

OUR PLAN

Welcome to the SMART BULLOCH 2045 PLAN. This Comprehensive Plan update is both visionary and strategic, articulating our aspirations for the future of Bulloch County and the cities of Brooklet, Portal and Register. It is also a toolbox of ideas that guide policy and decision-making for community investment and land use.

This Comprehensive Plan update is a progressive product of planning studies and technical reports built upon since the 1990's. These plans and reports provide a more in-depth understanding of the evolution of the community and how they relate back to the set of guiding principles articulated in this document. As such, this should be considered a living document, being regularly reviewed, modified, and supplemented as necessary to reflect changing circumstances, needs, and opportunities. Keeping this plan current enables Bulloch County's communities to utilize a range of implementation tools to advance the vision of the plan. It is the goal of the community to keep this plan relevant and ever reflecting of the desires to remain the best place in Georgia to live, work, play, and invest.

PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

MANAGEMENT TOOLS

- Promote a strong, healthy community.
- Provide a common vision for the future of the community.
- Set priorities.
- Determine future initiatives for civic investments.
- Guide to amending policies and regulations.
- Assist in forming public budgets and capital improvements programs.
- Protect property rights while supporting and accommodating economic development.
- Promote orderly and rational development that is economically viable.
- Manage growth and development.

PLANNING AND DESIGN TOOLS

- Create certainty about where development will occur.
- Strategically locate future developments in relation to public infrastructure.
- Achieve development patterns that are orderly, rational, physically attractive and economically viable.

- Gauge future impacts of assumed growth due to Hyundai Metaplant locating in neighboring Bryan County.
- Preserve important natural, cultural and historic resources.
- Encourage infill and redevelopment.
- Create a sense of place.
- Provide transportation alternatives.
- Target planning for special districts or areas.
- Establish a baseline for future housing initiatives.

This Comprehensive Plan update serves the purpose of meeting the intent of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) "Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning". Preparation in accordance with these standards adopted October 2018, is an essential requirement in maintaining status as a Qualified Local Government (QLG). QLG status allows communities to remain eligible for state-aid assistance programs. Bulloch County, Brooklet, Portal and Register are required to update their Comprehensive Plan every five years, along with their Community Work Program. Additionally, well prepared and implementing local governments which are able to demonstrate significant and local successes based on their Comprehensive Plan are eligible to receive the Department of Community Affairs' PlanFirst Community designation. While the City of Statesboro updates its comprehensive plan independently, this joint comprehensive plan process considers Statesboro's presence and importance to the community, where appropriate. The SMART BULLOCH 2045 PLAN is designed to address the following required by the minimum planning standards.

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS MINIMUM PLANNING STANDARDS

PLAN ELEMENTS

- Community Goals
- Needs and Opportunities
- Community Work Program
- Broadband Services
- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Housing

OTHER FACTORS

- Community Involvement
- Consideration of the Coastal Regional Water Plan
- Procedures for Plan Review, Adoption and Maintenance

The SMART BULLOCH 2045 PLAN represents a new way of thinking. The plan integrates three (3) primary SMART themes. SMART GOALS are meant to create attainable objectives and strategies that are notably reflected throughout the plan and the Community Work Program. We are a SMART COMMUNITY that educates, recreates and innovates. The participation process used to build this plan by some of Bulloch County's "super-smart" people has identified a vision for each jurisdiction. SMART PLANNING addresses both state mandated or recommended topic specific elements. For each jurisdiction, key needs and opportunities have been assigned a prioritized goal-oriented policy and implementation framework. This framework also addresses the Quality Community Objectives required by the minimum planning standards of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

THEME 1 - SMART GOALS

- Specific: Target an area for improvement.
- Measurable: Quantifiable, measurable or key performance indicators, where possible.
- Achievable: Identify responsible parties.
- Relevant: What results can feasibly be achieved?
- Time-Bound: When will the results be achieved (fiscal/calendar year, or on-going)?

THEME 2 - SMART COMMUNITY

- The plan ensures we remain vigilant of emerging technologies and the relationship for community development in our broadband element.
- The plan illustrates Bulloch County is poised to expand our educational opportunities and attract a highly skilled workforce.
- The plan promotes sustainability with scalable implementation resulting in an improved quality of life and "smart" local government services.

THEME 3 - SMART PLANNING

- SMART Business: Economic Development
- SMART Mobility: Transportation
- SMART Connections: Broadband
- SMART Growth: Land Use
- SMART Community: Housing

BULLOCH COUNTY

Bulloch County originated as a sparsely settled frontier in 1796. By the late 19th century, it began to grow as an agricultural community built on railroads shipping out timber, “Sea Island” cotton, naval stores and other agricultural products. In 1903, the county seat of City of Statesboro was incorporated. By 1906, community leaders solicited the State of Georgia to allow Statesboro to host what grew into a small teacher’s college. Everything changed in 1982 when a man named Erskine (“Erk”) Russell arrived to town to coach football at what was then Georgia Southern College. After his arrival, Statesboro and Bulloch County were never the same. County residents are proud to be the home of Georgia Southern University, the flagship post-secondary institution of South Georgia with an enrollment of 25,500 students. The impact of Georgia Southern University cannot be underestimated for modern Statesboro, Bulloch County and the region. A study has estimated the regional impact of the University for Bulloch and surrounding counties to be nearly \$1 billion and is responsible for creating over 10,000 jobs above its direct employment base of over 1,800 workers. The international influence to the area is also significant with students from 98 countries enrolled in 2022.

Bulloch County, centered around its county seat of Statesboro, has positioned itself to provide an exceptional quality of life that includes ample cultural amenities, economic and educational opportunities to its citizens, southern charm to its visitors, and progressive, yet fiscally conservative governance. It is also one of the largest counties geographically in the state comprised of 682 square miles, supporting a rich legacy of agriculture, forestry and natural resources. The community seeks to balance the retention of pastoral scenery of the lower coastal plain forthcoming growth from the Hyundai Metaplant and its suppliers.

Located on the fringe of the expanding Savannah metro area, Bulloch County is now home to 83,059 residents, more than doubling its population since 1980. Bulloch County is the Coastal Region’s third fastest growing county behind Bryan and Effingham and is the third most populous behind Chatham and Glynn. Its annual growth rate is twice as fast that of the region as a whole and outpaces the state’s overall growth rate. Bulloch County remains ranked in the top 20% of Georgia’s fastest growing counties. It is estimated that approximately 50,000 persons reside within five miles of the very center of the City of Statesboro. According to current census data, Statesboro’s population is now estimated at 34,353. With growth trends continuing at the current rate or increasing, it may be possible for Statesboro and adjoining areas to reach the status of a small metropolitan statistical area (MSA) after the next decennial census (2030). Population projections within this plan will illustrate various scenarios of growth; each scenario displays the likeliness of reaching an MSA.

Surface transportation and road improvements have always been a critical challenge in Bulloch County given its population growth, vast territory and 1,200-mile road system. Yet, the road network overall is very functional and well maintained. Interstate 16 has become a major economic and travel corridor since its completion in 1972. Both U.S. 301 and Georgia State Route 67/25 offer quick and convenient access to Statesboro. Veterans Memorial Parkway (Statesboro By-Pass), a four-lane perimeter road encircling most of Statesboro, opened in 1994. The Parkway extends south from Highway 80 West circling north to Highway 301 North. This has become Bulloch County's major traffic corridor providing not only a means to divert freight traffic from downtown Statesboro, allowing quick access to Georgia Southern University, the local airport and the city's emerging commercial and industrial areas.

While the county has among the most paved roads of any in the state, the county also has the most dirt road mileage of any other county in Georgia. Therefore, the county invests significant funds in road maintenance and construction. Since county forces can construct roads to pavement ready status, this brings substantial cost savings for local road improvement projects. However, insufficient transportation funding and less demand for dirt road paving now causes the county to consider other types of operational surface transportation improvements. A single county TSPLOST referendum was approved in 2018 and reauthorized by voters in 2023. This funding source has allowed for improved maintenance opportunities countywide.

The Statesboro-Bulloch County Airport, located just north of Statesboro, has emerged as an important transportation and economic development asset. The airport handles over 18,000 aviation operations annually. It is progressively becoming one of Georgia's best Level III general aviation public airports. An aggressive expansion program began in the mid-1990's that includes modern navigation systems, several new hangars (including a corporate hanger), taxi-lanes and runway improvements, and on-going terminal improvements. During the last two decades, these multi-million-dollar investments have helped to make its operations self-funding through increased fuel sales, landing fees and hanger rentals. As industries and supplemental commerce become rooted from the recent economic developments, the airport is likely to consider additional commercial activities.

As a part of our long-standing master greenways plan, the S & S Greenway boasts 3.1 miles of a completed paved walking trail. The route, originally traveled by the Savannah and Statesboro Railway, has become a regional attraction for pedestrian and cycling enthusiasts. Desirable housing has located along the greenways including a commercial fitness center. Coupled with a 2-mile expansion, partially funded by a federal grant award, the City of Brooklet plans to use a portion of the Right of Way to locate a municipal sewer line to the city. While the phase II expansion terminus will be short of the city limits of Brooklet, an additional phase to downtown Brooklet is likely as funding becomes available.

This project also links to Statesboro's multi-use pedestrian McTell Trail, and eventually a multi-use trail being developed by Georgia Southern University. As a result of an annexation agreement with the City of Statesboro, the city expects future development of a planned area that surrounds Phase I of the greenway consisting of up to 2,200 new residences at build-out. The city and county are working together in an effort to develop a corridor protection ordinance that will preserve the integrity of the project. The annexation agreement also includes a land use plan.

Recreation and leisure opportunities are abundant in Bulloch County. The Bulloch County Parks and Recreation Department is one of the oldest and most prestigious recreation organizations in the state. The department maintains and operates eight recreation areas encompassing more than 200 acres, and also oversees a multitude of unique infrastructure and facilities at these parks.

Recreation activities organized through the Bulloch County Parks and Recreation Department have increased year over year in Portal. With the trend likely to continue, additional facilities are desired. Additional amenities identified include an indoor recreation facility, pickleball courts, passive parks, and active sports fields. Currently the southeast Bulloch area lacks the facilities warranted if growth patterns are realized over the next twenty years.

Mill Creek Regional Park, operated by Bulloch County, is a 223-acre state-of-the-art recreational complex. Mill Creek has played host to hundreds of field sport tournaments including multiple national tournaments. The facility has also hosted the Georgia State Special Olympics, and the annual GSU International Festival and Fourth of July Firecracker Festival. It is not uncommon for attendance to run as high as 20,000 daily for these events. In late 2011, Mill Creek added an ATA certified ten-court lighted tennis center that includes spectator seating and locker room facilities and concessions.

Mill Creek also features what has turned out to be its marquee attraction, the Splash in the 'Boro Family Aquatic Center. The facility originally consisted of an 800-foot long lazy river, a 7,000 square foot low-depth play pool with spray features; a leisure pool six feet deep at the deepest; three water slides, concessions facilities and shade structures. There are also lap pools and a therapy pool that provide winter activities. A major expansion was undertaken in 2008 adding a new tot slide and spray ground in the existing island area of the leisure pool. The river area was expanded on the west side of the park to add a zero-beach entry and sunning area. Also, a new four-lane mat racer slide and a simulation "surf-rider" was installed which provide extreme thrill rides for the teen market. A second expansion was undertaken in 2016 that added a million-gallon wave pool, new concession areas and an expanded admissions and car drop off area to accommodate increased attendance. These expansions were funded by debt service to be paid from generated revenues. Annual attendance exceeds 150,000 during a 12-week period in the summer.

Bulloch County's vast geography guarantees its place as a leader in agribusiness in Georgia, even if Statesboro and south Bulloch County evolve as a small metropolitan area. The County is ranked 3rd highest in the state in total farm acreage with over 206,000 acres and ranked 28th in total farm gate value in 2022 of the commodities in Georgia. Bulloch County ranked 10th for row and forage value. The county's farms provide a venerable mix of row crops, livestock and poultry. New products have also been introduced in the last generation including sweet carrots and onions. Franklin Citrus Farm has found some recent notable success reviving Satsuma production. With a network of retailers across several states and online sales the Franklin Citrus Farm has merged forgotten traditions with commercial success.

Supporting the ideas of local agriculture success and utilizing our community assets, Bulloch County has completed the long-awaited multi-purpose arena in 2020. The arena has become an overnight success for the agriculture community and has hosted numerous community events such as Public Works Touch-a-Truck, Trick or Treat sponsored by the Bulloch County Parks and Recreation Department, political rallies, and livestock rodeos and shows.

Our community experienced a period of significant industrial and commercial growth during the 1990's. Companies including Wal-Mart, Briggs and Stratton and Viracon chose to locate in our state-of-the-art industrial park. Over the next decade, other industries filled available parcels within the Gateway Industrial Park. Nearly ten years ago, the Development Authority of Bulloch County was authorized to purchase adequate acreage to establish a new industrial park along Interstate 16 to capture the tremendous demand for easily accessible, truck oriented industrial prospects. A partnership was established between Bulloch County and the City of Statesboro to extend water and sewer services to the Bruce Yawn Commerce Park. This foresight has positioned Bulloch County and specifically the US 301 corridor, to become a booming industrial center along I-16. In February 2022, the first of five industries soon to locate in Bulloch County was announced. Aspen Aerogels, an industrial insulation manufacturer, plans to hire 250 advanced manufacturing jobs upon completion. Soon after this announcement, Governor Brian Kemp announced neighboring Bryan County would be the future location of the Hyundai Motor Group Metaplant for the production of electric vehicles. By the end of 2022, Bulloch County was selected as the future location of three Hyundai related part suppliers. These include Joon Georgia, Ecoplastic, and Hanon Systems. In the first quarter of 2023 the growth trend continued with a new industrial facility to be located in Bulloch County; creating an additional seventy jobs for the community. Revalyu plans to invest 50 million US dollars to develop the initial phase and will process over 225,000 pounds per day of used PET plastic waste. In total, the community is poised for tremendous growth and anticipates sustained residential and commercial growth to fulfill the workforce needs of over 1,500 recently announced jobs.

CITY OF BROOKLET

The Georgia General Assembly incorporated Brooklet as a City in 1906. Before 1899, the area was called Nellwood. It is located approximately eight miles southeast of Statesboro on U.S. Highway 80, and geographically consists of 3.1 square miles within its boundaries.

Brooklet, known for its avenues of oak trees, took shape at the end of the 19th century. Optimistic citizens built the new town beside the recently completed Savannah & Statesboro Railroad (now a planned multi-use trail route). An early resident asked the U.S. Post Office to accept the name of Brooklet for the new town, since a brook ran through it. Brooklet has become a thriving community growing with a population of 1,704 residents (2020 Decennial Census). Brooklet and its surrounding area have become a magnet for new residents, given its close proximity to Statesboro.

Teamed with a desirable school district, proximate location in southeast Bulloch County, and the development potential of land near the city limits, the growth trend for Brooklet is expected to remain high. City leadership, with state aid, was able to secure funding for the sewer service extension from the City of Statesboro into the historic downtown of Brooklet. The near \$6 million project will provide a maximum capacity of 300,000 gallons per day or 1,000 equivalent residential units. Future service provisions will be needed overtime depending on the type of growth realized by the city.

The City of Brooklet provides a 24-hour Police Department staffed by five full-time officers, including a chief. Other services include sanitation, water utility, Public Works, Municipal Court and development/permitting. Additional service needs have been identified to include a city administrator and a full-time planning and zoning administrator.

The Brooklet Peanut Festival is an annual festival that was established in 1990. It initially drew about 2,000 people and helped finance a town park lined with benches around a gazebo and fountain. The park was dedicated to the City of Brooklet at the 6th Annual Peanut Festival in 1995. The Brooklet Peanut Festival consists of an annual parade, a beauty pageant, a Peanut Run, booths, entertainment, and a tractor race. Each year, the festival has grown in attendance.

CITY OF PORTAL

Portal was established as a settlement in 1819 but incorporated in 1914. The origin of the City's name is unknown. However, it is thought by residents that the naming references the City as the "portal" into Bulloch County, as it is located in the far northwest section of the county. It is located approximately twelve miles northwest of Statesboro on U.S. Highway 80, and geographically consists of 2.2 square miles within its boundaries. Portal also has a growing population of 622 residents (2020 ACS estimate).

Like Brooklet, Portal's development took shape at the end of the 19th century with the growth of the timber and railroad industry in Bulloch County. Portal has a population of over 600 residents, though it has begun to decline over the last 20 years due to the closing of a manufacturing facility. However, it remains as a center of small commerce and attaches its identity as feeder system of public-school facilities for the northwest portion of the county.

The City of Portal offers basic services including a police department, sanitation services, a municipal water utility, a municipal court and zoning. Sewer service is available within most of the City due in part by grant funding from the State of Georgia. This is a unique offering in Bulloch County and will provide unique opportunities for mixed use development. Fire, recreation and recycling services are offered by Bulloch County.

In 1982, Portal established what is now a long running community event known as the Catface Turpentine Festival. The festival celebrates the history of turpentine at the historic E. C. Carter turpentine museum. Although turpentine has many uses including ingredients in cosmetics and chewing gum, the commercial viability of turpentine production is virtually lost in time. Portal aims to be an educational bastion for the turpentine trade. The annual festivities include a parade, arts and crafts, entertainment and tours of a local turpentine museum where some stills and demonstrations are featured.

CITY OF REGISTER

Register is located approximately eight miles southwest of Statesboro on Georgia State Route 46, and geographically consists of 0.8 square miles within its boundaries. Its current resident population is estimated at 209.

Originally a turpentine community centrally located amongst row crop fields and nearby transportation allies, Register began to grow at the turn of the twentieth century. Register was settled in 1855, but was earlier known as Bengal, then Herschal. The settlement was later named for Franklin P. Register, who moved to the area in 1894 and became the City's postmaster. The City's population grew to 400 when the intersecting Register & Glenville Railroad and a Central Georgia Railroad branch were completed in 1901, jumpstarting the local economy. By this time cotton farming and products bolstered the City's growth further. The 1950s witnessed the decline of the railroad spelled the end of most commercial growth in Register. However, local citizens sought and achieved official incorporation as a City in 1982, and in 1992, the City engaged in restoration efforts to preserve vital pieces of its local history. Today, City Hall is located on Main Street upon property originally designated for commercial business. The historic appearance of the modern building highlights the desire for the community to remain rooted in its long history while moving forward to the modern times and likely growth.

The City of Register offers basic services including a municipal water utility and public works. Fire, recreation and sanitation and recycling services are offered by Bulloch County. Because of its smaller size and other factors, its character is likened to other unincorporated rural neighborhoods and centers in Bulloch County included and described in the section below. The City seeks to capitalize on recent economic developments within the County, and due to proximity to Interstate 16 and US Highway 301, Register may be positioned for a mix of commercial and residential growth. Long term, a sewer service hook-up to the City of Statesboro's sewer line along US 301 may provide an avenue for balanced growth along the corridor.

RURAL CENTERS

Bulloch County also has several rural center communities located at crossroads. With similar characteristics to Brooklet, Portal and Register, but they were never incorporated. Some of the more prominent centers include Clito, Denmark, Hopeulikit, Leefield, Nevils, New Hope and Stilson. Other crossroad communities exist like Bay, Middleground, Ogeechee, Westside and Willow Hill that have historical, cultural or familial significance as rural residents' settlements sometimes formed around churches or old schools. Most of these rural centers have been assigned as Character Areas.

OUR PEOPLE

POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

As previously stated, Bulloch County's population stood has increased to 84,327 in 2023. Brooklet, Portal, Register and Statesboro have all benefitted from this continuing population growth. From statistics provided by the Census Bureau's American Community Survey, county-wide population characteristics are highlighted in the following boxes below.

BULLOCH COUNTY POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

AGE

Median Age is 29.5

Georgia Southern University is an influence. The median age in Bulloch County is increasing, but still lower than the state (37.6) and nation (39).

CITIZENSHIP

97.9% of Bulloch County residents are US citizens

This was higher than the national average of 93%.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

Hispanic/Latino and Asian residents are growing at a faster rate than other groups

Since 2000, Hispanic/Latino and Asian races combined have increased in proportion from 2.7% of the county-wide population to 5.3% at an equivalent growth rate. 70% of the 3,452 persons in these two groups are Hispanic/Latino.

NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING

3.0%

Speak a non-English language

Lower than the national average of 16.7%. The most common non-English language spoken is Spanish, closely followed by Korean and Arabic of the non-English speaking population for which poverty levels could be determined, 38.2% of Spanish speakers were in poverty.

EDUCATION

89.8% of residents 25 years or older have a high school degree or higher

31.2% have a bachelor's degree or higher, and 7.6% have no degree. These rates are consistent with Georgia and the nation however these figures have significantly improved since 2019. Brooklet and Statesboro tend to have slightly higher educational attainment than the balance of the county.

HOME OWNERSHIP

53.1% of housing units are renter occupied

56% of the county's 16,902 renter occupied units are in the City of Statesboro where 79% of Statesboro's housing units are renter occupied. Home ownership rates are highest in Register (65%), followed by the unincorporated areas (62%), Portal (58%) and Brooklet (65%). A significant cause for concern is 23.1% of homeowner occupied housing report a mortgage cost of 35 percent or greater as a percentage of household income. The indicators exhibit some cost burdened housing although some over representation may be caused by the Georgia Southern University student population.

