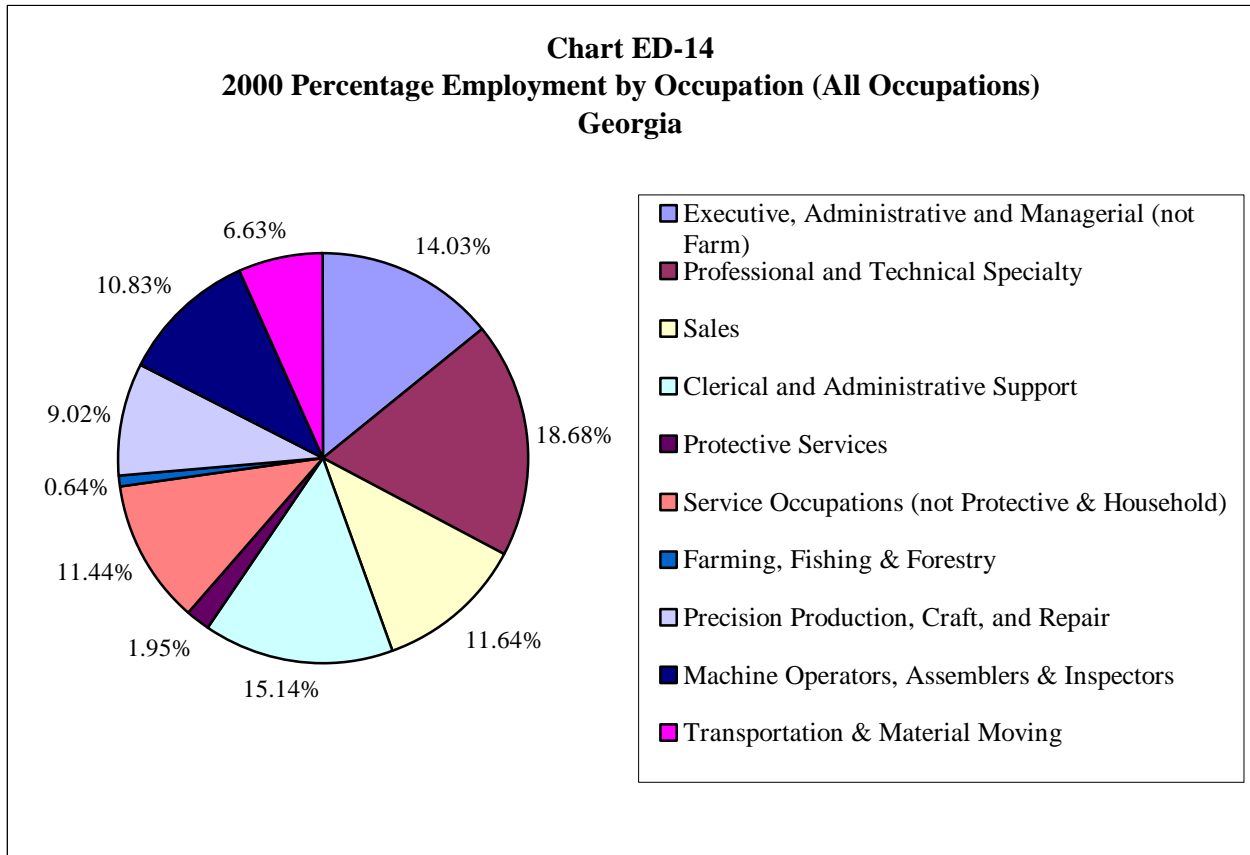
As of 2000, the top four occupations of Treutlen Countians are: Machine Operators, Assemblers, and Inspectors; Professional and Technical; Service (not Protective & Household); and Clerical and Administrative. These differ significantly from Georgia where the top four 2000 occupations are: Professional and Technical; Clerical and Administrative; Executive and Managerial; and Sales. The top U.S. occupations of 2000 were similar to Georgia except that Service occupations replaced Sales as fourth. This finding confirms that workers in Treutlen County are more "blue collar" oriented than other more "white collar" workers in Georgia and the U.S., although the presence of "white collar" jobs is slowly on the rise locally. There again is a reflection of the influence of manufacturing and the agribusiness industry in the local economy, and the local economy's less developed state. It also is an indicator of less educated, though not necessarily less skilled, local workers. However, local work force skills are not the technological skills of an information age either.

This assessment of a growth in local "white-collar" workers is also seen in analysis of 1990 to 2000 change. While "farming, forestry, and fishing," "precision production, craft, and repair," and "transportation and material moving" experienced substantial declines locally in real numbers, the top state and national labor force occupation (professional and technical specialty) increased more as a percentage locally, almost double that of the state and nation. Treutlen Countians also took just slightly fewer sales jobs in 2000 as opposed to 1990, while these jobs experienced a noticeable decline at the state and national levels. However, their percentage of the local labor force was still only about two-thirds that of the state and nation. On the other hand "machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors," a standard "blue collar" occupation, increased on a percentage basis locally, and remained more than double that of Georgia and U.S. percentages.

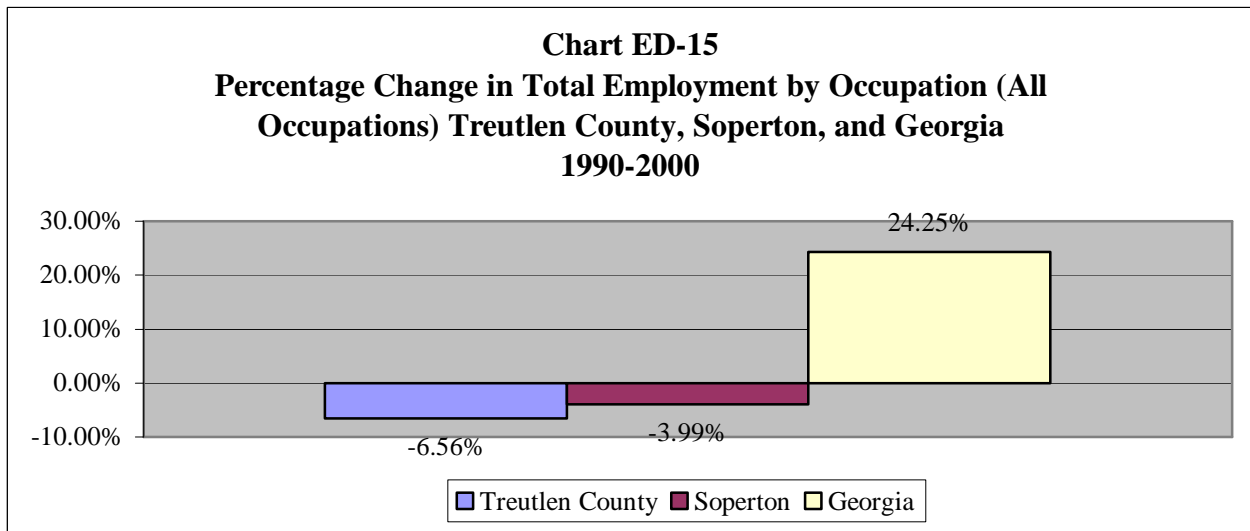
While the technical, "blue collar" skills of the local work force serve the current manufacturing economic base of the county well, it points to a need for more education and retraining of the labor force to attract information age jobs. Technology is pervasively invading even traditional manufacturing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



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, www.census.gov; 2006.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov; 2006.



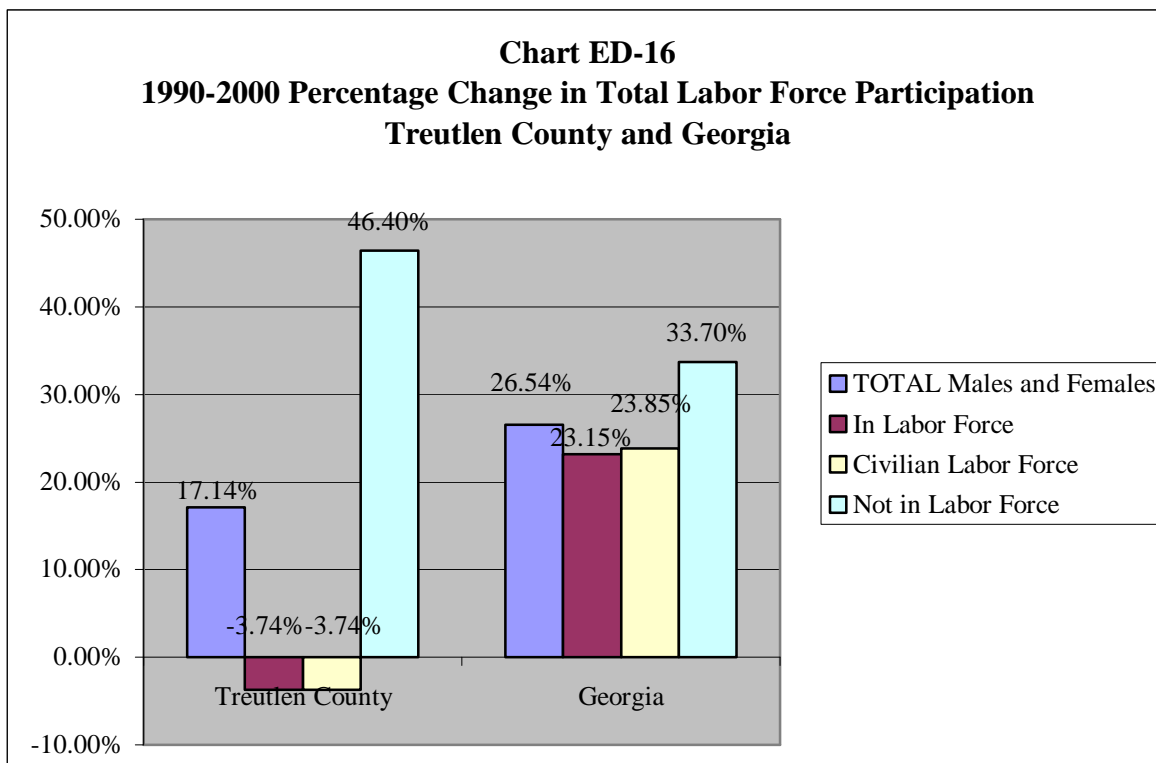
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov; 2006.

Employment Status and Labor Force Characteristics

Current and historic data on employment status and labor force characteristics are shown in Chart ED-16 in a comparison of the percentage change over the last decade for Treutlen County and Georgia. The total labor force in Treutlen County grew by 777 workers in the ten years from 1990 to 2000, an increase of almost 17 percent. During the same period the state labor force grew by more than 26.5 percent, while the U.S. labor force expanded at somewhat less than the rate of Treutlen County at 13.5 percent. Those not in the labor force increased in total numbers by more than twice the rate of the labor force as a whole (1,888 persons in 1990 vs. 2,764 persons in 2000, a gain of 876 persons, or 46.4 percent). While some of this change could be the result of people dropping out of the labor force, it is likely that most of this change is the result of the inmate population at the probation detention facility.

County employment in the civilian labor force fell well short of Georgia growth but did slightly outpace the U.S. as a whole during the 1990s. County civilian employment actually fell by 162 persons during the 1990s, or -6.56 percent, compared to 11.8 percent for the U.S. and 23.8 percent for the state. Much of the negative growth locally again can be attributed to the presence of the Treutlen Probation Detention Center in Soperton. The corrections facility takes a sizable number of individuals out of the local labor force, as evidenced by the aforementioned dramatic rise in those not in the labor force between 1990 and 2000 of 46.4 percent. A lesser factor affecting those in the labor force is the significant portion of the county's population that is elderly. As of 2000, some 13.2 percent of the county's population is age 65 and older. This percentage is more than one-third higher than the state (9.6 percent) and slightly higher than the nation (12.4 percent). As more young people leave the area in search of good paying jobs elsewhere, the remaining population is aging and, thus, slowly leaving the labor force. While the local economy has showed some signs of growth over the last decade, the high prison and elderly populations serve to stunt that growth from becoming more significant.

Of the 777 new workers added to Treutlen County's total labor force between 1990 and 2000, 581, or 74.77 percent, were males. Again, this is due largely to the presence of a significant prison population. This compares to Georgia where 28.6 percent of new workers were males and the U.S. where about 14.3 percent of new workers were males. However, in 2000 males



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov; 2006.

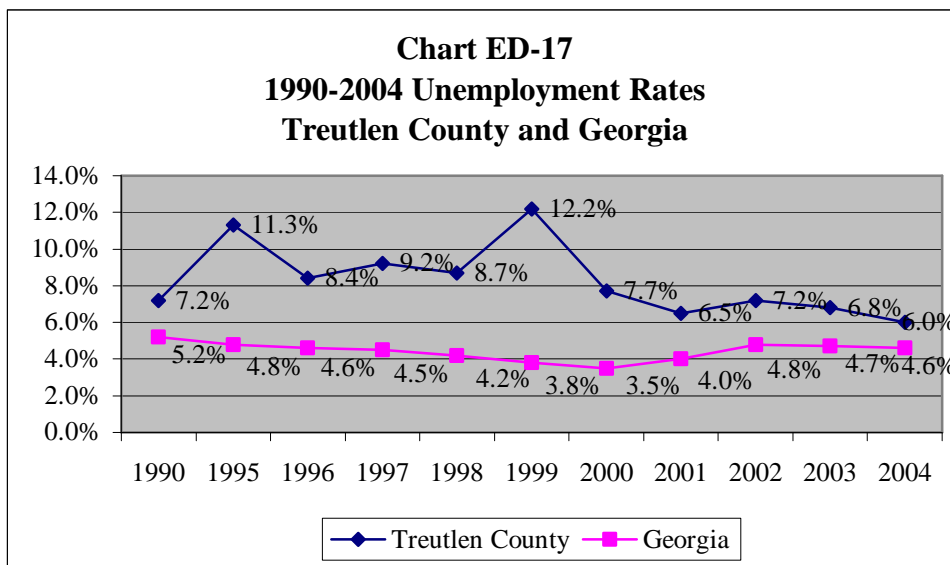
constituted 49.63 percent of the local labor force compared to 48.5 percent in Georgia and 48 percent in the U.S. Despite this higher percentage of local male workers, the male participation rate in the county labor force in 2000 was only about 50 percent, down substantially from 70 percent in 1990 and far less than Georgia's 73 percent male participation rate and the U.S. rate of almost 71 percent. The number of males not in the labor force locally more than doubled in actual numbers over the last decade. Again, this is attributable to the growth in the prison population locally. The female participation rate in the local labor force is also well below that of the state and nation (just under 46 percent in Treutlen County, over 59 percent in Georgia, and 57.5 percent in the U.S.). Overall, the county had only 47.94 percent of persons aged 16 or older in the work force in 2000 compared to Georgia's 66 percent and the U.S.'s 64 percent.

These statistics indicate less than healthy growth in the local labor force, especially when compared to Georgia or the U.S. However, it also means that there are likely other available workers in the population not currently counted in the labor force. The county population may have larger numbers of elderly and those with transfer payments, but the gap between the local labor force and that of the state and nation is somewhat larger than might be expected. There

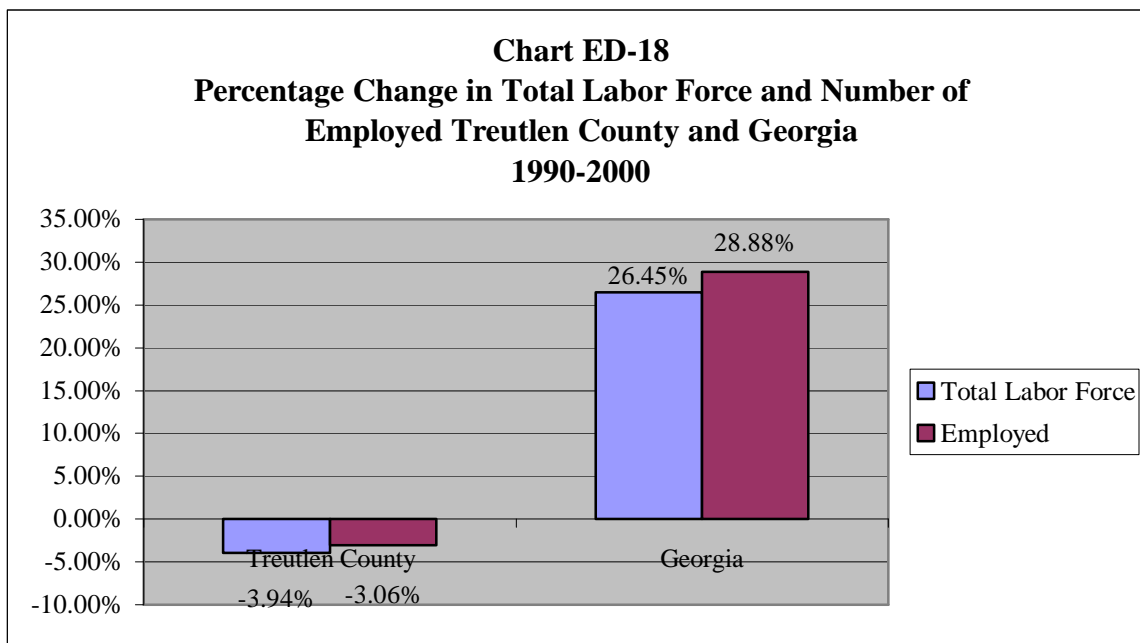
may be some indication that welfare and benefits programs are still more attractive than current low wage jobs, in spite of the welfare reforms that have transpired at the state and national levels. This is more evidence of an increased need for labor force education and training to increase participation rates, and greater diversification of the economy.

Unemployment Rates

Chart ED-17 details annual average unemployment rates in Treutlen County from 1990 through 2004, while Chart ED-18 highlights the percentage change in the total labor force and the number of employed persons during the 1990s both on a countywide and statewide level. Unemployment in the Treutlen County labor force has been consistently above that of Georgia and the U.S. since 1990 as the economic boom seen throughout much of Georgia and the U.S. during the latter half of the 1990s failed to have much positive impact at the local level. Treutlen County could still not keep pace with the rapid growth throughout Georgia and the U.S. as a whole, as evidenced by a decrease of 105 persons from the local labor force between 1990 and 2004 (-3.94 percent compared to the state’s growth rate of 28.88 percent and the national growth rate of 13.82 percent). Unemployment rates in Treutlen County are normally above all surrounding counties, except Wheeler. Treutlen County unemployment is usually 2 to 4 percentage points above the economic center and much larger Laurens County, and usually about 2 to 4 percentage points above the Georgia and U.S. rates. This is indication of an economy whose job additions are not keeping pace with its labor force growth.



Source: Georgia Department of Labor, 2006.



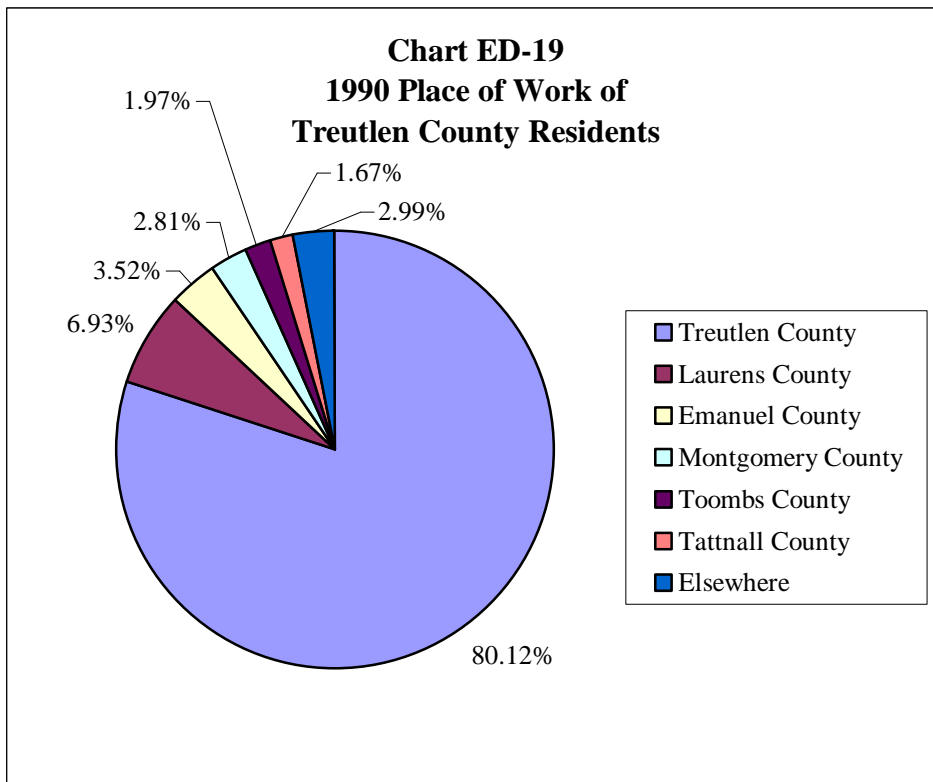
Source: Georgia Department of Labor, 2006.

Commuting Patterns

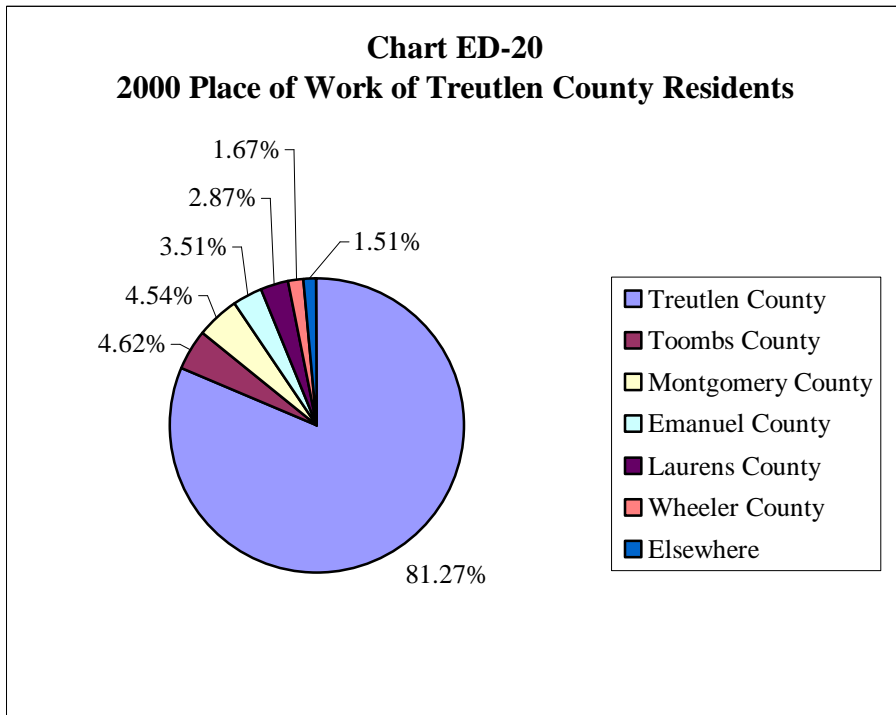
Charts ED-19 through ED-22 depict commuting patterns and trends of the local labor force and details by county where the local resident labor force is working, and where the people working in Treutlen County live. The charts document that a decreasing number of residents have to commute outside the county to find work. However, as discussed previously, the county's labor force is also on the decline at the same time. Almost 23 percent of the local resident labor force traveled elsewhere for jobs in 2000 compared to 25 percent in 1990. 322 fewer residents were working in the county in 2000 than 1990, while 235 residents had to go outside the county. Another way of saying it is that the local economy lost 216 jobs in the 1990s, but there were also 420 fewer people in the local workforce. As discussed previously, the negative growth of the labor force in the county is not leading to a high demand for job creation. Hence, those in the labor force are increasingly more likely to pursue employment outside of the county since additional job opportunities are not being created at home in numbers abundant enough to allow those people to work at home.

The detailed tables showing what counties worked in and what counties local workers lived in document that while 235 Treutlen Countians traveled outside the county for work in 2000, 1,202 workers from outside the county had jobs in Treutlen County, more than likely with the county's major employers (Treutlen Probation Detention Center, Soperton Diversified Industries, and General Fibers and Fabrics). Treutlen Countians not working in their home county usually work predominantly in Toombs County (Lyons/Vidalia) and Montgomery County (Mount Vernon/Vidalia), with Emanuel County (Swainsboro) and Laurens County (Dublin) being secondary destinations. The numbers commuting to Toombs County nearly doubled between 1990 and 2000, while those commuting to Laurens County declined by some two-thirds. Most of those Treutlen Countians commuting to these counties are most likely finding employment with the more vibrant manufacturing base in these areas and their better-paying jobs. People commuting from outside the county to jobs in Treutlen County are more likely to come from Laurens County (Dublin) or Toombs County (Lyons/Vidalia). Treutlen County workers increasingly have to look elsewhere for a source of suitable employment.