HOUSING VACANCIES

Homeowner vacancy rate is 0.0%; while renter-occupied vacancy rate is 2.5%

Homeowner and rental vacancy rates have decreased dramatically since 2019, signaling a market absorption and undersupply. Traditionally this market scenario leads to increased rental rates and housing cost pressures for lower income citizens.

VETERANS

There are 4,724 veterans residing in Bulloch County

This represents more than 5.6% of the population.

HEALTH OUTCOMES

Ranked #40 of 159 Georgia Counties

According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Bulloch County ranks 40th out of 159 Georgia counties in measured population health outcomes, 29th in length of life, 51st in quality of life, 77th in clinical care and 65th in health behaviors. Of these factors and rankings, Bulloch County improved significantly in four out of the five variables. Our clinical care ranking, associated with affordable quality healthcare, ranks six steps below the 2019 data.

Since Bulloch County's humble beginnings as a frontier county, the population has continued to have a steady growth trend. The local economy prior to the industrial wave in the 1990's was highly dependent on the fertile field and the coastal climate to produce various row crops and timber. Beginning in the 1960's, Bulloch County experienced higher percentages of growth per decade. As previously mentioned, the reintroduction of football at Georgia Southern College began an acceleration of growth by introducing Georgia Southern as a regional (soon to be) university and caused increased enrollment from the Atlanta Metro area. Georgia Southern was granted University status in 1990 and shortly after, multiple industries located in Statesboro including Briggs & Stratton and Wal-Mart Distribution. Assuming a traditional growth rate similar to historical trends dating to the 1960's, Bulloch County population growth can be assumed as a near 10% increase each decade. The 2040 plan projected that growth likely concentrated in and around Brooklet and Statesboro with some rural development in the suburban neighborhood character area. Due to factors such as COVID-19 and a national trend of increased work from home policies, Bulloch County experienced housing growth and concentration of out-of-state families locating to the area. Some locations for development were unexpected in the 2040 plan and will be evaluated with this update in Chapter 6 to determine additional growth areas. Additionally, the Hyundai Motor Group and Georgia Governor Brian Kemp jointly announced the siting of an electric vehicle car plant in

adjacent Bryan County, only four miles from the county boundary. With the addition of 8,500 jobs at the meta plant and similar amount of positions created in the region, the growth trends of our past will be accelerated. For this Comprehensive Plan update, staff considered various datasets and scenarios to formulate a reasonable growth model for the county. Figure 1 represents three scenarios for growth. First, the Governor's office of Planning and Budget is responsible for producing population projections for the state. This model utilizes multiple socioeconomic and demographic figures such as cohort modeling to develop the projections. The 2023 projections anticipate Bulloch County will grow to 112,300 people by 2045. Of our three projections displayed, this figure is the lowest and may vary by the number of anticipated Hyundai and related supplier impacts. Second, staff examined Bulloch County growth in a traditional trend of growth utilizing numbers beginning in 1970 to 2020. The linear forecast function with Microsoft Excel projects a population of 104,926 in 2045. As a second step, staff input phased Hyundai jobs created for a five year period (based on public information released with supplier announcements), in addition to examination of the Kia Automotive impact to West Georgia and East Alabama. With phased job creation, our growth rate accelerates over our national growth by ten percent and suggests a population of 116,121 by 2045. The third scenario displayed in Figure 1 is assumes a quicker rate of job creation and relocations to the area within three to five years. With this scenario, housing will be increased at a much greater pace to house employees and other commercial businesses locating here in response. Front loading most of the Hyundai and affiliate jobs provides an estimated population of 135,423 by 2045 for Bulloch County. While this scenario is the highest of our assumed rates, it may be realistic depending on service delivery of water and sewer in proximity to the meta plant and land availability/sales in designed growth areas.

OUR VISION

Bulloch County is a growing community with unique issues and opportunities related to its historical development and projected future growth. In order to manage the future growth and enhance the quality of life, the County has identified a vision for future development for unincorporated Bulloch County and the municipalities of Brooklet, Register and Portal. The community vision statements are built upon this plan's framework of carefully analyzing needs and opportunities. These needs and opportunities were then examined, and with community feedback have been formed into goals, policies and strategies to help define and achieve the vision statements below.

BULLOCH COUNTY

Incorporated and Unincorporated

Bulloch County is a SMART COMMUNITY that works to promote sustainability and self-sufficiency. We embrace our history while coming together to promote economic growth and development, protect our natural and cultural resources and build a successful future that includes the following missions:

- Guiding future development with informed land use plans.
- Preserving agricultural land and agriculture as a cornerstone of our economy.
- Providing a variety of walkable neighborhoods with scalable amenities and pedestrian infrastructure.
- Creating a variety of opportunities for our children, including recreational facilities, historical and educational-oriented resources.
- Offering public transportation facilities and services which are safe, efficient and improve mobility.
- Embracing our history with preservation of historic resources and neighborhoods.
- Embracing the future of the digital age and digital economy.
- Maintaining ourselves as a community that actively promotes and pursues innovative businesses that provide good-paying job opportunities and a balanced tax base.
- Supporting our regional university, technical college, and local public K-12 schools which all have attractive programs and an enriching educational environment.
- Balancing growth demands with available resources and service delivery.
- Create a water and wastewater utility to steer growth according to our land use plans.
- Increase housing affordability while maintaining desirable character of our community.

CITY OF BROOKLET

Brooklet shares with the Bulloch County community the collective vision for the area while also promoting some of its own uniqueness that includes the following missions:

- Smart growth policies that deliver efficient, sprawl-preventing growth patterns and that promote cooperation, coordination and efficient use and expansion of the City's public facilities and services.
- Establishing a variety of neighborhood connections such as sidewalks, greenway trails and bike lanes.

- Protecting and promoting downtown’s historic resources and its traditional role as the business/civic center of the community.
- Preserving the character of established neighborhoods and supporting revitalization efforts to increase housing opportunities and neighborhood stability.
- Providing cultural activities and educational opportunities to both residents and tourists visiting the area.

CITY OF PORTAL

Portal shares with the Bulloch County community the collective vision for the area while also promoting some of its own uniqueness that includes the following missions:

- Providing for a variety of opportunities to live and work in Portal.
- Preserving historic resources, neighborhoods and unique character.
- Requiring future development to support and preserve the rural and natural setting while also providing for traditional neighborhood development patterns.
- Creating manufacturing jobs while also creating new commercial opportunities.
- Providing cultural activities and educational opportunities to both residents and tourists visiting the area.

CITY OF REGISTER

Register shares with the Bulloch County community the collective vision for the area while also promoting some of its own uniqueness that includes the following missions:

- Guiding development with land use plans that take into account existing and proposed utility infrastructure and the protection of watersheds.
- Offering a variety of neighborhood connections such as sidewalks, greenway trails and bike lanes.
- Maintaining a clean and aesthetically appealing community.
- Encouraging development to be tied to the historic and rural character of the area.
- Supporting the location of park facilities near the community.

Creating a functional comprehensive plan begins with defining a common vision for the future development of the community. A community vision is the overall image of what the community aspires to be and how it should look in the future. The visioning process is the starting point for creating a plan to reach identified goals and requires meaningful participation from a wide range of community stakeholders. Bulloch County residents, property owners, business owners and other stakeholders contributed to the production of the **SMART BULLOCH 2040 PLAN**, generating pride and enthusiasm about the future of Bulloch County, thereby encouraging implementation of the plan.

VISIONING PROCESS

The Visioning Process, or citizen participation process for the **SMART BULLOCH 2045 PLAN** began with a Kick-Off Public Hearing, followed by a series of Steering Committee meetings aimed at gathering feedback and recommendations that would frame the entire planning process. A Countywide Stakeholders Workshop, and Public Hearings for the Board of Commissioners and municipal mayor and council meetings provided opportunities for input. Throughout the process, the Steering Committee added considerable input into the planning process and informed the content of the plan. Media strategies were employed to encourage participation such as social media postings, website utilization, newspaper advertisements, press releases, and informational flyers.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

To enhance awareness and promote the Comprehensive Plan, a broad approach was taken to engage the public and communicate the project's objectives. Various strategies and tactics were employed to involve the community and raise awareness of the plans and their concepts. These tactics were used to educate and inform residents and stakeholders about the initiatives. The Countywide Kick-Off Meeting introduced the community involvement plan and took place in conjunction with the first public hearing on November 13, 2023. Surveys and flyers were made available in County Buildings and were also posted on the County's social media and website for wider distribution, which ultimately resulted in 330 responses. The combination of feedback guided the planning team to supplement and expand the list of preliminary needs and opportunities presented in our **SMART PLANNING** elements and Community Work Program.

A steering committee was formed according to the minimum planning standards and suggested stakeholder list from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The steering committee included elected and appointed officials from each municipality, Bulloch County and representation from the Development Authority of Bulloch County. The remaining members have various backgrounds and expertise including retirees, bankers, business owners, residents, volunteer boards and committees. The broad spectrum of committee members were essential as they provided valuable input and informed their constituencies about various opportunities to become involved, thereby encouraging greater engagement. The Steering Committee met three (3) times and reviewed various drafts by email to review data essential for the update.

The first steering committee meeting was held December 14th, 2023. This meeting was held after the initial public hearing and workshop session to allow input originated from those sessions to be considered during a SWOT analysis. After introductions and a process overview for the committee members, a

Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats exercise was performed with the group. A detailed analysis of the SWOT exercise is provided in the chapter.

Additional steering committee meetings were held January 18th, and February 15th. Additional topics of the steering committee included economic development, transportation, broadband, housing, and future work items to be included with the plan. Agendas of the meetings are included in Appendix A.

Public workshops were held at two (2) locations in the County to obtain input. The workshops focused on various needs and visions for the municipalities, as well as unincorporated areas. The workshop locations were advertised via press releases, newspaper ads, and social media. Participants were invited to drop in at their convenience and stay as long as they desired. The current comprehensive plan, large-scale maps, and documents provided participants the opportunity to work interactively to provide their input on the future of Bulloch County during the workshops via community preference surveys, facilitated discussions, questionnaires, and one-on-one conversations with the planning team. The second workshop, held November 16th, 2023, was a unified planning effort with Bulloch County staff and the Statesboro-Bulloch County Long Range Transportation plan consultant. Land use and transportation were the main topics of the night, however all challenges of the community were discussed. Each event enjoyed some level of press coverage from a local news website or regional television news outlet.

Participants were asked to prioritize and contribute to a list of preliminary needs and opportunities identified by the planning team during the data gathering process and gathered from discussions with the Steering Committee. Topics ranged from land use, transportation, housing, economic development, community facilities, intergovernmental coordination, natural and cultural resources, and broadband. Participants also provided input on character areas in addition to addressing the questions, “Where are we? Where are we going? Where do we want to go? How do we get there?”. Written comments were gathered and tabulated for steering committee review later.

Multiple public hearings were held throughout the process, including the first held November 13th, 2023. The public was briefed by the planning team regarding the minimum planning requirements for local governments in Georgia, and the multiple ways to stay informed throughout the process. A second public hearing was held by the Bulloch County Board of Commissioners during a regularly scheduled Bulloch County meeting November 21st, 2023. Subsequent public hearings were held by the Bulloch County Planning and Zoning Commission and Board of Commissioners on March 14th, and April 2nd, 2024 respectively. Each municipality presented the final draft of the plan to their Mayor and City Councils at regularly scheduled meetings in April 2024, while also opening the floor for input from the public.

In addition to the required public outreach methods, planning staff elected to create a specific plan webpage where the public could visit throughout the process for updates. Plan drafts, steering committee packets, and agendas were posted using the webpage: <https://bullochcounty.net/comprehensive-plan-amendment/>. A link to our survey was located at the top of the page to attract interested stakeholders.

SWOT Analysis

Addressing needs and opportunities is crucial to a community’s growth. Housing options for all incomes are needed to accommodate population growth and a sustainable workforce. Economic growth can be nurtured by supporting businesses. Efficient community services are crucial for a balance of tax assessments and quality of life. Diversifying the economy through innovation, infrastructure investment,

and unique design elements will bolster development. By focusing on these aspects, comprehensive planning will outline a plan for growth, investment, and continued prosperity.

A needs and opportunities survey was designed for additional community input using multiple media strategies. The survey and flyers were heavily advertised and distributed via the County’s social media pages and website, generating three hundred thirty-three (330) responses. This survey provided valuable information relating to the community vision, strengths, and problems related to a variety of topics such as transportation, land use, economic development, housing, community facilities and services, natural and cultural resources, and broadband. **Appendix A** provides illustrations of the survey results. Additionally, the steering committee reserved a bulk of the first committee meeting to discuss our community’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. A summary of each category is provided below. Additionally, each planning element incorporates needs and opportunities within the specific chapters, each either being reviewed or consistent with today’s outlook or added during this update process.

Strengths

- **Young population**
- **Community participation**
- **Local news media**
- **Community events**
- **Recreation department**
- **Clean community**
- **Safe community**
- **Public safety communications with 99% coverage**
- **New Jack and Ruth Ann Hill Convocation Center**
- **Location- near Savannah Port & greater coastal area**
- **Interstate 16**
- **Lower cost of living**
- **Ogeechee Technical College, Georgia Southern University, East Georgia College**
- **Growth management**
- **Broadband/fiber to the home availability**

Weaknesses

- **High poverty rate**
- **Lack of affordable housing**
- **Low housing stock**
- **Literacy Rate**
- **Senior Citizen housing (aging in place)**
- **Resistance to change**
- **Balanced civic engagement**
- **Vacant shopping centers & other commercial properties**
- **Lack of design standards**
- **Lack of pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure**
- **Reserved greenspace is absent from developments**
- **Reliance on septic tanks for rural development/sewer availability**
- **Need for greater transit options outside of Statesboro**

Opportunities

- **Leverage growth to maintain rural character**
- **Utilize local diversity**
- **Corporate engagement with local non-profits**
- **Airport expansion and marketing**
- **Local sales tax options approved (SPLOST, TSPLOST)**

Threats

- **Georgia Southern University lower enrollment**
- **Aging infrastructure (Sewer capacity & treatment)**
- **K-12 School capacity**
- **Loss of revenue due to shopping outside of Bulloch County**
- **Lack of funds to address all issues**

- **New City of Statesboro zoning ordinance and higher density**
- **City of Brooklet sewer service to downtown**
- **City of Portal sewer service**

DECISION MAKING FRAMEWORK

In order to implement the community's vision of the future for unincorporated Bulloch County along with Brooklet, Portal, and Register, the Comprehensive Plan is guided by a decision-making framework related leading to **SMART GROWTH** and development. Significant analysis of existing conditions were considered to identify needs and opportunities. Through the interactive workshops, steering committee meetings, community surveys, and stakeholder input, the planning staff identified visions and prioritized **SMART GOALS** resulting in implementation strategies that are *SPECIFIC* in scope and priority, having *MEASURABLE* cost and financial impacts that are *ATTAINABLE*, responsible parties who are *RELEVANT*, and scheduled benchmarks that will ensure *TIMELINESS*. These goals were complimented by policies, priorities and quality community objectives to create the community vision. Ultimately, the **SMART GOALS** theme was incorporated into the new 2014-2029 Community Work Program in Chapter 7.

Bulloch County’s status as a Tier I community by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs makes addressing economic development a mandatory element in this planning document. Ultimately however, the purpose for the Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan is to examine ways to improve economic opportunity in a community. If designed thoughtfully, processes and programs can be considered that can facilitate and stimulate jobs creation/retention, capital investment and business growth. In order to improve economic opportunity, it is important to analyze past trends and current conditions of the local economy. The following sections carefully consider these trends and conditions.

SMART BUSINESS starts with having smart goals for economic development. The following represents the four primary goals for **SMART BUSINESS** throughout Bulloch County.

- **Diversification:** Achieve stability by balancing the economic base of the community.
- **Business Support:** Foster entrepreneurship, retain and expand existing businesses, and encourage the utilization of development ready commercial and industrial sites.
- **Quality of Life:** Maintain the character area framework of the Comprehensive Plan to support and foster quality development to make the community an attractive place to live, work and play.
- **Workforce:** Develop quality childcare support network in all areas of the community, improve housing stock and affordable house offerings, and diversity transportation options.

ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Despite population growth, data in Table 1 below demonstrate that between 2012 and 2017 Bulloch County struggled to recover from The Great Recession of 2008-2009. These indicators suggest stagnation in local economic growth compared to the long boom period between 1990-2010.

However, there is reasonable growth resuming in population, residential construction, employment, tourism and retail and services. Current unemployment in 2019 mirrors state and national levels which is now below the frictional level and where labor shortages exist. Consumer spending is slowly increasing but it is congruent with inflation which means that real growth in sales taxes is stagnant. It is also thought that a major factor in sales tax trends is the effect of more local residents shopping in Chatham County – although, the State of Georgia continues to pass sales tax legislation that favor special interest tax exemptions.

Meanwhile, state and national indicators show a continued recovery since the Great Recession. Gross Domestic Product and Gross State Product have maintained steady annual growth. Unemployment remains low, and wages and income are improving marginally. As some economic

sectors show decline, they are buoyed by others that are accelerating. Inflation remains relatively low along with interest rates for borrowing and investments. However, housing, capital and equity markets remain robust.

Short-to-intermediate term economic forecast show a 20% probability of a national recession by 2020. While a low probability, the prediction ratio has been increasing since 2016. A recession is quite likely within the next three years which may influence plan assumptions and strategies.

The median household income (MHI) in Bulloch County increased by 20% rising to \$47,297 between 2017 and 2022. Bulloch County's MHI is still 35% below the State of Georgia, and 36% below the national level. Bulloch County MHI, along with the Brooklet and Portal's MHI is growing at a faster annual rate than the state and nation, though Register and Statesboro remain below the rest of the county. Per capita income (PCI) in Bulloch County increased by 22% rising to \$26,336 between 2017 and 2023. The gap between Bulloch County's PCI and state and national levels improved but is still much lower. The PCI in the municipalities of Register and Statesboro also remain well below state and national levels, though Brooklet and Register's PCI is growing at a faster rate and volume than the rest of the county.

The disparity in median and per capita income throughout Bulloch County is largely influenced by low resident student income at Georgia Southern University, the City of Statesboro's high poverty rate, and a growing number of elderly households with reduced fixed incomes. The City of Brooklet compares favorably to the rest of the county where Portal and Register are lagging, but gaps are closing.

AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES

Bulloch County's Average Weekly Wages (AWW) have been consistently lower than state and national levels. The 2023 AWW in Bulloch County was \$823. The highest AWW economic sectors in Bulloch County in 2023 were in the construction, information, and wholesale trade, while the lowest average weekly wages were in agriculture, farming and fishing. From 2017 to 2023, Bulloch County's annualized growth in AWW has been more favorable than state and national rates, and labor market area rates. However, Bryan and Effingham Counties benefit from their presence in the Savannah metropolitan area. Area counties reporting the greater amount of outflow commuters to Bulloch each report lower AWW than Bulloch County. The eight-county labor market area includes the surrounding counties of Bryan, Candler, Effingham, Emanuel, Evans, Jenkins and Screven.

POVERTY CHARACTERISTICS AND PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

Poverty status represents a lack of access to goods and services commonly taken for granted by members of mainstream society. Based on Census figures and thresholds, 30% of individuals in Bulloch County remain below the poverty line in the last decade and this ratio is increasing in areas throughout the county except for Brooklet and Register. The typical cause of individuals reaching poverty thresholds is unemployment, and the effect of The Great Recession is coincidental to the higher rates of unemployment in the county during that time period. However, the prevalence of other demographic changes, household income, and education levels are also influences.

Public assistance refers to programs that provide cash or in-kind benefits to individuals and families from any governmental entity. Two major types of public assistance programs include social welfare programs and social insurance programs. Bulloch County residents receiving certain kinds of public assistance has improved since 2017.

In 2017, 16.7% of county residents received Food Stamps/SNAP. This has improved by 4.8% to 11.9%. This increase is more pronounced in Statesboro and in the unincorporated areas while increasing less than at the statewide level in the smaller towns. A similar trend has occurred with cash assistance for recipients including both General Assistance and Temporary Aid to Needy Families increasing by 46.6% countywide in 2017 (compared to 26.6% statewide), though assisting far fewer individuals or families than either Food Stamps/SNAP. Meanwhile, the number of individuals receiving Supplemental Security Income is decreasing, while those receiving Social Security in 2017 has increased 27.4% since 2010, particularly in Portal and in the unincorporated areas. This trend is expected to continue as the local population ages. Of those employed, 86.2% reported having health insurance coverage, improving year over year and initiatives increased benefits are being offered by area employers. Healthcare on average, attributes to 8% of household expenditures according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Employment by industry analyzes what kinds of sectors employed people work in. Data examined is organized into thirteen high-level groups but can be distinguished between goods and services producing sectors. The service producing sector accounted for 62% of all jobs in 2023, down from 82% in 2017. Meanwhile, during the same period the goods producing sector (agriculture, construction and manufacturing) has decreased as a percentage of total jobs from 18% to 13% in 2023. The fastest growing sectors since 2015 are the public administration; finance, insurance and real estate; arts, entertainment, recreation and accommodation food services; and, manufacturing. The sector having the greatest numeric gains during the same period is educational services, and health care and social assistance, which consists of nearly one-third of the workforce (31.2%), while construction showed the greatest losses, and percentage wise (-5% annually).

Bulloch County has a relatively diversified economy when compared with Georgia and the United States. While the goods producing sector in Bulloch County is very similar to Georgia and the United States, the service producing sector is influenced with the presence of major educational institutions, a regional private hospital with health care support businesses, and state and local government. Recent economic development wins will continue to provide diversity for the economy. Bulloch County will be diverse among manufacture types and lesson the reliance among a few large employers.

EMPLOYMENT BY CLASS OF WORKER

Employment by class of worker categorizes resident workers according to the type of ownership of the employing organization independent of industry and occupation. Data examined is organized into four high-level groups distinguished between private wage and salary workers, government workers, self-employed workers, and unpaid family workers.

While private wage and salary workers consist of a majority of workers countywide, the proportion of government and self-employed workers is currently higher compared to the State of Georgia as a whole. Between 2010 and 2017, there were noticeable shifts from private wage and salary workers into the government and self-employed classes, particularly for workers residing in Portal or Register where there were significant declines in private workers that shifted primarily to the government class. This significance of this shift is greater than changes elsewhere in the county and contrary to statewide changes. Overall, between 2010 and 2017 government workers grew by 10% countywide, but self-employed workers increased by 32%, primarily in Brooklet and the unincorporated areas.

EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION

Employment by occupation measures the mix of skill levels in a community's workforce which is useful to companies interested in expanding or locating a new business. It is typically organized into five high level groups. Skill levels also indicate the relative need for vocational training programs.

During the 2017-2022 period, Education, legal, community service, arts and media occupations; and healthcare support occupations were the fastest growing. Meanwhile, farming, fishing and forestry occupations; and, personal care and service occupations showed slight to moderate declines.

Bulloch County has similar occupation mixes compared to the State of Georgia, such as management, professional, and related; farm, fishing, and forestry; construction, extraction and maintenance; and production, transportation, and material moving. The County has a slightly higher percentage of jobs in service occupations (17% compared to 13% in Georgia and 15% in the U.S.) and a slightly lower percentage of jobs in sales and office (24% compared to 27% in Georgia and the U.S.).

EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUTING

Examining Bulloch County's worker commuting patterns provides insight into economic development, housing, land use issues, and traffic patterns. In terms of means to work, 79% of employed Bulloch County residents drive alone in their own vehicle, remaining the same since 2015. While carpooling or walking to work has declined, use of public transportation and working at home has increased.

Data examined from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 2016-2020 measures work destinations of resident workers reveals that 23% of Bulloch County workers commute to other locations (10% work in Chatham County; the remaining 14% work in nearby communities). 70% of the jobs originating in Bulloch County are filled by Bulloch County residents. Of the remaining 30%, a sizeable majority commute from the eight-county labor market area, primarily from Screven, Candler and Evans Counties with others from outlying counties and outside the state.

The Census Bureau provides an alternative product called "*OnTheMap*" measuring employment commuting within a labor-shed (a user defined area such as Bulloch County). This tool reveals differences from the ACS data. Data for commuting patterns reflect labor force and employment efficiency shown by resident employee work locations being inside or outside of the County. Net job inflows to Bulloch County continued from a negative 450, to a negative 3374 between 2015-2021. During the same period, the percentage of employed persons living and working in Bulloch declined from 35% to 30%, while the percentage of employed persons living in the county working in other

counties increased from 32% to 39%. The percentage of workers coming to work in Bulloch County increased from 28% to 34%. Taken together, the labor market efficiency measures indicate the county is becoming less self-sufficient over time despite the local work force increasing. Increasing numbers of Bulloch County's resident workers commute to Bryan, Chatham, Effingham and Emanuel Counties, though resident commuters from Candler, Jenkins and Screven Counties offset the imbalance.

It should also be noted that the commuter outflow numbers record employees who work from home but are employed by companies outside of Bulloch County. The increase of outgoing employees is likely attributed to a national trend post COVID-19 pandemic of working from home and population increases over the time period.

MAJOR ACTIVITY CENTER AND EMPLOYERS

Bulloch County has five major business activity centers represented in Table 5 showing traffic counts, the number of business establishments and estimated employment. Most of Bulloch County's major private employers, represented in Table 6 are located in one of these activity centers.

MAJOR INDUSTRIAL PARKS

Table 7 profiles Bulloch County's major industrial parks strategically located on the US 301 corridor. Bruce Yawn Commerce Park, located at Interstate 16 and US 301, has been filled with two advanced manufacturers and a travel center. Joon Georgia a tier 1 Hyundai supplier, Aspen Aerogels and Travel Centers of America will complete the park upon their completion. In response to the completion of Bruce Yawn Park, the Development Authority of Bulloch County purchased approximately 180 acres north of Interstate 16 along US 301 South. The additional acreage will be home of an additional tier 1 Hyundai supplier, Ecoplastic. The remaining 100 acres is available for industrial sites. Water and sewer is readily available and roadway upgrades are planned.

Land availability in the Gateway Industrial Park has been absorbed with exception to one parcel. Hanon Systems, a Hyundai supplier, and Revalyu, A German owned manufacturing facility, have recently located to the park. The Airport-Holland Industrial Area is nearly absorbed. Both Gateway Industrial Park and Airport-Holland Industrial Area have rail access.

It would be desirable to perform studies to determine acquisition and development of new industrial sites, along with reviewing the Gateway and Airport-Holland parks for future improvement needs to existing users.

IMPORTANT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Bulloch County has much to be proud of since the last Comprehensive Plan update. Economic development has been steady since 2019 along all sectors of the economy, new industries announcing future facilities in Bulloch County include Joon Georgia, Ecoplastics, Hanon Systems, Aspen Aerogels, and Revalyu. Commercial developments include Publix and associated businesses within the shopping center. Additional restaurants along major state highways. Travel Centers of America completed its first store along Interstate 16 in the Bruce Yawn Commerce Park. Georgia Southern University will soon complete the new Jack and Ruth Ann Hill Convocation Center and

Ogeechee Technical College is continuing to move forward the construction of a robotics training facility. Bulloch County has made improvements toward creating a water and sewer system in Southeast Bulloch County in preparation of the Hyundai meta plant. Additional projects include a multi-million-dollar sewer line from the City of Brooklet to the City of Statesboro. Significant funding for the Blue Mile and City of Statesboro secured in 2023 by the state legislature. The grants will contribute to the overall project by rebuilding a bridge and trail construction along the creek.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES OF GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION FOR FUTURE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Advantages: Geographic factors can affect economic activities. Superior location provides higher consumption utility, higher productivity and the attraction of human capital leading to higher growth. Bulloch County offers advantages due to its high investment in physical capital and infrastructure. A good and accessible transportation system exists which lowers transport costs, offering proximity to the Savannah metropolitan area and the Port of Savannah. The county also has a good utility grid for water and sewer, natural gas, telecommunications, and electricity. Along with a diverse economic base, the county also offers human capital with higher education and skill levels than comparable communities.

Disadvantages: The County also has location challenges. The City of Statesboro is the only sewer utility provider for existing industrial parks and major business centers in the County. While improvements are planned, there is no county-wide provision of utility services. The City of Brooklet will soon become a sewer provider with the help of Statesboro. The City of Register is in the beginning stages of planning for sewer service, likely through the City of Statesboro. During the last decade, Portal has invested in a sewer system which may be capable of supplying smaller industries. Though there are industries that exist that benefit from local assets such as infrastructure and educational institutions, the county is still behind in attracting higher-wage technology-based jobs. The retail and commercial sectors are also limited because lower income and wage rates deter higher-end shopping and commercial services.

SUMMARY

- Bulloch County has attracted 5 major industrial manufacturers since 2022.
- Georgia Southern University is a key economic driver and recruitment tool for industries.
- The local economy was previously shifting away from good producing jobs. Recent economic developments will slow or reverse this shift.
- An economic “fault line” may exist along US 301 corridor within the county, as reflected in income and workforce disparities.
- Income and wage rates are influenced by the presence of resident students and a very high poverty rate centered in Statesboro, and to a lesser degree in Portal.
- There has been a shift from private wage workers to government jobs and self-employment with more occupations working from home.
- The county is exporting resident workers to other bordering communities, however a portion of the increase is attributed to a population influx from multiple states and working from home.
- Major economic activity centers have shown growth in physical and workforce presence.
- The county has been able to maintain its largest private employers and recruit five goods producing industries.
- Key educational institutions continue to make investments and develop programs to facilitate economic stability and future growth.

OUTLOOK

From a long-term perspective, the nation’s economy may be affected by many factors, including a growing national debt and trade deficit, increased demands on Social Security as baby-boomers near retirement, and geo-political events. However, the long-term local outlook is favorable.

- Bulloch County’s infrastructure and base of large employers will create sustainability.
- Local banking institutions and the housing and construction markets are more stable locally than they are elsewhere.
- Population growth continues allowing Statesboro and Bulloch County to become a secondary economic hub to metropolitan Savannah and the Coastal Region.
- Coastal Georgia is poised to be the state’s fastest growing region now and in the immediate future in terms of population and job growth.
- Growth of retail sales is essential to the County’s overall economic well-being.
- Preserving existing jobs and industries while developing strategies for attracting new economic opportunities will be critical to adapting to the changing macro-economy.
- A significant challenge in attracting new industrial growth is the intense competition by other communities in the region for new economic development projects.
- Bulloch County must also continue its commitment to nurture existing industries and businesses, while also planning for strategies for attracting new businesses.
- As the County continues to grow in population, it also faces a shift in its tax base. Windfall tax revenues from the 1990’s boom of commercial and industrial development have declined from its peak, creating a heavier reliance on residential property taxpayers to support operations demanded from the community.
- It will also be important for all the municipalities to focus on redevelopment and revitalization of their downtown areas and existing commercial centers in order to spur new business activity and tax revenues.

ALIGNMENT MATRIX

The following pages present tabular descriptions that advance this baseline analysis for the purpose of identifying needs, opportunities, goals, policies and quality community objectives addressed by priority for each community. By identifying these attributes, this matrix allows decision-makers to develop implementation strategies for the Community Work Program element.

INTRODUCTION

While transportation is an optional Comprehensive Plan element for Bulloch County and all of its municipalities, it is an essential element for the Comprehensive Plan.

Statesboro and Bulloch County do not yet have territory within in a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). However, because the greater Statesboro area has been forming an urbanized cluster that could create a metropolitan statistical area by the 2030 Census enumeration, the formation of an MPO is within reach. Given Bulloch County's rate of population growth, transportation planning has been a staple of the overall community planning framework for the past two decades. Our countywide long-range transportation plan is currently undergoing a complete update and is expected to be completed in late 2024 or early 2025. The transportation plan update is being developed in a similar format with the anticipation of a future Metropolitan Planning Organization designation for Statesboro-Bulloch County.

Traffic congestion is emerging as a community concern for certain intersections and roadways, however implementation for multi-modal transportation improvements is pro-active. Furthermore, adverse traffic issues that do occur at peak periods has been observed to be a result of a lag in local regulatory standards for design and access that has fallen behind the growth curve. Increases in traffic volume and level of service capacity are a concern as our population continues to grow.

GOALS

SMART MOBILITY starts with having smart goals for transportation. The following represents the five major goals for **SMART MOBILITY** county-wide.

- **Safety and Quality:** Provide access to a safe, efficient, and well-maintained transportation system
- **Mobility and Connectivity:** Improve mobility through enhanced connectivity and reduced congestion.
- **Alternative Modes:** Improve access to jobs, homes, and services through a multi-modal transportation system.
- **Land Use Compatibility:** Create a sustainable environment through the coordination of land use and transportation plans.
- **Economic Benefit:** Maintain a reliable transportation system which will sustain economic activity and promote economic development.

ANALYSIS

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION

Roadways are grouped into classes according to the character of traffic they are intended to serve. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) has developed a functional classification system mapped for all roadways within the state. Urban classifications are those places within boundaries, which have a population of 5,000 or more. Roadways within these established urban areas carry urban roadway functional classification categories. Areas outside these urban areas utilize rural functional classification categories.

Broadly, the functional classification system groups the streets and highways according to the service they are intended to provide.

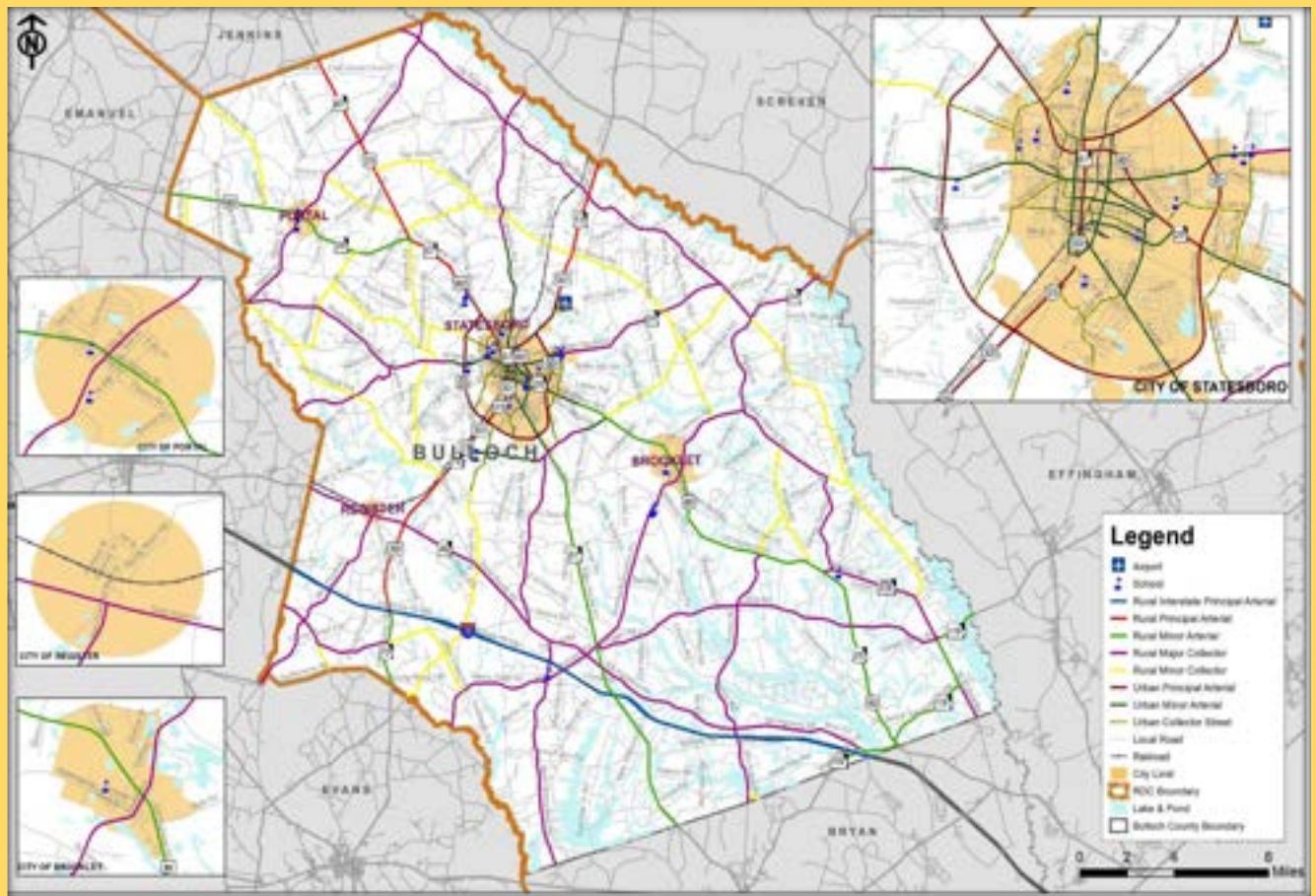
- *Interstate and freeways* are limited access highways meant for longer distance connections with higher travel speeds and which do not abut land uses that serve them.
- *Arterial* roadways provide direct service between cities and provide a network of continuous routes for moderate lengths and often link to interstates.
- *Collector* roadways collect traffic from the local roads and streets that are accessing land uses and distributing them onto the arterials with speeds lower than arterials and have fewer signalized intersections. They are often a connection between residential neighborhoods and small commercial centers and community facilities.
- *Local* roadways account for the largest percentage of all roadways in terms of mileage. They are not intended for use in long distance travel due to their provision of direct access to abutting land. They are often designed to discourage through traffic. The origin is typical from rural or residential uses.

For economic development purposes, most businesses centers in the county have good access to roads, and to some degree by rail and aviation facilities.

There is a significant burden to construct and maintain existing roads in Bulloch County. Bulloch County's road system is the fourth largest in the state behind Cobb, Gwinnett and Laurens Counties with approximately 1,606 miles of local, state and federal routes. The county ranks 24th in the state in the amount of paved local (city and county) roads and 33rd in the amount of total vehicle miles traveled for all routes. Bulloch County has a large network of rural unpaved roads which is the most of any county in Georgia. However, with minor exceptions, the paved road system provides good connections and radial access to the municipal centers and cross-county connections between rural communities.

Table 8 profiles the Bulloch County Road System with regard to size, demand and pavement characteristics. Table 9 indicates that 45% of local roadways in Bulloch County are unpaved. Most of these unpaved roads are concentrated in rural areas and classified as local roads. It may be appropriate to upgrade and pave some of these roadways to provide better connectivity throughout the county, and which would elevate them to collector status. Most of the vehicle miles traveled is concentrated along I-16, and the major and minor arterials leading to and from Statesboro. However, the vehicle miles traveled on the local road system is has slightly shifted to the urban sections and have increased since 2017 for all classifications.

Figure 9: Bulloch County Functional Classification of



Source: 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan

Table 8: Profile of the Bulloch County Road System

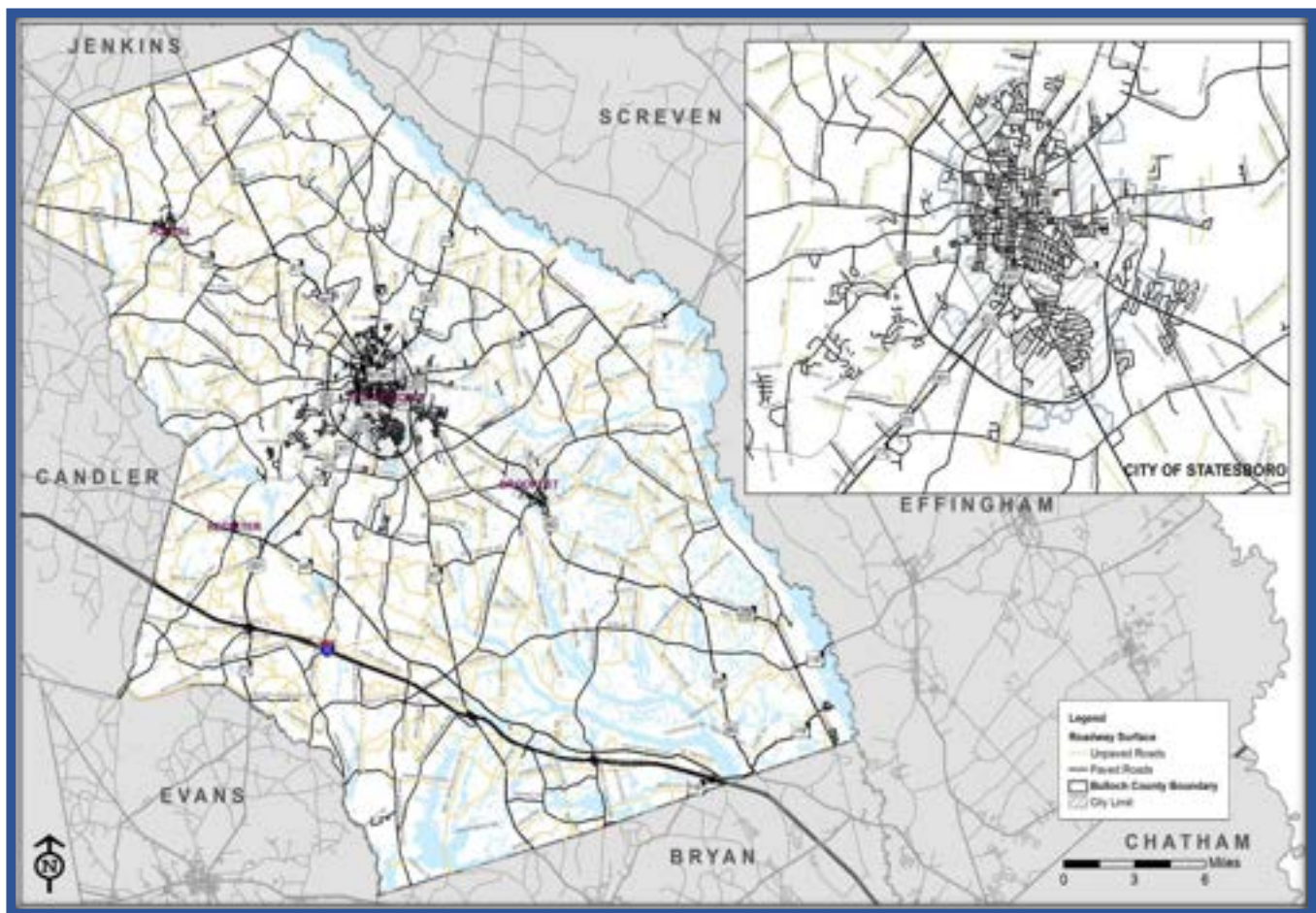
Jurisdiction	Local Road Network Size				Local Road Network Demand			
	CM	% Dist.	LM	% Dist.	VMT	% Dist.	VMT /PLM	% Dist.
Statesboro	124	8.8%	248	8.8%	170,000	23.3%	685	54.6%
Brooklet	20	1.3%	41	1.3%	6,600	0.9%	160	11.5%
Register	2	0.1%	3	0.2%	550	0.02%	183	11.5%
Portal	10	0.8%	21	0.8%	3,850	0.5%	183	11.3%
Unincorporated	1,233	89.0%	2,470	89.0%	546,000	75.1%	221	11.1%
Total	1,386	100.0%	2,774	100.0%	727,000	100.0%	NA	100.0%

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation 400 Series Reports, 2017; centerline mileage (CM), lane mileage (LM), vehicle miles traveled, and vehicle miles traveled per lane mile (VMT/PLM)

Table 9: Roadway Surface Types						
Route Type	Total Mileage	Unpaved	Paved	% Paved by Route	% Dist.	
Interstate	26	0.00	25.87	100.0%	1.6%	
State Routes	179	0.00	179	100.0%	11.3%	
County Roads	1,235	702	533	43.1%	78.6%	
City Streets	157	6	150	95.5%	9.9%	
TOTAL	1,571	708	835	53.7%	100.0%	

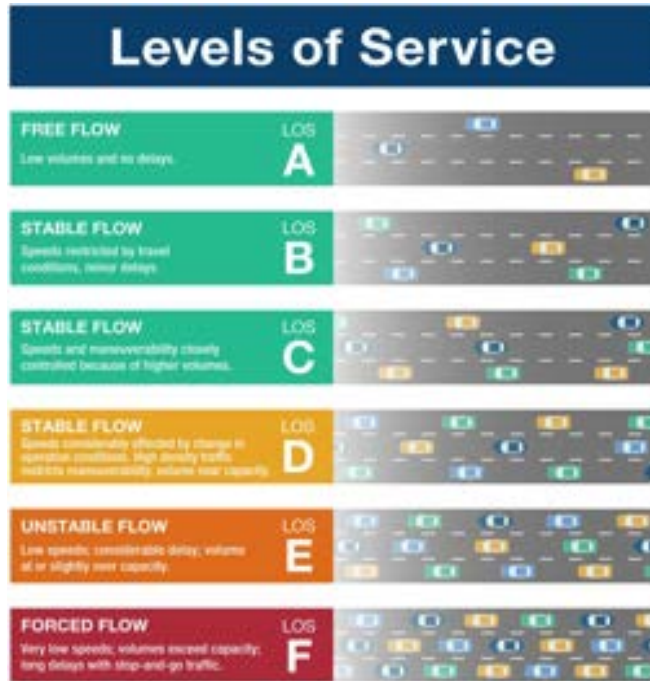
Source: Georgia Department of Transportation 400 Series Reports, 2022.