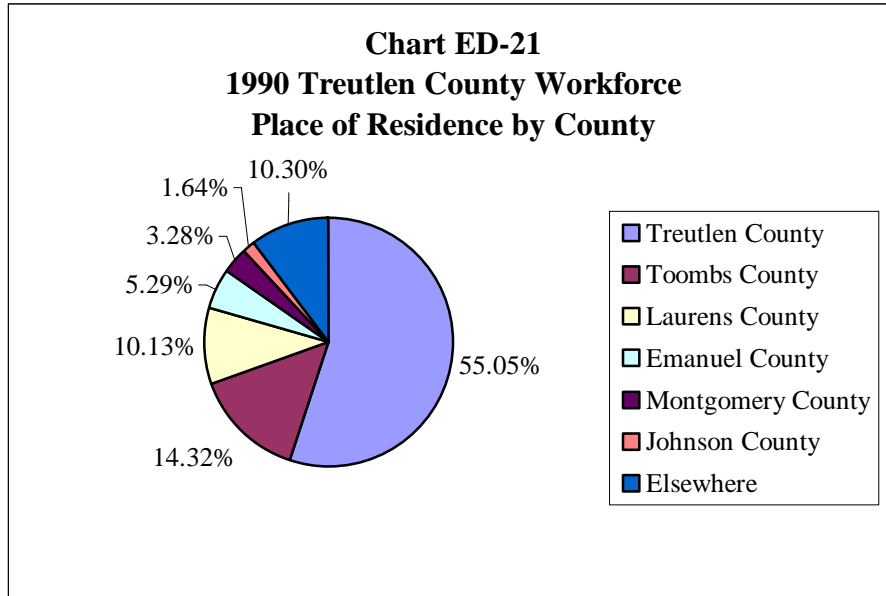
Soperton. The labor force of Treutlen County's lone municipality is assumed to mirror that of the county because its residents are included in county figures, and there truly is only one local economy. This is especially true for Soperton, which is the location for the vast majority of county employment and home for 41.2 percent of county population. Soperton does have some farming, manufacturing, government, retail trade and service jobs and occupations, even if in limited numbers. All of the public community schools in Treutlen County are located in Soperton. Education levels are somewhat lower in Soperton, primarily because of the high percentage of elderly residents. The age of residents would also tend to lower the participation rates of the city's labor force. Measures designed to increase overall county employment and improve the skills of the local work force will also benefit Soperton in due measure.



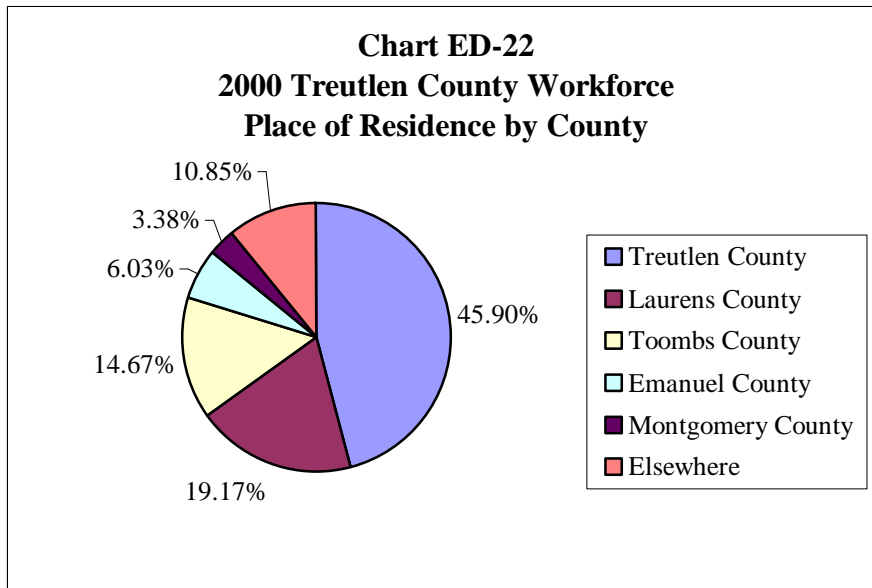
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov; 2006.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov; 2006.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov; 2006.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov; 2006.

Local Economic Development Resources

Economic Development Agencies

Treutlen County has a number of important organizations that focus attention on, direct and assist economic development efforts of the community. Most of these organizations are countywide in concern and work to the benefit of all citizens and governments. The following analysis highlights key local economic development resources.

Treutlen County Chamber of Commerce
114 Second Street
P.O. Box 622
Soperton, GA 30457
(912) 529-6868

The Treutlen County Chamber of Commerce is the first contact for newcomers, both labor and industry, to the community, providing assistance and information of all types related to the area.

The Treutlen County Chamber of Commerce has a brief history, having been originally created in 1967 with a revised resolution reconstituted in 2001, and is led by local citizens who are experienced in all fields of community activities. The Chamber has a segment devoted to industry, both old and new, and provides help in areas of labor education, business retention and industry recruitment. The Chamber is funded by dues paid by the local members and receives no public funds. Due to its short existence, the Treutlen Chamber is still in the process of building a reputation of being an active and effective force for business development in the area. It is a rallying point, and should take a lead role, when the community needs to band together. It was instrumental in the community locating Swainsboro Technical College's satellite campus in the Treutlen County Industrial Park and other recent economic development activities.

Treutlen County Development Authority
114 Second Street
P.O. Box 622
Soperton, Georgia 30457
(912) 529-6868

The Treutlen County Development Authority, like the Chamber of Commerce, was reconstituted in 2001, and is a public authority founded by Georgia public law. This act set up an authority with nine board members appointed by the Treutlen County Commissioners who serve staggered four-year terms. Officers are elected from the members of the board. The Authority is funded by a 1/2 mill of property tax per year. This funding is to finance Authority activities, recruit new industry, and assist present industry. The Development Authority, along with the Chamber, has been seeking to build a reputation as being an active player in local economic development efforts and is striving to be effective. However, new developments have been limited in recent years due to the lack of significant population growth and demand for increased jobs.

Laurens/Treutlen Joint Development Authority
P.O. Box 818
Dublin, Georgia 31021
(478) 272-5546

The Laurens/Treutlen Joint Development Authority is a public authority founded by Georgia public law in 1995. This act set up a multi-county authority so that Treutlen County might be able to pool its limited resources with a neighboring county for the purposes of coordinating and enhancing local economic development recruitment activities. The Authority is funded jointly by both counties to finance Authority activities, recruit new industry, and assist present industry in both areas. The Authority is headed by the President of the Dublin-Laurens County Chamber of Commerce and Development Authority, and serves as a de facto full-time economic developer for Treutlen County.

Swainsboro Technical College
346 Kite Road
Swainsboro, Georgia 30401
(478) 289-2200 Fax: (478) 289-2214

Swainsboro Technical College's main campus is located 25 miles northeast of Soperton on GA 57 in Swainsboro. STC is a state funded school and guarantees the ongoing availability of state-of-the-art trained employees whose skills match those required in today's competitive work place. In the last couple of years, STC opened the Treutlen County Workforce Training Center in the Treutlen County Industrial Park to provide adult literacy and continuing education

services to residents of Treutlen County. Georgia's Quick Start Training program is offered at Swainsboro Tech. This program enables new industry to train their work force while their facility is under construction or allow an expanding existing industry to train additional workers in new technologies. The Quick Start Program also offers an Existing Industries Program to aid retention and expansion efforts. Individual referrals which match client needs for specific training is available through Swainsboro Tech. All graduates of Swainsboro Tech are covered by the Department of Technical and Adult Education "Technical Education Guarantee" which assures industry that graduates can either perform as advertised in their trained field, or the graduate will be retrained at the school's expense. Further discussion about STC's programs is included under the Training Opportunities section.

Programs

The Treutlen County Development Authority has among its economic development assets the 140-acre Treutlen County Industrial Park, located just north of Soperton along GA 29 approximately 4 miles from I-16. The park currently has six occupants: General Fibers and Fabrics (produces carpet backing), Soperton Diversified Industries (a division of Easter Seals), a Frito-Lay distribution facility, Uni-Press (newspaper printing facility), Macrie Produce (refrigerated storage facility), and the Treutlen County Workforce Training Center (Swainsboro Technical College satellite facility). The park is fully served with water and sewer access. The County also has another 30-acre site for utilization as an additional industrial park, located south of Soperton on GA 29 with access to the Georgia Central Railway along with water and natural gas service. In addition, the County has a one-acre commercial site available for immediate occupancy located at the intersection of U.S. 221 and GA 46 in Soperton. Two developed properties are also available. One is a 1,875 square foot office duplex that is currently shared by two separate physicians, and the other is a 31,000 square foot industrial building that is currently leased by the Easter Seals Organization for the production of women's blouses for the U.S. Navy. Future plans do call for construction of an Authority-financed "spec building" to further assist in attraction of new industry. Limited resources have prevented Treutlen County and its municipalities from developing the infrastructure necessary to be able to retract and retain industrial development. However, locals do realize the importance of being able to provide jobs and a stable economic base that will allow its citizens to work and keep their wages at home, and there does appear to be renewed efforts to make it possible for the area to be more marketable to potential businesses and industries than in times past. At the present time, there is ample room in the county for future industrial growth.

Treutlen County and the City of Soperton assist with industrial development with "Freeport" exemption on industrial inventories. An exemption of 100 percent was established countywide and serves those industries located in Treutlen County or the City of Soperton. Treutlen County is also classified as a Tier One county by the OneGeorgia Authority, making qualifying industries locating to Treutlen County eligible to receive up to \$3,500 per job created. The Development Authority and Chamber also are seeking to continue their ongoing efforts to work closely together to assist existing industry. While the programs and resources of these agencies have had only limited effectiveness, they are not remaining static. There are ongoing plans for improvement.

Training Opportunities

Swainsboro Technical College
346 Kite Road
Swainsboro, Georgia 30401
(478) 289-2200 Fax: (478) 289-2214

Through its educational programs and services, Swainsboro Technical College seeks to assist students in the development of their individual potential and meet identified needs of local businesses. Swainsboro Tech also holds high standards for their students, not only in academic performance, but also in the area of work ethics. It is accredited by the Accrediting Commission of the Council on Occupational Education. The presence of STC is an excellent economic development attractor and provides a flexible means to meet needed educational improvement skills level training of the local labor force, particularly on a local level through its Treutlen County Workforce Training Center. Swainsboro Tech's programs can be easily coordinated and adapted to meet newly identified, special, or changing training needs. Associate in Applied Technology degrees are offered in such areas as accounting, business (office technology and information office technology), early childhood care and education, and forestry technology, in addition to such diploma and certificate programs such as microcomputer specialty, machine tool technology, electronics technology, automated manufacturing technology, and health care (medical assistant and practical nursing). Continuing education programs are currently offered in computers, personal development, technical development, business and professional development, and allied health care, as well as Quick Start training to new and expanding industries. Adult education classes for basic literacy for those not able to read and write through the General Equivalency Degree are offered at the Treutlen County Workforce Training Center. Special classes have been set up at local companies.

Several other institutions of higher learning are within a short driving distance of Soperton/Treutlen County. The Dublin Center, located approximately 20 miles from Soperton, is a two-year unit of The University System of Georgia. The Dublin Center is operated by Middle Georgia College, a two-year community college based in Cochran, but also houses satellite course offerings by East Georgia College and Georgia Southern University. This campus provides students with various associates degrees to prepare them for further education in a four-year college or university, or students can take course offerings through Georgia Southern in pursuit of a four-year degree. Many students have found that attending the Dublin Center is the best option for them since Treutlen County is close enough to commute back and forth, and it is less costly than many other colleges. Georgia Southern University is the main college of choice for students who want to attend a university located nearby. It is located in Statesboro, Georgia, which is approximately 60 miles from Treutlen County. The university status that Georgia Southern achieved over a decade ago has provided a multitude of Treutlen County students with many opportunities to receive a better education. Brewton-Parker College is the closest college in terms of proximity for Treutlen County students. It is located in Mount Vernon, Georgia, which is just 15 miles from Soperton. Like the Dublin Center, Brewton-Parker College allows Treutlen County students the opportunity to pursue a four-year college education or higher without having to travel far from home. With an enrollment of approximately 1,300 students, this private school affiliated with the Georgia Baptist Convention provides a more intimate learning environment through smaller class sizes than the roughly 15,000-student population of GSU, which appeals to a number of Treutlen County students. Many Treutlen County students seeking the opportunity to return home upon graduation can have the chance to do so.

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

the workforce. The WIA Program and the local One-Stop Center have been a tremendous resource in helping many local residents either get back on their feet or find their niche in the workplace.

Economic Trends

Recent Major Economic Activities

As noted in other sections, the opening of the Treutlen Probation Detention Center in the early 1990's is the biggest economic base structural change in recent years. This institution has added some much needed stability to the local economy amidst recent declines.

Other changes in local employment have been minimal in the last few years or so. General Fibers and Fabrics, a manufacturer of carpet backing, located in the Treutlen County Industrial Park in 2001 and has become a successful local operation. Soperton Diversified Industries, a division of Easter Seals, also opened in the county's industrial park in recent years and has become fairly successful as well. Both are among the county's leading employers. Also locating in the park in the last five years are a Frito-Lay distribution facility; Uni-Press, a newspaper printing facility; and Macrie Produce, which is a storage facility for refrigerated products. Another recent development is Swainsboro Technical College's Treutlen County Workforce Training Center in the Treutlen County Industrial Park. This activity was discussed previously under the Training Opportunities section, but the center is an important component in the efforts to upgrade the educational and skill levels of the local population, a development that is critical to future local economic development efforts.

. This recent bit of hard luck is symptomatic of the state of the local economy, where there have been more negative developments in recent years than positive ones despite the earnest effort of local officials. Ups and downs, particularly in manufacturing, are likely to continue as a more balanced and mobile world economy develops. These developments, the low wages of the county, and other indicators as previously discussed point to a priority need to further increase and diversify the local economic base.

Special Economic Activities

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

The Million Pines Arts and Crafts Festival is the area's major tourist draw. The festival began in 1972 as a project to assist local civic clubs and to help community needs while celebrating the area's rich timber heritage. It derives its name from the Million Pines Plantation, where in 1926 James Fowler planted ten acres of seedlings. Until his death in 1963, he planted 7 million slash pine seedlings on some 10,000 acres of land in Treutlen County. Today the festival attracts hundreds of visitors to Soperton each year during the first full weekend in November, and includes such items ranging from antiques to modern-day crafts in addition to food and entertainment. Over the last 30 years or so, the Million Pines Arts and Crafts Festival has become one of the more popular events in southeast Georgia each year.

Hunting and fishing recreation in the county will likely grow, especially with declining opportunities in Florida because of population and development. Some 80 percent of Treutlen County's total land area consisted of forestland as of 1997, offering an abundant area for hunting opportunities. Excellent fishing opportunities abound in the Oconee and Ochoopee rivers near Soperton. Alternative hunting and fishing enterprises could flourish, and could provide secondary income for farmers and landowners. The county has the potential to develop into a local agri-tourism hub, given the natural resources available. With the success of the local farming industry, farm tours could be developed providing another secondary source of income for farmers. Enough farming is available to use the local agri-tourism industry as a sort of "niche" market to attract nature enthusiasts to the area.

Tourism seeking a "natural experience" is a growing phenomenon and has coined a term "nature-based tourism." The potential development of the two public boat landings along the Oconee River offer potential for Treutlen County to take advantage of this current tourism phenomenon by utilizing its abundant natural resources for economic gain. If the landings were to be more fully developed, Soperton could see an increase in the number of visitors to the area. The City could become a logical overnight lodging point, especially for visitors wishing to engage in hunting or fishing excursions.

There are current limitations in hospitality accommodations, particularly lodging and restaurant facilities, in Soperton. If agri-tourism and the local boat landing along the Oconee River are developed, this could help provide the impetus needed in the private sector to help the City to develop the necessary accommodations to be a lodging point for visitors to the area. In the interim, small natural and historic resource attractors currently are available and can continue to be developed and nurtured.

Major Findings of Economic Development Assessment

- In 2000, the five largest sectors of employment in Treutlen County were the State & Local Government (20.55%), Services (18.2%), Retail Trade (16.78%), Manufacturing (13.72%), and Farm (12.02%) sectors. These five sectors combined to comprise some 81 percent of Treutlen County's total employment.
- In 1980, Manufacturing (26.88%), Farming (19.29%), and State & Local Government (18.48%) were the largest sectors in the county in terms of total employment.
- Between 1980 and 2000, employment in the Services sector more than doubled (8.23% vs. 18.2%), while the Manufacturing sector declined by one-half (26.88% vs. 13.72%) and the Farm sector also declined significantly (19.29% vs. 12.02%).
- In 2000, the largest sectors of employment in Georgia were in the Services (28.63%), Retail Trade (16.8%), Manufacturing (12.63%), and State & Local Government (10.39%) sectors; comprising more than two-thirds (68.45%) of the state's total employment.
- The largest increase in the state's employment between 1980 and 2000 was in the Services sector (18.3% vs. 28.63%), while the steepest decline was in the Manufacturing sector (19.25% vs. 12.63%).
- By 2025, the four largest sectors of employment in Treutlen County are projected to be in the Services (24.02%), State & Local Government (22.07%), Retail Trade (15.96%), and Manufacturing (11.34%) sectors, combining to comprise some 73 percent of Treutlen County's total employment.

- From 2000 to 2025, the only sector expected to see a substantial increase is the Services sector (18.2% vs. 24.02%), while the Farm sector (12.02% vs. 8.88%) is projected to continue its steep decline. Manufacturing (13.72% vs. 11.34%) and Retail Trade (16.78% vs. 15.96%) are expected to decline somewhat.
- By 2025, the largest sectors of employment in Georgia are projected to be in the Services (33.35%), Retail Trade (17.76%), and State & Local Government (10.10%) sectors; comprising more than 60 percent of the state's total employment.
- The Services sector is projected to continue to see the biggest increase statewide between 2000 and 2025 (28.63% vs. 33.35%), with the Retail Trade sector being the only other one forecasted to see significant growth. Manufacturing is projected to decline the greatest among all sectors.
- By far, the leading sector in Treutlen County in terms of earnings in 2000 was State & Local Government, which at 29.12% was almost one-third of total county earnings alone. The next closest sector was Manufacturing (14.15%).
- Between 1980 and 2000, earnings in the State & Local Government sector increased by roughly one-half as a percentage of total county earnings, while the percentage of total county earnings belonging to Farming and Manufacturing both declined by approximately one-half.
- In 2000, the largest sector in terms of the percentage of total earnings in Georgia was the Services (26.77%) sector; comprising more than one-quarter of the state's total earnings. More than one-half (51.81%) of Georgia's total earnings came from three sectors: Services, Manufacturing, and State & Local Government.
- By 2025, some 60 percent of Treutlen County's total earnings are projected to be found in just three sectors: State & Local Government, Services, and Manufacturing. Of these three sectors, only the Services sector is expected to experience any appreciable increase as a percentage of total countywide earnings between 2000 and 2025 (13.42% vs. 18.99%).
- Almost one-half (46.26%) of Georgia's total earnings by 2025 are projected to be in the Services and Manufacturing sectors. The Services sector alone is expected to make up one-third (33.73%) of the state's total earnings, and it is the only sector expected to have any appreciable increase in terms of the percentage of the state's total earnings between 2000 and 2025.

- In 2004, the highest Average Weekly Wages in Treutlen County were in the Federal Government (\$740), Finance and Insurance (\$641), and Transportation (\$620) sectors. Georgia's highest Average Weekly Wages were in the Utilities (\$1,315), Communications (\$1,181), Financial and Insurance (\$1,174), and Federal Government (\$1,071) sectors.
- Growth in Average Weekly Wages (All Industries) was somewhat higher in Georgia (49.49%) than in Treutlen County (40.07%) between 1994 and 2004. Treutlen County's Average Weekly Wages in 2004 were just over 56 (56.18%) percent of Georgia's, with the Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing sector (103.24%) in Treutlen County being the only sector locally to surpass that of the State.
- In 2000, the largest percentage of Treutlen County's total personal income consisted of Wages and Salaries by Household (73.87%), which was slightly lower than that of Georgia (78.24%). The County's percentage of Transfer Payments to Households was more than double that of the state as a whole (10.02% vs. 4.04%).
- From 1990 to 2000, employment by occupation declined both countywide (-6.56%) and in the City of Soperton (-3.99%), while growing statewide at a rate of almost 25 percent.
- The top occupation both countywide and in the City in 2000 was Machine Operators, Assemblers, and Inspectors (about one-fifth of the total in both), followed by Professional and Technical. Georgia's highest percentage was in the Professional and Technical sector (18.68%). Slightly less than one-half of the state's employment by occupation is in the Executive, Professional, and Clerical occupations, while countywide about one-third of total employment was in these occupations.
- Between 1990 and 2000, Treutlen County's total labor force grew at a rate that was significantly less than Georgia as a whole (17.14% vs. 26.54%).
- In 2000, Treutlen County had slightly more people not in the labor force than those who were. In the City of Soperton, both categories were roughly equal.
- In 1990, over 70 percent of all males in Treutlen County were in the labor force. By 2000, however, only one-half of all males countywide were in the labor force. The total of all males

and females not in the labor force countywide in 2000 was substantially higher than Georgia as a whole (52.06% vs. 33.7%).

- Between 1990 and 2004, Treutlen County's unemployment rates were higher than that of Georgia for each year, with a high of 12.2% in 1999 and a low of 6.0 % in 2004. Georgia's unemployment rate fluctuated from a high of 5.2% in 1990 to 3.5% in 2000. From 1995 through 2004, Georgia's unemployment rate was below 5.0% for each year.
- Among its surrounding counties, only Wheeler County had consistently higher unemployment rates throughout the period than Treutlen County.
- In 1990, Toombs County was the leading county among those commuting into Treutlen County for work on a daily basis. By 2000, Laurens County had become the top county for those commuting into Treutlen.
- For those in Treutlen County commuting elsewhere to work, Laurens County was the top destination in 1990. By 2000, those commuting to Laurens County had declined by more than one-half, and Toombs County became the top choice for those Treutlen Countians commuting elsewhere.
- During the 1990s, the percentage of Treutlen County residents comprising the county's workforce declined from 55 percent in 1990 to 46 percent by 2000.
- The County's lead economic development agencies are the Treutlen County Chamber of Commerce, the Treutlen County Development Authority, and Swainsboro Technical College (through the Treutlen County Workforce Training Center). Among the county's economic development assets include the 140-acre Treutlen County Industrial Park (currently 6 occupants), an additional 30-acre site south of Soperton, and a one-acre commercial site at U.S. 221/GA 46. There is also 100% Freeport exemption on various items countywide. Treutlen County is a Tier One county as classified by the OneGeorgia Authority, making qualified industries locating to the county eligible for tax credits of up to \$3,500/job created.
- Good education and training opportunities are available locally to improve skill levels of the local labor force through Swainsboro Technical College's satellite facility in the countywide industrial park (which also offers Quick Start training to industries), nearby secondary

institutions such as Brewton-Parker College, the Dublin Center, and Georgia Southern, and Workforce Investment Act program services through the local One-Stop Center in Soperton.

- Ongoing economic trends locally within the last decade include the development of the Treutlen County Industrial Park, the location of Swainsboro Technical College's satellite facility, the continued decline of farming and manufacturing jobs as mainstays of the local economy, the emergence of service jobs as a leading source of employment, the continued success of the Million Pines Festival as a means of visitor attraction, and the sustained viability of the state and local government jobs as the leading source of local employment and earnings.

Summary of Needs Assessment

The Treutlen County economy was developed relying on transportation and its vast forests, and its future to a large extent will depend on these same avenues. The local economy, while continuing to grow slowly at best and even declining in some cases, is not adding jobs at the rate its labor force is growing, even though the population and labor force itself is only slowly growing. The economy overall is much less developed and diverse than the state. There is an unhealthy reliance on one correctional facility and the relatively low wage service industry. The labor force is in need of modern skills improvement, and higher paying jobs to increase participation rates. Improved infrastructure is much needed in order to attract future business and industrial growth, in particular a new speculative building in the Treutlen County Industrial Park and the extension of infrastructure to I-16. Within the City of Soperton, the downtown area is in major need of revitalization and improvements to bring needed retail and other businesses back to the heart of the city, in addition to serving as another draw for travelers coming off of I-16. Likewise, improvements to the City's gateway corridors, particularly Georgia Highway 29, would serve to entice visitors as well. Upgrades to the county's school facilities is another important area that needs to be addressed. Quality of life issues, such as the development of medical services and improvements to the county's recreation facilities, are also important items that will enhance the area's liveability. Enhanced leadership programs and continuing to improve ongoing local cooperation are key avenues to increase the involvement of all facets of the community to work together for the betterment of both the County and the City.