Figure 10: Bulloch County Roadway Surface Types



Source: 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan

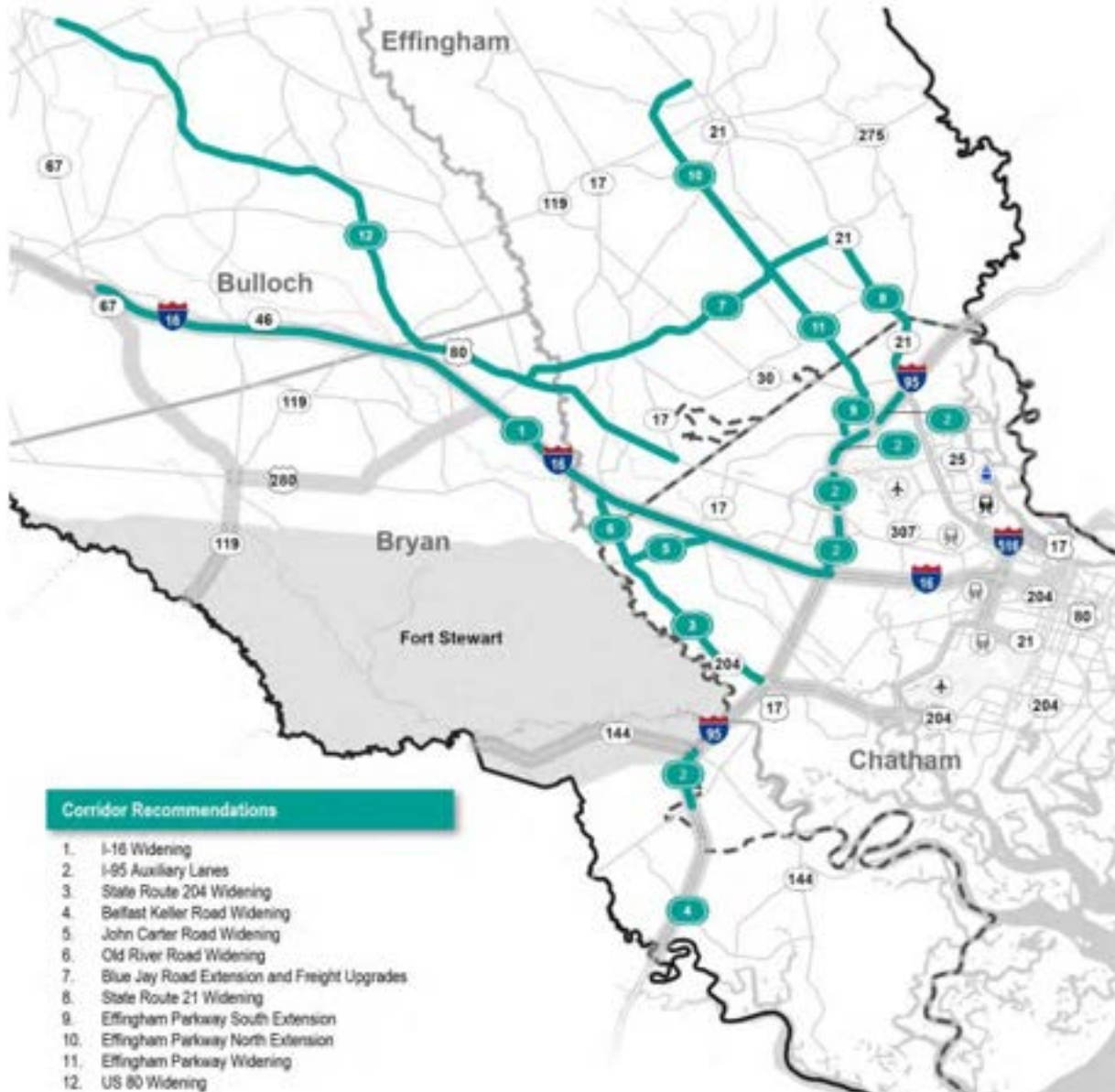
Travel demand models assist in the evaluation of existing and future travel conditions throughout Bulloch County. The key outputs from the travel demand models are the daily volume to capacity ratio for each roadway segment that helps identify the level of service (LOS). LOS is a qualitative measure of traffic flow and describing roadway operating conditions. Each level is given letter designations from A to F, with LOS A representing the best operating conditions and F the worst. A facility may operate within a range of levels of service depending upon time of day, day of week or period of the year. A qualitative description of the different levels of service is provided below.



Bulloch County has a travel model that identifies deficient segments projected for 2035. For daily operating conditions, any segment identified as LOS D or worse is considered deficient. The vast majority of roadways in Bulloch County currently operate at an acceptable LOS C. There are ten road segments that current operate at or below LOS D, however this number may have increased since the initial model was completed in 2009. Future data for issues concerning level of service will be revised upon the completion of the 2045 Statesboro-Bulloch County Long-Range Transportation Plan.

By 2035, with expected population and employment growth, there is projected to be an additional five segments that will operate at or below LOS D without improvements. However, two projects have been completed since 2019 including passing lane extensions on U.S. 80 East between Statesboro and Brooklet, and the two-to-four-lane expansion of State Route 67 South to I-16, both of which have improved the level of service.

In 2023, the Georgia Department of Transportation released the Coastal Empire Transportation Study for the purpose of assessing the roadway network in Bryan, Bulloch, Chatham, and Effingham Counties (Coastal Empire region). The study was in direct response to the growth trends in the region driven by the Port of Savannah and to a lesser extent, Hyundai in Bryan County. Keeping the area’s planned industrial development within a 40-minute drive to the port is a key economic driver for the area, enhances port customer recruitment and competition compared to other United States ports. The plan utilized two scenarios of no-build and corridor improvements built by 2050. Upon completion of the recommended build scenario, a majority of Bulloch County will be within 60 to 120 minutes travel time to the Port of Savannah. Of the 12 corridor improvements recommended by the study, two Bulloch County projects are planned for a total investment of \$657 M (2022 US Dollars).



The highest ranked corridor project of the Coastal Empire Transportation study is the I-16 widening project. The project scope includes the widening of I-16 from four to six lanes between I-95 in Chatham County and State Route 67 in Bulloch County (approximately 30 miles) and is recommended to be a GDOT-led project (see Figure 13). Widening the interstate by one lane in each direction will help mitigate the effect of increased traffic volumes on I-16 and improve the reliability of the network for freight. Industrial development along US 301 in Bulloch County supports widening I-16 between State Route 67 and US 301 in Bulloch County. In total, this project is anticipated to cost \$481M, and an additional cost of \$152M if extended to US 301.

While not the lowest ranked project to be studied in the Coastal Empire Transportation Study, the US 80 Widening project incorporates a road design from two to four lanes beginning at Amanda Road in Bulloch County to State Route 17 in Effingham County

(approximately 34 miles). The purpose of this project is to prepare the region's network for increased traffic volumes by creating redundancy and improving routes parallel to I-16. The widening of US 80 will support planned industrial development, especially in northern Bryan County. Expanding the corridor will create increased capacity and improve connectivity in the region. The cost estimate for the project is \$176M, and is categorized as a long term improvement and ranked as the 12th highest on the cost-benefit scale used in the planning analysis.

A third project impacting Bulloch County did not meet the cost-benefit threshold for the plan, however it is suggested the widening of State Route 119 from I16 to Springfield (Effingham County) remain in consideration (see Figure 13). At a cost of \$98M, this project may be needed if traffic and density continue to increase.



Source: Coastal Empire Transportation Study, 2023

Bridges

Deficient bridges can pose problems for a fully functional road network due to load limits or condition. The GDOT provides bridge condition reports every three years to measure sufficiency ratings to determine a bridge's structural condition and maintenance needs.

Based on current sufficiency ratings, Bulloch County does not currently have a bridge rated in poor condition. Of 139 bridges countywide, 111 are rated good, 28 are rated fair.

ALTERNATIVE MODES

Public Transit

Two public transit systems now operate within Bulloch County. Coastal Regional Coaches is a demand response service, part of a regional system serving 10 counties and 35 municipalities within the coastal region. Counties serviced by the regional program include Bryan, Bulloch, Camden, Chatham, Effingham, Glynn, Liberty, Long, McIntosh, and Screven counties and their respective municipalities. The system operates a system of over 60 buses and covers a service area of over 5,100 square miles. Passengers can travel regionally to accommodate their trip purpose. The system requires advance reservations for members of the public and coordination from human service providers. The fare for public transit ridership on Coastal Regional Coaches is \$5 one-way (\$10 round-trip) within the passenger's county of residence or point of origin. For travel outside the county of residence, the fare will vary based on the number of counties traveled.

The City of Statesboro created a flex route public transit system in 2023. Statesboro Area Transit (SAT) operates between the hours of 6AM and 6PM on weekdays. Two routes, red and blue, have been established to run on a fixed schedule with approximately 30 bus stops strategically located along the routes. Pre-arranged service is available to customers within a quarter of a mile from either of the routes and is notified 24 hours in advance. The cost to ride the transit service is \$1 for a one-way trip and \$2 for a roundtrip. Coastal Regional Coaches partners with the City of Statesboro to operate the SAT service.

Georgia Southern University's Statesboro campus has a bus system for its students called Southern Express. According to their Parking and Transportation Office, buses serve the campus and immediate areas weekdays from 7:00 AM to 9:00 PM, with reduced service after 4:00 PM, Monday through Thursday



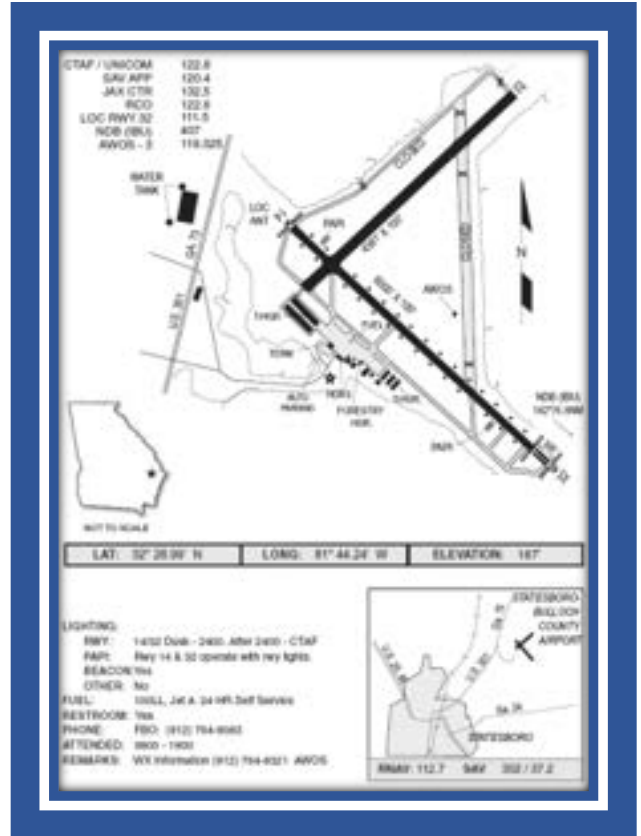
and Friday service ending at 5:00 PM. During peak service on weekdays, the bus stops every 3-4 minutes. During off-peak hours, buses stop every 15 minutes. The route begins at Paulson Stadium and serves various apartments on Lanier Drive before entering campus. Fares are not charged but are covered through student enrollment fees. Parking for students is free at Paulson Stadium and the Recreation Activities Center.

Opportunities exist to allow the City, County and GSU to work together as a consortium in

providing a fixed route system in greater Statesboro. Finally, funding options may increase should the area become an MPO after the 2030 census, which would enhance federal support.

Aviation

The Statesboro-Bulloch County Airport is a County operated Level III general aviation public airport located three miles northeast of the central business district of Statesboro. It is jointly owned by the City of Statesboro and Bulloch County, but operated by Bulloch County. Currently, there is no commercial service to the airport. The airport annually updates its five-year capital improvements program, while updating its airport layout plan every ten years, both of which are filed with the Georgia Department of Transportation and Federal Aviation Administration. The airport is financially self-supporting thanks to high-volume fuel sales and hangar rentals and is also an active community asset providing an annual “Airport Day” open to the public, a local Civil Air Patrol unit, and offering educational tours to K-12 students and the general public. Fifty miles to the east, the Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport provides the region with access to commercial passenger and cargo air service. The airport is located strategically near the junction of Interstates 95 and 16, and the Savannah Port.



Expenditures	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	Total	Funding Source
FAA / GDOT Projects:							
Runway 6/24 Rehabilitation	1,618,789					1,618,789	75% State / 25%TSPLOST
Apron Rehab/T-Hangar Sitework – Design Phase	90,000					90,000	90% Federal / 5% State / 5% TSPLOST
Apron Rehab/T-Hangar Sitework – Construction		3,000,416				3,000,416	90% Federal / 5% State / 5% TSPLOST
Corporate Hangar/Apron – Design	74,541					74,541	100% Local – TSPLOST / Airport Fund
T-Hangar Building		1,000,000				1,000,000	90% Federal – 10% TSPLOST
Runway Approach Area Drainage Imp – Design					90,000	90,000	90% Federal / 5% State / 5% TSPLOST
Future Development Site Prep			861,685			861,685	90% Federal / 5% State / 5% TSPLOST
Airfield Perimeter Fencing (Phase I – North)			1,473,740			1,473,740	90% Federal / 5% State / 5% TSPLOST
Airfield Perimeter Fencing (Phase II – South)				1,170,263		1,170,263	90% Federal / 5% State / 5% TSPLOST
Access Road				2,572,050		2,572,050	90% Federal / 5% State / 5% TSPLOST
Corporate Hangar/Apron – Construction					1,500,000	1,500,000	75% State / 25%TSPLOST
Other Local Projects:							
HVAC Replacement (Terminal Building)	40,000					40,000	TSPLOST
Shelter Hangar			150,000			150,000	TSPLOST
Hangar Door Replacements	40,000	30,000				70,000	TSPLOST
Total Expenditures	1,863,330	4,030,416	2,485,425	1,742,313	1,590,000	13,711,484	

Source: FY2023-2024 Budget Book

Railroads, Trucking, and Port Facilities

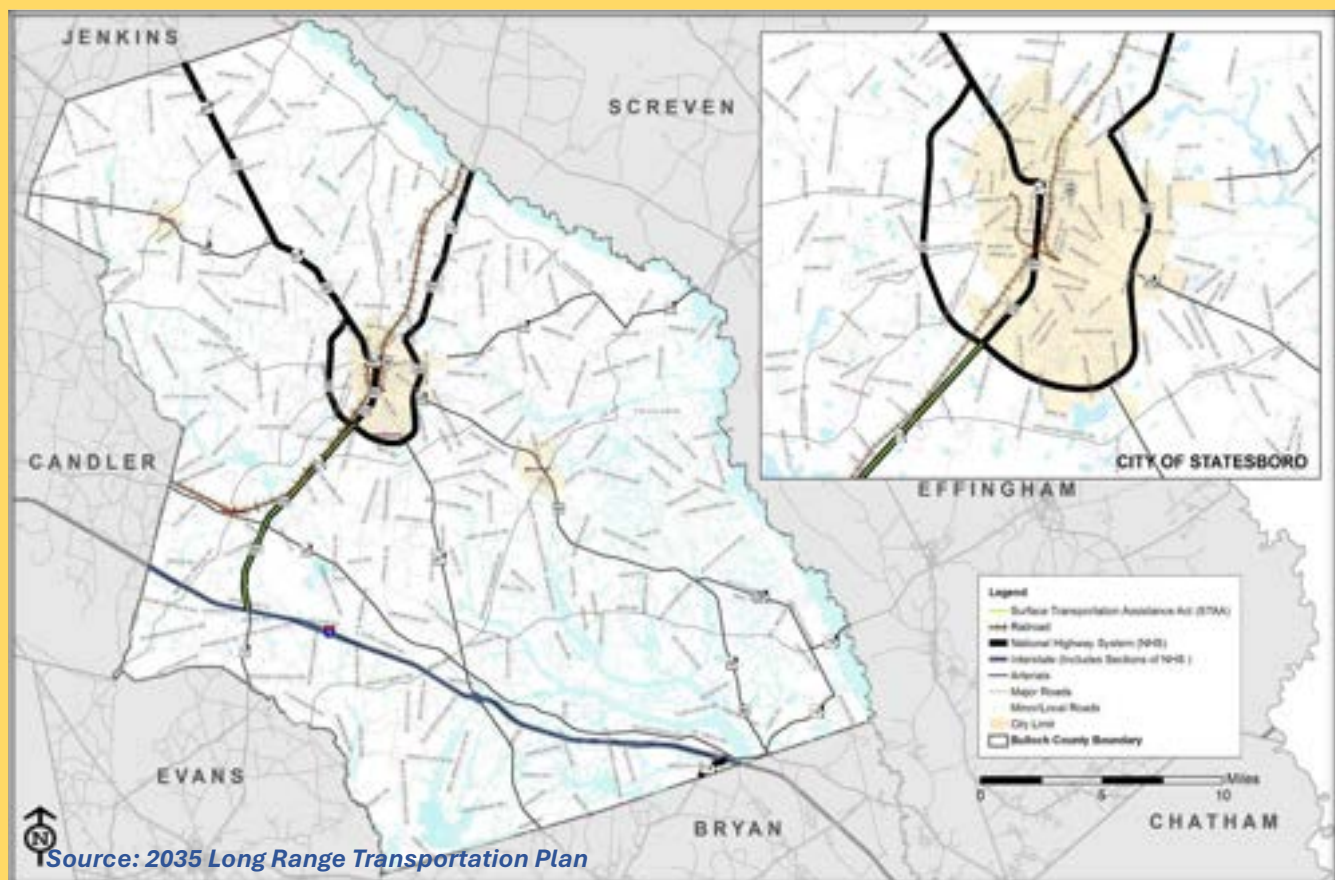
Rail freight facilities: The Georgia Southern Railroad short line runs west from Pulaski (east of Metter) through Statesboro, then north to Dover tying into a Norfolk Southern line connecting Savannah with Augusta. It is reported that the short line carries up to 3 million gross tons of freight per year. In 2011, Bulloch County made over \$300,000 in signal improvements for A.J. Riggs Road at Gateway Regional Industrial Park, with \$1,000,000 in improvements to rail spur installations to local industries.

Non-rail freight facilities: Statesboro is home to many industries that benefit from the transportation infrastructure available for goods movement. Especially, the 972-acre Gateway Regional Industrial Park just three miles south of Statesboro on US 301, where several industries access the rail line. Holland Industrial Park is located adjacent to the municipal airport, on 214 acres on US 301. Key manufacturing and distribution centers in Statesboro or Bulloch County include:

- Wal-Mart distribution center (retail)
- Briggs and Stratton manufacturing facility (engines)
- Cardinal Glass fabrication facility (high-performance glass products)
- WL Plastics (pipe)
- GAF Materials (construction products)
- Brodie Meter Co. (flow meters, valves)
- Braswell Foods (toppings, syrups, sauces, etc.)
- Claude Howard Lumber Co. (softwood lumber)

Seaport and truck freight: Statesboro and Bulloch County are located approximately 50 miles from the Savannah Port and roughly 110 miles to the port of Brunswick and 160 miles from the ports of Charleston and Jacksonville. Truck access is available primarily from I-16, State Route 67, State Route 80 and US 301.