Despite many structural economic problems, Treutlen County has a number of important assets and opportunities for growth. Treutlen County's location on a planned developmental highway (GA 15) as well as I-16 continues to offer many opportunities for economic growth including transportation, tourism, and agriculture. The natural resources of the county,

particularly the Oconee and Ochoopee rivers, offer enormous potential for tourism and other economic growth. The abundant groundwater supply will help. Another important advantage is that the County has the presence of available, affordable land for industrial development and the infrastructure capacity to handle new growth. The proposed expansion of the Treutlen County Industrial Park along with plans to tie its infrastructure in with the City of Soperton's is illustrative of this particular opportunity. The Million Pines Festival remains the area's major tourist drawing card, and it will continue to play a vital role in attracting visitors. It is very likely that the same areas that spurred development in the county in the 19th and 20th centuries will again stimulate development in the 21st Century. Transportation and natural resources, the fields and forests of the county, still offer the most potential for growth albeit in new variation. There is much work to be done to prepare for and stimulate this growth, but the unity of the community and its local economic development and training resources already in place can accomplish much.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Introduction

Treutlen County's abundance of natural and cultural resources contributes to its rural character and excellent quality of life. Scenic pastoral landscapes and forests abound, while the Oconee and Ochoopee rivers border, and their tributaries flow through, the county. Visual reminders of Treutlen County's agrarian, railroad, and naval stores heritage and its continued dependence on its natural resources are evident in the unincorporated areas, including crossroads communities, as well as in Soperton. These include historic farmhouses; log cabins; schools; churches; downtown commercial buildings, and others. Evidence of earlier settlements and the presence of prehistoric cultures also remain at known archaeological sites throughout Treutlen County.

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

Natural Setting

Treutlen County is located within the Coastal Plain Physiographic Province in the Vidalia Upland Region. See Map NCR-1 in the Appendix. The county seat of Soperton is located approximately 70 miles southeast of Macon. It has a total area of approximately 129,511 acres or 202 square miles and is bordered by the Oconee River on the southwest and the Ochoopee River to the northeast.

Treutlen County has warm, humid summers with relatively mild winters. The average annual temperature is about 65 degrees. The frost-free period extends from about mid-March to just before mid-November, providing a growing season of

approximately 240 days. Treutlen County receives an average annual rainfall of about 45 inches.

Environmental Planning Criteria

WATER SUPPLY WATERSHEDS

These natural resources are not applicable to Treutlen County.

WETLANDS

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) defines freshwater wetlands as “those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.” Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas. The highest concentrations of wetlands in Treutlen County are near the Oconee River-Mercer Creek Corridor; Ochopee River Corridor; Tiger, Pendleton and Red Bluff Creek corridors, and other major creeks, although they are found throughout the county. See the National Wetlands Inventory map of Treutlen County, Map NCR-2 in the Appendix. Approximately 12 percent of the county hosts hydric soils, which underlie wetlands by definition.

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

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulates activities in wetlands at the federal level under the Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The City of Soperton adopted the “Environmental Conservation, On-Site Sewage Management, and Permit Ordinance” in

2001, which provides protection for wetlands as required by DNR's Part 5 Environmental Standards. Treutlen County has not yet adopted this ordinance, but has plans to do so in the near future.

GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AREAS

Groundwater recharge is a natural process whereby water infiltrates the ground to replenish an aquifer, which is an area of rock below the earth's surface capable of storing and producing water. Recharge of Coastal Plain aquifers occurs at specific locations where the aquifer outcrops. Treutlen County's significant groundwater recharge areas are located in a small north central area of the county and in three scattered sites in the southeast. All recharge the Miocene-Pliocene-Recent Unconfined Aquifer, and are of average pollution susceptibility. See Map NCR-3 in the Appendix for approximate locations.

Groundwater recharge areas need protection to avoid toxic and hazardous waste contamination of drinking water supplies. The previously referenced "Environmental Conservation, On-Site Sewage Management, and Permit Ordinance" also addresses protection for significant groundwater recharge areas as required by DNR's Part 5 Environmental Standards under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. Although the City of Soperton adopted this comprehensive environmental ordinance in 2001, the portion concerning significant groundwater recharge areas does not apply to the City as none of these areas are located within the city limits. The County plans to adopt the ordinance in the near future.

PROTECTED RIVER CORRIDORS

Treutlen County has two Protected River Corridors, the Oconee and Ohoopie rivers, which are protected under the 1991 River Corridor Protection Act. Any perennial river or water course with an average minimum flow of 400 cubic feet per second requires protection under this Act. The Oconee River's headwaters begin as the North Oconee and Middle Oconee rivers, which originate in the Appalachian foothills before forming the Oconee River just below the city of Athens in northeast Georgia. The Oconee flows southerly for 226 miles from Oconee to Jeff Davis County and through

Lake Oconee and Lake Sinclair. It converges with the Ocmulgee River to form the Altamaha River, the largest free flowing river on the East Coast of the United States. Public access to the Oconee River is available in Treutlen County via Dead River and State Route 46 landings. The Ochoopee River originates from Tennille in Washington County and flows through Johnson, Treutlen, Emanuel and Toombs counties before emptying into the Altamaha River in Tattnall County.

The River Corridor Protection Act provides for the maintenance of a natural vegetative buffer of 100 feet on each side of the Oconee and Ochoopee rivers and strict regulations of uses infringing upon the required buffer. Map NCR-4 in the Appendix gives the general location of the Oconee and Ochoopee River corridors; however, the 100 foot protected buffer is too narrow to appear on a map of this scale. These corridors are of vital importance to Treutlen County and Georgia in that they help preserve those qualities that make a river suitable as a habitat for wildlife, for recreation, and as a source of clear drinking water. They also allow the free movement of wildlife from one area to another, help control erosion and river sedimentation, and assist in absorbing flood waters. The Oconee and Ochoopee rivers are significant in terms of history as important transportation arteries for Indians and early settlers to the region and movement of goods and timber products. A number of archaeological sites along the Oconee in Treutlen County have been recorded in the State Archaeological Site File at the University of Georgia, and there are likely additional sites within or near both river corridors which have yet to be discovered.

Treutlen County amended its previous comprehensive plan in April, 1995 to include the Oconee and Ochoopee River Corridors Protection Plan, which provides for protection of these river corridors as required by DNR's Part 5 Environmental Standards. The County has not yet adopted the Environmental Conservation or other ordinance to enforce its provisions, but plans to do so in the near future.

PROTECTED MOUNTAINS

These natural resources are not found in Treutlen County.

Other Environmentally Sensitive Areas

PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY SOURCES

Groundwater is the major source of drinking water in Treutlen County and Soperton. In 2000, an average of 1.47 million gallons per day of groundwater was used county-wide, while 0.2 million gallons of surface water was used. Agricultural irrigation required 0.83 gallons per day. The Upper Floridan Aquifer System supplies most of the water used in Treutlen County. Said to possibly be the largest aquifer in the world (it covers one-third of Georgia, most of Florida, and parts of Alabama and South Carolina), the Floridan Aquifer also provides approximately 50 percent of Georgia's groundwater. See Map NCR-5 in the Appendix. Adoption and enforcement of the Environmental Conservation ordinance by Treutlen County will help prevent groundwater contamination (primarily shallow) because once an aquifer is polluted, it is nearly impossible to clean.

Water quality is already a concern in Treutlen County because of the presence of polluted waters on the state's 303(d) list of impaired waters. EPD officially identified the Ochoopee River-Little Ocmulgee to GA 292 and Pendleton and Red Bluff creeks in Treutlen County as "impaired waters" for exceeding the maximum amount of one or more pollutants that a body of water can contain and still be deemed safe (TMDLs). At the time of testing, the Ochoopee River-Little Ocmulgee to GA 292 contained excessive fecal coliform, while Pendleton Creek tested high for both fecal coliform and dissolved oxygen. Red Bluff Creek lacked sufficient biotic diversity. Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Plans have been completed for all three of Treutlen County's currently listed impaired waters. Common observations made in these plans include the need for better data at each monitoring station and more stations for additional sampling; testing occurred during a drought which could account for more concentrated levels of

pollutants; and dissolved oxygen occurs naturally. The culprits, if any, are likely non-point source pollutants, such as urban or agricultural runoff or leaking septic tanks, but may be naturally occurring. The plans, in any event, generally recommend use of Best Management Practices to improve water quality and prevent further regulations from being imposed at the local, state, or federal level. Implementation of these TMDL Plans by property owners along the impaired waters should help improve water quality.

STEEP SLOPES

There are no significant steep slopes in Treutlen County or Soperton. Existing slopes range from 0-12 percent. Two prominent bluffs, Berry Hill and Silver, are located along the Oconee River in the county. See Map NCR-6 in the Appendix for their approximate locations. Protection would be provided through the Environmental Conservation Ordinance for the bluffs located in the Protected Oconee River Corridor once the County adopts the ordinance.

COASTAL RESOURCES

These natural resources are not applicable to Treutlen County.

FLOOD PLAINS

Flood plains are defined as areas subject to flooding based on the 100-year (base) flood. They are an important water resource area when left in their natural or relatively undisturbed state. They help control the rate of water flow and provide an area for temporary storage of floodwaters. Vegetative flood plains enhance water quality by collecting sediment which would otherwise contribute to damaging water temperature rises, increased pollution, and reduced levels of dissolved oxygen needed for desirable aquatic species. Natural flood plains also assist groundwater recharge through local ponding and flood detention, thus slowing runoff and allowing additional time for infiltration of groundwater aquifers. Most of Treutlen's flood plains are found along the Oconee and Ochoopee rivers and major creeks. Very prominent low areas in comparison to the rest of the county exist along the Oconee River flood plain. This flood plain area extends more than one mile within the county. Such areas also exist along the Ochoopee

although the elevation tends to slope less quickly and dramatically than in the Oconee floodplain area. See Map NCR-7 in the Appendix. Only Treutlen County (not Soperton) participates in the National Flood Insurance Program. FEMA is currently digitally mapping the entire state of Georgia.

SOIL TYPES

Treutlen County has four basic soil associations. They are:

1. Alluvial land-Swamp-Myatt Association: Very poorly to somewhat poorly drained soils of flood plains. Subject to flooding. Most suitable for growing timber. Located primarily adjacent to Oconee and Ochoopee rivers and Pendleton and Red Bluff creeks. This association occupies about 15 percent of the county.
2. Norfolk-Tifton Association: Well drained soils with a sandy surface layer and a yellow-brown, friable sandy clay loamy subsoil. Located throughout county and in much of Soperton on very gently sloping, broad interstream divides. Occupies about 35 percent of county. Suitable for most uses, especially agriculture. Tifton and Norfolk loamy sands are considered prime farmland (Class I) and comprise about 27 percent of county's area.
3. Gilead-Lakeland-Cuthbert-Sawyer-Norfolk Association: Chiefly well-drained soils with a sandy surface layer and a variable subsoil. Located county-wide and in Soperton, comprising about 30 percent of the county's land area. Subject to erosion. Used primarily for timber cultivation.
4. Lakeland-Plummer Association: Excessively drained, sandy soils on ridges and poorly drained soils on flats. Not well suited for cultivation, except for timber. This association comprises approximately 20 percent of the county's land area.

See Map NCR-8 in the Appendix for the location of Treutlen County's soil associations.

Areas of Treutlen County where the Alluvial land-Swamp-Myatt and Lakeland-Plummer soil associations are found have development limitations based on their soil composition. Together these two associations comprise approximately 35 percent of the county's area. Of these soils, nearly 12 percent host hydric or saturated soils. See Map NCR-9 in the Appendix. Soil erosion is common in Treutlen County, but not a severe problem. The Gilead-Lakeland-Cuthbert-Sawyer-Norfolk soil association is the most

susceptible. EPD issues Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control (land disturbance) permits for both Treutlen County and Soperton.

PLANT AND ANIMAL HABITATS

DNR's list of Special Concern Animals, Plants, and Natural Communities for Treutlen County lists two animals and six plants as of October, 2004, none with federal status (Protected, Candidate or Partial Status). They are listed below. Georgia protected species are followed by (GA).

Animals	Plants
<i>Clemmys guttata</i> (Spotted Turtle) (GA)	<i>Marshallia ramosa</i> (Pineland Barbara Buttons) (GA)
<i>Notropis chalybaeus</i> (Ironcolor Shiner)	<i>Penstemon dissectus</i> (Grit Beardtongue) (GA)
	<i>Sarracenia flava</i> (Yellow Flytrap) (GA)
	<i>Scutellaria ocmulgee</i> (Ocmulgee Skullcap) (GA)
	<i>Sideroxylon sp. 1</i> (Ohoopée Bumelia)
	<i>Sporobolus teretifolius</i> (Wire-leaf Dropseed)

Source: Wildlife Resources Division, Georgia DNR, October 22, 2004.

There are no designated "natural communities" in Treutlen County; however, those areas likely to include sensitive plant/animal habitat are the Oconee and Ohoopée rivers and their flood plains, creeks, and wetlands. Some protection would be afforded the county's sensitive plant and animal habitats through passage of the Environmental ordinance covering wetlands and the Oconee and Ohoopée Protected River Corridors.

Significant Natural Resources

SCENIC AREAS

Scenic areas located within Treutlen County are most associated with natural resources. The Oconee and Ohoopée rivers and their corridors, are the focal point for a number of picturesque views, such as Berry Hill Bluff. Berry Hill is a 75-100 foot high

sandstone bluff overlooking the Oconee River. Also noted as scenic were the public Dead River Boat Landing on the Oconee and the privately owned Sand Hill and Wildwood Lakes. Georgia Highway 29 north of Soperton to I-16, known as the “Greenbelt Highway,” is an eight mile section of highway with landscaped 100 foot rights-of-way which provides a scenic gateway into Soperton. President Franklin Roosevelt was responsible for this highway’s development. Restoration and conservation are needed to return it to its full glory. The James Fowler Estate/Million Pines Area is another area known for its scenic qualities. From 1926 to his death in 1963, James Fowler planted 7 million slash pine seedlings on his 10,000 acre estate, which today remains in private ownership. See Map NCR-10 in the Appendix.

PRIME AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST LAND

Agriculture (15 percent) and particularly forestry (nearly 80 percent) are Treutlen County’s primary land uses, with about 95 percent of the county’s land area used for these purposes. According to the existing land use map prepared in conjunction with preparation of this plan, approximately 121,992 acres of Treutlen County are in agricultural or forest land use. See Map LU-1 in the Appendix. Prime farmland (Class I) comprises approximately 34,440 acres or 27 percent of the county’s land area and consists of Tifton and Norfolk loamy sands. See Map NCR-11 in the Appendix. As of April 1, 2005, 1,123 acres of Treutlen County farmland had been converted to timberland under the Conservation Reserve Program.

Since about 1950, the number of farms nationwide has declined significantly. This is true of Treutlen County as well. The county had 182 farms in 2002, a decrease of 5.7 percent from 1997. The total acreage of farms county-wide decreased from 43,826 acres in 1997 to 34,680 in 2002 (21 percent decrease). About 27 percent of the county’s total land area was in farms in 2002 compared to the current 15 percent. The average farm in Treutlen County has decreased from 227 acres in 1997, to 191 acres in 2002. This is less than the average of 218 acres statewide. Acres of harvested cropland increased slightly from 6,502 acres in 1997 to 6,624 acres in 2002 (2 percent increase). Irrigated land increased from 725 acres in 1997 to 1,156 acres in 2004.

Treutlen County's estimated value of agriculture production in 2004 was \$14,487,939 (ranked 137th in state). The percentage by Commodity Group in 2004 was as follows: Poultry/Egg – 0 percent; Vegetables – 1.4 percent; Ornamental Horticulture – 23.0 percent; Livestock/Aquaculture – 19.1 percent; Row/Forage Crops – 21.8 percent; Forestry & Products – 28.2 percent; and Fruit and Nuts – 0.77 percent. The county's principal Row/Forage Crops in 2004 were cotton, tobacco, hay, corn, peanuts, rye, soybeans, straw, oats, and wheat. Treutlen County ranked 13th in the state for onion production in 2004. Livestock production in 2002 included 1,416 cattle and calves (865 beef); 171 hogs and pigs; and 152 sheep. There were 275 goats in 2004.

Treutlen County ranks 76th in Georgia for timber production. The 2004 Farm Gate value was \$2,975,514. An estimated 94,300 acres was in timber in 2005, down from 103,400 acres in 1997 when 80.5 percent of the county was in forest. At least 98 percent of Treutlen's timber land is in private/individual ownership, with the remainder owned by the forest industry. In 2004, the county ranked sixth in Georgia for pine straw production (\$1 million); 15th in Christmas trees; 21st in turfgrass (\$2.1 million); and 23rd in container nurseries.

MAJOR PARK, RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AREAS

There are currently no major federal, state, or regional parks/recreation areas in Treutlen County. The former Treutlen Public Fishing Area on Sand Hill Lake closed several years ago. Existing public boat landings include Dead River and SR 46 landings on the Oconee River. Tremendous opportunities exist for restoration and promotion of the historic landscaped GA 29 Gateway into Soperton, as well as conservation of Million Pines Plantation, and possible river/lake development in the county. There is also interest in establishing a new state-operated Public Fishing Area and possibly a Wildlife Management Area in Treutlen County.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Treutlen County was created from portions of Emanuel and Montgomery Counties in 1917, the 152nd in order of creation of Georgia counties. It was named after John Adam Treutlen, the first governor of the state of Georgia, who vanished shortly after he left office in January, 1778. He was believed to be killed by Loyalists, those Americans in the Revolutionary War period who maintained allegiance to the British. Soperton, the county seat, was named in 1903 after a Mr. John Soper, who was a construction engineer for the Macon-Dublin-Savannah Railroad, and a prominent citizen of the community.

Treutlen County is in what has been referred to as the “piney woods and wiregrass” section of Georgia and was the last part of the state to be developed. Present-day Treutlen County was settled in the mid-19th century by small scale farmers from the Carolinas who were attracted to the region by the lumber industry. Agriculture and forestry, in particular, remain important to the Treutlen County/Soperton community to this day.

In 1976 a historic preservation consultant conducted a survey of historic structures in Treutlen County and Soperton under contract with the Heart of Georgia Area Planning and Development Commission. As a result of this survey, a total of 69 properties (51 in Soperton and 18 elsewhere in the county) were recorded and their locations marked on maps. Most of the architecture in Treutlen County and Soperton is of rural, vernacular style. The arrival of the railroad in the late nineteenth century heralded Victorian styles with their increased ornamentation. Classical Revival structures and Craftsman bungalows dating from the early 20th century are also found county-wide. There is a nice collection of early 20th century commercial buildings in Soperton, including a former bank, stores, a gas station, and warehouses.

Two of the most prominent historic landmarks in Treutlen County are the Treutlen County Courthouse (1920) in Soperton and Governor Troup’s Tomb in the

western part of the county. Located near the Oconee River at the site of one of his plantations, the tomb of former Governor George Michael Troup and his brother are surrounded by a protective granite wall and iron gate and marked with a Georgia Historical Marker.

The 1976 Treutlen County Historic Resources Survey provides a good representation of the county's architecture, but given its age and the relatively small number of properties recorded, it is not considered comprehensive or up to date. In the last 30 years, a number of additional properties have become historic, while others listed no longer exist. At best, it does have value for general reference until such time as local interest and funds are available to help sponsor a new survey. Funding is currently available through the Georgia Historic Preservation Division to assist with a limited number of surveys each year.

Treutlen County currently has only one historic property, the Treutlen County Courthouse, listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is the federal government's listing of historic properties worthy of preservation. To determine National Register eligibility a property is thoroughly documented, and its value or significance is assessed along with its level of significance (local, state, national) and integrity (survival of historic physical characteristics). Each National Register property generally must be a minimum of 50 years old. It is expected that a number of individual properties/sites and potential historic districts located throughout unincorporated Treutlen County and Soperton may be eligible for the National Register, including a potential downtown commercial historic district in Soperton.

Less is known concerning archaeological resources in Treutlen County, although at least 27 sites have been recorded to date in the State Archaeological Site File at the University of Georgia. See Map NCR-12 in the Appendix for the general locations. Specific sites are not mapped to protect them from vandalism. The earliest known human inhabitants of present-day Treutlen County came to the area approximately 11,500 years ago, toward the end of the last Ice Age. Archaeological sites in Treutlen County, therefore, range from pre-historic sites where hunters manufactured stone tools to historic Indian and settler sites to small late 19th/early 20th century farmsteads, naval stores operations, and the like. The largest concentration of recorded sites in the county are along the Oconee River; however, further research is expected to yield additional Indian

sites and the remains of historic communities, farms, sawmills, and turpentine operations.

Some community landmarks have been identified by the Treutlen County Local Plan Coordination Committee which, although they may or may not be National Register eligible or even historic, are considered locally important. It is known that the list is far from exhaustive, and no significance should be presumed because a property is not listed. Those properties which appear eligible for National Register listing are indicated; however, there are likely additional eligible properties about which a determination cannot be made without further study. All of the following are located in unincorporated areas of Treutlen County unless otherwise noted.

1. Residential Resources

Fowler Lawton House (Treutlen Co. Museum), Soperton
Curt Barwick House (Welcome Center)

2. Commercial Resources

Downtown Soperton Historic District (National Register-eligible)

3. Industrial Resources

None identified.

4. Institutional Resources

Treutlen County Courthouse (National Register-listed), Soperton
Treutlen County Jail, Soperton
Treutlen Primary School Auditorium and Gymnasium, Soperton

5. Transportation Resources

None identified.

6. Rural Resources (all historic resources listed in unincorporated Treutlen County should be considered rural resources)

John Gillis House

Neil Lee Gillis House

Dave Gillis Log House (relocated to Soperton)

7. Other Historic, Archaeological, and Cultural Sites

Governor Troup's Tomb

Oconee River Indian Village Site

Gillis Springs

Bethsaida Church Cemetery

Boiling Springs Cemetery

Jim Ricks Cemetery

Hooks Cemetery

Harmony Church Cemetery

Troup Cemetery

Gillis Cemetery

Sites on File at the University of Georgia

The 27 sites on file at the University of Georgia consist of prehistoric Indian sites and historic Indian and settler sites from the 19th and early 20th centuries. It is unknown whether any of the sites have been determined National Register eligible.

The approximate locations of the above cited resources are shown on Maps NCR-13 and 14 in the Appendix. As previously referenced, the archaeological sites on file at the University of Georgia are generally shown on Map NCR-12. To aid in their protection, their specific site locations are available upon request only to authorized individuals.

Historic preservation-related activity has increased overall in Treutlen County and Soperton in recent years, with efforts ranging from renovating the historic Treutlen County Courthouse in Soperton to individual and community rehabilitation projects to

downtown revitalization efforts. Treutlen County continues to demonstrate its support for historic preservation through its stewardship of the National Register-listed Treutlen County Courthouse, which presently continues to house a number of county government offices and to be used for court proceedings. In recent years, the County completed extensive renovations to the courthouse using SPLOST and general funds. Voters passed a new SPLOST in March, 2006 to replace the deteriorated roof and make related structural repairs so as to preserve the courthouse's architectural integrity and its National Register listing.

Efforts have been underway for several years to improve the appearance of and generally revitalize downtown Soperton. The City has received Department of Transportation Enhancement Funds for streetscape improvements and development of a downtown park and a veteran's memorial park. Several privately funded rehabilitations of historic commercial structures have also been completed, which, it is hoped, will serve as catalysts to encourage additional rehabilitations and other downtown improvements.

Other successful preservation-related projects include the Treutlen County Historical Society's Museum located in the historic Fowler Lawton House in Soperton; the 19th century Curt Barwick House which serves as the local Welcome Center; and the privately funded restoration of the 19th century Dave Gillis Log House for interpretive use. In addition, Heath Farms was designated in 2002 as Treutlen County's first Centennial Farm in recognition for its more than 100 years in operation.

Summary Needs Assessment

Protection of Treutlen County's natural and cultural resources and the county's rural character is paramount to maintaining the community's overall quality of life now and in the future. This can best be achieved through controlled and planned growth and land use regulation designed to conserve these significant resources and encourage their sensitive development, as appropriate. The Oconee and Ohoopie rivers, the county's forests and lakes, and the Million Pines Plantation are among the natural resources which

need to be utilized and promoted for public recreation, such as fishing, wildlife management, trail development, and/or other compatible economic development and tourism uses. Preservation of historic community landmarks, revitalization of downtown Soperton, and restoration and promotion of the historic landscaped GA Highway 29 corridor are also needed and desired. Conservation and preservation of Treutlen County's significant natural and cultural resources truly hold keys to the community's future.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Introduction

The provision of services, protection of its citizens, preservation of its resources, and enrichment and enhancement of the quality of life for its people are among the primary reasons for the creation and existence of local governments. A community's facilities and infrastructure exist to address these needs. "Community Facilities and Services" is one of the most important elements required under the Georgia Planning Act because construction of new facilities and maintenance and upgrading of existing ones generally represent the largest public expenditures of local governments. Due to limited funds, ongoing planning is vital for a community to offer the services and facilities desired by current and future residents, businesses, and industries in an efficient and effective manner. The location of public facilities can be an important tool in guiding and managing growth and development. Planning ahead can provide the opportunity to properly prepare and anticipate growth, and prevent expensive mistakes.

The following contains a description, assesses the adequacy, and presents the community's recommendations for improving community facilities and services for existing and future residents in the City of Soperton and Treutlen County as a whole in accordance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures at the basic planning level. Future needs of economic growth are addressed as well as future needs required by population growth. The categories of community facilities and services considered are: transportation; water supply and treatment; sewerage system and wastewater treatment; solid waste; public safety; hospital and other public health facilities; recreation; general government; educational facilities; and library and other cultural facilities.

Transportation

Inventory. A total of approximately 422 miles of county roads, city streets, and state and federal highways serve Treutlen County. There are a total of 203 miles of county roads. A total of 254 miles are paved, while 168 miles remain unpaved in the county. The City of Soperton has 22 miles of city streets. There are approximately 20 miles of paved and two miles of unpaved streets in Soperton. The county has 118 miles of roads on the State Highway System and 19

miles of Interstate. The county has approximately 16 miles (State Route 15) of road on the Governor's Road Improvement Program (GRIP).

Local Government Activities.

Treutlen County annually budgets an average of \$383,890 for capital equipment outlays for transportation improvements. Approximately 15 people are employed in the Road Department. Adequate equipment is purchased and maintained to grade, drain, and base county roads in preparation for paving contracts and for maintenance of existing county roads, both paved and unpaved. The County has the following major road equipment: three motor graders; one front loader; one backhoe loader; one bulldozer; three tractors with mowers; four dump trucks; one bush cutter; one durapatcher; one tractor trailer lowboy; and other types of equipment. An average of one to two miles of county roads are paved each year by the County, while an average of six tenths of a mile are resurfaced annually under the Local Assistance Road Program (LARP).

The City of Soperton has a city funded Roads and Streets Department. The City budgets \$193,286 annually for street maintenance and repair. The City's Road Department currently employs five people and has one backhoe; two dump trucks; one front end loader; and various other types of equipment. An average of six to seven miles are resurfaced annually under the Local Assistance Road Program (LARP).

Major Highways.

Treutlen County has one Interstate highway, I-16. It is a four-laned east/west facility that is approximately 18 miles in length inside of Treutlen County. Many motorists utilize I-16 as a route of transportation between Savannah and Atlanta.

Treutlen County has one major federal highway. State Route 56/U.S. 221 intersects with State Routes 46 and 15/29/78 in the City of Soperton. Approximately two miles of State Route 56/U.S. 221 lies within the City of Soperton. State Route 56/U.S. 221 continues northward approximately two miles past I-16 and State Route 56 turns eastward while U.S. 221 continues northward. There are approximately 16 miles of U.S. 221 within Treutlen County. State Route 56/U.S. 221 enters Treutlen County from the south. It is a two-laned north/south facility that crosses I-16, splits with State Route 56, and runs north above Augusta and south through Valdosta, eventually going into Florida.

Eight State Routes run through Treutlen County as well. State Route 56 is a north/south highway that splits off of U.S. 221 two miles north of I-16 in Treutlen County. It runs two miles eastward and turns north into Emanuel County. It is approximately 16 miles in length in the County. State Route 86 is a northwest/southeast highway that traverses Treutlen County. It runs 17 miles northwestward into Johnson/Laurens County and southeastward into Emanuel County. It does not pass through any municipalities. State Route 46 is an east/west highway that enters Treutlen County over the Oconee River and traverses eastward into Emanuel County. Approximately 2.1 miles of State Route 46 lies within the City of Soperton. It is approximately 20 miles in length inside of Treutlen County. State Route 298 is approximately 4 miles in length inside of Treutlen County. It is a northwest/southeast two-laned facility that terminates once it reaches State Route 46. It does not pass through any municipalities. State Route 227 is a connector two-laned highway between State Route 56/U.S. 221 and State Route 46. It is approximately two miles in length and does not pass through any municipalities. State Route 199 traverses the southwestern section of Treutlen County. It is a northwest/southeast highway that is approximately 14 miles in length inside of Treutlen County. It does not pass through any municipalities. State Route 199 Spur is four miles in length and traverses southwest from State Route 199 in the Lothair community. It is approximately 4 miles in length inside of Treutlen County. It does not pass through any municipalities. State Route 15/29/78 intersects with State Route 56/U.S. 221 and State Route 46 in the City of Soperton. Approximately two miles of State Route 15/29/78 lies within the City of Soperton. State Route 15/29/78 splits in the City of Soperton, and State Route 15/78 continues northward while State Route 29 turns northwestward. Both State Routes cross I-16. There are approximately 16 miles of 15/78 within Treutlen County. There are approximately 12 miles of 15/78 within Treutlen County. State Route 15/29/78 enters Treutlen County from the south and splits into two different directions.

All of these transportation routes serve as major thoroughfares through Treutlen County. Many motorists traveling to Atlanta, Athens, or Augusta from the southern part of the state use State Route 56/U.S. 221, State Route 15/29/78 and I-16.

See Maps CFSM-1 and CFSM-3 for the road network in Treutlen County and the City of Soperton.

Bridges/Overpasses.

There are 45 bridges located on county, state, and federal routes in Treutlen County. There are 22 bridges located on state/federal routes and 23 bridges located on county roads.

Rail.

CSX provides rail service in Treutlen County. The system has approximately 12 miles of mainline track that runs northwest/southeast through the County. Approximately 1.0 mile of track is in the City of Soperton. The track is owned by Georgia Central Railroad. It begins in Macon and it connects with the Heart of Georgia Railway continuing eastward to Savannah.

Airport.

The Treutlen Airport is owned and operated by Treutlen County. It is located northeast of Soperton on Airport Road. The airport has a 3,000 foot runway with a windsock. The airport does not have any lighting, communications equipment, hangars, tie down spots, a terminal, or fuel dispenser.

See Map CFSM-4 for the location of the airport in Treutlen County.

Public Transit.

Public transportation in Treutlen County is provided through a Section 5311 Program of the GA Department of Transportation and through the GA Department of Human Resources Coordinated Transportation Program. Services are provided both on a scheduled route and on demand response to the citizens who utilize the 5311 program by Treutlen County. The elderly and low income populations and general public of the county use the program for general purposes. The program utilizes a single van equipped with an elevator for wheelchair bound passengers. Beginning July 1st 2006, the provider for the GA Department of Human Resources (DHR) Coordinated Transportation System will change from Middle GA Community Action to Quality Transportation, Inc. The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center now contracts with the GA Department of Human Resources to manage the DHR Coordinated Transportation System of the DHR Coordinated Transportation Program. Transportation services will continue to be provided for people in Treutlen County who are clients of the Georgia Divisions of Aging, DFACS, MHDDAD, and Vocational Rehabilitation. The program will now utilize the van system of Quality Transportation, Inc, a private provider. The vans utilized are equipped with an elevator for wheelchair bound passengers. The service area of for both public transit systems is Treutlen County.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Ways.

One bike path exists in Treutlen County along I-16. It is approximately 18 miles in length. Treutlen County is looking to partner with the other 16 counties in the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center Region to implement the recently completed Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center Regional Bike and Pedestrian Plan. The regional bike/pedestrian plan examines existing conditions and needs, and provides recommendations for future improvements, including new route recommendations and other efforts to boost education, safety, and usage. Needs identified for the region include additional facilities, particularly paved shoulders, additional state bike routes, better state signage, and for increased safety and educational activities. There was a special need identified to interconnect the region's state parks with bicycle facilities, and to interconnect region facilities to other state bike routes. Compatible local bicycle facilities, events and regional cooperation, marketing, and promotion were encouraged. Bicycling was seen as having potential economic development/tourism benefits for the region. The region could be promoted as a touring destination for beginning and intermediate cyclists because of its low traffic counts, open spaces, pastoral scenery, historic sites, topography, and climate.

Freight/Bus.

The Treutlen County area is served by two freight or trucking companies. The freight lines are Wheeler Trucking and Eddie Mimbs Trucking. United Parcel Service, Federal Express, Roadway, D.H.L., and Western Union service is available in Treutlen County.

Assessment. Treutlen County has some transportation needs. The county ranks 133rd out of 159 counties in the state in total road mileage. It also ranks 105th in the state in percentage of roads paved. Although the county is not facing the pressure of significant population growth, there is a need to continue and work to upgrade the county transportation network to enhance the county's efforts to attract economic development, and make progress toward reducing the unpaved mileage and otherwise improving roads. Treutlen County needs to increase the amount of roads that are paved and/or resurfaced annually in the unincorporated areas of the county. The City of Soperton needs to continue to make progress towards paving all of their roads, especially with the recent infrastructure improvements that will require a significant amount of paving. Maintenance of sidewalks in Soperton needs to be continued. The City needs to continue to apply for CDBGs and Transportation Enhancement grants to improve their sidewalks. The City of Soperton has plans to improve its downtown streetscape through Transportation Enhancement

grants. Drainage improvements are still needed in the City of Soperton and throughout Treutlen County. Stormwater management continues to be somewhat of an issue throughout the county because of insufficient drainage in some areas. The City of Soperton needs additional parking in the downtown area of the city. The County needs to continue to work with the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) to identify bridges in need of repair and schedule such maintenance. Treutlen County has recently identified all equipment and manpower through its project management schedule so that they will be able to maintain dirt roads in the county in a more timely manner. This will help them to develop a maintenance/replacement schedule in order to save money and time. New, more modern equipment and continued repairs to existing equipment will be needed by Treutlen County, and especially the City of Soperton, in the coming years to maintain and improve their roads and streets. The City of Soperton needs a track loader, a bulldozer, a motor grader, dump trucks, a bucket truck, and a service truck.

Railways have played an important role in the development of Treutlen County. The City of Soperton and Treutlen County continue to use the rail system that runs through Soperton. The freight rail service provided to the City of Soperton is adequate to meet the needs of Treutlen County now and into the future. These services are very important to Treutlen County as the industrial parks are continuing to be developed. The unincorporated area of Treutlen County needs more visible railroad signage. This service is vital to Treutlen County, and as the economy changes and different rail needs are required, the communities need to remain vigilant and supportive of keeping the current facilities and expand the level of services.

Treutlen County needs to make some major improvements to its airport facility. The County needs to extend the runway, build new t-hangars, add lighting, build a terminal, construct tie down spots, and have access to fuel at the airport.

There is a specific need to modernize and utilize continued maintenance on the bridges in Treutlen County.

There are sufficient freight and other types of carriers to meet the current and future needs of businesses and individuals in Treutlen County. The resources are in place and could be expanded as needed.

There is currently one bike path that exists in Treutlen County along I-16. The county is included as a part of a regional bicycle and pedestrian plan recently completed by the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center. The plan recommends designation of a bike

path along State Route 15/29/78 as a connector route and along State Route 46 as a regional route.

The Treutlen County Transit System is important to the citizens of Treutlen County. The county has a significant elderly population; therefore, continuation of the programs is very important due to the lack of personal transportation available.

Water Supply and Treatment

Inventory. Treutlen County has one municipal water system, which is owned and operated by the City of Soperton. The county government does not operate a water supply system. Unincorporated residents rely mainly on individual wells for their water supply. The City of Soperton withdraws raw water from the Floridan (limestone) Aquifer. Due to the high quality of water from the Floridan Aquifer, only the addition of chlorine and flouride is required before it is pumped into the distribution center.

The City of Soperton provides water service to approximately 1,200 residential and business customers throughout an approximate 21.79 mile distribution system consisting of 16.52 miles of water lines that are six inches or smaller and 5.27 miles of water lines that are eight inches or greater. Ninety-nine percent of the households are served inside of the city limits. Please see table CF-3 for water rates inside of the city limits. There are approximately 18 customers that are served outside of the city limits. Customers outside of the city limits are charged a flat fee of \$50.00 for the first 2,000 gallons. After the first 2,000 gallons, customers are charged the same rates as the customers that are inside of the city limits for 2,001 gallons and above. The City presently operates three deep wells with a combined permitted capacity of 0.75 million gallons per day (See Table CF-1).

TABLE CF-1
Deep Wells
City of Soperton

<u>WELL NO.</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>CAPACITY (GPM)</u>	<u>DATE DRILLED</u>
1	Georgia Avenue & Fourth Street	500	1934
2	Edwin Street & Bell Avenue	500	1960
3	State Route 46	750	2006

One elevated storage tank serves the City of Soperton. See Table CF-2 for information. Map CFSM-5 shows the location of water services throughout the City of Soperton.

TABLE CF-2
Elevated Storage Tank
City of Soperton

<u>TANK NO.</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>CAPACITY</u>	<u>DATE ERECTED</u>
1	Georgia Avenue & Fourth Street	150,000	1963

TABLE CF-3
Water Rates Inside and Outside the City Limits
City of Soperton

<u>GALLONS</u>	<u>INSIDE WATER RATES</u>	<u>OUTSIDE WATER RATES</u>
0-2,000	Base Rate of \$10.00	Base Rate of \$50.00
2,001-25,000	Base + \$1.50/1,000 gal.	Base + \$1.50/1,000 gal.
25,001-100,000	Base + \$2.00/1,000 gal.	Base + \$2.00/1,000 gal.
100,000 & Up	Base + \$3.50/1,000 gal.	Base + \$3.50/1,000 gal.

Assessment. There are areas inside the city limits of the City of Soperton that have been recently annexed that need to be connected to the city's water system. The City of Soperton needs to apply for grants through EIP and CDBG to assist with the various projects. The City also needs a new water storage tank for its water system. In the near future, the City needs to connect its water system to the industrial park on State Route 29 South. New pumps may be needed in the future for the existing wells. A filtration system is needed for the water system as soon as possible due to the infiltration of iron and manganese. The City has a permitted capacity in average daily flow (ADF) of 0.75 million gallons per day. In 2005, the City of Soperton had an average daily flow of 0.392 MGD. The City should continue maintenance and upgrading of the water system by replacing any inadequately sized lines and inadequate appurtenances. There is ample room for growth both from normal population growth as well as planned future annexations.

There is a need in Treutlen County to ensure that private wells are located, drilled and developed in such a manner to protect public health and the environment. Subdivision regulations detailing water system development standards for the City of Soperton should be developed and enforced.

Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment

Inventory. There is one public sewerage system in Treutlen County. The City of Soperton owns and operates its own municipal wastewater treatment and collection system. Since Treutlen County does not have a public sanitary sewerage system, individuals continue to use septic tanks in the unincorporated areas of the county not served by the City of Soperton.

The City of Soperton’s wastewater treatment plant is located on Sessions Street. The treatment plant utilizes a digester and belt press sludge treatment process and has a treatment capacity in average daily flow (ADF) of 0.6 million gallons per day. In 2005, the City of Soperton had an average daily flow of .373 MGD. The City's sewer collection system consists of approximately 17.8 miles of sewer lines with six to fifteen inch pipes and three lift stations that lift wastewater from lower areas to gravity lines running to the treatment plant. Information on the lift stations is included in Table CF-4.

TABLE CF-4
Pump Stations
City of Soperton

<u>PUMP STATION NO.</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>YEAR INSTALLED</u>	<u>PUMP DATA</u>
1	Louisiana Avenue East	1969	100 GPM
2	Waters Lane	1969	275 GPM
3	Forest Avenue	1977	225 GPM

The City of Soperton’s sewerage system serves approximately 1,158 customers or approximately 88 percent of households within the city limits. Residential and commercial customers are charged different rates. See Table CF-5 for the list of sewer rates inside the City of Soperton. There are no sewer customers outside of the City of Soperton city limits. See Map CFSM-6 for the location of sewer services throughout the City of Soperton.

TABLE CF-5
Sewer Rates
City of Soperton

<u>RESIDENTIAL</u>	<u>COMMERCIAL</u>
\$22.00 or 75% of Water Bill	\$22.00 or 100% of Water Bill

Assessment. The City of Soperton needs to upgrade its existing lines in the downtown area of Soperton. There are areas inside the city limits of the City of Soperton that have been recently annexed that need to be connected to the City's sewer system. The City of Soperton needs to apply for grants through EIP and CDBG to assist with the various projects. In the near future, the City needs to connect its sewer system to the industrial park on State Route 29 North. The system has a treatment capacity average daily flow (ADF) of 0.6 million gallons per day. In 2005, the City of Soperton had an average daily flow of .373 million gallons per day. In the near future, the City needs to develop an alternative method for its outfall of sewer to expand its capacity to meet future GA EPD requirements.

Septic tank regulations were adopted in 1988 as a part of a manufactured home ordinance. In June of 2006, updated septic tank regulations were adopted as a part of an updated manufactured ordinance by Treutlen County. Citizens of Treutlen County can obtain a septic tank permit at the Treutlen County Health Department. Septic tank permits are enforced at the local level by the Georgia Department of Human Resources Environmental Health Specialist I at the Treutlen County Health Department. A continued check of the septic tanks by the Treutlen County Health Department throughout Treutlen County is needed to ensure their proper use and installation.

Solid Waste

*See the Treutlen County Joint Solid Waste Management Plan for additional information.

Inventory.

Waste Stream. Households principally contribute to the overall waste stream in the unincorporated areas of Treutlen County, along with lesser contributions from industries and commercial businesses. These sectors generate different items such as paper, plastic, brown goods, food, industrial, and commercial waste. It is estimated that approximately 80 percent of the material is household garbage, 15 percent is industrial, and five percent is commercial. In the City of Soperton, households, commercial businesses, industries, and institutions contribute to the overall waste stream. Households contribute approximately 65 percent of the overall waste stream, while commercial businesses contribute roughly 20 percent. Institutions, such as the schools in the Treutlen County School System, contribute about 10 percent, and industries throughout the city also generate approximately 5 percent as well.

Collection and Disposal. At the present time, Treutlen County operates a collection system for rural residents of the county. The County utilizes dumpsters located throughout the county to collect household garbage. There are approximately 12 sites located countywide with a total of approximately 84 unstaffed green boxes. The garbage is collected twice a week. The County does not charge a fee to residents for solid waste collection. The County also provides commercial dumpster rentals for its commercial customers. The dumpsters are six cubic yards in size. The dumpsters are picked up once a week for \$30.00 a month and twice a week for \$60.00 a month. Once the garbage is collected, it is taken by the County to the Toombs County Landfill. See the Treutlen County Joint Solid Waste Management Plan for additional information on the capacity of the Toombs County Landfill.

The City of Soperton collects its garbage once a week utilizing curbside collection. It charges its customers \$9.00 per month. Commercial customers in the city can also contract with a private company (Sullivan Environmental Services of Vidalia) to collect their garbage if a larger sized container is necessary. Customers may choose from a four, six, or eight cubic yard container. The cost depends on the size of the container and the number of times the container is picked up each week. Once the garbage is collected, it is taken by the City to the Toombs County Landfill. See the Treutlen County Joint Solid Waste Management Plan for additional information on the capacity of the Toombs County Landfill.

Illegal Dumping, Contingency Strategies. There is a problem in Treutlen County and the City of Soperton with illegal dumping. The County utilizes its Codes Enforcement Officer through the Treutlen County Sheriff's Office to combat the problem of illegal dumping where needed. In case of a natural disaster or another event that may interrupt the flow of garbage pickup, Treutlen County and the City of Soperton would utilize a private contractor (Sullivan Environmental Services of Vidalia). The County and the City of Soperton may also utilize nearby local governments to have access to solid waste collection equipment, if an excessive amount of waste is generated. In case of a natural disaster or another event that may interrupt the flow of garbage disposal, Treutlen County and the City of Soperton would utilize other regional landfills (Broadhurst Landfill in Wayne County and/or the Taylor County Landfill).

Composting/Mulching. The City of Soperton has a composting/mulching program. The City provides a daily curbside collection for yard trimmings and does not charge a fee. A chipper is carried behind the collection truck. The mulch is taken to a 17-acre GA EPD permitted inert landfill on U.S. 221. Only the City has access to the facility because it is gated and locked at all

times. The City gives away mulch to local citizens who provide their own method of hauling it away. Treutlen County does not have a composting/mulching program. However, the City allows mulch to be available to residents in the unincorporated area.

Special Management Items. Treutlen County has a program to collect tires, batteries, white goods, and oil throughout the county. The City of Soperton also utilizes curbside collection for these items daily within the incorporated area. These items are then taken by both governments to the Treutlen County Recycling Center. Citizens may also take these items to the Treutlen County Recycling Center voluntarily. Once an adequate amount of these items are collected, various companies come and collect the items for proper disposal, or they are taken to various locations by the local governments, depending on the company. See the Treutlen County Joint Solid Waste Management Plan for additional information on the companies that collect these items and/or where the local governments transport them.

Recyclables. As a part of local efforts to address the State of Georgia's goals to reduce the amount of waste disposed, Treutlen County and the City of Soperton have a staffed recycling center facility just outside of the City of Soperton located on Airport Road. It is open on Friday, Saturday, and Monday from 7AM to 7PM. On Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday the center is open from 1PM to 7PM. Citizens may drop off paper, plastic, clothes, and cardboard. Citizens may voluntarily drop off newspapers at the Mental Health Center located in Soperton. The City of Soperton has 45 designated commercial sites located throughout the city that have a bin to collect cardboard. The City picks up the cardboard once a week and takes it to the Treutlen County Recycling Center. Treutlen County also has cardboard recycling bins located at each of the 12 dumpster sites located throughout the county. The county collects the cardboard from the bins on an as needed basis. The cardboard is then taken to the Treutlen County Recycling Center. Citizens may also take their paper and plastic to a trailer that is located at one of the two schools located in Soperton. See the Treutlen County Joint Solid Waste Management Plan for additional information on the companies that collect recyclables or where the local governments transport them.

Education and Litter Control. Treutlen County does not currently participate in local or regional public educational/beautification programs. The City of Soperton participates in the Keep America Beautiful program with a clean up week each year. During that week, the City emphasizes the collection of a particular item to help control litter problems. The City also utilizes three prison detail teams to help with their efforts. The City has one full prison detail each day and can request others as needed. The County utilizes community service each Saturday

of the month. The City of Soperton also has two garden clubs that assist with litter control. The City publishes educational articles in the newspaper as well.

Assessment. The collection of solid waste by the County and the City of Soperton is adequate. In the future, the City of Soperton will need a new collection truck. Treutlen County needs to install cameras at its dumpster sites to make the sites cleaner with monitoring by Codes Enforcement. With several regional landfills located in close proximity to Treutlen County, the accessibility of a landfill for solid waste collection purposes by the local governments is adequate.

The contingency plan(s) to continue solid waste pickup and disposal in Treutlen County is/are adequate for the County and the municipalities in case of an emergency.

Treutlen County does not currently have a composting/mulching program in use nor do they anticipate a program in the near future. The City of Soperton does have a composting/mulching program. The City provides curbside pickup once a week for free. Processed compost/mulch may be utilized by citizens at their request. In the future, the City of Soperton will need a new chipper and a building for equipment storage at the inert landfill.

The collection program that Treutlen County has for special management items is adequate.

The local governments in Treutlen County need to further utilize and expand their recycling program. The program is effective, and needs to be continued and expanded to better facilitate achieving the State and local waste disposal reduction goals. The City of Soperton needs additional recycling bins for its citizens to collect recyclables in addition to the commercial cardboard bins. The County needs an additional trailer to collect recyclables. The codes enforcement officer needs to be increasingly utilized to educate and enforce ordinances in Treutlen County as needed. Unless and until more state funding for codes enforcement is put in place, the local governments need to seek other sources of funding for its local environmental codes enforcement program. The County needs to participate in regional and statewide programs to help to control litter problems.

Public Safety

Law Enforcement.

Inventory. The Treutlen County Sheriff's Department is the only local law enforcement agency in Treutlen County. The City of Soperton and Treutlen County consolidated law enforcement in 2005. The Treutlen County Sheriff's office is located at 203 Second Street South (Suite 302) in Soperton, and the Treutlen County Jail is located at 100 Third Street South in Soperton. Treutlen County operates and maintains the jail facility.