Figure 13: Major Countywide Surface Transportation Freight

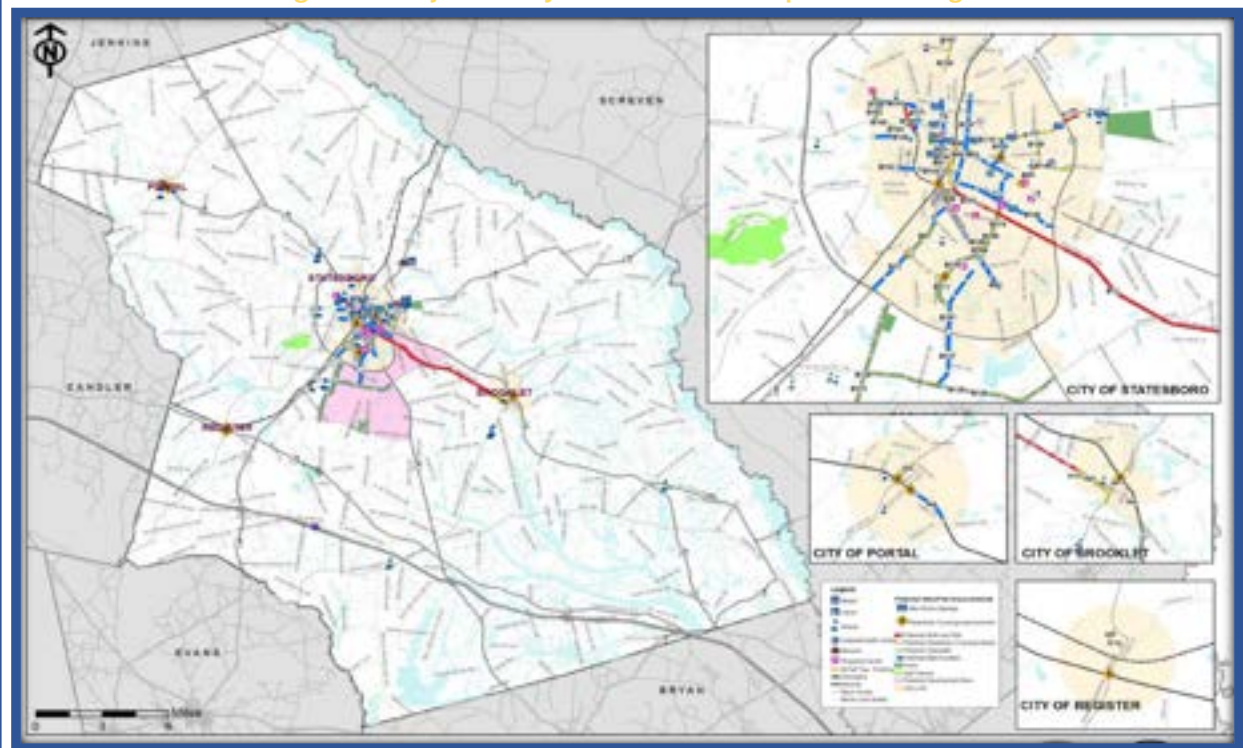


BICYCLE – PEDESTRIAN

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are an important part of a multimodal transportation system to efficiently move people. It is important to consider that everyone is a pedestrian at one point in almost every trip, even if the primary mode of travel for a trip involves a personal vehicle or transit. Sidewalks are an important element along roadways near local activity centers such as schools, libraries, commercial centers, and public recreation areas which attract significant pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

To help reduce the overall costs of infrastructure development for a bicycle and pedestrian network, new local facilities are implemented concurrent with subdivision development and local policy standards. Recommendations for development of a county-wide system for bicyclists and pedestrians should focus on safety and connectivity with the existing designated bicycle routes, system of sidewalks, neighborhood streets, and pathway connections.

Figure 14: Major Countywide Surface Transportation Freight



Source: 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan

The City of Statesboro maintains a partially developed sidewalk network in the downtown areas and some residential neighborhoods. The three smaller communities of Brooklet, Portal, and Register also have similar core sidewalk networks. The networks in these four areas could be expanded to better connect residents to activity centers within these communities and have better safety features such as signage, signal and crosswalk infrastructure. Maintenance is also an issue. There are very few sidewalks outside of these incorporated communities, located at a few neighborhoods and some public-school sites.

The McTell Greenway Trail was constructed by the City of Statesboro, beginning at Fair Road Park and runs north to North Main Street linking Georgia Southern University to downtown. The University also has a well-developed internal system of facilities for walking and biking.

Phases I and II of the 3.1 mile S&S Greenway Trail have been constructed, starting in the City of Statesboro at Gentilly Road running southeast to Burkhalter Road. The County has received a FHWA Transportation Alternatives Program grant to extend the Greenway an additional two miles to Grimshaw Road near Brooklet. Phase 3 is anticipated to be completed in 2027.

Short walking trails are available at city neighborhood parks in Statesboro and Portal, and county parks including Mill Creek Regional Park and Stilson Park. A new project is being considered by the County for a walking trail inside Fletcher Road Park inside the City of Statesboro.

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) has designated a State Bicycle Route network consisting of fourteen routes throughout the state. Two of those identified routes, *March to the Sea* and *TransGeorgia*, traverse Bulloch County. The Bulloch County portion of the *March to the Sea* route is approximately 44 miles long running northwest to southeast. The *TransGeorgia* route runs west to east across southern Bulloch County for approximately 29 miles. As part of the implementation strategy of the State Bicycle Routes Network Plan, GDOT has been signing the routes as state bicycle routes, while also adding paved shoulders or bike lanes to these routes during regularly scheduled road widening or major reconstruction. The two identified routes in Bulloch have not been signed by GDOT to date.



S&S Greenway Sign

Traffic safety has become an increasing concern. Traffic volumes are increasing with population growth. The Governor’s Office of Highway Safety reports that fatalities, crashes and injuries are dramatically rising in both urban and rural areas. While human error and traffic enforcement are influences, physical interventions such as speed zone reviews, striping and signage improvements, installing bike lanes, and improving intersections crossings offer additional tools.

While traffic calming techniques are being considered for designing new road improvement projects, only the City of Statesboro and Bulloch County have policies for the installation of vertical deflection device (speed humps, bumps, tables, chicanes, etc.) installation in appropriate locations. Such devices are installed by petition and are typically paid for by special assessments for the neighborhoods or districts considered.

PARKING

Bulloch County and its municipalities do not currently have parking issues, except at infrequent times of the year when various special events occur. Public parking is usually on-street or in modest amount offered for government buildings or facilities. Conceptual plans for park renovations on Fair Road include a parking deck to increase availability near the Blue Mile creek project along South Main Street. As the County’s population continues to grow, it is likely that demand for additional public parking facilities may arise.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Bulloch County has actively been involved in short, intermediate and long-range planning since the year 2000. The following plans have addressed transportation related matters.

2000 Bulloch County Transportation Plan
2002 Bulloch County Greenways Master Plan
2005 Coastal Georgia Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
2006 Bulloch County Land Use Plan
2008 Bulloch County Transit Development Plan
2008 Statesboro-Bulloch County Airport Improvement Plan
2009-2029 Bulloch County Comprehensive Plan
2009-2029 City of Statesboro Comprehensive Plan
2009-2035 Statesboro Bulloch County Long Range Transportation Plan
2024-2027 Georgia Department of Transportation; State Transportation Improvement Program
2023 Coastal Empire Transportation Study
2024-2028 Bulloch County Capital Improvements Program

The *2035 Statesboro-Bulloch County Long-Range Transportation Plan* document has recommended various road, bridge and bike-pedestrian projects subject to programming and available funding. Although the plan is currently being updated, it is structured to accommodate federal designation for Statesboro and parts of Bulloch County as small metropolitan statistical area status, likely after the 2030 Decennial Census. Such a designation would trigger the need to form a Metropolitan Planning Organization

responsible for transportation planning and allocating federal funds for eligible projects within the urbanized area.

TRANSPORTATION – LAND USE CONNECTION

Investments in transportation affect land use patterns, density, and housing prices especially in more urban environments. Built environment characteristics such as the size and diversity of neighborhoods and the siting of jobs and housing significantly influence travel demand. Policies expanding travel choices can be important to expanding housing and job choices. Land use decisions directly impact the transportation system and facilities generating vehicle trips leading to traffic congestion and costly, expansive roadway capacity improvements.

The design of transportation facilities also impacts the rural character of a community. Conventional street design has tended to create roads with the motorist in mind, forgetting the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists. This has contributed to safety issues and some loss of rural “small town” character.



Langston Chapel Roundabout Source: EMC

To achieve sustainable development, this plan addresses land use and transportation policies and implementation strategies that promote development approaches, walkable communities, and access management. In practice, Bulloch County, Brooklet, Portal and Register implements these policies and strategies through a combination of development regulations including zoning, subdivision controls and right-of-way encroachment permitting.

SUMMARY

- Traffic congestion on the surface transportation system have increased during peak periods at certain locations and during special community events.
- Traffic safety is an increasing concern.
- The size of the overall surface transportation system coupled with population growth and the diversity of road profiles create significant challenges and burdens for maintenance and construction.
- Flex route public transit has a proven demand in Statesboro.
- General aviation is well served by the Statesboro-Bulloch County Airport with access to commercial airline service accessible in Savannah.

- The arterial road and railroad system are adequate to serving freight to and from other destinations. Future GDOT led projects will decrease drive times to the Port of Savannah.
- The bicycle and pedestrian system are deficient in terms of quality, quantity and connections, although there is demand and emerging support to expand multi-use trail systems and facilities.
- Public parking facilities are limited, especially on the Georgia Southern University campus in Statesboro, and future options should be studied in the future.
- Transportation planning and connections with land use are important to the community, but greater implementation efforts are desirable.

OUTLOOK

- Bulloch County and the municipalities of Brooklet, Portal, Register and Statesboro will continue to share a vested interest in long-term transportation planning.
- The 2035 Statesboro-Bulloch County Long Term Transportation Plan is being updated and is tentatively scheduled for completion in early 2025. The plan format anticipates the establishment of an MPO after 2030.
- Past and current transportation planning efforts focus on mobility, connectivity and safety for primary and alternative modes of transportation.
- In 2022, Bulloch County voters reauthorized a 1% single-county Transportation Special Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST). The 2023 TSPLOST is projected to collect \$72M and serve as a meaningful funding source into the year 2029.

ALIGNMENT MATRIX

The following pages present tabular descriptions that advance this baseline analysis for the purpose of identifying needs, opportunities, goals, policies and quality community objectives addressed by priority for each community. By identifying these attributes, this matrix allows decision-makers to develop implementation strategies for the Community Work Program element.

Technology plays a large part in developing a **SMART COMMUNITY**. Smart communities have broadband connectivity that is readily available and affordable for its residents, usually with some type of government involvement. Though Bulloch County is much better off than most rural communities in this regard, to stay ahead of the curve, a planning framework to facilitate emerging state policy is needed.

On May 7, 2018, Governor Nathan Deal signed into law Senate Bill 402, the “Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Act.” This legislation outlines a multi-agency strategy to provide for planning, incentives and deployment of broadband services to unserved areas throughout the state. One provision of the ACE Act required the incorporation of a Broadband Services Element in the Local Comprehensive Plan of each local government in the state, effective on October 1, 2018. Specifically, each local government must include an action plan for the promotion of the deployment of broadband services by providers into under-served areas within its jurisdiction.

GOALS

SMART CONNECTIONS start with having smart goals for broadband deployment. The following represents the six major goals for **SMART CONNECTIONS** county-wide.

- **Availability:** Every address in the county should have at least two provider choices for landline and cellular service.
- **Abundance:** Every address in the county should have broadband service that offers the FCC minimum definition.
- **Affordability:** Monthly prices and value should be equitable with national averages with consideration for low-income households.
- **Readiness:** Learning how to achieve operational preparation and readiness for broadband deployment by developing a coherent community plan.
- **Reliability:** All service providers in the region should have redundant connections.
- **Sustainability:** Leverage funding sources without putting significant local public assets or funds at risk.

IMPORTANCE OF BROADBAND SERVICES

Broadband planning is relatively new to public sector planning. Unlike other forms of infrastructure such as roads, water, sewer and stormwater systems, broadband services are more likely to be owned by private sector enterprises. Therefore, local government officials must now become actively involved to advocate for community interests, yet, support coordinated broadband deployment with private interests. Community interests may broadly include economic development, appropriate use of public right of ways, neighborhood revitalization, or providing access to low-income or underserved households. Broadband initiatives will require communities to reconsider business models and infrastructure planning.

The House Rural Development Council was created by House Resolution 389 during the 2017 Legislative Session of the Georgia General Assembly. The two-year charge for the Council was to address issues that have caused economic lags occurring in rural areas of Georgia with a focus on education, health care, infrastructure and utilities.

The Council found that a lack of broadband connectivity, particularly in rural Georgia, has influenced population loss. It is reported that 16% of Georgians have no access to broadband services. Expanding broadband statewide is thought to be vital for attracting and retaining people in parts of rural Georgia, especially for those communities who are losing population. This type of infrastructure build-out is also thought to be important to education, health care and general business growth. It has become a key policy initiative for the State of Georgia.

Further, the Council proposed modernizing the state and local tax structure and expanding the ability of rural utilities to provide broadband services. The combined effect would create state funding for grants available for broadband deployment to underserved areas.

The Council also issued recommendations to ensure both rural and urban areas are prepared for future 5G cellphone technology. Further, the Council found the need for a streamlined application and permitting process for attaching or co-locating small cell technology on power-line poles or other infrastructure in the right-of-way. Small cells, which are wireless antennas, will help increase telecommunication companies' network capacities and speeds. These technologies are essential to present and future technologies, such as smart cars and smart cities.

Legislative action in the 2019 Georgia General Assembly has advanced some seed funding and has enabled new providers to enter the market. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs continues to work with federal, state, local and private partners to implement the ACE Act.

ASSESSMENT OF UNDERSERVED AREAS OF BULLOCH COUNTY

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) defines broadband as data transmission technologies that are always on and capable of simultaneously transporting multiple signals and traffic types between the Internet and end users. In January 2015, the FCC upgraded the definition of broadband speeds for downloading content from 4 Mbps (Mega-bytes per second) to 25 Mbps and for uploading content from the previous rate of 1 Mbps to a new standard of 3 Mbps. The FCC notes that with the revised standard, 13% of households nationwide do not have access to broadband. There are no known formal public studies performed specifically for Bulloch County or its municipalities on broadband services. Downloaded zip code datasets for fixed and mobile broadband deployment were examined from June 2017 provider submissions to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Form 477. The maps and data below were arranged broadband coverage for the State of Georgia, but particularly Bulloch County.

Georgia is the 21st most connected state in the U.S. with 224 internet providers. Almost 92% of consumers in Georgia have access to a wired connection with true broadband speeds faster than 25 Mbps, while 88% of Georgians have access to 100 Mbps or faster broadband. The average internet download speed in Georgia is 42 Mbps. In Bulloch County, there is virtually 100% access to broadband services. It is estimated that approximately 300 people do not have access to 25 Mbps wired broadband. Approximately 100 people in Bulloch County do not have access to any wired

internet. The fastest service within Bulloch County as of June 2017 is located in zip code 30461. There are differences in provider access, choices, and speed. Generally, the areas around Statesboro and Brooklet have advantages over Portal and Register. It is apparent that Bulloch Telephone Cooperative has been the most aggressive entity to expand service countywide, focusing on fiber optic installation that provides robust speeds and coverage. The map below, along with Tables 11 and 12 illustrate the strengths and weaknesses of broadband service available in Bulloch County.

ORDINANCES

Bulloch County, and the municipalities of Brooklet, Portal and Register all have some form of ordinances, policies or agreements with telecommunications providers for either compensation, use or encroachment permitting for local rights-of-way. However, there is nothing specific addressing wireless small-cell broadband technologies that are emerging. It is uncertain when 5G technology will arrive in Bulloch County. There is great concern among cities and counties about any state legislation which preempts or otherwise diminishes local ability to responsibly regulate rights-of-way.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Bulloch County is home to several local public safety agencies and state and federal response agencies. Because local, state, and federal response agencies are not required to coordinate these systems, inefficiencies, and operational challenges are inherent and plentiful. As the “Internet of Things” develops and becomes more pervasive it will be imperative for public safety audio and video communication systems to be interoperable and dependable. Historically, public safety connectivity was either voice radio communications to a Public Safety Answering Point (for example, an E-911 center) or to a specific dispatch center.

The commercial standard for mobile data transfer is to use cellular data, but it has limitations as it is not designed with public safety needs in mind. For example, public safety centers typically have generators at radio sites, whereas commercial cellular carriers typically do not. In addition, when using commercial cellular carriers, public safety needs cannot be sufficiently prioritized in emergencies or during large events like festivals, races, or concerts. Events like this cause congestion through extraordinary loading of the commercial cellular service and limit the effectiveness and utility of commercial service.

Finally, most problematic for many public safety broadband users in sparsely populated areas is coverage. Cellular carriers build where the business case is clearly demonstrated. The business case for saving lives is a different calculation than typically made by stockholders. However, as technology advances in the wireless spectrum, the next decade is expected to see a boost in assisting public safety agencies in communications and data access. In a key initiative in this planning period, Bulloch County intends to install a \$7.2 million P-25 interoperable communications system. This IP-based system will enable broadband radio communications that is reliable and encrypted for sending digital voice and data. The new system will also provide 98% coverage county-wide.

SUMMARY

- State government is taking a clear lead role in broadband deployment for local communities and especially rural Georgia.
- Local governments will need to learn how to plan and coordinate broadband deployment with non-traditional stakeholders such as rural utilities.
- Local and state government will need to work out differences on tax/revenue structure and right-of-way-management.
- While broadband coverage is favorable countywide compared to most rural communities, areas outside of Statesboro and perhaps Brooklet would benefit from higher internet speeds and competitive choices of providers.

OUTLOOK

- State policy and funding is still forming at this time.
- Broadband availability is favorable county-wide for buried fiber optic networks, but spotty for wireless availability outside of the central part of the county and along I-16.
- There is a need to ensure that any existing gaps are filled, especially for disadvantaged populations.

ALIGNMENT MARTRIX

The following pages present tabular descriptions that advance this baseline analysis for the purpose of identifying needs, opportunities, goals, policies and quality community objectives addressed by priority for each community. By identifying these attributes, this matrix allows decision-makers to develop implementation strategies for the Community Work Program element.

Housing

Housing is an essential element of the community and plays a critical role in opportunities for individuals, families, employees, and employers. The mix of housing types, age, condition, tenure, and cost of housing can impact the health and economic outlook of the community. Bulloch County has continued a steady growth trend since the late 1960s with few periods of retraction. Data suggests each industrial development period has produced new housing inventory during the same period. It is expected the County and municipalities will again experience increased housing construction with the Hyundai Metaplant and area suppliers locating in Bulloch County and adjacent counties. It is critical to ensure the community is equipped to prepare for an influx of diverse homeowners who are likely to desire various forms of housing types and price points than a traditional single-family home. The planning element and data as presented within will guide the progression towards achieving the goals as stated and agreed upon by stakeholders.

The citizens of Bulloch County should have multiple forms of housing options available to them at an affordable cost. Dwelling mixes should vary in sizes from single bed rooms to any size suitable to their needs. Future developments should consider proximity to area attractions including commercial and retail access, parks, jobs, healthy food choices, and transportation cost. To become livable neighborhoods, low maintenance, walkability, amenities, mixed housing types and sizes should be the new normal rather than the exception. Safe access and overall quality of living should be afforded to those most vulnerable. This includes services and provisions for low- and moderate-income persons, youth, seniors and the physically disabled. Finally, housing programs, partnerships, and monetary or social assistance through community development initiatives should be considered.

Below are planning highlights of Bulloch County and municipalities for consideration of future investment and initiatives. While it is recognized some housing issues are present in the community, the data is based largely on the American Community Survey by the US Census Bureau and may only represent high level housing issues. Further community study is warranted as the community continues to increase by population and density.

Housing Needs

- Workforce Housing
- Variety of Housing Types
- Expanded healthy food options and access
- Attainable housing related to the median household income

Housing Goal

Ensure the provision of adequate, attainable, and safe housing for all existing and future residents of Bulloch County

Policies

- Promote equal-housing opportunities for all persons
- Focus housing near locations accessible to services and employment
- Encourage quality, attainable housing options for all people
- Promote development of higher density housing, including attainable housing, in areas where municipal water and sewer services are available.
- Coordinate and collaborate with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to increase the supply of affordable housing
- Encourage an adequate supply of housing for a growing senior population

Planning Highlights

Average household size is smaller than the state and national average.

2.4 Bulloch, 2.61 state, 2.5 national

- About 23% of all households have children living at home; Georgia 31.7; us 29.1.
- Median household income is lower than the region and the State of Georgia.

96.7% of households own a computer

85.4% have a subscription to broadband services

- Households earning \$35,000 - \$49,999 represent the largest share in the county.

Median Household Size comparison

Household Earnings, ACS 2022



Housing inventory

Bulloch County's housing inventory includes a higher share of renters than homeowners.

The majority (73.5%) of Bulloch County housing stock is valued at or below \$299,000 for an average median home value of \$206,200.