The Treutlen County Sheriff's Department and Jail's main functions are to serve the Courts of Treutlen County, to operate and maintain the jail, and to conduct patrols. The department patrols unincorporated areas of Treutlen County and has a contract with the City of Soperton to patrol its incorporated area. It has a total of 19 employees with a staff consisting of eight dispatchers/jailers, nine deputies, one jail administrator, and a sheriff. The current jail was constructed in 1919 and is inadequate for the county due to overcrowding and deterioration. It was built to house 18 inmates and currently is at full capacity. The County contracts with Emanuel County to temporarily house female inmates that the County's jail does not have room to house locally. The Treutlen County Sheriff's Department has 11 patrol cars, 14 portable radios, and eight in-car cameras.

The Treutlen County Sheriff's Department may obtain assistance from the Georgia State Patrol, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, and the Department of Natural Resources as needed.

Also located in Treutlen County is the Georgia Department of Corrections' Probation Detention Center. The center is a state funded institution located on Cascade Circle in Soperton. The facility houses 251 inmates and has 80 employees.

See Map CFMS-4 for the location of law enforcement facilities in Treutlen County.

Fire Protection.

Inventory. Treutlen County has six organized fire departments located throughout the county. All of the departments are fully volunteer departments. Each fire district covers an area of approximately five square miles. The fire districts are: Soperton, Orland, Lothair, Blackville,

Gillis Springs, and Oglethorpe. The Treutlen County Sheriff's Department receives fire calls for all of the fire departments in the county and serves as the central dispatch location. The City of Soperton's station is located at 104 Metter Road. It was completed in 1972 and is approximately 2,800 square feet in size. The City of Soperton has an ISO rating of seven. Soperton volunteer firefighters get paid \$15.00 per drill or per fire. The Soperton VFD covers the entire city and has a mutual aid agreement with all of the departments in the unincorporated area of Treutlen County to assist them if needed. The fire departments in the unincorporated area of Treutlen County have a mutual aid agreement with each other and the City of Soperton. The unincorporated area of Treutlen County has an ISO rating of nine. All of the stations are approximately 1,200 square feet in size and were expanded in 2004. The Orland station is located on Highway 29. The Lothair station is located on Highway 199. The Blackville station is located on State Route 86. The Gillis Springs station is located on U.S. 221, and the Oglethorpe station is located on State Route 86. Together, the county fire departments own a rescue van and equipment including the Jaws of Life. Treutlen County firefighters hold fire drills twice each month. Treutlen County volunteer firefighters get paid \$13.00 per drill or per fire.

See Maps CFSM-2 and CFSM-4 for the locations of fire protection facilities in Treutlen County.

All of the fire trucks in the county are equipped with two-way radios and are able to communicate with the central dispatch. Firefighters are alerted by pager through the central dispatch. The number of trucks and personnel each department has are listed below:

TABLE CF-6
Fire Equipment and Personnel
Treutlen County
2006

<u>Department</u>	<u>Description of Trucks</u>	<u>Number of Personnel</u>
Soperton	1996 Freightliner Pumper, 1,250 GPM, 750 Gallon Tank	22
	2003 International Pumper, 1,000 GPM, 2,500 Gal. Tank (County)	
	1992 International Tanker, 350 GPM, 2,000 Gal. Tank (County)	
Orland	1975 Ford Pumper, 1,000 GPM, 700 Gallon Tank	10

	1981 Ford Fireknocker, 350 GPM, 1,560 Gallon Tank	
Lothair	2003 International Pumper, 1,000 GPM, 2,500 Gal. Tank 1977 Ford Fireknocker, 350 GPM, 950 Gallon Tank	10
Blackville	1975 Ford Fireknocker, 350 GPM, 950 Gallon Tank 2003 International Pumper, 1,000 GPM, 2,500 Gallon Tank	10
Gillis Springs	1996 Freightliner Fire Knocker, 350 GPM, 1,250 Gallon Tank 1975 GMC Fireknocker, 350 GPM, 950 Gallon Tank	10
Oglethorpe	2003 International Pumper, 1,000 GPM, 2,500 Gallon Tank	10

Emergency Management Service.

Inventory. The Treutlen County Emergency Ambulance Service is located at 208 Arch Street. Treutlen County owns the location and the equipment of the ambulance service. The County contracts with Higgs Ambulance Service for operational services. The County pays Higgs Ambulance Service \$145,300 per year and buys the license and pays the insurance for the employees. The Higgs Ambulance Service is responsible for the billing and collecting of services, as well as for the maintenance of the vehicles and paying the employees. The Treutlen County Sheriff's Department serves as the central dispatch location for the EMS. The area served is 200.7 square miles with a 2005 population of 6,753. The EMS operates two fully equipped full-time basic life support ambulances providing state of the art emergency medical care to the citizens of Treutlen County. Its staff consists of 11 personnel, nine full-time EMT'S and two full-time paramedics. The EMS also has basic life support supplies, non-reusable supplies, and ambulance equipment on hand in case extra supplies are needed in an emergency.

See Map CFMSM-4 for the location of EMS services in Treutlen County.

Emergency Management Agency.

The Treutlen County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) is located on Airport Road. EMA personnel consists of a part-time director and first responders (volunteer fire fighters). The EMA is the agency of the county charged with the responsibility of coordinating

and managing disaster situations, whether manmade or natural. Funding is provided through county, federal, and private donations.

See Map CFSM-4 for the location of EMA services in Treutlen County.

E-911

Treutlen County provides the communication equipment for the E-911 system. The system will be dispatched from the Treutlen County Sheriff's Department in Soperton. E-911 handles all addressing and all dispatching, including fire departments, in all areas of the county. The Treutlen County E-911 system will be Phase I compatible with wireless services in September of 2006. The county will charge a \$1.50 monthly surcharge for E-911 services.

Assessment. Although the local law enforcement agency in Treutlen County provides adequate public protection, there is need for additional personnel. Due to the lack of a police force in Soperton, there is a need for at least three to four additional staff in the Sheriff's department within the twenty-year planning period to help serve that area. Three more deputies are needed to provide more frequent patrols in the unincorporated areas of the county. The City of Soperton is satisfied with the protection it receives from Treutlen County, but does express interest in establishing a municipal police department. Increased attention to drug and alcohol offenders, stiffer fines, and treatment resources associated with these activities need to be encouraged. Along with normal law enforcement procedures training, there is a need for the officers to be trained to handle incidents of terrorism. Since terrorists hit the World Trade Towers on September 11, 2001, local law enforcement has been asked to increase their awareness of suspicious activities and continue to be on heightened alert at certain times. Also, there may be a need for additional training in the future to deal with Homeland Security issues such as bio-terrorism with chemicals and various other methods terrorists use to carry out acts of terror.

The Treutlen County jail facility was constructed in 1919 and is inadequate. Voters in the county approved a SPLOST referendum in March of 2006 for the next six-year period that is to begin in 2007, and approximately \$1.4 million in SPLOST funding has been earmarked for the construction of a new facility. The determination of which course of action to proceed will be made by local officials at a later date. Nonetheless, a new jail facility will be a definite asset to help relieve the current problem of overcrowding and deterioration. The County continues to upgrade its law enforcement equipment each year and will need to continue to do so. Additional vehicles are also needed to meet existing and future needs. A new finger printing machine for the

jail facility is needed along with blood and spill kits, and breathing apparatuses. An additional officer is needed for courtroom security during court proceedings along with a state of the art metal detector. A generator will be needed for the new jail once it is constructed. A storage building is also needed for the sheriff's department.

Treutlen County has an overall good fire protection program for a rural county. The unincorporated areas have an ISO rating of 9 and the City of Soperton has an ISO rating of 7. Most of the residences are located within 5 miles of a rural fire station. Treutlen County has 25 to 30 dry hydrants throughout the county and additional ones are needed to improve rural fire protection. Response time for the county fire departments ranges from five to ten minutes, while the department in Soperton arrives in three to five minutes on the average. Fire protection in Treutlen County appears to operate efficiently for the present time, but faster response times and lower ISO ratings are desired, especially in the City of Soperton. However, Treutlen County and the City of Soperton are in need of a fire training facility, a rescue utility truck to carry its equipment, newer fire fighting equipment and gear, Class A trucks, breathing apparatuses, and a heavy duty Jaws of Life to meet the needs of the population and to lower ISO ratings. A joint facility could serve all departments. Treutlen County is striving to lower the ISO rating in the unincorporated areas to a six.

There is also a need to obtain additional equipment for the EMS in order to better serve the citizens of Treutlen County. The EMS also needs a new ambulance with advanced life support.

Based on current and future levels of service, the Treutlen County EMA will need to be upgraded. There is a need to update and obtain additional equipment in order to better serve the citizens of Treutlen County. The EMA will be relocated to the new jail facility once it is built.

The E-911 system will be completed in September of 2006. It will need a generator to backup the system and the County needs to continue with Phase II of the process as soon as Phase I is completed.

Hospital and Other Public Health Facilities

Inventory. Currently, there is no hospital located in Treutlen County. Citizens of Treutlen County have five hospitals that are located in close proximity. Fairview Park Hospital and Veteran's Administration Medical Center are located 22 miles away in Dublin. Emanuel Medical

Center is located in Swainsboro, approximately 24 miles away. Located in Vidalia, Meadows Regional Medical Center is approximately 18 miles away. The Wheeler County Hospital is located 19 miles away in Glenwood.

The Treutlen County Health Department is located at 619 Third Street in Soperton. This building is a 6,050 square foot facility. The building consists of a main lobby, a conference room, exam rooms, an education room, an adult health waiting room, a large lab, hearing and vision room, two front offices, nine employee offices, one break room, and restrooms, which are handicap accessible. The department has four full time employees. There are two nurses, two secretaries, one part time Environmental Specialist III, two part-time RN's, one part-time nutritionist, one part-time LPN, one part-time interpreter, and one hourly social services technician. In the fiscal year 2005, the clinic served 1,983 clients and had 5,710 total visits. The clinic performed a total of 13,121 total services while serving approximately 29 percent of the population of Treutlen County. The clinic provides approximately 30 programs including family planning, physicals, cancer screening, tuberculosis immunizations, follow-ups, STD services, women's health physicals, HIV counseling and child health services.

There is one public health home health agency located in Treutlen County. Three Rivers Home Healthcare is located in Soperton at 108 Second Street. It serves an average of 25 clients in Treutlen and surrounding counties. It provides medical equipment.

Treutlen County has one nursing home with 50 licensed beds. The Treutlen County Nursing Home is located at 404 College Street. This facility provides services for acute need patients on a 24-hour basis. They provide services such as skilled nursing, physical, occupational, and speech therapy.

In addition to the nursing home, Treutlen County has two personal care homes. The Treutlen Living Center is located at 613 Third Street North and provides 15 beds. The Cauley House is a private personal care home that is located at 105 College Street North and provides 14 beds.

Treutlen County has two doctor's offices located in Soperton. The Million Pines Family Health Center is located at 601 Third Street North and the East Georgia Healthcare Center is located at 109 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive.

See Map CFSM-4 for the location of health care facilities in Treutlen County.

Assessment. Because there is not a hospital located in Treutlen County, there is a need to continue to improve the existing medical services that are provided by recruiting medical specialists to come to the local doctor's offices located in Treutlen County.

The health department facility is adequate for some time to come. The Treutlen County Nursing Home and the Treutlen Living Center need to be expanded to meet the needs of a growing elderly population. Currently, the two facilities are at their capacity and Treutlen County residents have to relocate to facilities in other counties if they are in need of a nursing home or personal care home.

Recreation

Inventory. The City of Soperton Recreation Department operates and maintains over 38 acres of recreation area at two parks. The 22 acre recreation complex is located on Ballpark Road just off of State Route 46 and has four lighted ball fields. Flag football, baseball, soccer, and softball are played at the complex. Concessions are available when games are being played. The complex also has two lighted tennis courts and a lighted basketball court. The recreation department provides a program for basketball, which is played at the high/middle school gym.

The 16 acre Jean Gillis Park is located on Railroad Avenue. It has a walking trail, a walking track, a playground, and a football practice field.

The City of Soperton Recreation Department does not provide a football program for the youth of Treutlen County. The youth football program is handled by volunteers. The equipment is provided through donations. Games are played at the Treutlen County High/Middle School Field.

Staffing is critical to the provision of quality parks and recreation services. The City of Soperton Recreation Department employs two professional staff, which includes one administrative staff and one maintenance person. The staff's maintenance of facilities and their willingness to serve and assist the general public is the department's foundation to success. While the full-time staff is important to the department's overall performance, the hundreds of part-time staff, instructors, and volunteers more often than not make the difference between average and quality services.

There are also numerous fishing and hunting opportunities located throughout the county. The Oconee and Ochoopee Rivers provide an abundance of freshwater fish and miles of winding waterways for those who prefer to ride boats and ski. Two public boat landings are located on the Oconee River. Dead River Landing and the State Route 46 Landing are county owned and maintained. There are also numerous private landings as well. Numerous private hunting clubs utilize Treutlen County's vast forest and wetland areas for hunting.

See Maps CFSM-2 and CFSM-4 for the location of recreation facilities in Treutlen County.

Assessment. The City of Soperton has been able to provide adequate recreation services to its citizens to this point, but it will need some financial resources, program expansion, and facility upgrades in order to continue to do so as services become increasingly popular. The City of Soperton Recreation Department is providing the best possible service and programs to Soperton citizens that it can at this time given the limited amount of resources. Treutlen County contributes \$35,000 per year and in-kind assistance to the recreation department.

There are several needs that exist for the City of Soperton Recreation Department. At the recreation complex, the City needs to purchase new land and construct two new lighted ball fields. Additional fencing needs to be placed around the current ball fields along with bleachers to seat patrons. Tables need to be acquired and garbage cans need to be placed at the complex to replace the existing old cans.

The Jean Gillis Park also needs some improvements. Lighting needs to be added to the walking trail so that patrons will be safer and can walk in the evening. Bathrooms need to be constructed as well. The addition of tables for eating and garbage cans will improve the cleanliness of the park.

The City of Soperton would like to construct a new walking trail because the current trail is overcrowded with patrons. New adult recreation facilities need to be constructed and an additional playground will increase the number of patrons coming to the parks due to the current problem of overcrowding.

In the future, the City of Soperton Recreation Department would like to establish an organized youth football program for the citizens of Treutlen County. This program can be established with the expansion of facilities at the recreation complex.

The landings on the Oconee River serve the citizens of Treutlen County very well; however, upgrades need to be made periodically to the landings because of deterioration. In the future, the County needs to investigate the feasibility of constructing a landing on the Ohoopce River as well. The County also needs to promote its hunting and fishing opportunities as an important asset for tourism.

Treutlen County needs to encourage the State of Georgia to establish a site in Treutlen County as a Public Fishing Area. The County also needs to encourage the State to establish a Wildlife Management Area within Treutlen County.

General Government

Inventory - Services. There are two local governments: the City of Soperton and Treutlen County. Each government offers services and maintains public facilities, which enhance the quality of life for their citizens.

Incorporated in 1902, a mayor and five-member council govern the City of Soperton. Soperton provides water and sewer service, street maintenance and repairs, fire protection, street lighting, sanitation, recreation, and beautification. Police protection is provided in Soperton by the Treutlen County Sheriff's Department on a contract basis.

Treutlen County was created in 1919 by legislative act. The County is governed by five county commissioners elected by district. The four constitutional officers are the Sheriff, Clerk of Court, Tax Commissioner, and the Probate Court Judge. Among the services Treutlen County offers are public safety, court services, jail operation, road and bridge maintenance, health and welfare services, solid waste collection, county extension, senior services, EMS, EMA, rural fire protection, and community development services. Recreation is provided in conjunction with the City of Soperton Recreation Department, although the County does provide some monetary and in-kind assistance. Public boards and authorities in Treutlen County include the Board of Assessors, Development Authority, Voter Registrar Board, Department of Family and Children's Services Board, Health Board, the Library Board, the Treutlen/Laurens Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce, Hospital Authority, and the Tax Equalization Board.

Inventory – Facilities. The Soperton City Hall is a 2,400 square foot building located at 102 Martin Luther King Drive. The mayor's office, the council chambers, and the city clerk are

located in the municipal building. The City currently employs 18 people. The City of Soperton Fire Station is located at 104 Metter Road. The Street, Sanitation, and Public Works Department is located at 1305 Florida Avenue and has six personnel. The Water Department and the wastewater treatment plant are located on Sessions Street. The city maintenance barn is located on Georgia Avenue, and the city cemetery is located on Eastman Road. The City's recreation complex is located on Ballpark Road, and the Jean Gillis Park is located on Railroad Avenue. The Community Clubhouse is located at Iva Park on Main Street. See Map CFSM-4 for the location of public facilities in Soperton.

Treutlen County facilities are spread throughout the county, and have a total of 59 employees. The Courthouse is located at 200 Second Street in Soperton and was renovated in 2002. The Sheriff and the Clerk of Court are located in the Courthouse. The Courthouse Annex is located at 114 Second Street South. The following offices are located in the Courthouse Annex: the Probate, Tax Commissioner, Tax Assessor, and the Magistrate. The County Road Department and Equipment Maintenance Shop are located at 306 Metter Road. Volunteer fire stations and elections precincts are located throughout unincorporated districts of the county. The Senior Center is located at 502 Louisiana Avenue. The EMS is located at 208 Arch Street and the EMA is located on Airport Road. The Treutlen County Health Department is located at 619 Third Street South. The library is located at 307 Second Street South. The Treutlen County Jail is located at 110 Third Street South. The County Commissioner's Office is located at 302 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. The Treutlen County DFACS office is located at 108 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. The Treutlen County Board of Education is located at 202 Third Street South, and the Extension Service is located at 204 Third Street South. The Treutlen County Welcome Center is located at the I-16 interchange on State Route 29. See Maps CFSM-2 and CFSM-4 for the location of public facilities in Treutlen County.

Assessment - Services. It appears that the services offered by both of the local governments are currently adequate. However, it is anticipated that many services will need to be improved and expanded due, in part, to state and federal mandates, as well as to improve efficiency and control cost. Solid waste disposal is a service, which has changed dramatically due to the requirements of the Georgia Solid Waste Management Act. Treutlen County and the City of Soperton have implemented and continue to implement their solid waste management plan. Also, services will need to be improved to meet the ever-changing needs of the population. While services are generally good, they cannot remain static.

Given the increasing complexities of local government services and the growing burden on local governments to deliver more with less, whenever possible local governments need to employ professional staff to help provide more efficient services. There is a need for cooperative intergovernmental sharing of various services to ensure countywide enforcement and coordination, and to prevent duplication of efforts and unnecessary waste of resources. The City of Soperton needs to enact zoning in the near future. Treutlen County needs to upgrade its technological capabilities by making available broadband access and new computer equipment for citizens to utilize in places like the library.

Assessment - Facilities.

The City of Soperton's major public facility needs for the next twenty years are to make improvements in their water system; sewer system; fire protection; recreation; and downtown area. They also need to build a municipal complex; an equipment storage building for their streets and road department; and a new community civic center.

Treutlen County has several facility needs. The courthouse roof needs renovation. A new county jail needs to be built. A new Treutlen County DFACS building needs to be built. The Senior Center needs to be renovated. Several improvements need to be made at the airport. Improvements need to be made concerning fire protection; police protection; EMS; E-911; and medical services.

Although facilities, existing or proposed, appear to be somewhat adequate to accommodate expected population and economic growth in the county, planning for improvements should be ongoing. Both governments in Treutlen County need to maintain and upgrade existing public facilities/infrastructure to meet the increasing demands of the population so as to continue providing adequate services to current and future residents. Ongoing efforts need to be made to obtain funding from state and federal sources, when available, as well as to extend the special purpose local option sales tax and collect any back taxes.

Educational Facilities

Inventory. The Treutlen County School System is operated by the county's Board of Education, whose office is located at 202 Third Street in Soperton. The school system is comprised of three schools, all of which are located within the city limits of Soperton. These schools are: Treutlen Early Learning Campus (Pre-K), 424 Railroad Avenue East; Treutlen

Elementary School (K-5), 601 College Street; Treutlen Middle/High School (6-12), 1201 Fowler Street. All schools are accredited by the Georgia Accrediting Commission. Treutlen Middle/High is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Average enrollment for Treutlen County Schools in 2004-2005 was 1,152 students. The Treutlen County School System has 179 employees, 102 of whom are certified personnel. The remaining numbers include paraprofessionals, secretaries, lunchroom staff, custodians, bus drivers, maintenance staff, and transportation personnel. The total budget for the 2005-2006 school year was \$9.25 million (\$98,838 in capital costs).

Swainsboro Technical College, with its main campus in Swainsboro, has a satellite campus located in Soperton. The facility offers various training, adult education, and GED classes.

There are three technical college main campuses located within commuting distance of Soperton. Swainsboro Technical College located in Swainsboro and Southeastern Technical College located in Vidalia, and Heart of Georgia Technical College located in Dublin.

The Tri-County Alternative Program for Success, or TAPS, was started in January of 1995 as part of a joint effort to help students who misbehave in county schools. Montgomery, Wheeler, and Treutlen counties came together for the joint effort to get kids to learn how to behave in a positive manner. The school is located in Wheeler County and averages a total of 100 students at all times. The school employs 17 people and has students that range from grades six through twelve. The program was designed to bring kids from the school systems of the three counties that misbehave and get them started in the right direction. Upon satisfactory performance, the students are allowed to re-enter the regular school system. The program has proven to be a huge success for all three counties.

Several other post secondary schools are located in close proximity to Soperton. The Middle Georgia College Dublin Center is located in Dublin. There are classes offered at the center through Middle Georgia College, East Georgia College, and Georgia Southern University. Brewton-Parker College, a four-year private Baptist College is located in Mount Vernon. East Georgia College, a two-year institution, is located in Swainsboro.

See Map CFSM-4 for the location of schools in Treutlen County.

Assessment. There has been minimal growth in the Treutlen County School System in past years; however, it has reached its capacity. In the near future, new buildings will need to be constructed to replace the deteriorated buildings that are currently being utilized.

There is a need to expand the programs that are offered by the satellite campus of Swainsboro Technical College in Soperton. Currently, the programs are limited and an expansion of programs would increase enrollment.

There is a need to offer post secondary classes in Treutlen County as well. This will increase the current education levels and will offer more opportunities for citizens to further their education.

The Tri-County Alternative Program for Success, or TAPS, is a successful program that needs to be continued. Every effort needs to be put forth by Treutlen County to continue the programs that the school provides.

Library and Other Cultural Facilities

Inventory. The Treutlen County Library is located at 307 Second Street South in Soperton. The library is one of five libraries in the Oconee Regional Library System. Built in 1975, the library is 5,090 square feet in size. Approximately 25 percent of the local citizens are registered as patrons. The facility houses a collection of approximately 14,000 volumes, 500 print and on-line periodicals, one newspaper, 50 videos, 25 cassettes, recordings, large print books, and books on tape. During FY 05, 10,000 items were checked out from the library. One meeting room is available to the public. The attendance during FY 2005 was approximately 10,133. The staff consists of one part-time person. Special programs and services constitute a large and important segment of the total library program. These include a summer reading program, internet access, and genealogical information.

The total budget for the Treutlen County Library in 2005 was \$24,700. The Treutlen County Board of Commissioners provided 27.53% of the budget. The Treutlen County Board of Education provided 23.22% of the budget. The state provided 26.58% of the budget. The City of Soperton provided 22.67% of the budget.

Treutlen County has two facilities available for cultural events. The Soperton Community House in Iva Park seats 50 and is located on Main Street in Soperton. It is owned by the City of

Soperton, but is leased to the Million Pines Festival Committee. Treutlen County has a Primary School Auditorium that seats 175 located on Railroad Avenue.

The City of Soperton hosts one major outdoor event. The Million Pines Festival is held on the first weekend of November each year. It has been held every year since 1972 as a way to give money back to the community as a non-profit event. It hosts over 250 exhibitors that have arts and crafts and other types of booths such as food along with entertainment. The event takes place at Soperton's Iva Park located on Main Street.

The Treutlen County Courthouse, located in Soperton, is on the National Register of Historic Places.

See Map CFMSM-2 for the location of cultural facilities in Treutlen County.

Assessment. Treutlen County has two facilities for hosting cultural events and activities; however, a large facility, possibly a new auditorium, is needed if additional festivals and community events are to be developed. The library also needs to be upgraded with new equipment and technology (broadband access). The Primary School Auditorium needs to be renovated.

The County may need to investigate the feasibility of establishing a festival in the future. The County has also expressed interest in placing Historic Markers at several historic sites located throughout the county.

Iva Park, where the Million Pines Festival is held, needs to be expanded because it has reached its capacity. The park also needs bathrooms, tables, lighting, bleachers, garbage cans, and fencing. The Soperton Community House is newly renovated, but needs to be well-maintained due to the amount of use of the facility.

The County and the City of Soperton need to promote its tourism assets along I-16 to attract visitors to the county.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Relationship of Governmental Entities and Programs to Local Government Comprehensive Plan

Entities

There are no apparent conflicts identified in Treutlen County's joint comprehensive plan with the adjacent counties. The local comprehensive plan does call for working with neighboring counties where appropriate. For example, Treutlen County and the City of Soperton presently contract with Toombs County for proper disposal of solid waste. Treutlen County also participates with Laurens County in a Joint Development Authority to promote economic development activities among and within both counties. Both of the county's local governments also participate in regional efforts through the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center and the Regional Economic Development Academy. A successful joint effort also exists among Treutlen, Montgomery, and Wheeler counties in the administration of the Tri-County Alternative Program for Success (TAPS), an alternative school located in Glenwood. The county is also currently working with the counties of Montgomery, Tattnall, and Toombs in researching the possibility of developing a regional reservoir within the multi-county area. Treutlen County and the City of Soperton generally work well with each other, and both are cooperating to improve the community. Meetings are held periodically among the chief elected officials of each government to discuss issues as they arise. The local governments in the county also work well with the Treutlen County Board of Education. The school system prepares its own separate Five-Year Facilities Plan and keeps it updated annually. The local government comprehensive plan is consistent with the school system's facilities plan, and the County and the City of Soperton work with the school system on any needed infrastructure improvements. It identifies the Treutlen County Development Authority as the main organization to oversee economic development activities for the county and the city. The Laurens-Treutlen Joint Development Authority is also an important coordination tool for promoting regional projects between the two counties. There currently are no independent special districts in Treutlen County, and thus they are not applicable.

Programs and Requirements

The Treutlen County Service Delivery Strategy was updated in conjunction with the county's joint local comprehensive plan, and the Strategy is consistent with the comprehensive plan. The local comprehensive plan is also consistent with the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) implementation plan that was prepared under EPD requirements for Pendleton and Tiger creeks. The comprehensive plan's implementation policies/actions address supporting the local implementation of the TMDL plan. Other state and regional programs, such as the Coastal Zone Management Program, the Governor's Greenspace Program, the Appalachian Regional Commission, and Transportation for non-attainment areas, are not in effect in Treutlen County and are not applicable.

Existing Coordination Mechanisms

Entities

There are several formal coordination mechanisms in existence between the county and adjacent counties. As mentioned earlier, Treutlen County and the City of Soperton contract with Toombs County for disposal of the county's and city's solid waste in the Toombs County Landfill. The County is also working with Montgomery, Tattnall, and Toombs counties in investigating the possible development of a regional reservoir within the multi-county area. The county is also currently involved with Laurens County in a joint development authority that seeks to attract economic development activities that would be beneficial to one or both counties. Treutlen County participates in a joint effort with Montgomery and Wheeler counties in the operation of the Tri-County Alternative Program for Success (TAPS). Located in Glenwood in Wheeler County, the three counties partnered together in 1995 to create an alternative school for area students who have to be removed from a regular classroom environment due to disruptive behavior. The beneficial program allows students to re-enter the regular classroom environment upon successful completion of the program. The three counties also partner together to administer the Tri-County Family Connection program, which is also located in Glenwood. As issues arise, the local government chief elected officials consult and/or meet with the appropriate administrator/chief elected official as needed. In matters involving the Joint Development Authority, the local government chief elected officials consult and/or meet with the Executive Director of the Treutlen County Development Authority and the president of the Joint Development Authority.

There are several formal coordination mechanisms existing between both local governments in the county. For example, the County and the City of Soperton have a mutual aid agreement involving fire protection. Law enforcement service is currently consolidated countywide, with the City contracting with the County for the service. Either government may opt out of the contract by providing the other party with 30 days notice. In the area of recreation, the City of Soperton provides the service countywide, while the County contributes some funding. The County also operates the Treutlen County Recycling Center, while residents of Soperton may take their recyclables to the facility. The County coordinates with Swainsboro Technical College (STC) to provide skills training and other employment services through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program and STC's Treutlen County Workforce Training Center in the Treutlen County Industrial Park near Soperton. Meetings are held as needed among the appropriate chief elected officials to resolve any ongoing problems or conflicts. In matters involving the local school system, the chief elected officials are available to meet with the school superintendent to resolve issues. Matters involving the Development Authority are handled in regular meetings between the authority's executive director and the chief elected officials. Matters involving Swainsboro Technical College are resolved through meetings including the chief elected officials and the president of the college. The joint comprehensive plan preparation was coordinated by a formal executive committee and a local plan coordination committee with public and private sector members appointed by both of the local governments.

Programs and Requirements

Treutlen County and the City of Soperton are both included in Treutlen County's Service Delivery Strategy. These governments meet on a regular basis to discuss and resolve issues that arise within the various components of the Strategy. The TMDL implementation plan that has been prepared locally is not required to be implemented at this time. There are current regional coordination mechanisms available through the Laurens/Treutlen Joint Development Authority, the possible future development of a regional reservoir also involving Montgomery, Tattnall, and Toombs counties, and the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center. The local governments also actively participate in the RDC which provides a regional forum and means of cooperation, and the Regional Economic Development Academy serves as a forum to promote education and training while promoting economic development on a regional scale. Other state and regional programs are not applicable to Treutlen County at this time.

Joint Planning and Service Agreements

Entities

The local governments in Treutlen County have an inter-agency agreement concerning responses by the various agencies in times of local emergencies. There currently are no other joint planning or service agreements, other than the contract for law enforcement mentioned previously, between the local governments in Treutlen County and adjacent local governments, the school board, and the development authority.

Programs and Requirements

Under the county's Service Delivery Strategy, Treutlen County and the City of Soperton have joint agreements concerning annexations, dispute resolution, and water/sewer service extensions. The Service Delivery Strategy, including these agreements, was updated concurrent with the joint local comprehensive plan. Other state and regional programs are not applicable to Treutlen County.

Special Legislation and Joint Meetings or Work Groups for the Purpose of Coordination

No special legislation or joint meetings or work groups are applicable to Treutlen County involving other local entities or state programs, other than the committees appointed to coordinate the joint comprehensive plan preparation. The local governments in the county do meet periodically to coordinate the countywide Service Delivery Strategy and keep it current, and there is regular coordination, both formal and informal, at the local government staff levels.

Local Government Parties or Offices With Primary Responsibility for Coordination

Entities

The chief elected officials from each local government are the lead agents countywide for coordinating with administrators from the adjacent local governments, the school superintendent, the Development Authority executive director, the president of the Laurens/Treutlen Joint Development Authority, and the president of Swainsboro Technical College.

Programs and Requirements

The chief elected officials of both local governments are responsible for coordinating local issues under the countywide Service Delivery Strategy. Other state and regional programs are not applicable to Treutlen County.

Issues Arising From Growth and Development Proposed In Nearby Governments

At this time, there are no issues arising from growth and development proposed in nearby governments or within the local governments in the county. No land use conflicts are present along the county's jurisdictional borders with adjacent counties. The county's comprehensive plan does not conflict with those of its neighbors. The local plan is also consistent with the Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC's regional plan. The regional review hearing process for comprehensive plans is sufficient to obtain information about other local government plans and policies. Currently there are no service provision conflicts or overlaps or annexation issues in effect. The countywide Service Delivery Strategy is effective in addressing these issues.

Specific Problems and Needs Identified Within Each of the Comprehensive Plan Elements That Would Benefit From Improved or Additional Intergovernmental Coordination

There are several areas within the Local Comprehensive Plan that could stand to benefit from strengthened coordination efforts. Regional efforts to promote economic development are well underway through ongoing participation in the Laurens/Treutlen Joint Development Authority. A need also exists to continue to coordinate efforts between the County and Montgomery, Tattnall, and Toombs counties concerning the investigation and possible location of a regional reservoir in the multi-county area. These efforts need to be maintained and strengthened as appropriate. Greater coordination and commitment between the County, the Development Authority, and a possibly reactivated Soperton Downtown Development Authority could expand the resources available for consistent and steady economic development activities. A need also exists to strengthen the educational and skill levels of the local labor force to ensure that citizens have the skills needed for the kinds of development the county would like to attract. The relationship between the local governments of Treutlen County, the Treutlen County School System, the Region 9 Workforce Investment Board, and Swainsboro Technical College to

improve facilities and services should be expanded as needed. The need for potential coordination does exist concerning the enhancement of information sharing among all local governments as well as the potential for consolidating services. A significant need also exists in the area of land use planning. Treutlen County would stand to benefit from coordinated efforts among all jurisdictions in the coordination, establishment, and/or consolidation of comprehensive countywide land use regulations to address such areas as erosion and sedimentation control, manufactured housing, and codes enforcement. A countywide planning commission would be an effective tool toward developing a comprehensive and unified land development mechanism.

Adequacy of Existing Coordination Mechanisms With Related State Programs and Goals and Implementation Portions of the Local Comprehensive Plan

The countywide Service Delivery Strategy was updated concurrent with the Local Comprehensive Plan. The local governments believe that the current Service Delivery Strategy provides a very effective and efficient delivery of local services. The Strategy addresses procedures for resolving land use and annexation issues, as well as infrastructure improvements such as water and sewer service extensions. The County's membership in the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center provides an avenue for improved coordination of these issues, both on a local and regional basis. Other state and regional programs are not applicable to Treutlen County.

Preliminary Issues and Opportunities

The following preliminary issues and opportunities pertaining to Intergovernmental Coordination were identified by the Treutlen County Local Plan Coordination Committee as part of this Community Assessment:

Issues

- Need for enhanced coordination among local economic development entities
- Need for coordinated efforts in land use planning
- Need for annexation of both industrial parks (Hwy. 29 North and South) into the City of Soperton
- Need for service merger/consolidation
- Improved local cooperation

Opportunities

- Potential for additional service merger/consolidation
- Possible reactivation of Soperton Downtown Development Authority

Exploration of the possible development of a regional reservoir involving Treutlen,
Montgomery, Tattnall, and Toombs counties
Existing service consolidation and cooperation
Regional cooperation

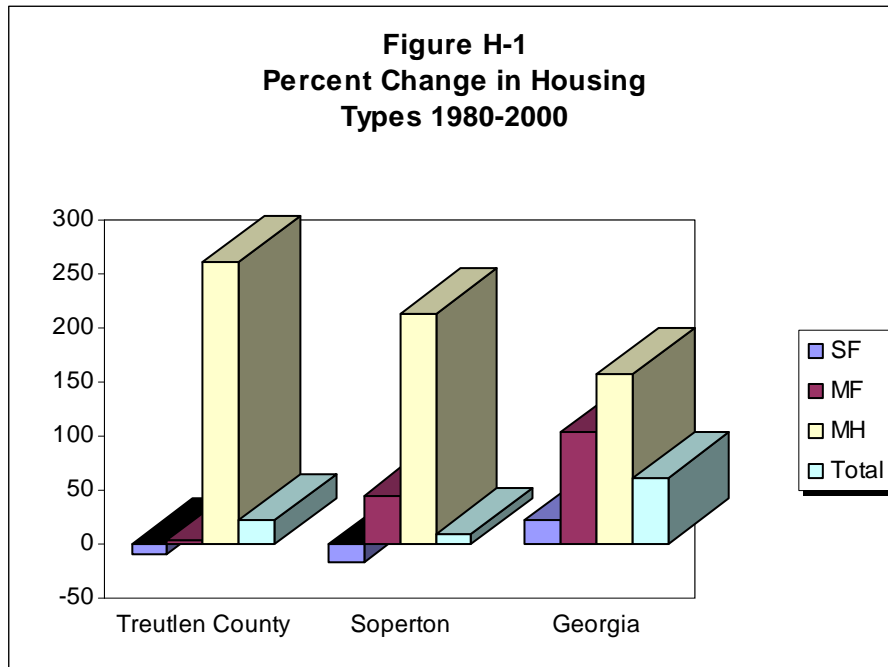
HOUSING

Introduction

Housing is a key link in a comprehensive plan with important relationships to population, economic development, and land use. Growth of almost any sort usually means more people, and they need a place to live. Land must be available for development of a wide range of housing types; there needs to be choice in housing; and housing must be affordable and desirable. Improving the quality of life for people has to begin by ensuring decent, safe, and sanitary shelter. Availability and affordability of housing, and its quality and appearance have become issues important to continued economic development and social equity concerns in many communities. The condition of a community's housing may reflect the condition of the community itself.

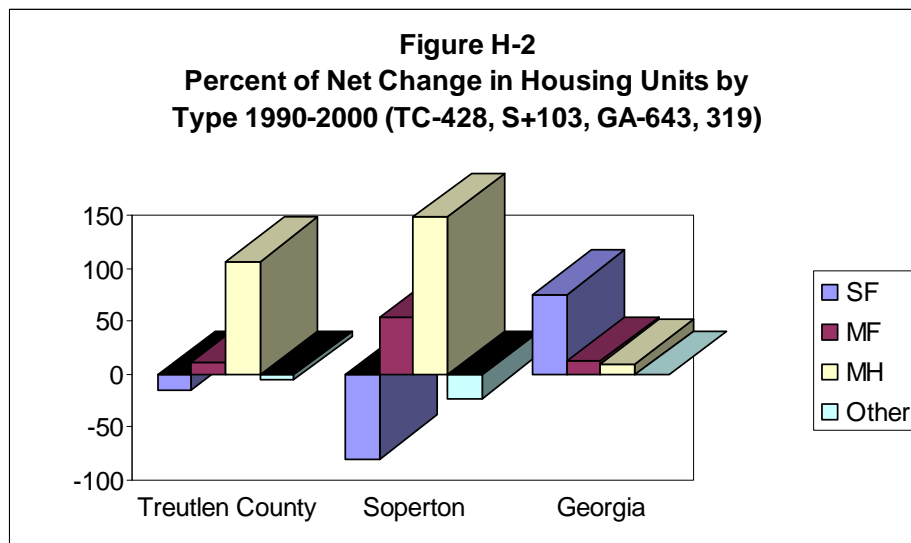
Housing Types and Mix

Treutlen County's total housing units increased by 22.6 percent (528 units) from 1980-2000 (2,337 to 2,865 units), about one-third the rate of Georgia's increase. The county's population grew modestly at 12.6 percent compared to the state's 50 percent during the period. Treutlen County lost 174 of its single-family homes (9.2 percent) from 1980-2000, while Soperton lost 152 such units (17.5 percent). This compares to the state's 44 percent gain. The county gained 7 multi-family units (3.7%). All 196 multi-family units reported were located in Soperton. Georgia more than doubled such units during this time. Manufactured homes county-wide increased by 681 units from 1980-2000 (3.5 times gain in county, 3 times in city). This compares to Georgia's 2.5 times increase during the period. The dramatic growth of manufactured housing reflects the popularity of this lower cost housing option, which allows home ownership for more residents, as well as the availability of land upon which to locate such units.



Source: Table H-1 (See Appendix).

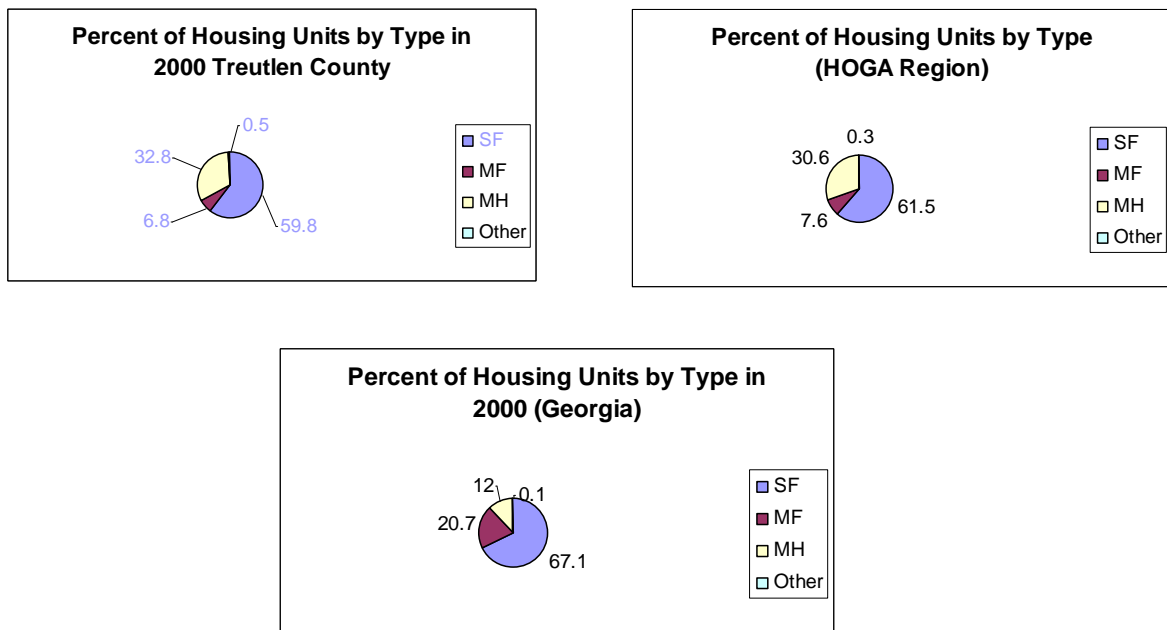
From 1990-2000, Treutlen County gained 428 net total housing units, while losing 60 single-family homes (458 were manufactured housing units). Nearly 90 out of 100 net new housing units were manufactured homes compared to 10 of 100 for the state. During the same period, Soperton gained 103 units, including 153 units of manufactured housing and 55 multi-family, but lost 82 single-family units and 23 other units. Georgia had a net increase of 76 of 100 new housing units as single-family units for the decade.



Source: Table H-1 (See Appendix).

Treutlen County had more manufactured housing (32.8 percent) in 2000 than Region 9 (30.6 percent) and the state (12 percent). Region 9 has the most manufactured housing of any region in Georgia. The county has less single-family units (59.8 percent compared to 61.5 percent for the Region and 67.1 percent for Georgia) and multi-family units (6.8 percent vs. 7.6 percent and 20.7 percent, respectively).

**Figure H-3
Percent of Housing Units by Type,
Treutlen County, Region, and Georgia, 2000**



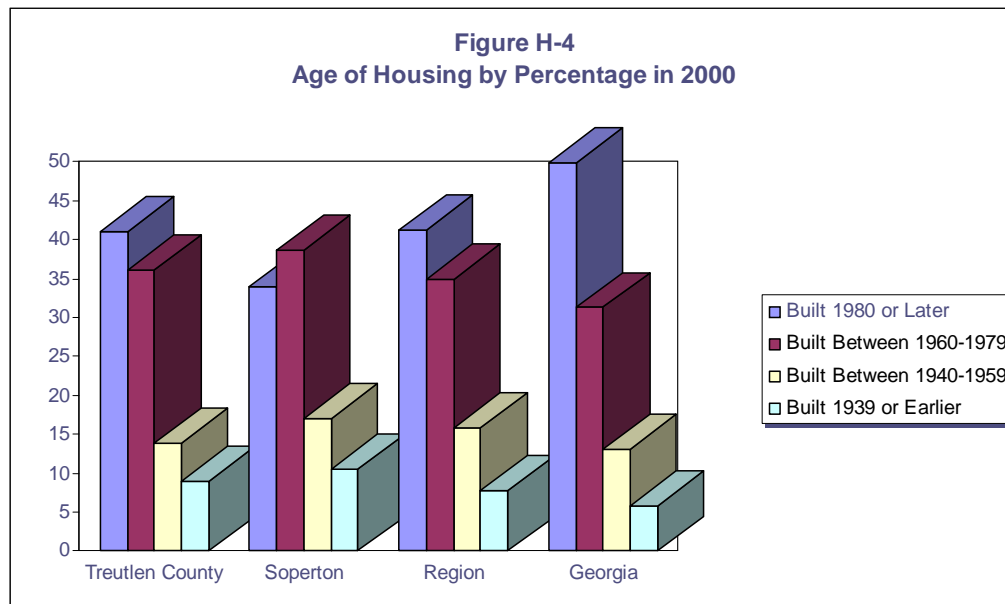
Source: Table H-2 (See Appendix).

Treutlen County is expected to gain about 603 housing units (occupied) or 23.8 percent by 2025, while Soperton’s gain is expected to be about 94 housing units (8.6 percent). Only a slight increase in occupied single-family housing units is projected by 2025 for the county at 3 percent (46 units), while a loss of 5 units (0.76 percent) is expected in Soperton. All multi-family increase (49 units or 27.1 percent) is expected in Soperton and none in the unincorporated area. This is primarily due to the city’s sewer system. As expected based on recent trends, 508 or 61.6 percent of the total 603 projected increase in occupied housing units county-wide by 2025 is

expected to be in manufactured homes. Within Soperton, that increase is projected at 53 units (20.9 percent). See Table H-3 in the Appendix.

Condition and Occupancy

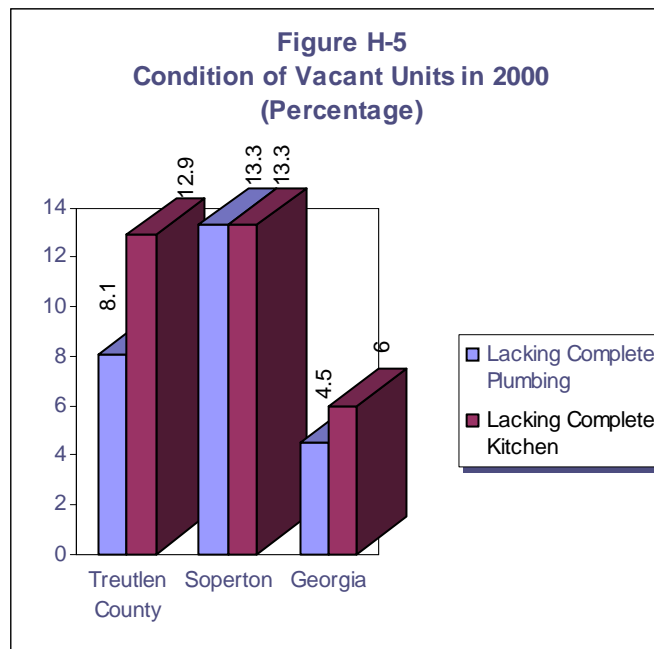
Most of Treutlen County's housing (41 percent) has been built in the last 25 years (primarily manufactured housing), while about 34 percent of Soperton's dates from this period. About 50 percent of Georgia's units have been built during this time. Treutlen County has generally older housing stock than the Region or state. About 27.5 percent of Soperton's housing is more than 40 years old compared to 23 percent for the county. 10.5 percent of Soperton's housing stock is more than 60 years old as is 9.0 percent of the county's housing units.



Source: Table H-4 (See Appendix).

Although there has been a dramatic decline in housing units lacking complete plumbing in Treutlen County since 1980, such units are still higher in the county (1.3 percent) and Soperton (1.2 percent) than Georgia's 0.90 percent. Only 0.4 percent of occupied units in Treutlen County and none in Soperton lacked complete plumbing. The U.S. Census Bureau defines complete plumbing as having hot and cold piped water, a flush toilet, and a tub or shower within the dwelling. See Table H-5 in the Appendix.

Two percent of the county and Soperton's housing units lacked complete kitchen facilities in 2000. This is twice as likely as the state, even more so than the Region. Complete kitchen facilities as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, consist of a sink with piped water, a stove, and refrigerator located inside the housing unit. See Table H-5 in the Appendix. Vacant units are much more likely to lack complete plumbing or kitchens, as to be expected. One in 10.5 units lack such facilities in Treutlen County, compared to 1 in 7.5 in Soperton, and 1 in 20 for Georgia.

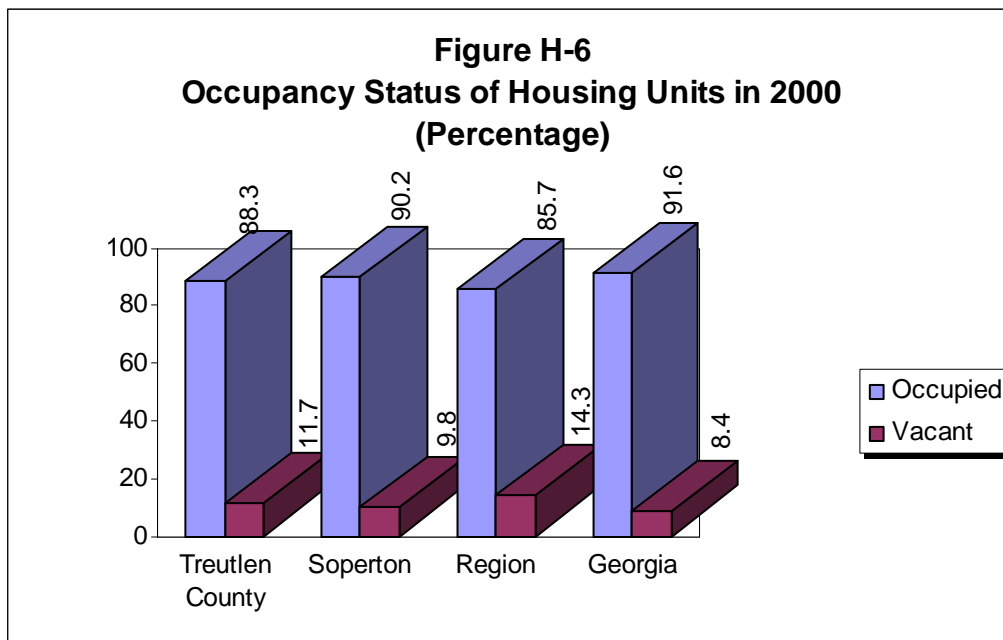


Source: Table H-7 (See Appendix).