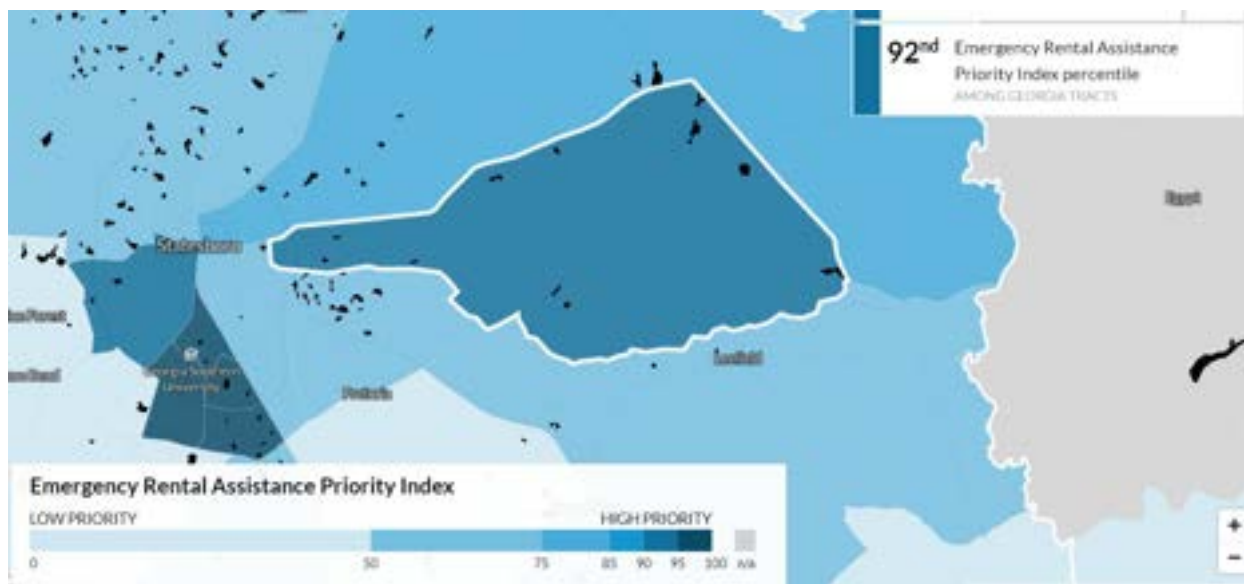
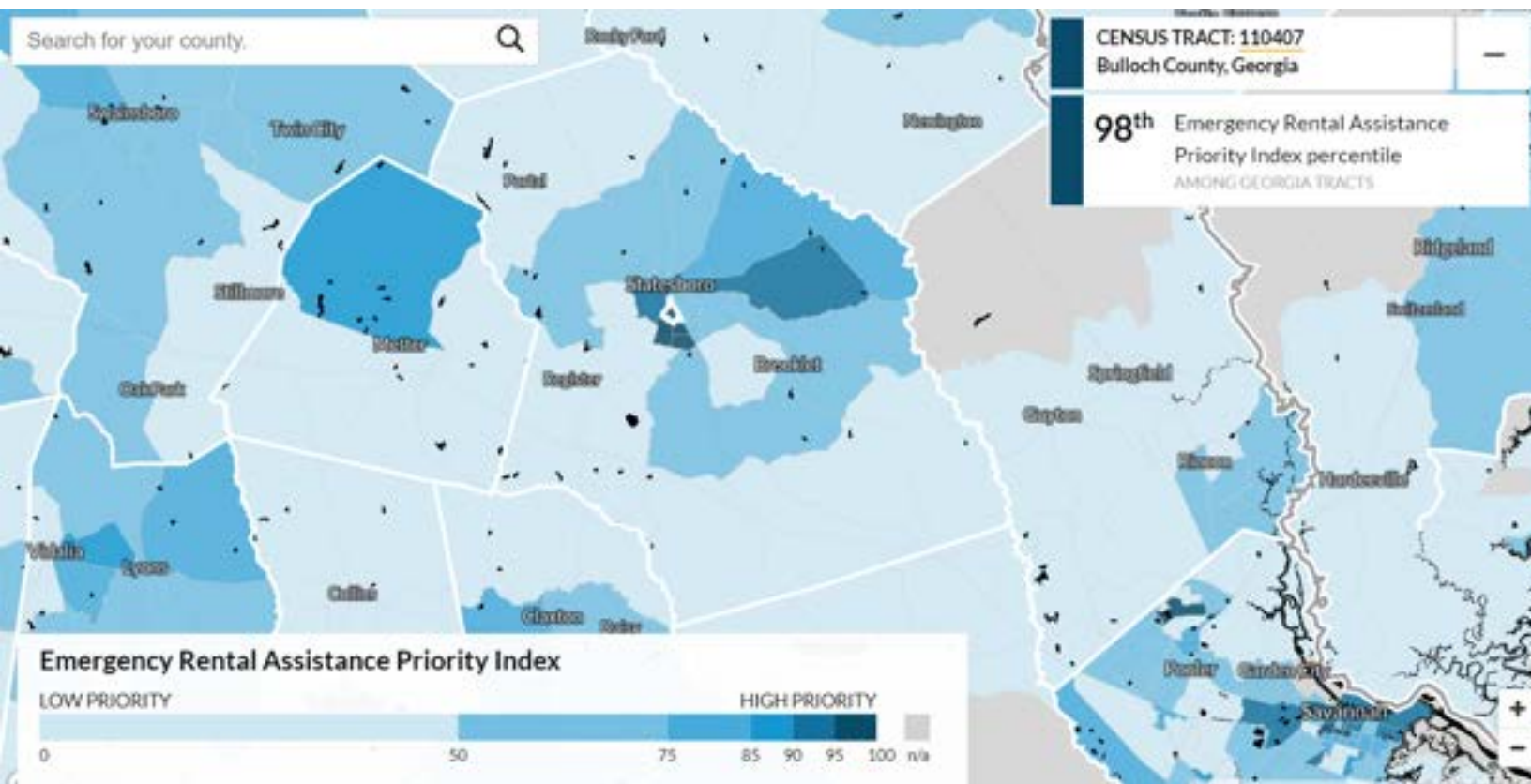
40.1% of homes were built in 1990 or later

209 units lack complete plumbing or kitchen facilities

A majority (42.9%) of Bulloch County residents spend 35% or more as a percentage of household income; GA 43.1%, Savannah metro 46.5 , however this is slightly less than the State and Savannah metro area.

The Statesboro Housing Authority owns and manages 148 units for public housing.

Data from the Urban Institute's Emergency Rental Assistance Priority (ERAP) index helps identify neighborhoods with the greatest need for rental assistance and resources allocation. Using US Census tract level data, the index considers demographic, income and housing data to suggest priority of census tracts within Bulloch County. Census Tracts 110405, 110406, 110407, and 110408 each reach an index score between 96 and 98 of 100, suggesting the highest priority are for the county. These census tracts are entirely within the city limits of Statesboro and are also the location of higher levels of student housing. Census Tract 110604 reaches an index score of 92 and is located east of Statesboro in the unincorporated area of Bulloch County (see figure). Other areas reaching a mid-range index score are east of US 301 North, and rural areas north of Statesboro and south of Brooklet.



Food Security

Limited access to healthy foods makes it difficult for residents in many low-income communities to maintain a well-balanced, nutritious diet. These communities are

frequently referred to as “food deserts.” The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food deserts as urban or rural locations lacking in ready access to fresh fruits, vegetables, and other healthful foods due to an absence of retailers of healthy food. Additionally, residents of food deserts may have limited resources, such as income, a vehicle (at the individual level), or availability of public transportation. In 2014, one study revealed, 2 million residents the State of Georgia, including 500,000 children, live in food deserts. Whereas choices for healthy food promote healthy living and lifestyles, for people living in food deserts, often food is simply purchased at a nearby store. Food products purchased from nearby locations are often processed, pre-packaged, and high in calories, fat, sugar, sodium, and preservatives. Within food deserts, availability of healthy food items, including fresh produce, meats, and dairy products is limited.

To address health food option concerns and overall food deserts, the United States Department of Agriculture utilizes two distinct distance measures for urban and rural areas. Since transportation and vehicle access is vital to obtaining fresh foods, a food desert is located in low income and low access areas. For those living within an urban area (City of Statesboro), the distance from a supermarket is one mile. Residents in a rural area are generally considered to be in a food desert when living 10 miles or greater from a supermarket. While public transit options are now available within the City of Statesboro, walking or using public transportation increases the time it takes to move food from the store to the home and limits the quantity of food that can be purchased and carried. To address the issue, each community may consider establishing and/or supporting additional farmers market locations in the future to lessen the distance from the food deserts located within Bulloch County. Additionally, support of the Statesboro Food Bank should remain a priority of the community. Figure XX exhibits areas identified by the United States Department of Agriculture Food Access Research Atlas as low income and low access areas in proximity to supermarkets (food deserts).

CHAPTER 6 SMART GROWTH LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

Bulloch County, Brooklet, Portal and Register have land development regulations that are subject to the *Georgia Zoning Procedures Act* in which they routinely consider updates to their land development regulations. This Comprehensive Plan also considers quality community objectives and character area planning to provide guidance to decision-makers in shaping development activity and evaluating new projects in each community.

GOALS

SMART GROWTH starts with having smart goals for land use. The following represents the six major goals for **SMART GROWTH** county-wide.

- **Mixed Land Uses:** Encourage building homes, offices, schools, parks, shops, restaurants, and other types of development near one another for access, economies of scale and walkability.
- **Compact Design:** Encourage compact design and infill development to make more efficient use of developable land.
- **Diverse Housing Choices:** Build quality housing for people at all stages of life and income levels and in appropriate character areas.
- **Walkability:** Create safe and convenient walkability with mixed land uses, compact design, context sensitive street design and multi-use trail connections.
- **Sense of Place:** Create unique character areas reflecting community values, culture, and heritage of the people living or visiting them, and direct development to them accordingly.
- **Preserve Open Space:** Protect sensitive environmental resources and rural character while building resilience, creating passive recreation opportunities and supporting agricultural and eco-tourism.

REGIONAL WATER PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING CRITERIA

Bulloch County is part of the Coastal Regional Water Planning Council. The adopted Coastal Regional Water Plan (2023), was considered by the Bulloch County Local Plan Coordination Committee and the local governments in preparation of this plan. The water plan goals ensure management practices balance economic, recreational and environmental interests while maintaining consistency with this comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan's community goals and long-term policies are supportive of and consistent with the regional water plan. The vision of the regional water plan, "to manage water as a critical resource vital to our health, economic, social, and environmental well-being," is inherent in this comprehensive plan's community vision and goals. In the Regional Water Planning Council's 2017 update, Bulloch County's agricultural groundwater withdrawals were considered to be significant and should be monitored. There are currently no anticipated regional groundwater resource gaps expected over the 40-year planning horizon for Bulloch County. However, localized gaps could occur if well densities and/or withdrawal rates result in exceedance of sustainable yield metrics.

Similarly, the Environmental Planning Criteria were also considered in the development of this comprehensive plan. All local governments including Bulloch County, the cities of Brooklet, Portal, and Register, have long been in compliance with the Environmental Planning Criteria, having adopted implemented policies and/or ordinances consistent with Rules of Georgia Department of Natural Resources Environmental Protection Division, Chapter 391-3-16, Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria.

ANALYSIS

In order to develop sound implementation strategies for future land use in Bulloch County, it is important to understand the existing conditions of the physical setting. A key element in this process is an inventory of existing land use described below. Seven land use classifications were used to represent the data recorded using Bulloch County's Geographic Information System.

Agriculture-Forestry: Because Bulloch County is largely rural, the amount of land occupied by agricultural uses accounts for nearly 86% of the total land in Bulloch County. Timber land makes up much of this land use category, though cultivated acreage is also prominent. Wetland areas are also considered in this land use category due to the inherent preservation and natural presence on the forestry/agriculture land. As physical development continues with projected population growth, the agriculture-forestry class of land will gradually decline. Many properties are classified as prime agricultural land, representing a great natural resource that should be preserved.

Parks/Recreation/Conservation: Bulloch County's Parks and Recreation Department is recognized as having high quality recreation facilities and programs. Georgia Southern University also provides significant recreational facilities and programs to students and the public. Despite having high quality facilities, there is a deficiency of public parkland in the county of nearly 5,000 acres. Future public parkland for passive recreation activities and environmental preservation purposes is needed and is addressed in the County's current Master Recreation Plan. There are also opportunities to address dedication of private open space or green space in private developments, though some uses may be restricted.

Residential: Single-family residences are located throughout rural Bulloch County, dispersed along both major and minor roads. Dense concentrations of subdivisions and individually built homes can be found in and near municipal areas, historic areas and in more modern subdivisions. There has been consistent growth in Bulloch County of small-scale residential developments. Outside of the immediate surroundings of Georgia Southern University, unincorporated Bulloch County contains few multifamily residences, but they are increasing. Subdivision development is taking place in areas outside of the Veterans Memorial Parkway (Statesboro By-Pass) and in areas south of Brooklet, within reach of Interstate 16. Also, there is a significant number of manufactured homes dispersed throughout the county on individual lots and clustered parks, though their prominence has declined over the previous 25 years.

Commercial: Commercial land uses are found throughout Bulloch County, but more intensive commercial areas are concentrated in and around Statesboro. Outside of the City of Statesboro, significant commercial areas are located along U.S. Highways 301 and U.S. 80, and State Routes 24 and 25. The access created by the Statesboro By-Pass contributes to increased commercial development. The U.S. 301 corridor between State Route 46 and Statesboro is increasingly being developed as commercial along the corridor with a mix of newer and older commercial properties, and portions of the corridor have aged to the point of needing redevelopment. The municipalities of Brooklet, Portal and Register each have traditional central business districts with a mixture of retail, industry and office uses, and have similar redevelopment needs. Additionally, some Bulloch County unincorporated crossroad communities include quaint, village-like retail shops, antique stores and convenience stores.

Industrial: The largest amount of industrial land use in Bulloch County is located along U.S. Highway 301, both north and south of Statesboro. Industries in both of these areas also have rail access. Smaller industries are located in various parts of Bulloch County. A 220-acre industrial park was developed at I-16 and U.S. 301 with the aid of \$16 million in public infrastructure investment and is part of a planned 1,800 acre Tax Allocation District where most of the remaining development is expected to be commercial in nature. The park and other property within the Tax Allocation District have recently become the future location major Hyundai suppliers Ecoplastics, and Joon Georgia. The Cities of Brooklet, Portal and Register do not currently have active industries that employ residents.

Public-Institutional: Churches and education facilities are the primary institutional uses. Government facilities and schools are located in Statesboro, Brooklet, Portal and Register. Because of the size of and growing population of Bulloch County, additional government and school sites should be identified to insure adequate delivery of facilities and services. Due to the importance of municipalities, new public and institutional buildings should be located at urban centers and corridors, when possible.

Transportation-Communication-Utilities: This classification is differentiated from industrial including only airports, water and sewer facilities, power stations, substations, water storage tanks, radio and television stations, limited access highways, and utility corridors. Created in a network fashion, most of these facilities follow existing road and rail networks. However, in rural settings, the networks will intersect from road and rail right of ways using private land easements.

CHARACTER AREAS

The Great Recession of 2008 and 2009 slowed the unusually high rate of population growth and physical development throughout Bulloch County, although by 2016 such growth began to resume. Two new character areas have been introduced into the Comprehensive Plan to adequately address growth concerns in the southeast Bulloch area. The areas are generally centered around future utility locations along GA Highway 67 and Interstate 16. Higher density nodal development has been considered in these areas where utilities will be present.

Five major development categories in the illustration below describe general development patterns ranging from natural areas to urban and district areas. The fifteen-character areas within each category describe community elements of scale, and intensity of development. The Future Development Maps for unincorporated Bulloch County, Brooklet, Portal and Register align with the character area narratives, and lay out the vision and implementation strategies for future land uses.

Character Area Framework

The Character Area Framework is presented in narrative form in this section and is illustrated in the Future Development Maps. The framework describes policies, development patterns and design strategies to help achieve the community vision for future land uses. The framework for each Character Area more specifically incorporates the following components:

- *Intent* describes the goal and policy aims of each Character Area, specifically to preserve, maintain, enhance or create a desired atmosphere.
- *General Characteristics* provide an overview of desired development pattern in relation to the Design Principles.
- *Application* provides a general description of tools or approaches that can be applied based on characteristics of the land and infrastructure.
- *Primary Land Uses* lists appropriate land uses that support the desired mix and or/type of land uses in a Character Area.
- *Applicable Zoning Districts* identifies appropriate zoning districts to use within the character area. Zoning districts in this policy component represent both currently adopted zoning districts, and where necessary, proposed districts (*in italics*) designed specifically to implement the intent of the Character Area.
- *Design Principles* describes the form and character of physical elements of the Character Area. This includes scale, which is presented in terms of low, medium and high (relative to other Character Areas in the County), site design, density/intensity, green space, transportation and infrastructure/utilities.
- *Visual Character Description* provides illustrations of the desired development character specifically for development patterns, transportation and green space.
- *Implementation Strategies* are used to link the desired physical development patterns identified in each character area with further planning studies, and/or appropriate modifications to existing development regulations, or the addition of new regulations needed to meet policy intent.

DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER AREAS

NATURAL

This category applies to areas that are important to preserve and maintain in a natural state for environmental functionality, and to provide areas where residents can enjoy nature. Examples of this category include geographic features natural wildlife habitat, water bodies, and public preserves and parks.

There is only one character area described as Natural Open Space. Preserved areas can be both public and private. Public natural areas can be in the form of passive parks or government-

owned land with low impact recreational activities such as boating, hiking, fishing, camping and picnicking. Privately-owned natural areas can be in the form of conservation easements or undesirable areas for development because of sensitive natural features. Opportunities to connect and enjoy nature are an important part of a community.

Emphasis should be placed on connecting natural features to support a healthy environment without interruption or segregation by the built environment. Building and development is rare in this category. Where development does occur, every effort should be made to minimize its physical impact on the surrounding natural environment.

RURAL

Rural character areas include Rural Open Space, Rural Neighborhoods and Rural Centers. These are areas defined by agricultural activities, low density residential uses, and limited low intensity non-residential uses where appropriate. The intent of this category is to preserve and enhance the rural character. The development pattern is defined by sparsely scattered buildings connected by a more limited road network than found in other development categories. Buildings are usually a combination of residential homes and structures for agricultural activities. Spacing between buildings is usually wide and they are separated by large tracts of land. Some rural areas may have clusters of residential buildings that are closer to one another and the street to create rural "hamlets."

Pasture land and crop fields are appropriate. Limited commercial activity can be found at Rural Center crossroads. Non-residential uses should be limited to those that provide essential services to the rural community. Civic uses such as schools and post offices or commercial uses such as small grocery stores or farm equipment and supply stores are examples of non-residential uses. These buildings should be located on smaller lots, oriented close to the street, and clustered together to minimize the development of the surrounding rural landscape.

Green space is an important part of the rural character. Farm land and natural features are the main types of green space and are mostly located on private land. Public access to green space is limited to available community parks, though privately-owned land is in abundance.

Roads typically follow contours and other natural features. Typical rural road cross sections consist of the roadway, shoulders, and ditch and swales with no curbs or sidewalks. Generally, distances between intersections is greater. The nature of the road network and low frequency of intersections limits mobility options to motorized vehicles and increases trip distance and time.

Public and utility services are limited in rural areas. Public safety services such as police, fire, and medical response are influenced by greater distances to travel and limited road connections. Civic services such as schools, community centers and post offices should be located at important crossroads. Electricity and

landline telecommunications are the main private utilities service for rural areas along with expanding wireless telecommunications access. Water service is limited and sewerage treatment is generally limited to septic tanks, both on site. Water and sewer should be handled on site with best management practices to limit negative environmental impacts.

SUBURBAN

This category which includes Suburban Neighborhood and Suburban Corridor areas represent a transition between natural and rural settings and urban environments. The intent of this category is to preserve the accommodation of natural features into the built environment, but also to enhance the access to urban amenities such as jobs, commercial goods and services and public services. These character areas are typically adjacent to the municipalities, or on arterial corridors leading to municipalities.

The development pattern of traditional suburban neighborhoods is generally characterized by the separation of land uses into residential and non-residential areas, though mixed uses can be accommodated. Residential areas typically have clusters of similar one and two story residential buildings, lots surrounded by landscaping on all sides, and a moderate to degree of building separation. Non-residential areas are typically located along major roads or in nodes at major crossroads. Commercial uses are typically clustered together and are designed largely to accommodate vehicular access. Civic buildings such as schools or government offices are usually located in isolation from other uses and along major roads.

Transportation is centered on the automobile but pedestrian facilities should be included. Road networks have a moderate degree of connectivity and frequency of intersections. Because trip distances are typically too long for walking, transportation mobility is largely dependent on motor vehicles. Streets are typically curvilinear with residential streets often ending in cul-de-sacs. A typical cross section of a street should include the roadway, curb and gutter, and in some cases sidewalks.

Green space in suburban areas is largely located on private properties and associated with the yard area surrounding buildings, though in more affluent subdivisions there is green space, community buildings or passive recreation available through homeowners' associations. Public green space is typically in the form of parks with recreation facilities such as ball parks or small neighborhood parks, and private common interest elements in some neighborhoods, where available.