Overcrowding, which the U.S. Census Bureau defines as more than one person per room, is generally not a problem in Treutlen County, except in Soperton. The city's 5.4 percent is higher than the Region (4.7 percent) and state (4.8 percent). The county's rate is slightly lower at 4.5 percent. See Table H-5 in the Appendix.

There are no real concentrations of blight in Treutlen County or Soperton, except for in the West Canady Avenue Neighborhood in southwest Soperton. Otherwise, blight tends to be scattered throughout the Treutlen County community.

Housing vacancies at 11.7 percent for the county and 9.8 percent for Soperton are less than the Region's 14.3 percent, but higher than the state (8.4 percent).

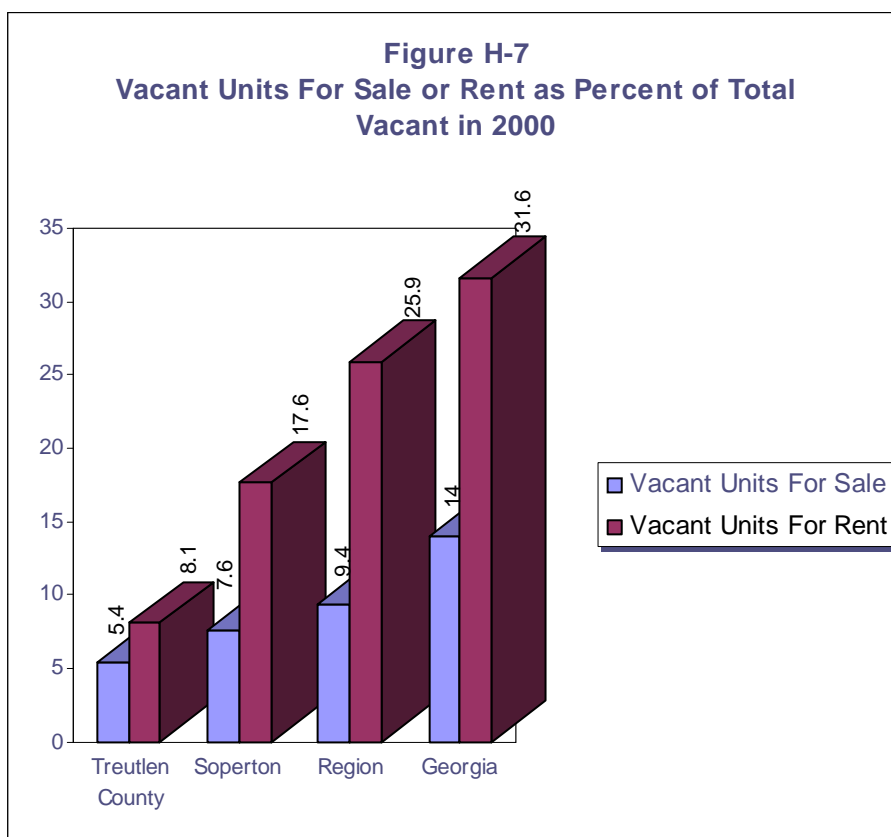


Source: Table H-6 (See Appendix).

Nearly 75 percent of Treutlen County's occupied county housing units are owner occupied (25 percent renter occupied), while Soperton has more renter occupied units at nearly 39 percent (more than the Region's 26.4 percent or Georgia at 32.5 percent). The percentage of owner occupied units increased in both the city (10.4 percent) and county (35.6 percent) since 1980. See Table H-6 in the Appendix. Treutlen County had an owner vacancy rate of 0.94 percent in 2000, as compared to 1.3 percent for Soperton, 2.1 percent for the Region, and 1.9 percent for Georgia. Only 18 vacant units were listed as available for sale in 2000, including 9 units in Soperton. See Table H-7 in the Appendix. In terms of renter vacancy rate, Soperton's 4.7 percent is slightly higher than Treutlen County's 4.1 percent. This compares to 14.1 percent for

the Region and 8.2 percent for Georgia. About 27 units were available for rent county-wide, including 21 units in Soperton.

Vacant housing units are less likely to be for sale or rent in Treutlen County or Soperton than in the Region (35.3 percent) or state (45.6 percent), but are more likely in Soperton (25.2 percent) than Treutlen County as a whole (13.5 percent). The lack of homes on the market in unincorporated Treutlen County is largely due to the housing stock’s age and condition and to families retaining control over an old homeplace, even if vacant.

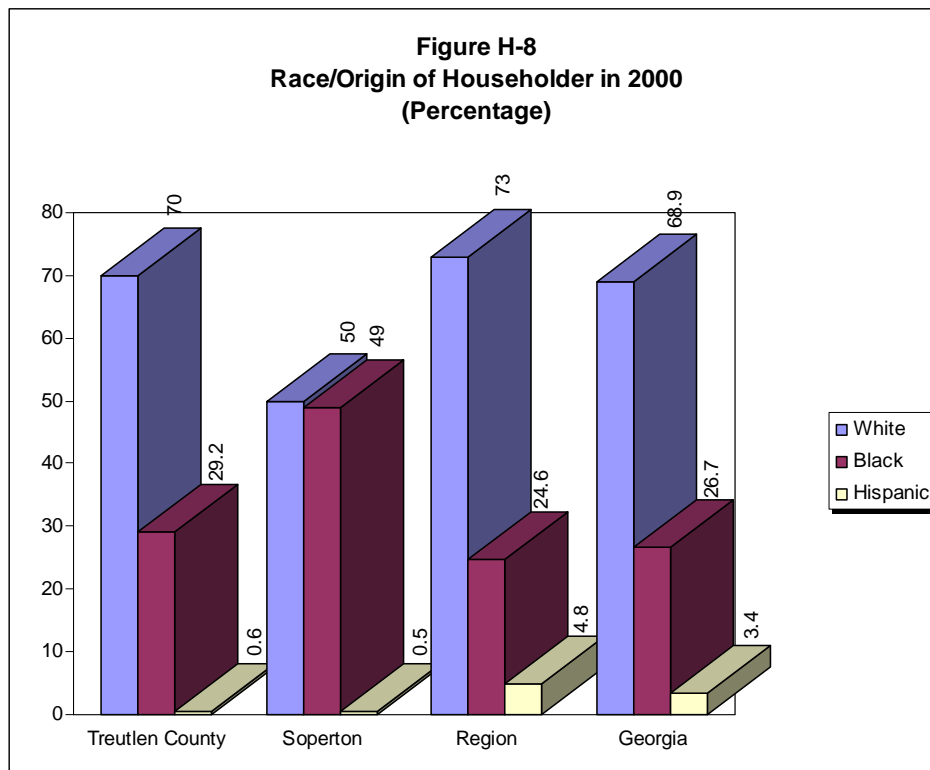


Source: Table H-7 (See Appendix).

Householder Characteristics

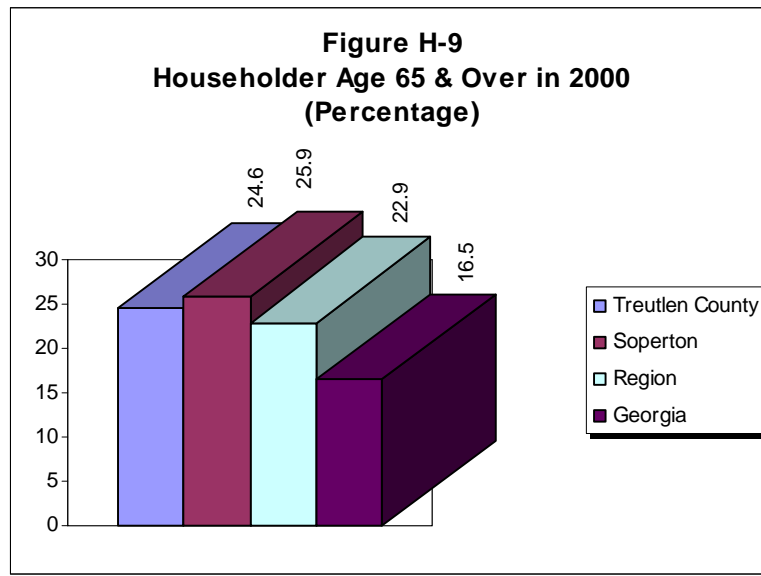
Householders in Treutlen County are predominantly white (70 percent), with 29.2 percent black, and 0.6 percent Hispanic. In Soperton, white and black are nearly even (50 and 49 percent,

respectively), with Hispanic at 0.5 percent. The black population, especially in Soperton, is considerably higher in Treutlen County than in the Region (24.6 percent) or state (26.7 percent), while the Hispanic population is much lower than either. Still, Hispanic households are thought to be increasing.



Source: Table H-6 (See Appendix).

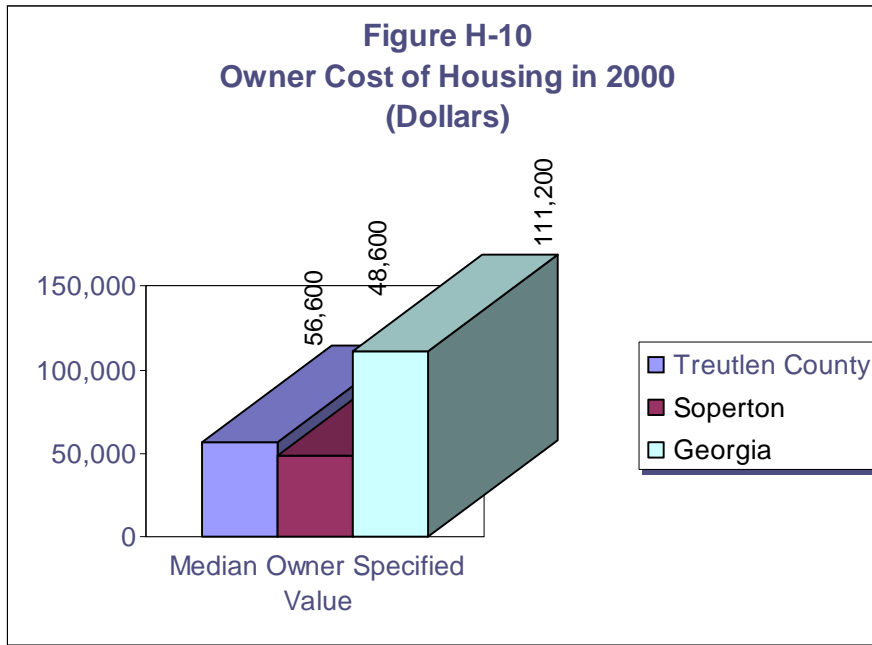
Householders within Treutlen County are more likely to be 65 or over than those in the Region (22.9 percent) and much more likely than those in the state (8-10 percentage points more). There are slightly more senior householders in Soperton (25.9 percent) than the county as a whole (24.6 percent). The high percentage of elderly householders has potential implications in terms of housing condition, such as the inability financially and physically to make repairs. Other issues include the need for accessibility adaptations and elderly support services if they remain in their homes. It also means there will be more occupied houses becoming vacant in Treutlen County, and an opportunity to utilize them in marketing for potential new residents and is consistent with bedroom community promotion.



Source: Table H-6 (See Appendix).

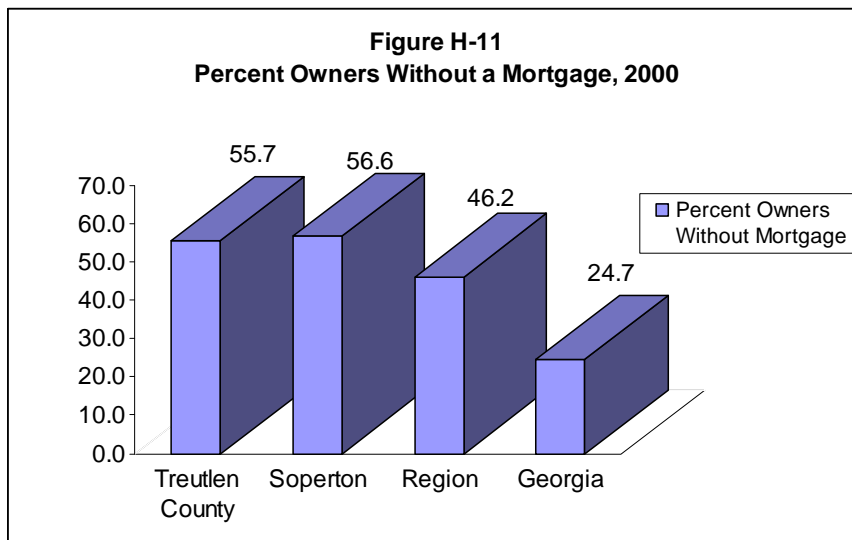
Cost of Housing

The median owner specified value of housing in Treutlen County is \$56,600 (51 percent of state's \$111,200) and \$48,600 (43.7 percent of state) in Soperton. Treutlen County's median owner specified value was considerably less (ranging from \$9,800 to \$17,300 lower) than in three adjacent counties (Toombs, Montgomery, and Laurens), but was higher than three others (Johnson, Wheeler, and Emanuel) by \$5,800 to \$8,600. The median mobile home value in Treutlen County is \$20,900. Existing homes in the county (14) sold for next to the lowest average price (\$47,882) in Region 9 after Wheeler County (\$47,531), substantially less than the Region average of \$71,937. The average purchase price for Georgia (\$150,625) was more than three times that of Treutlen County and more than double the Region. No new homes were reported sold county-wide in 2000.



Source: Table H-8 (See Appendix).

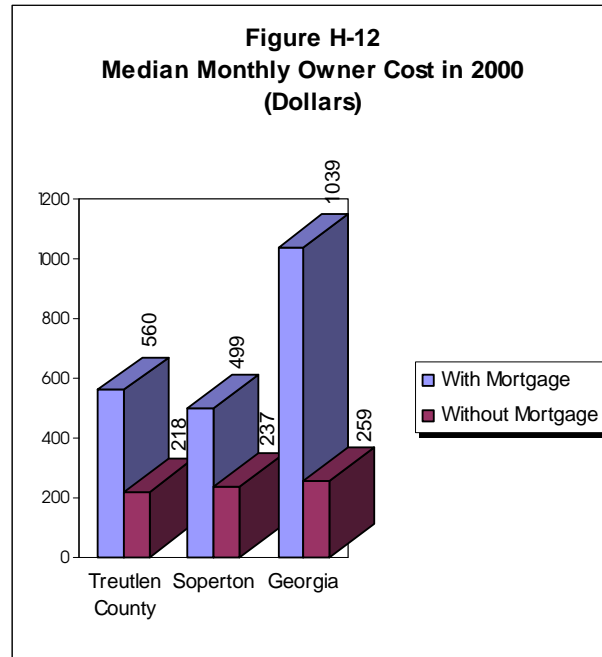
The monthly owner cost of housing in Treutlen County for those with a mortgage is about 48 to 54 percent of the state (\$1,039). The median in the county is \$560 compared to \$499 in Soperton. More than 55 percent of owners in Treutlen County and Soperton do not have a mortgage, compared to 46.2 percent for the Region and 24.7 percent for the state.



Source: Table H-8 (See Appendix).

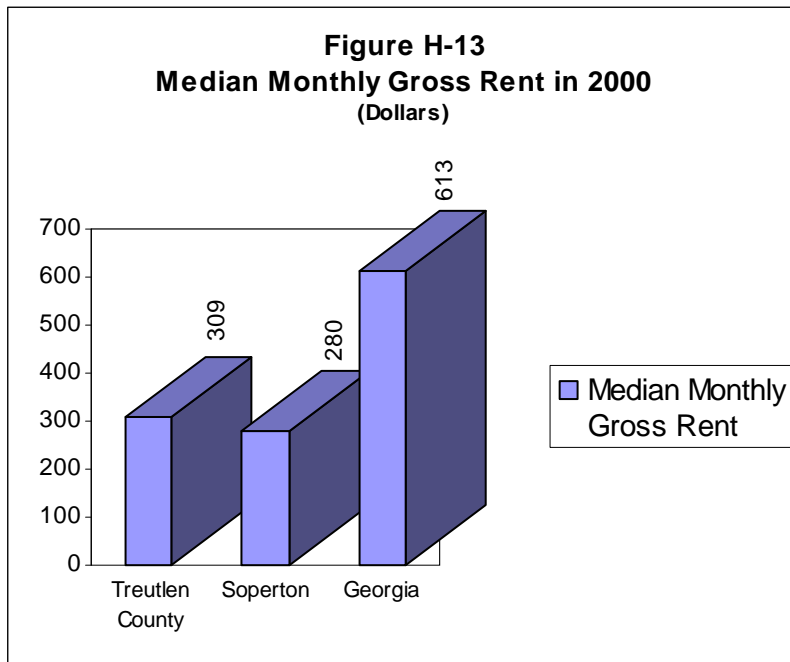
The cost of living difference with Georgia ranges from 8.5 to 15.8 percent less within the county. It is higher in Soperton (\$237) than in the county (\$218). The large number of less costly

manufactured housing units and the older housing stock within Treutlen County help explain the lower housing costs. These lower values and costs could be utilized in bedroom community marketing.



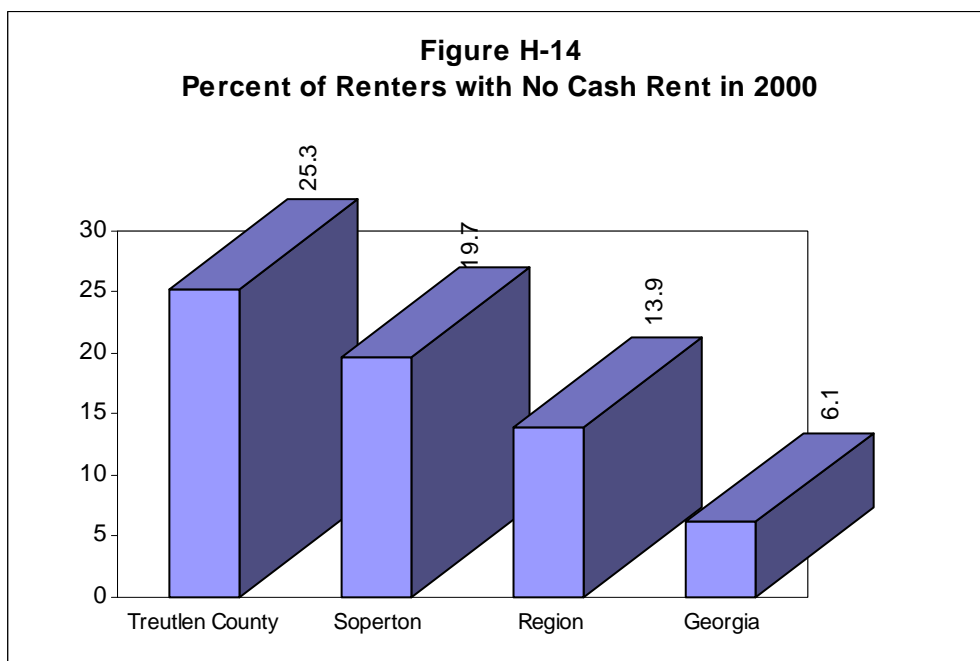
Source: Table H-8 (See Appendix).

Median rent within Treutlen County is \$309 compared to \$280 in Soperton and \$613 for the state. The county compares favorably to its neighboring counties in terms of median gross rent (from \$70 to \$84 less than Toombs, Laurens, and Montgomery counties, but \$13 to \$60 more than Wheeler, Johnson, and Emanuel counties).



Source: Table H-9 (See Appendix).

Renters in the county and Soperton are about three to four times less likely to pay cash rent than those in the state (6.1 percent). About one in four renters in the county and nearly one in five renters in Soperton do not pay cash rent compared to about 14 percent of renters in the Region.

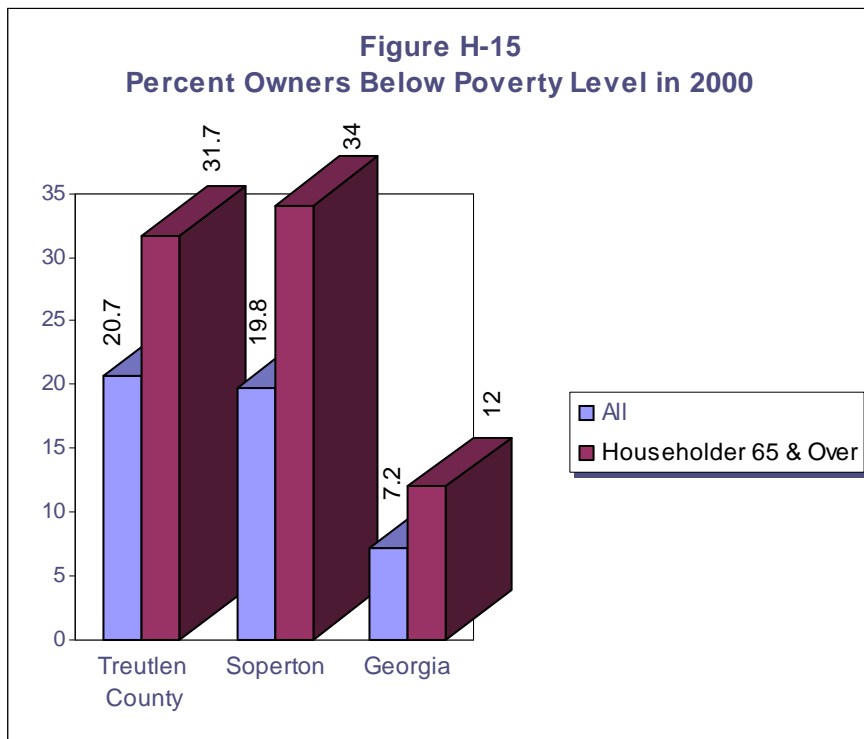


Source: Table H-9 (See Appendix).

Cost-Burdened Households

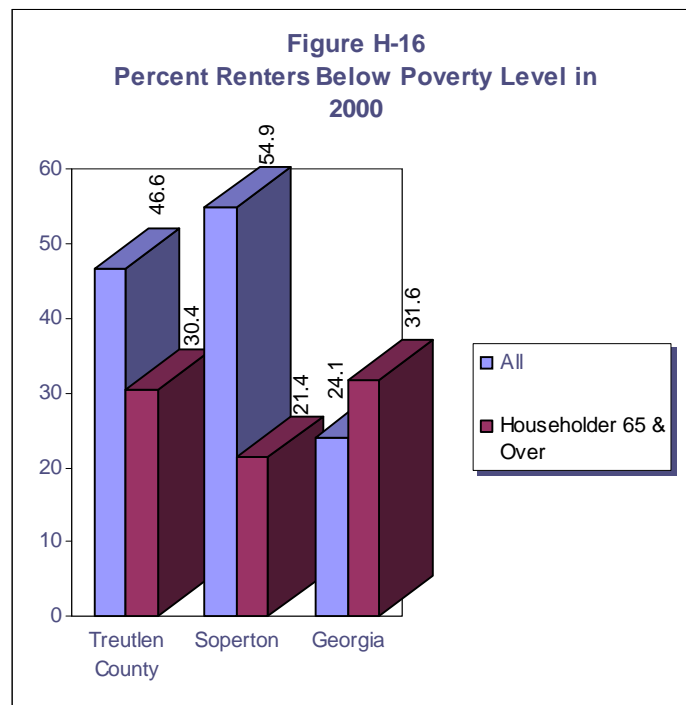
Owner householders in Treutlen County (39.4 percent) are more likely to be cost burdened than those in the Region (36.6 percent), but less likely than those in the state (44.3 percent). Soperton owner householders (48.4 percent) are even more likely to be cost burdened, which the U.S. Census Bureau defines as paying more than 30 percent of one’s gross income for housing costs.

Homeowners within the county are about three times more likely to live in poverty than those in Georgia as a whole (20.7 percent for county, 19.8 percent for Soperton). The poverty statistics for elderly homeowners are even higher with approximately one-third (31.7 percent) of the county’s elderly homeowners living below the poverty level. Soperton has a slightly higher percentage of such homeowners than the county at 34 percent compared to 12 percent for the state. These statistics confirm low incomes in the county, but also have implications for housing condition. Many of these homeowners will not be able to afford housing improvements without financial assistance.



Source: Table H-8 (See Appendix).

Twenty-eight percent of renters in Treutlen County are cost burdened, while just over 32 percent in Soperton are cost-burdened. Out of those, 16.2 percent of renters in the county are severely cost burdened, defined as spending 50 percent or more of one’s income on housing costs. Renters in Treutlen County (46.6 percent) are nearly twice as likely than those in the state (24.1 percent) to live below the poverty line. Soperton renters (54.9 percent) are even more likely to live in poverty. More than 30 percent of county seniors who rent live below the poverty line (slightly less than the state’s 31.6 percent), while 21.4 percent of Soperton’s senior renters live in poverty. There are 120 units of public housing in Treutlen County, all located in Soperton (17.51 units/1,000 persons). This is the second highest rate in the Region after Evans County. No Low Income Housing Tax Credit units had been built in Treutlen, Appling, or Jeff Davis counties as of 2002.



Source: Table H-9 (See Appendix).

Special Housing Needs

As the elderly population of Treutlen County and Soperton grows, there will be increasing need for assistance to aging homeowners with normal maintenance and repairs, as well as accessibility adaptations and services provided for those who remain in their own homes. The availability and cost of such assistance is a concern for those on fixed incomes and/or those who cannot physically make the repairs themselves. Often in small rural communities, such as Treutlen County and Soperton, family members, neighbors, and/or churches provide volunteer assistance to meet the needs of elderly homeowners. The needs may also be lessened because of the large numbers of homes without a mortgage. Homeowners may be able to afford repairs even if they have lower incomes. The local senior center and the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Area Agency on Aging provide further assistance with obtaining needed services. Elderly renters, while they may not have the same maintenance and repair issues as homeowners, are a special concern given their increased likelihood of living in poverty.

Elderly housing facilities for those unable to remain in their own home, such as personal care homes, in Treutlen County consist of one public facility operated with the Treutlen County Nursing Home and one private facility. There are waiting lists for both. Because the State limits the number of beds allowed, some Treutlen elderly live in facilities in Toombs County or Glenwood/Wheeler County.

There may be a market for public and/or private development of retirement housing for Treutlen County's elderly population and attracting retirees, including congregate housing for both those who can function independently, as well as those who need care. Development of retirement housing needs to take place within or near Soperton where infrastructure is available.

Treutlen County has no known homeless population, as families tend to take care of their relatives, nor is there a local domestic violence shelter. The closest domestic violence shelters are located in Toombs and Laurens counties. There were eight police actions taken in Treutlen County in 2000 in response to domestic violence reports.

There were an estimated 383 migrant and seasonal farm workers in Treutlen County in 1994. It is known that this figure has increased substantially in recent years, but an accurate count is difficult to obtain due to cultural differences and language barriers, as well as the illegal immigration issue. It was estimated in the late 1990s that Georgia had at least 100,000 migrant workers. There are USDA programs to assist with migrant housing needs, but they are not known to have been utilized in Treutlen County.

An estimated 40.95 percent of the adult population of Treutlen County has some type of mental, physical, or developmental disability that may or may not require special housing needs. There are presently three group homes in Soperton to serve the county's disabled population.

A total of six cases of HIV/AIDS have been reported in Treutlen County from 1981-2000. No special housing is currently provided within the Treutlen community for this population, and none is projected to be needed during the planning period.

An estimated 404 adults in Treutlen County were in need of substance abuse treatment in 2001. To help meet this need, the Christian Family Retreat Center was established in Soperton in 1995. The non-profit residential treatment center provides four to six month drug and alcohol recovery programs. Its current facility is designed to house 24 patients and always has a waiting list. Fundraising is underway to expand the existing facility with the addition of a 50 bed unit in 2008.

Jobs-Housing Balance

Current and historic data on characteristics of Treutlen County's population that impact housing needs in the county and Soperton, such as age, household size, income, average wages, and commuting patterns of the resident and nonresident workforce are addressed in the Population and Economic Development elements of this plan. Housing supply and affordability issues will not be constraining elements to expected growth. On the converse, the housing market in the county will support and should help attract growth and development. There is a somewhat

limited availability of housing for immediate occupancy, but ample land is available for development or location.

Overall, Treutlen County does not have major housing issues, especially ones which will prevent, or have limiting influences to, expected accommodation of future growth and development. Some special housing needs, particularly for the elderly and low income do exist. There are also needs for housing rehabilitation, quality developments, more apartments, existing programs promotion for individuals and developers, code enforcement, and land use regulation.

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS AND LAND USE

Existing and Future Growth

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. There has been some residential growth on small acreages south and west of Soperton and near Lothair in southwest Treutlen County primarily because of subdivided land available for sale. There has been one new subdivision in newly annexed portions of Soperton near Ga. Hwy. 46 west. The recreation complex on Ga. Hwy. 46 west, and the new industrial parks along Ga. Hwy 29 north and south of Soperton are stimuli for future growth. At present, the county's land use is relatively stable outside of Soperton and I-16.

Future opportunities for growth include the I-16 corridor and its three interchanges, the Ga. Hwy 29 corridor from Soperton to I-16 and its wide, landscaped right-of-way dating from the Roosevelt Era, and the Georgia 15 corridor. The rural quality of life, the Oconee and Ohoopie rivers, the Million Pines Plantation and Festival, Sand Hill and Wildwood lakes, other natural beauty, many historic landmarks and buildings, and downtown Soperton are assets for attracting growth. Treutlen County's location near the local growth centers of Vidalia and Dublin, and along I-16 between Macon and Savannah, will also attract growth. The availability of relatively cheap land for development and sale will facilitate such growth in the future.

The lack of land use regulation in the county, even in Soperton, is an obstacle to managing and directing growth and to encouraging quality development. The appearance of the county, including downtown properties, substandard housing, and other vacant run-down buildings, manufactured homes, and properties, is a detraction to growth. There are

also needs for public infrastructure, especially water/sewer services, and for upgraded public and educational facilities to help facilitate, accommodate, and direct growth and development.

Existing Land Use

The existing land use patterns of Treutlen County and Soperton were examined by the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center's Geographic Information Systems staff in early 2006 by analyzing a previous zoning land use study, tax maps, and other available sources. A generalized land use map digitized as a layer to an existing digital base map meeting DCA requirements resulted. Standard land use classifications identified in the "Local Planning Requirements" were utilized as categories, except that "agriculture" and "forestry" were separated because of the dominance of these uses within Treutlen County. The descriptions of these land use classifications are defined as follows.

Land Use Category Definitions

Residential:

The predominant use of land within the residential category is for single-family and multi-family dwelling units organized into general categories of net densities.

Commercial:

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

Industrial:

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

Public/Institutional:

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

Transportation/Communications/Utilities:

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

Park/Recreation/Conservation:

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

Agriculture:	This category is for land dedicated to farming, such as fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock/poultry production, etc., or other similar rural uses.
Forestry:	Land dedicated to commercial timber or pulpwood production/harvesting or other woodland use.
Undeveloped/Vacant:	This category is for lots or tracts of land that are served by typical urban public services (water, sewer, etc.) but have not been developed for a specific use or were developed for a specific use that has since been abandoned.

The generalized land use maps were provided to the local governments for review and correction. The local governments utilized local knowledge by a number of staff and elected officials to note corrections to the initial GIS maps. RDC GIS staff then revised the digital information. The resulting existing land use maps are shown on Map LU-1 for Treutlen County and on Map LU-2 for the City of Soperton.

The GIS system is also able to determine acreages for the various land use classifications in each jurisdiction. Table LU-1 provides the existing land use acreages for Treutlen County and the City of Soperton. Combined, agriculture and forestry land uses account for more than 94 percent of the land area of the county, with forestry (mostly pine tree plantations) accounting for almost 80 percent of all land use by itself. Almost one-third of Soperton's land area also remains in agriculture or forestry use. The dominance of Soperton as the center of intense commercial and other high-density uses can be seen in the "commercial" and "public/institutional" categories. The lack of industrial use within Soperton proper is because the two industrial parks are not currently located within the city limits.

**TABLE LU-1
Existing Land Use Distribution, 2006
(Acres)
Treutlen County and Soperton**

<u>Land Use Category</u>	<u>Total County</u>	<u>% of Total County</u>	<u>Unincorporated County</u>	<u>% of Unincorporated County</u>	<u>Soperton</u>	<u>% of Soperton</u>
Agriculture	19,332	14.9%	19,212	15.1%	120	4.9%
Forestry	102,661	79.3%	101,975	80.3%	686	27.9%
Residential	2,979	2.3%	1,738	1.4%	1,241	50.4%
Commercial	93	0.1%	2	0 ^{1/2} %	91	3.7%
Industrial	166	0.1%	166	0.1%	0	0%
Public/Institutional	138	0.1%	5	0 ^{1/2} %	133	5.4%
Park/Recreation/ Conservation	1,965	1.5%	1,926	1.5%	39	1.6%
Transportation/ Communications/Utilities	2,177	1.7%	2,027	1.6%	150	6.1%
Total	129,511	100%	127,051	100%	2,460	100%

^{1/2} Less than 0.1%.

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

Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha RDC Geographic Information System, 2006.

Areas Requiring Special Attention

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

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

The significant natural resources of Treutlen County generally include its rural farmlands and timberlands and the resulting scenic landscape, but specifically the Oconee and Ohoopie Rivers and the large private lakes, Wildwood and Sand Hill lakes. These could be addressed through increased public access, tourism promotion, alternative private farm developments, and land use and environmental ordinance regulation. They would be a part of the proposed Rural Treutlen Character Area.

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

There are no true areas where rapid development or land use change is expected. The I-16 interchanges are the most likely area for expected land use changes, although not rapid. Land use regulation, public infrastructure development, and tourism promotion are the principal means to address and influence these changes. The I-16 Corridor Character Area would encompass this area.

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

There are no areas within Treutlen County and the City of Soperton where the pace of development has or is likely to outpace the provision of community facilities and services. There is no issue to address, although additional and improved community facilities and services are needed to serve and attract growth, and these are identified elsewhere in this plan.

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

There is an identified general need to enhance aesthetics and attractiveness in the county to enhance and attract growth and development, to better highlight the scenic beauty of the rural landscape, and to further improve the quality of life. Downtown Soperton, because of a concentration of buildings in need of rehabilitation, has been identified as a candidate for aesthetic improvement. The Georgia Highway 29 Corridor from Soperton to I-16 has also been identified as needing landscaping improvement to restore its impressive and historic status as a wide, landscaped entranceway into Soperton dating from FDR's days. These needs could be addressed through regulation, code enforcement, and public and private investment. Downtown Soperton would be a subarea of the Greater Soperton Character Area. Georgia Highway 29 is a proposed highway corridor character area.

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

There are no identified large abandoned structures or sites requiring special attention. This is no particular issue to address other than continued vigilance and diligence to diverse economic development pursuits.

Areas with significant infill development opportunities (scattered vacant sites)

There are areas within Soperton and within the Soperton urban area of infrastructure (particularly the industrial park) with vacant lots and areas appropriate for both infill and general development. These could be addressed primarily through regulation, public investment, and the encouragement and promotion of private investment. These areas are located within the Greater Soperton Character Area.

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

Poverty and blight is generally scattered throughout Soperton and Treutlen County without true concentrations. There is a small concentrated area in southwest Soperton, the West Canady Avenue Neighborhood, in need of housing rehabilitation. This area is located within the Greater Soperton Character Area.

Recommended Character Areas

The preliminarily identified and recommended character areas (and subareas) include the following parts of the county and city because of their uniqueness, differing expectations of, and stimuli for, growth and development. They are shown graphically on Map LU-3. The Greater Soperton Character Area's subareas are depicted on Map LU-4.

Greater Soperton. The City of Soperton as the only municipality, the seat of county government, and with the only public infrastructure, will continue to be the focus for intense development, particularly general commercial, industrial, and multi-family residential growth. The expected growth and character area will include the surrounding environs, within a ½ to 1 mile radius of Soperton, because of the availability of water and sewer service and the location of facilities. Soperton's downtown commercial area, the existing city limits urban area and the surrounding urban fringe would be subareas of the

large Greater Soperton Character Area because of their special needs and importance to helping stimulate overall growth and development. The GA 15, GA 29, and GA56/US 221 Highway Corridors would intersect the Greater Soperton Character Area by traversing through the Urban Fringe subarea.

The Greater Soperton Character Area is and would be characterized by a mixture of all land use types, but at a higher density and intensity customary for small urban areas. Apartment complexes, shopping centers, industrial parks, office complexes, governmental buildings, schools, and large community recreation facilities are uses that might be unique to this character area, or at least more concentrated within. The existing urban area would likely have greater densities of land use than the urban fringe. Land use regulation in the urban fringe area would require the coordination and cooperation by Treutlen County, while growth in the Downtown and the Soperton Urban Subareas could be managed by the City of Soperton itself.

I-16 and State Highway Corridors. The fact that I-16 with an ever increasing amount of traffic traverses the county from the west to the east is a significant asset for future growth by providing both access to residents, travelers, as well as businesses and industry. The county has three interchanges along I-16, all relatively undeveloped at present. Georgia Highway 29 is a natural gateway into Soperton. It also has a wide right-of-way which was made a landscaped showpiece during the Roosevelt Era, and could again be made something unique and special which would attract people to Soperton. The main industrial park's location on Hwy. 29 north of Soperton and land for sale in the corridor will further attract growth. Georgia Hwy. 15 is another gateway from I-16. Its status for future widening as part of the Governor's Road Improvement Program and importance in intrastate travel in Georgia (particularly to Athens and the University of Georgia) are key to its potential. The location of the Million Pines Plantation and its important history in pine plantation development and tree farming along Hwy. 15 between I-16 and Soperton is also an asset for attracting visitors and future growth and development.

These highway corridor character areas are still primarily in forestry and agriculture use with some scattered residential, commercial, and industrial uses. They are envisioned with more intense commercial and industrial uses, particularly around the I-16 interchanges, and as inviting gateways into Soperton with attractive mixed uses, including quality residential developments and likely, some continued forestry/agriculture uses as well.

Rural Treutlen County. The vast majority of Treutlen County with its stable forestry/agricultural/rural land uses will be the largest character area. The verdant pine forests, the Oconee and Ochoopee rivers, and other natural and cultural assets offer attractions for residential growth to take advantage of the atmosphere, open spaces, and quality of life. There are also advantages and potentials for economic development in a broader sense including agriculture, forestry, tourism, recreational, and value added concerns.

This remaining unincorporated area is primarily still characterized by agriculture and forestry uses. There is also scattered residential and neighborhood type commercial uses as well as transportation/communication/utilities uses, but in a rural setting. The future uses are envisioned with similar rural character and uses, although public park/recreation/conservation uses would be enhanced.

ANALYSIS OF CONSISTENCY WITH QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

Introduction

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

In general, Treutlen County and Soperton’s policies, activities, and development patterns are supportive of and consistent with the Statewide Planning Goals. Variation of the statewide goals were all espoused in the currently adopted joint comprehensive plan, *Soperton-Treutlen Comprehensive Plan 1990-2010*. Some of this consistency, however, is due to a lack of growth pressure, and the existing dearth of a truly developed local economy. The high incidence of poverty and low incomes, the lack of much growth, and the abundance of forest lands have resulted in quality environments without much development threat. The lack of existing land use regulation, the fragmentation of the forest industry, and the existing quality of life could pose threats and conflicts to continuation of desired growth patterns as development, particularly residential, is attracted to Treutlen County.

Statewide Planning Goals

The following Statewide Planning Goals are generally supported by Treutlen County and Soperton’s policies, activities, and development patterns.

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

Comment: This may be the number one goal of Treutlen County/Soperton.

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

Comment: This is important to Treutlen County/Soperton and was a key strategy in their first comprehensive plan.

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

Comment: Treutlen County/Soperton strives to have adequate infrastructure to serve existing and future populations and to attract economic development, but is limited by a small tax base and low incomes.

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

Comment: This is a desire for Treutlen County/Soperton, but is made more difficult by low incomes.

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

Comment: The need for transportation infrastructure improvements is a key to future growth and development in Treutlen County, but there is currently little land use regulation.

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

Comment: Treutlen County/Soperton have survived through intergovernmental coordination; have been almost a model; and will continue to rely on it in the future.

Quality Community Objectives

Consistency with these elaborations of the Statewide Planning Goals is more problematic since many do not seem to be applicable to a small, rural county with limited growth, and since many also assume the existence of local land use regulation. The assessment tool survey of DCA was utilized in the initial draft assessment, but each Quality Community Objective is listed below with comment on Treutlen County/Soperton.

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

Comment: Treutlen County/Soperton has always identified and cooperated in a regional identity of Georgia’s “Pine Belt,” as a part of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, and in joint projects with neighboring counties. This is not an issue.

Growth Preparedness Objective: Each community should identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate

training of the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.

Comment: This is an objective which is a basic expression of the purpose of a comprehensive plan, was addressed in the old plan, and will be addressed in this plan. There are unmet needs and issues in all of these subareas within Treutlen County/Soperton. There is a lack of even basic land use/growth management regulation.

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

Comment: Diverse economic development is a key to future growth of Treutlen County/Soperton, and it is realized that current education levels/job skills limit economic development. It is also desired that the existing quality of life and natural and cultural resources of the county be protected.

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

Comment: The community is proud of its secondary school programs and its existing Workforce Training Center/Satellite Campus of Swainsboro Technical College, but wants to improve both programs and facilities. There are major technology and secondary facility needs.

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

Comment: This is an issue within Treutlen County/Soperton. It essentially is a bedroom community, and because of its small size/scale, this will be difficult to address.

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

Comment: This is an expressed desire of Treutlen County/Soperton, but would be difficult under growth pressure because of a lack of basic land use regulation in the city or county.

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

Comment: This has not been an issue because of the large existing amount of farmland and timberland which dominates existing land use, but there are no mechanisms to achieve future set asides, other than a desire for the location of public (state) wildlife management areas and or public fishing areas.

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

Comment: Environmental protection is not perceived as a local issue, but one for the state. There is minimal protection through environmental planning criteria ordinances (not yet adopted by the County, but will be) and health department regulation. Again,

there is a general local desire to protect natural and cultural resources and quality of life, but there is lack of even basic land use regulation.

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

Comment: There has been great success in Treutlen County/Soperton in regional cooperation as noted elsewhere. Some of these include economic development, education, workforce training, and law enforcement. There is also great reliance on the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center. This is not an issue.

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

Comment: This is not truly applicable to Treutlen County/Soperton as large scale alternatives to the automobile in such a small, rural county are not realistic. There is a one-van Treutlen County Transit System 5311 Program, and the county is served by DHR's Coordinated Transit. There is a desire to improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

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

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

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

Comment: Housing costs are relatively affordable in Treutlen County, but there has been great reliance on manufactured homes because of low incomes. All who work in Treutlen County can afford to live there, but there are housing condition problems and some cost burdened household issues.

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

Comment: This is truly not applicable to Treutlen County/Soperton. Almost all of Soperton could be considered a “traditional neighborhood.” There is no market for such developments at this time. People want to live either in Soperton on relatively large lots or more likely, large lots (an acre or more) in Treutlen County to preserve rural character.

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

Comment: There is vacant land within Soperton, and there is a desire for more intense residential, commercial, and industrial developments to locate in or near Soperton, or near I-16 interchanges. This is likely to happen in any event because the only public sewerage in the county is operated by the City of Soperton. With the limited growth that has occurred, the issue has been, and will likely continue to be, to obtain compatible development of any kind, not just infill.

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

Comment: The development and redevelopment of Downtown Soperton has been expressed as a key concern for Treutlen County/Soperton and an important focal point for future growth and development. Downtown Soperton remains the community focal point for shopping, dining, government, meeting, and landmark uses at this point, and there is a desire that this continues.

LIST OF POTENTIAL ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Economic Development

Issues

- Unemployment/Lack of Jobs
- Industrial Park Improvements/Speculative Building
- Infrastructure Development to I-16
- Landscaping of Hwy. 29 Gateway
- Downtown Improvements/Revitalization
- Upgrades of School Facilities
- Recreation Facilities (esp. Adult; Festival Site?)
- Attraction of I-16 Travelers
- Development of Hospitality Facilities/Services (Lodging, Restaurants)
- Development of Medical Services
- Enhanced Leadership Programs
- Improved Local Cooperation
- Low job skills/educational levels
- Recruitment of transportation/distribution businesses
- Declining agricultural/forestry sectors

Opportunities

- Location of I-16 (Hwy. 15 & 29)
- Highway 29 Gateway Corridor
- Million Pines Festival
- Infrastructure Capacity
- Available, Affordable Land for Industry
- Secondary and Post-Secondary Educational Programs
- Downtown
- Existing Service Consolidation and Cooperation
- Regional Cooperation
- Oconee/Ohoopee Rivers

Natural and Cultural Resources

Issues

- Need for landscaping restoration of Hwy. 29
- Need for downtown historic buildings rehabilitation
- Need for community landmark preservation, rehabilitation, and reuse (old school buildings, historical society building, courthouse, community house, and others)

Need to renovate/maintain Primary School Auditorium for community use
Need to upgrade/establish Oconee and Ochoopee Rivers access/boat landings
Need to develop/encourage utilization of the county's natural resources/forests through possible trail development, public fishing, or wildlife management areas.

Opportunities

Public and Private Utilization of Rivers and Sand Hill Lake
Promotion of Hwy 29 as Gateway
Better utilization and more development/promotion of Gillis Park, Iva Park, and other recreation facilities/venues
Promotion/marketing/utilization of Welcome Center, Million Pines Plantation, and other historic buildings/landmarks

Housing

Issues

Lack of available single-family homes on market
Existence of relatively large numbers of substandard and abandoned houses
Lack of land use regulation
Need for code enforcement
Condition and appearance of manufactured homes
Need for education on available housing assistance programs to public and developers
Need to extend infrastructure to annexed areas of Soperton to encourage housing development

Opportunities

Availability of land for sale and development
Recent subdivision development in Soperton
Rural quality of life/atmosphere

Land Use

Issues

Substandard Housing
Downtown Revitalization
Existence of vacant, run-down buildings/properties
Lack of land use regulation

Opportunities

Development of transportation corridors
 (I-16, Hwy. 29, Hwy. 15)
 Rural quality of life/atmosphere
 Natural resources (Rivers, Forests)
 Existing parks and recreation facilities
 Availability of affordable land for development
 Possible location for regional landfill
 Possible utilization of methane from old landfill

Community Facilities and ServicesIssues

Need for water/sewer expansion to annexed areas
 Need to connect water/sewer systems of Soperton and Industrial Park
 Need to provide Hwy. 29 water/sewer service
 Need to develop LAS site for expansion of wastewater treatment
 Need for technological service upgrades (Broadband service, local government equipment, technology lab (incubator)
 Need for road/street improvements
 Need for airport upgrades (runway, terminal, hangers)
 Need for public safety improvements (jail, EMS, EMA, fire stations, central training facility, dry hydrants)
 Need for general government facilities expansion/upgrade
 (Soperton City Hall, Courthouse, Community House, landmarks)
 Need for new recreation facilities
 (adult, playground, bleachers, possible new Million Pines site, boat ramps)
 Need for new educational facilities/programs
 (new schools, post secondary programs, tech college expansion)
 Need for community facilities improvements
 (Primary School Auditorium, Senior Center, DFACS Building)
 Need for solid waste management improvements
 (dumpster sites, recycling expansion)
 Need for medical services improvements
 (access, nursing home expansion)
 Need for animal control
 Need for downtown streetscape/parking improvements
 Need for service merger/consolidation

Opportunities

Capacity of new wastewater treatment plant
 Million Pines Festival utilization/promotion

Hwy. 29 corridor/gateway
Welcome Center/Historic Buildings
Industrial Park water/sewer availability and possible expansion/connection to
Soperton along Hwy. 29
Swainsboro Tech facility within industrial park
Local ISO ratings

Intergovernmental Coordination

Issues

Need for enhanced coordination among local economic development entities
Need for coordinated efforts in land use planning
Need for annexation of both industrial parks (Hwy. 29 North and South) into the
City of Soperton
Need for service merger/consolidation
Improved local cooperation

Opportunities

Potential for additional service merger/consolidation
Possible reactivation of Soperton Downtown Development Authority
Exploration of the possible development of a regional reservoir involving
Treutlen, Montgomery, Tattnall, and Toombs counties
Existing service consolidation and cooperation
Regional cooperation