While the traditional model of suburban development is prominent, a desire for a more complete and integrated physical form is desired. New suburban development should integrate land uses (mixed-use)

or mixed density where appropriate and increase the connections between land uses, reducing the influence of design around automobiles. Examples of this type of development pattern include connecting residential developments to other residential developments or commercial areas. Within commercial areas, buildings should be located closer to the street and separated from the roadway by landscaping rather than parking lots. Parking and additional commercial buildings should be located behind buildings.

that front the street. Civic buildings and uses such as schools and parks should be located where commercial and residential uses connect to create suburban centers or corridors with a cluster of services and activities for a community.

URBAN

This category consisting of Urban Neighborhoods, Urban Centers and Urban Corridors in Brooklet, Portal and Register is defined by the highest intensity of development. The intent of this category is to enhance and create quality, walkable communities with residential and nonresidential uses in close proximity. Additionally, this category intends to preserve historic buildings and street patterns associated with traditional City centers.

The development pattern of urban areas is defined by higher intensity of street connection, buildings, and land uses. Commercial areas are defined by buildings that consume most of the lot and have little to no setbacks from the street. The building uses are typically a mixture of retail, office, and residential uses. The scale of buildings varies but is intended to frame the site with two or more stories. Residential neighborhoods are defined by shallower lots and yard setbacks than found in suburban character areas.

Green space in urban areas is made up of street trees or other plantings that lines sidewalks, small urban parks, and small yards in urban neighborhoods.

The transportation network of urban areas has a network of linear streets, smaller walkable blocks, and frequent intersections. Mobility opportunities are greater in urban areas with walkable distances between land uses, integrating motor vehicle traffic and pedestrians. A typical cross section of an urban street includes the roadway, curb and gutter, street trees or other street furniture, and a sidewalk. On-street parking is also a part of urban areas. The network is capable of providing activity along the street and a buffer between moving traffic and the pedestrian walkways.

Urban areas also provide higher degrees of public and utility services. Water, electricity, and other utilities are all provided, though sewer is only available in Portal. Additionally, the full range of public safety services are available and can access the quicker response times in urban areas. Civic services such as government buildings and community parks and centers are also typically located in urban areas.

DISTRICT

This category includes an area surrounding the Statesboro-Bulloch County Airport, three planned industrial parks and one interstate interchange on I-16 accommodate activities not offered with traditional community elements of open space, neighborhoods, centers, and corridors. The intent of this category is to create and enhance areas with special services and high intensity uses for the community, create community gateways, and to limit negative impacts they may have on surrounding areas.

The development patterns for districts are typically large land developments. Examples include airports or industrial sites that require a large geographic area. Large buffers are required to limit the impacts of the land use on adjacent areas. To help limit the district's impact on the surrounding character areas, efforts should be made to mirror the character of the surrounding areas at the district edge. Similar street types and landscaping buffers are an example of this type of character mirroring.

Transportation in and around districts can vary greatly. For heavy land uses such as industrial uses, the transportation system should be designed to accommodate large, heavy vehicles. Access to loading or heavy service areas should be accommodated on site and away from major road access points.

Green space is variable in districts. Most green space is associated with landscape buffers or large open areas such as an airport runway, though there is limited to no public use for pedestrian or recreation purposes.

Utility services are an important component of district areas. Where heavy uses are located, such as industrial uses or airports, it is important that water, sewer, telecommunications and electrical services are provided. Noxious water uses, smoke, glare and noise need to be mitigated to limit negative impacts on the environment.

GA HIGHWAY 67 & INTERSTATE COMMERCE NODE

GA Highway 67 Character Area

This character area encompasses an area centered along Georgia Highway 67. This route runs north to south from Statesboro to Interstate 16 and beyond. The boundaries for the area are Emit Grove Road (north), NeSmith Proctor Road (south), Old Happy Road and Lower Black Creek (east), and Clifton Road or 2,000 feet west of GA Hwy. 67 (west). The intent of this area is to address specific design criteria for the corridor and suggest land uses along GA 67. The proposed density relies on nodal development focused along Interstate 16 and smaller crossroads to a lesser degree. Implementation of zoning overlays and additional requirements will be realized overtime as additional studies are performed. Within the GA 67-character area, residential developments are required to have increased buffers fronting GA 67 to lessen the appearance of developed land and to preserve open space as the corridor develops. A buffer measuring 50 feet in width for parcels fronting GA 67 should be required whether by an overlay adoption or zoning conditions. Design consideration will be placed on the use of frontage roads and limited access to GA 67. Transportation is primarily automobile centered with connectivity among developments including greenspace and linear trails. Developments near road crossings should be encouraged to provide

pedestrian crossing refuges for access across GA 67. Outside of nodal developments, commercial uses along GA 67 should be limited to major intersections, surrounding parcels or adjacent to other commercial uses and where infrastructure is in place to accommodate higher density commercial uses. Additional standards or requirements may be applied through overlays. Industrial development shall only be considered within the interstate commerce node with careful consideration of noise and air quality pollutants. Visual photo simulations should be rendered prior to industrial approval to adequately consider impacts for the surrounding area. Residential developments should utilize the conservation style subdivisions with density bonuses suggested up to 50%, whereby the remaining land is preserved by an HOA or land trust in perpetuity.

Interstate Commerce Node

Nodal development is suggested by Bulloch County to allow for the concentration of mixed uses in a defined area which will allow for the utilization of future infrastructure and create a balanced approach to growth and land use. Higher density residential developments will be located within the commerce node with preference to village style mixed uses. Road frontage and arterial road access should be limited to commercial or office use with high density residential or logistics-oriented industry to the rear of parcels. Strict landscaping, signage and architectural standards should be applied by adopting overlay districts. Commercial and retail strip developments must provide inter-parcel access and variable façade appearances of natural stone, masonry, cement siding materials to lessen monotonous appearances. Open space preservation is given priority in residential developments. Open areas should be readily accessible, useable and well-designed. Large community open spaces or public square parks should be the focus point of a development with multiple smaller parks throughout residential phases. Townhomes facing parks and open space with small restaurants or convenience stores should be considered in Planned Unit Developments. Transit stops should be incentivized within the node. Regional scaled commercial uses should be limited to GA 67 frontage with logistics related industrial uses available to parcels, limiting road frontage as commercial or higher density residential.

BLACK CREEK CHARACTER AREA & INTERSTATE 16 NODE

Black Creek Character Area

This character area is defined as the area south of Mud Road to Seedtick Road. East and west boundaries are Old Happy Road and US 80 respectively. A small portion of the area is south of Georgia Hwy. 119 and bounded by US 80 east to the Ogeechee River. Within the area, future higher density nodes are located along Interstate 16 at Arcola Road (exit 132) and GA 119 (exit 137). The current character of the area is rural, low-density development consistent with the R-80 and AG-5 zoning parameters. Much of the land's present development challenges are due to the presence of wetlands and low-lying terrain. Commonly referred to as the "Flatwoods", this area of Bulloch County is located in the lower coastal plain, displaying typical flora and fauna associated with coastal counties. Transportation within the area is dependent on county roads, of which most are presently dirt. Collector routes include Ash Branch Church Road/Arcola Road, Mud Road, and Old GA 46. Interstate 16 records the highest traffic volumes for the area.

The development of the Black Creek Character Area should be carefully considered where parcels are likely to receive water and sewer service in the future. Density levels may be similar to the suburban neighborhood character area with single family neighborhoods of near half-acre lot minimums utilizing individual septic tanks. Medium to high density residential may be located within nodal areas. Residential developments should allow for environmental protection of sensitive areas through the use of

conservation subdivisions. Open space requirements are strongly suggested in the designs of development.

Interstate 16 nodal developments should create a defined sense of place with signage overlay districts and enhanced landscaping requirements. Commercial development should be limited outside of the nodes, keeping high density developments within nodal areas served by water and sewer utilities. Temporary use of state permitted community septic systems may be allowed in planned infrastructure areas.

ALIGNMENT MATRIX

The following pages present tabular descriptions that advance this baseline analysis for the purpose of identifying needs, opportunities, goals, policies and quality community objectives addressed by priority for each community. By identifying these attributes, this matrix allows decision-makers to develop implementation strategies for the Community Work Program element.

SMART GROWTH: LAND USE ELEMENT						
Needs	Major corridors and neighborhood streets lack character and discourage biking and walking.	Development pressures threaten agricultural areas and natural and rural open space.	Limited housing choices.	Lack of pedestrian circulation and networks.	There are many undeveloped vacant sites in each City.	There are not enough neighborhood centers to serve adjacent neighborhoods.
Opportunities	Traditional neighborhood development; mixed use development.	Encourage higher density/intensity growth into suitable areas for development.	Allow a mixture of housing types in developing areas and concentrating new, higher density housing types into mixed use developments.	Enhancements to downtown areas will encourage more livable, pedestrian friendly commercial areas.	Infill development can enhance established neighborhoods and help revitalize economically distressed neighborhoods and business districts.	Encourage mixed land uses or direct development to appropriate places.
Goals	Sense of place, preserve open space.	Sense of place, preserve open space.	Mixed use, diverse housing choices, sense of place, preserve open space.	Mixed use, sense of place, preserve open space.	Compact design, diverse housing choices, walkability, open space.	Mixed land uses, compact design, walkability, sense of place.

SMART GROWTH: LAND USE ELEMENT						
Policies	Refer to character areas.	Refer to character areas.	Refer to character areas.	Refer to character areas.	Refer to character areas.	Refer to character areas.
Quality Community Objectives	Efficient land use, local preparedness, sense of place, transportation options, community health.	Resource management, efficient land use, sense of place, community health.	Sense of place, housing options, community health.	Efficient land use, local preparedness, sense of place, transportation options, community health.	Efficient land use, sense of place, community health.	Economic prosperity, efficient land use, sense of place, community health.

SMART GROWTH: LAND USE ELEMENT						
Needs	There is no clear boundary where City stops and countryside begins.	The Greenway system needs to be expanded.	New development remains dependent upon the use of septic systems outside of Portal.	New development within the cities of Brooklet, Portal, and Register is limited because of insufficient water capacity and aging distribution systems.	Brooklet, Portal and Register have a core of historic and cultural resources that could be preserved.	Recreation facilities are needed to the north and southwest of Statesboro.
Opportunities	Use corridor character areas to define and establish community or business district gateways.	The existing S&S Greenway has completed two phases and there is a Master Greenway Plan to follow.	Develop municipal sewer capacity, consider requirements to install package systems.	Build a business case or model to justify and fund needed improvements.	Retaining the individual identity of each city, which are largely shaped by local historic resources.	Work with public schools to create joint use facilities, follow Recreation Master Plan.

SMART GROWTH: LAND USE ELEMENT						
Goals	Sense of place.	Sense of place, preserve open space.	Mixed land uses, compact design, sense of place, preserve open space.	Compact design.	Sense of place.	Walkability, Sense of place, preserve open space.
Policies	Refer to character areas.	Refer to character areas.	Refer to character areas.	Refer to character areas.	Refer to character areas.	Refer to character areas.
Quality Community Objectives	Efficient land use, sense of place, transportation options.	Resource management, local preparedness, sense of place, transportation options, educational opportunities, community health.	Resource management, efficient land use, local preparedness, community health.	Resource management, efficient land use, local preparedness, community health.	Resource management, efficient land use, sense of place, local preparedness, community health.	Resource management, efficient land use, local preparedness, sense of place, community health.

NATURAL OPEN SPACE (N-OS)

POLICIES

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Intent

- Preserve existing undisturbed natural areas and open space unsuitable for development and protect areas that have already developed or have development potential due to existing zoning.

General Characteristics

- Floodplain areas, wetlands, river corridor, publicly owned parkland, and privately-owned land in its natural state.
- Primarily privately-owned rural land with no development or limited residential or recreational homes with variable setbacks.

Application

- Limit man-made disturbances.
- Provide residents opportunities to connect with nature.
- Seek opportunities to acquire land for open space for passive recreation and protection.

Primary Land Uses

- Civic uses such as cemeteries and burial grounds, and passive recreation (hunting, fishing, boating, nature preserves).
- Undeveloped areas in their natural state.
- Very low-density single-family residences.

Zoning Classifications

- AG-5, Conservation Preservation
- A-1, AG, CD, AGR

Site Design

- Preserve scenic views, existing tree cover and vegetation, natural habitats and rural character.
- Place buildings and choose exterior materials to blend with surrounding landscape and to reduce visual impacts.

Density/Intensity

- Natural landscape.
- Limited civic uses (community education).
- Limited residential development.
- 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres, or more.

Green Space

- Natural and informal landscape.
- Maintain connections between natural features.

Transportation

- Low pedestrian connectivity.
- Limited access with informal roadways such as unpaved roads.

Infrastructure

- Not applicable.

Visual Character Description

Development Pattern



Transportation



Green Space



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Pursue public-private partnerships to purchase environmentally sensitive lands for the creation of wildlife areas, nature preserves, and public parks.
- Establish a land conservation program to create and promote conservation easements or similar tools that preserve important natural areas.
- Enforce flood hazard and river corridor protection ordinances.
- Adopt design standards for rural roads and alterations to minimize scenic and environmental impacts.

RURAL OPEN SPACE (R-OS)

POLICIES

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Intent

- Preserve and sustain rural character, lifestyle and the agricultural economy.

Site Design

- Moderate-to-deep building setbacks with green space.
- Small building footprints in relation to lot size.

General Characteristics

- Scattered low density residential development and agricultural activities.
- Buildings have variable setbacks and an informal orientation to the roadway.

Density/Intensity

- Limited civic buildings.
- 1 dwelling units per 2-5 acres, or more.
- 1-2 story buildings.

Application

- Provide opportunities for residents to connect with nature.
- Seek opportunities to secure and protect land for open space.
- Protect prime agricultural lands.

Green Space

- Natural and informal landscape.
- Maintain connections between natural features.
- Require landscape buffers to reduce land use conflicts.
- Encourage conservation subdivisions.

Primary Land Uses

- Civic uses such as places of worship, cemeteries and burial grounds, passive recreation (including greenways and trails).
- Agricultural uses, low density single family residential and accessory uses such as barns, stables, or cottage industries.

Transportation

- Low pedestrian connectivity with greenways, trails.
- Low vehicular connectivity with generous distance between intersections and driveways.
- Rural paved and unpaved roadways with narrow shoulders, ditches or swales.

Zoning Classifications

- AG-5, R-80, Conservation-Preservation

Infrastructure

- On-site water (private wells or small systems) and sewer (septic or package systems).
- Variable private utilities.

Visual Character Description

Development Pattern



Transportation



Green Space



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Pursue government purchase of environmentally sensitive lands to create wildlife areas, nature preserves, and public parks.
- Adopt a Conservation Subdivision Ordinance for clustered development to preserve rural character, sensitive natural resources and large tracts of permanent green space.
- Incorporate and incent design principles into development ordinances or zoning conditions.
- Implement the Countywide Greenways Master Plan and define priorities for development.

RURAL NEIGHBORHOOD (R-N)

POLICIES

Intent

- Preserve and sustain rural character, lifestyle and the agricultural economy.

General Characteristics

- Scattered low density residential development with large distances between buildings or historical clusters of rural homes.
- Buildings have variable setbacks with an informal orientation to the roadway.

Application

- Provide a transition area between rural open space and a rural center while protecting prime agricultural land.
- Accommodate hamlet-style clustered homes compatible with surrounding agricultural uses benefitting from the scenic rural landscape.

Primary Land Uses

- Civic uses such as places of worship, cemeteries and burial grounds, passive recreation (including greenways and trails).
- Small-scale agricultural uses, low density single family residential and accessory uses such as barns or stables.

Zoning Classifications

- R-40, R-80, *Conservation Subdivision*

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Site Design

- Moderate building setbacks with green space.
- Small building footprints in relation to lot size.
- Architectural diversity and controlled aesthetics giving a sense of place with attractive facades and streetscape where practical.

Density/Intensity

- Scaled civic buildings.
- 1-2 dwelling units per acre.
- 1-3 story buildings.

Green Space

- Natural, formal and informal landscape.
- Maintain connections between natural features.
- Use landscape buffer to reduce land use conflicts.
- Encourage conservation subdivisions.

Transportation

- Low pedestrian connectivity with greenways or trails.
- Low vehicular connectivity with large blocks between intersections and driveways.
- Rural paved and unpaved roadways with narrow shoulders, ditches or swales; informal landscaping or farm fences lining the edges.

Infrastructure

- On-site water (private wells or small systems) and sewer (septic or package systems).
- Variable private utilities.

Visual Character Description

Development Pattern



Transportation



Green Space



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Adopt a Conservation Subdivision Ordinance to ensure to preserve rural character, sensitive natural resources and large tracts of permanent green space.
- Incorporate and incent design principles into development ordinances, or by zoning conditions.
- Implement the Countywide Greenways Master Plan and define priorities for development.

RURAL CENTER (R-C)

POLICIES

Intent

- Preserve and sustain rural character, lifestyle and the agricultural economy by providing compatible commercial goods and services concentrated at important cross roads that serve nearby areas.

General Characteristics

- Clustered commercial and residential development patterns with moderate to short distances between buildings.
- Buildings are located close to the street with parking either in front, beside or behind the building.

Application

- Compact small-scale development with compatible rural architecture.

Primary Land Uses

- Civic uses such as places of worship, cemeteries and burial grounds, passive recreation (including greenways and trails).
- Commercial uses such as retail stores, farm equipment and supply stores.

Zoning Classifications

- R-40, R-80, GC, NC, *Rural Center Overlay*

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Site Design

- Shallow to moderate building setbacks with green space.
- Moderate building footprints related to lot size.
- Architectural diversity giving a sense of place and character with attractive non-corporate facades, landscaping, streetscapes and unobtrusive lighting.

Density/Intensity

- Limited civic buildings.
- 1-3 story buildings clustered around or in close proximity to major intersections.

Green Space

- Natural, formal and informal landscape.
- Maintain connections between natural features.

Transportation

- Low pedestrian connectivity with greenways, trails, and sidewalks.
- Low-to-moderate vehicular connectivity with managed access, adequate distance between intersections and efficient and safe circulation patterns.
- Paved roadways and parking, curb and gutter and formal landscaping at the edge of public right of way and private property.

Infrastructure

- On-site water (private wells or small systems) and sewer (septic or package systems).
- Accessible private utilities.
- Controlled stormwater as needed.

Visual Character Description

Development Pattern



Transportation



Green Space



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Incorporate and incent design principles into development ordinances, or by zoning conditions.
- Implement the Countywide Greenways Master Plan and define priorities for development.
- Adopt Rural Center Overlay District that defines desired standards for commercial uses and site design.

SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD (S-N)

POLICIES

Intent

- Enhance existing suburban neighborhoods and create new suburban neighborhoods with a sense of place and community.

General Characteristics

- Clustered buildings located close to the street with parking beside or behind the building.

Application

- Compact and walkable residential development and neighborhood commercial development.
- Housing diversity and connectivity with nodal concentrations near key crossroads.
- Connect to public water and sewer if available.

Primary Land Uses

- Civic uses such as places of worship, cemeteries and burial grounds, health facilities, school's passive recreation (including greenways and trails), public parks and community centers.
- Single family and multi-family residential uses.
- Neighborhood-scale commercial and office uses.
- Neighborhood-scale mixed use development.

Zoning Classifications

- R-2, R-3, R-8, R-15, R-25, GC, NC, PUD

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Site Design

- Shallow-to-moderate building setbacks with green space.
- Moderate building footprints related to lot size.
- Master planned projects that consider quality architectural building design with attractive facades, controlled aesthetics, amenities and context sensitive infrastructure.

Density/Intensity

- Scaled civic uses.
- 2-4 dwelling units per acre.

Green Space

- Informal landscaping for passive use areas.
- Formal landscaping and appropriate buffers within built areas.
- Maintain connections between natural features.
- Neighborhood and community park facilities.

Transportation

- Pedestrian facilities (sidewalks/multi-use trails) connected to civic and commercial uses.
- Moderate vehicular connectivity with managed access, adequate distance between intersections and efficient and safe circulation patterns.
- Paved roadways and parking, curb and gutter, sidewalks, streetscaping and streetlights.

Infrastructure

- Municipal water (or sewer) proximity.
- On-site water (private wells or small systems) and sewer (septic or package systems).
- Abundant private utilities.
- Low impact development.

Visual Character Description

Development Pattern



Transportation



Green Space



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Incorporate and incent design principles into development ordinances, or by zoning conditions.
- Encourage the use of planned unit developments (PUD's).
- Develop and promote incentives for amenities, aesthetics, and infill.
- Implement the Countywide Greenways Master Plan and define priorities for development.

SUBURBAN CORRIDOR (S-C)

POLICIES	DESIGN PRINCIPLES
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Intent</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance existing suburban corridors with an increased sense of place and community. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Site Design</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate-to-deep building setbacks with green space using building structures to frame the site. Moderate-to-large building footprints related to lot size. Master planned projects that consider quality architectural building design with attractive facades, controlled aesthetics, amenities and context sensitive infrastructure.
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>General Characteristics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed use or single use commercial, office and residential development along major linear transportation corridors. Clustered buildings located close to the street with shared parking to the side and rear. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Density/Intensity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scaled civic uses. 2-8 dwelling units per acre. 1-4 story buildings clustered with proximity to major intersections. Moderate floor area and impervious surface ratios.
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Application</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locate on principal arterials near areas where public water and sewer exists or is proposed. Housing diversity and connectivity with nodal concentrations at major intersections. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Green Space</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal landscaping and appropriate buffers within built areas. Community and regional park facilities.
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Primary Land Uses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civic uses such as places of worship, cemeteries and burial grounds, schools, health care facilities, active and passive recreation and municipal services. Single family and multi-family residential uses. Highway commercial and office uses. Larger scale mixed use development clustered at key crossroads. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Transportation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedestrian facilities (sidewalks/bicycles/multi-use trails) with high connectivity between uses. High vehicular connectivity with managed access, adequate distance between intersections and efficient and safe circulation patterns. Paved roadways and parking, curb and gutter, sidewalks, streetscaping and streetlights.
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Zoning Classifications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> R-2, R-3, R-25, HC, GC, PUD, Corridor Overlay District 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Infrastructure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipal water (or sewer) proximity. On-site water (private wells or small systems) and sewer (septic or package systems). Abundant private utilities. Low impact development.

Visual Character Description

Development Pattern	Transportation	Green Space
		

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Incorporate and incent design principles into development ordinances, or by zoning conditions.
- Encourage the use of planned unit developments (PUD's).
- Develop and promote incentives for amenities, aesthetics, and infill.
- Implement the Countywide Greenways Master Plan and define priorities for development.
- Prepare and adopt a Suburban-Corridor Overlay District to regulate building placement, and materials, design and size, sign placement, landscaping, access management, inter-parcel access, and other elements that contribute to the look and function of the corridor.

URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD (U-N)

POLICIES

Intent

- Enhance and maintain existing urban neighborhood character by accommodating infill development that respects the scale, setback and style of adjacent homes, protects and stabilizes existing dwellings, including those with historic value.
- Create new urban neighborhoods to improve the quality of life and create a sense of place and community.

General Characteristics

- Buildings are clustered and located close to the street with parking either in front, beside or behind the building on private property.
- Green Space is reduced due to smaller lot sizes.

Application

- Compact, walkable development linking the City center.
- Mixed use or single use neighborhood scale commercial, office and residential development.
- Housing diversity of types and sizes with redevelopment, including live/work units.

Primary Land Uses

- Civic uses such as places of worship, schools, health facilities, passive recreation (including greenways and trails).
- Single family and multi-family residential uses with home occupations.

Zoning Classifications

- R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, PUD
- SFR, MFR, MHP, PUD
- DR, RMD, SR, PUD

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Site Design

- Shallow to moderate building setbacks with green space using building structures or landscaping to frame the site.
- Moderate to high lot coverage and building footprints related to lot size.
- Master planned projects that consider quality architectural building design with attractive facades, controlled aesthetics, amenities and context sensitive infrastructure.

Density/Intensity

- Scaled civic buildings.
- 2-8 dwelling units per acre.
- 1-3 story buildings.
- Infill vacant lots.

Green Space

- Informal landscaping with passive use areas.
- Formal landscaping and appropriate buffers within built areas.
- Moderately dense street trees, bushes, and planting strips.
- Neighborhood and community parks.

Transportation

- Pedestrian facilities (sidewalks/multi-use trails) with high connectivity between uses and access to nearby corridors.
- High vehicular connectivity, linear street patterns, managed access, short-to-moderate distance between intersections and alleys, and efficient and safe circulation patterns.
- Paved roadways and parking (on-site/street), curb and gutter, sidewalks, streetscapes and streetlights.

Infrastructure

- Municipal water (and/or sewer).
- Abundant private utilities.
- Low impact development.

Visual Character Description

Development Pattern



Transportation



Green Space



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Incorporate and incent design principles into development ordinances, or by zoning conditions.
- Amend the zoning ordinance to include planned unit developments (PUD's) for innovative site design.
- Implement the Countywide Greenways Master Plan and define priorities for development.
- Prepare a City-wide inventory for vacant sites and identify those that are suitable for infill development.
- Prepare a City-wide inventory of buildings suitable for redevelopment.

URBAN CENTER (U-CTR)

POLICIES

Intent

- Encourage mixed uses that can create vitality, reinforce the area’s role as a central business district and local activity center, and respect and promote the established development pattern of the City center.
- Enhance existing urban centers to create a sense of place, culture, history and community.

General Characteristics

- Mixed use or single use commercial, office and residential development in a central business district.
- Clustered buildings located close to the street with parking either in front, side or rear of the buildings.

Application

- Compact, walkable development.
- Connectivity between uses that generate a high level of pedestrian oriented activity.
- Retain and enhance existing building stock with appropriate maintenance and rehabilitation.
- Use buildings with underutilized upper floors for infill opportunities (residential above ground-floor retail).
- Major business/municipal functions in a City center.

Primary Land Uses

- Civic uses such as places of worship, municipal offices, health facilities.
- Multi-family residential uses with home occupations.
- Mixed uses (single use commercial and residential above ground-floor retail).

Zoning Classifications

- R-Multi Family; C-1, C-2; Urban Overlay District
- R-3, NC, HC; Urban Overlay District

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Site Design

- Shallow building setbacks using building structures to frame the site.
- Moderate-to-high lot coverage and building footprints related to lot size.
- Master planned projects that consider quality architectural building design with attractive facades, controlled aesthetics, and context sensitive infrastructure.

Density/Intensity

- Scaled civic buildings.
- 2-8 dwelling unit/acre for single family
- 10-20 dwelling unit/acre for multi-family
- 1-3 story buildings

Green Space

- Formal landscaping and appropriate buffers within built areas.
- Moderately dense street trees, planters, and planting strips.
- Pocket parks or parklets.

Transportation

- Well-defined pedestrian environment and facilities (sidewalks/multi-use trails) with access to nearby corridors.
- High vehicular connectivity, linear street patterns, managed access, short distance between intersections and alleys, and efficient and safe circulation patterns.
- Paved roadways and parking (on-site/street), curb and gutter, sidewalks, streetscaping and streetlights.

Infrastructure

- Municipal water (or sewer).
- Abundant private utilities.

Visual Character Description

Development Pattern



Transportation



Green Space



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Incorporate and incent design principles into development ordinances, or by zoning conditions.
- Amend the zoning ordinance to include planned unit developments (PUD’s) for innovative site design.
- Develop and promote incentives for amenities, aesthetics, and infill.
- Implement the Countywide Greenways Master Plan and define priorities for development.
- Prepare and adopt a Downtown Master Plan to guide design and regulation of future development in the character area.
- Prepare and adopt an Urban Overlay District zoning category to encourage future development to enhance the character area.

URBAN CORRIDOR (U-C)

POLICIES	DESIGN PRINCIPLES
<u>Intent</u>	<u>Site Design</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance existing urban corridors to improve the quality of life in Brooklet, Portal and Register with a sense of place and community. Encourage mixed uses that create vitality, reinforce local activity centers while respecting and promote the established development pattern of the City center. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate to deep building setbacks with green space using building structures to frame the site. Moderate to high lot coverage and building footprints related to lot size. Master planned projects that consider quality architectural building design with attractive facades, controlled aesthetics, amenities and context sensitive infrastructure.
<u>General Characteristics</u>	<u>Density/Intensity</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed use or single use commercial, office and residential development along major linear transportation corridors. Clustered buildings located close to the street with shared parking to the front, side and rear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited civic buildings. 2-8 dwelling unit/acre for single family. 10-20 dwelling unit/acre for multi-family. Moderate floor area and impervious surface ratios.
<u>Application</u>	<u>Green Space</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain and enhance existing building stock with maintenance and rehabilitation. Locate at key intersections on principal arterials where full services, public facilities and potential public transit. Connectivity to uses generating a high level of activity and pedestrian scaled development patterns, including building placement, lighting, site features, sidewalk use, amenities, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal landscaping and appropriate buffers within built areas. Moderately dense street trees, and planting strips. Neighborhood and community park facilities.
<u>Primary Land Uses</u>	<u>Transportation</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civic benefit such as places of worship, cemeteries and burial grounds, schools, health facilities, passive recreation (including greenways and trails), municipal services, parks and community centers. Single family and multi-family residential uses. Commercial and office uses. Moderate to high scale mixed use development clustered at key intersections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High vehicular connectivity, linear street patterns, managed access, short distance between intersections and efficient and safe circulation patterns. Well-defined pedestrian environment and facilities (sidewalks/bicycles/multi-use trails) with high connectivity between uses and access to City center. Paved roadways and parking (on-site/street), curb and gutter, sidewalks, streetscapes and street lighting.
<u>Zoning Classifications</u>	<u>Infrastructure</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> R-Multifamily; C-1, C-2; I-1; <i>Corridor Overlay District</i> MFR; HC, NC; <i>Corridor Overlay District</i> RMD; NC, HC; <i>Corridor Overlay District</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipal water (and/or sewer). Abundant private utilities. Low impact development.

Visual Character Description

Development Pattern	Transportation	Green Space
		

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Incorporate and incent design principles into development ordinances, or by zoning conditions.
- Encourage the use of planned unit developments (PUD's) for innovative site design.
- Implement the Countywide Greenways Master Plan and define priorities for development.
- Prepare and adopt a Streetscape Corridor Plan to guide design and regulation of future development in the character area.
- Prepare and adopt an Urban Corridor Overlay District zoning category to encourage future development to enhance the character area.

AIRPORT DISTRICT (A-D)

AIRPORT DISTRICT (A-D)

POLICIES

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Intent

- Enhance and maintain the existing airport facility to accommodate air travel activity and related business facilities, while discouraging land uses and development patterns that could present conflicts.

General Characteristics

- Single or mixed use commercial and industrial uses.
- Variable building development to promote the specific needs of industrial activities or businesses.
- Managed land use, height, sound and buffering.

Application

- Locate on principal arterial where full services, public facilities and routes of potential public transportation are available.

Primary Land Uses

- Air travel facilities and related businesses.
- Industrial uses such as low-to-high intensity manufacturing and assembly, distribution, processing, wholesale trades.
- Planned business or industrial parks.

Zoning Classifications

- LI, HI, GC, HC, PUD

Site Design

- Deep to moderate building setbacks using building structures to frame the site.
- Moderate to high lot coverage and building footprints related to lot size.
- Master planned projects that consider quality architectural building design with attractive facades, controlled aesthetics, and context sensitive infrastructure.

Density/Intensity

- Limited civic buildings.
- 1-2 story buildings.
- Moderate to high floor area and impervious surface ratios.

Green Space

- Formal landscaping and appropriate buffers between the airport and built areas to limit negative noise and visual impacts to surrounding areas.
- Moderately dense street trees, bushes and planting strips.
- Passive open space or recreational uses.

Transportation

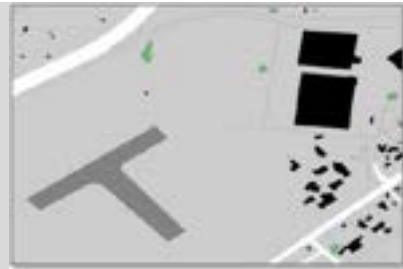
- Moderate to high vehicular connectivity with managed access, accommodation for heavy vehicles, limited connections to surrounding development and efficient and safe circulation patterns.
- Limited pedestrian environment and facilities due to nature of vehicular traffic.
- Paved roadways and parking (on-site), curb and gutter, streetscapes and streetlights.

Infrastructure

- Municipal water (and/or sewer).
- Abundant private utilities.
- Low impact development.

Visual Character Description

Development Pattern



Transportation



Green Space



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Incorporate and incent design principles into development ordinances, or by zoning conditions.
- Encourage the use of planned unit developments (PUD's) for innovative site design.
- Promote development in surrounding areas that is compatible with airport uses.
- Review rezoning requests to ensure compatibility with airport district character area and Federal Aviation Administration requirements.

EMPLOYMENT DISTRICT (E-D)

POLICIES

Intent

- Enhance and maintain existing industrial and business facilities and create new facilities to expand economic opportunities for Bulloch County in appropriate planned areas while discouraging land uses and development patterns that could present conflicts with future district development.

General Characteristics

- Accommodate large industrial and business development in appropriate areas.
- Variable building development to promote the specific needs of industrial activities or businesses.
- Appropriate landscaping and open space between buildings and adjacent land uses to help limit negative visual and noise impacts of activity within the district to surrounding areas.

Application

- Planned development including industrial, commercial and service uses to serve workers and patrons of these businesses.
- Locate on principal arterial where full services, public facilities and routes of potential public transportation are available.

Primary Land Uses

- Industrial uses such as low-to-high intensity manufacturing and assembly, distribution, processing, wholesale trades.
- Planned business or industrial parks.
- General commercial businesses and services for workforce.

Zoning Classifications

- LI, HI, GC, HC, PUD

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Site Design

- Deep to moderate building setbacks using building structures to frame the street.
- Moderate to high lot coverage and building footprints related to lot size.
- Master planned projects that consider quality architectural building design with attractive facades, controlled aesthetics, and context sensitive infrastructure.

Density/Intensity

- Limited civic buildings.
- 1-3 story buildings.

Green Space

- Formal landscaping and appropriate buffers between built areas to limit negative noise and visual impacts to surrounding areas.
- Moderately dense street trees, bushes and planting strips.

Transportation

- Moderate to high vehicular connectivity with managed access, accommodation for heavy vehicles, landscaped parking, limited connections to surrounding development and efficient and safe circulation patterns.
- Limited pedestrian environment and facilities.
- Paved roadways and parking (on-site), curb and gutter, streetscapes and streetlights.

Infrastructure

- Municipal water (and/or sewer).
- Adequate telecommunications.
- Low impact development.

Visual Character Description

Development Pattern



Transportation



Green Space



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Incorporate and incent design principles into development ordinances, or by zoning conditions.
- Prepare a revitalization or redevelopment study in advance of physical decline in existing employment districts.

INTERSTATE GATEWAY DISTRICT (IG-D)

POLICIES

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Intent

- Enhance and maintain existing highway commercial businesses associated with interstate interchanges to define a visual gateway to Bulloch County, and create industrial or large business facilities to take advantage of the I-16 access and proximity to Savannah's port and shipping facilities.

General Characteristics

- Potential to accommodate large auto oriented commercial and industrial uses catering to I-16 traffic and nearby workforce.

Application

- Planned development for industrial, commercial and residential uses for workers and travelers.
- Locate on principal arterial where full services, public facilities and routes of potential public transportation are available.

Primary Land Uses

- Single or multi-family residential (PUD only).
- Interstate oriented commercial uses.
- Industrial uses such as low or high intensity manufacturing, assembly, distribution, processing, wholesale trade, etc.
- Planned business or industrial parks.

Zoning Classifications

- HC, LI, HI, PUD, Interstate Overlay

Site Design

- Deep to moderate building setbacks using building structures to frame the site.
- Moderate to high lot coverage and building footprints related to lot size.
- Master planned projects that consider quality architectural building design with attractive facades, controlled aesthetics, and context sensitive infrastructure.

Density/Intensity

- Limited civic buildings.
- 1-8 dwelling units per acre.
- 1-4 story buildings.

Green Space

- Formal landscaping and appropriate buffers between built areas to limit negative noise and visual impacts to surrounding areas.
- Moderately dense street trees, bushes and planting strips.

Transportation

- High vehicular connectivity with managed access with frontage roads, accommodation for heavy vehicles, landscaped parking, limited connections to surrounding development and efficient and safe circulation patterns.
- Moderate pedestrian environment and facilities (sidewalks/bicycles/multi-use trails).
- Paved roadways and parking (on-site), curb and gutter, sidewalks, streetscapes and street lighting.

Infrastructure

- Municipal water (and/or sewer).
- Abundant public utilities.
- Low impact development.

Visual Character Description

Development Pattern



Transportation



Green Space



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Continue to implement the redevelopment plan for the I-16/U.S. 301 Interstate Gateway District.
- Prepare a redevelopment plan to establish a similar district at I-16 and State Route 67.

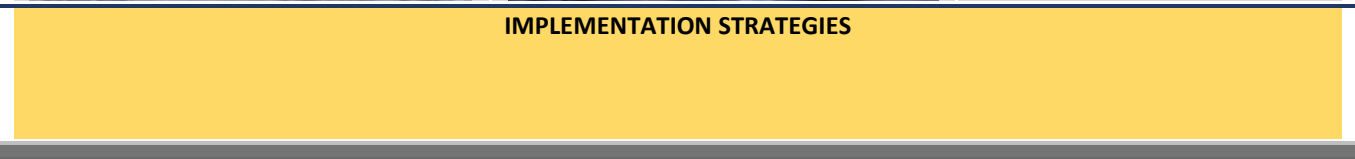
GA HIGHWAY 67 CHARACTER AREA & INTERSTATE COMMERCE NODE

POLICIES	DESIGN PRINCIPLES
<p align="center"><u>Intent</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create new moderate to high density neighborhoods with a sense of place and community. • Preservation of scenic character and gateway corridor for City of Statesboro using enhanced landscaping and building materials. 	<p align="center"><u>Site Design</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate building setbacks with enhanced green space. • Moderate building footprints related to lot size. • Master planned projects that consider quality architectural building design with attractive facades, controlled aesthetics, amenities and context sensitive infrastructure.
<p align="center"><u>General Characteristics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed use or single use commercial, office and residential development along major linear transportation corridors. • Clustered buildings located near intersections, moderate distance to the street with shared parking to the front, side and rear. 	<p align="center"><u>Density/Intensity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited civic buildings. • 2-8 dwelling unit/acre for single family. • 10-14 dwelling unit/acre for multi-family • 10-20 dwelling unit/acre for multi-family within node. • Moderate floor area and impervious surface ratios.
<p align="center"><u>Application</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate at key intersections on principal arterials where full services, public facilities, and potential public transit. • Housing diversity and connectivity with nodal concentrations near key crossroads. • Connect to public water and sewer if available. 	<p align="center"><u>Green Space</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal landscaping and appropriate buffers within built areas. • Buffer minimum of 50 feet along GA 67 frontage. • Moderately dense street trees, and planting strips. • Neighborhood and community park facilities. • Civic common areas
<p align="center"><u>Primary Land Uses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic uses such as places of worship, cemeteries and burial grounds, health facilities, school's passive recreation (including greenways and trails), public parks and community centers. • Single family and multi-family residential uses. • Commercial and office uses. • Moderate to high scale mixed use development clustered at key intersections. • Limited transportation oriented light industrial within node 	<p align="center"><u>Transportation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian facilities (sidewalks/multi-use trails) connected to civic and commercial uses. • Moderate vehicular connectivity with managed access, adequate distance between intersections and efficient and safe circulation patterns. • Paved roadways and parking, curb and gutter, sidewalks, streetscaping and streetlights.
<p align="center"><u>Zoning Classifications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GA Highway 67 CA: R-2, R-3, R-8, R-15, R-25, GC, NC, PUD, <i>Corridor Overlay District</i> • Interstate Commerce Node: R-2, R-3, R-8, R-15, R-25, HC, GC, NC, PUD, LI, <i>Corridor Overlay District</i> 	<p align="center"><u>Infrastructure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal water and sewer proximity. • Temporary use of On-site water (private wells or small systems) and sewer (septic or package systems). • Low impact development.

Visual Character Description

<i>Development Pattern</i>	<i>Transportation</i>	<i>Green Space</i>
		

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES



- Incorporate and incent design principles into development ordinances, or by zoning conditions.
- Encourage the use of planned unit developments (PUD's).
- Develop and promote incentives for amenities, aesthetics, and infill.
- Implement the Countywide Greenways Master Plan and define priorities for development.
- Prepare and adopt an GA Highway 67 Corridor Overlay District zoning category to encourage future development to enhance the character area.

BLACK CREEK CHARACTER AREA & INTERSTATE 16 NODE

POLICIES

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Intent

- Create suburban neighborhoods and high-density nodal development with a sense of place and community.

General Characteristics

- Clustered buildings located close to the street with parking beside or behind the building.

Application

- Compact and walkable residential development and neighborhood commercial development.
- Housing diversity and connectivity with nodal concentrations near key crossroads.
- Connect to public water and sewer if available.

Primary Land Uses

- Civic uses such as places of worship, cemeteries and burial grounds, health facilities, school's passive recreation (including greenways and trails), public parks and community centers.
- Single family and multi-family residential uses.
- Neighborhood-scale commercial and office uses.
- Neighborhood-scale mixed use development.
- Moderate to high scale mixed use development clustered within the node or isolated within planned unit developments

Zoning Classifications

- Black Creek CA: R-2, R-3, R-15, R-25, GC, NC, PUD
- Interstate 16 Node: R-2, R-3, R-8, R-15, HC, GC, PUD, LI, *Interstate Overlay District*

Site Design

- Shallow-to-moderate building setbacks with green space.
- Moderate building footprints related to lot size.
- Master planned projects that consider quality architectural building design with attractive facades, controlled aesthetics, amenities, and context sensitive infrastructure.

Density/Intensity

- Scaled civic uses.
- 2-4 dwelling units/ acre for single family.
- 2-8 dwelling units/acre along arterial or collector routes for single family
- 10-20 dwelling unit/acre for multi-family within node

Green Space

- Informal landscaping for passive use areas.
- Formal landscaping and appropriate buffers within built areas.
- Maintain connections between natural features.
- Neighborhood and community park facilities.

Transportation

- Pedestrian facilities (sidewalks/multi-use trails) connected to civic and commercial uses.
- Moderate vehicular connectivity with managed access, adequate distance between intersections and efficient and safe circulation patterns.
- Paved roadways and parking, curb and gutter, sidewalks, streetscaping and streetlights.

Infrastructure

- Municipal water (or sewer) proximity.
- On-site water (private wells or small systems) and sewer (septic or package systems).
- Abundant private utilities.
- Low impact development.

Visual Character Description

Development Pattern

Transportation

Green Space



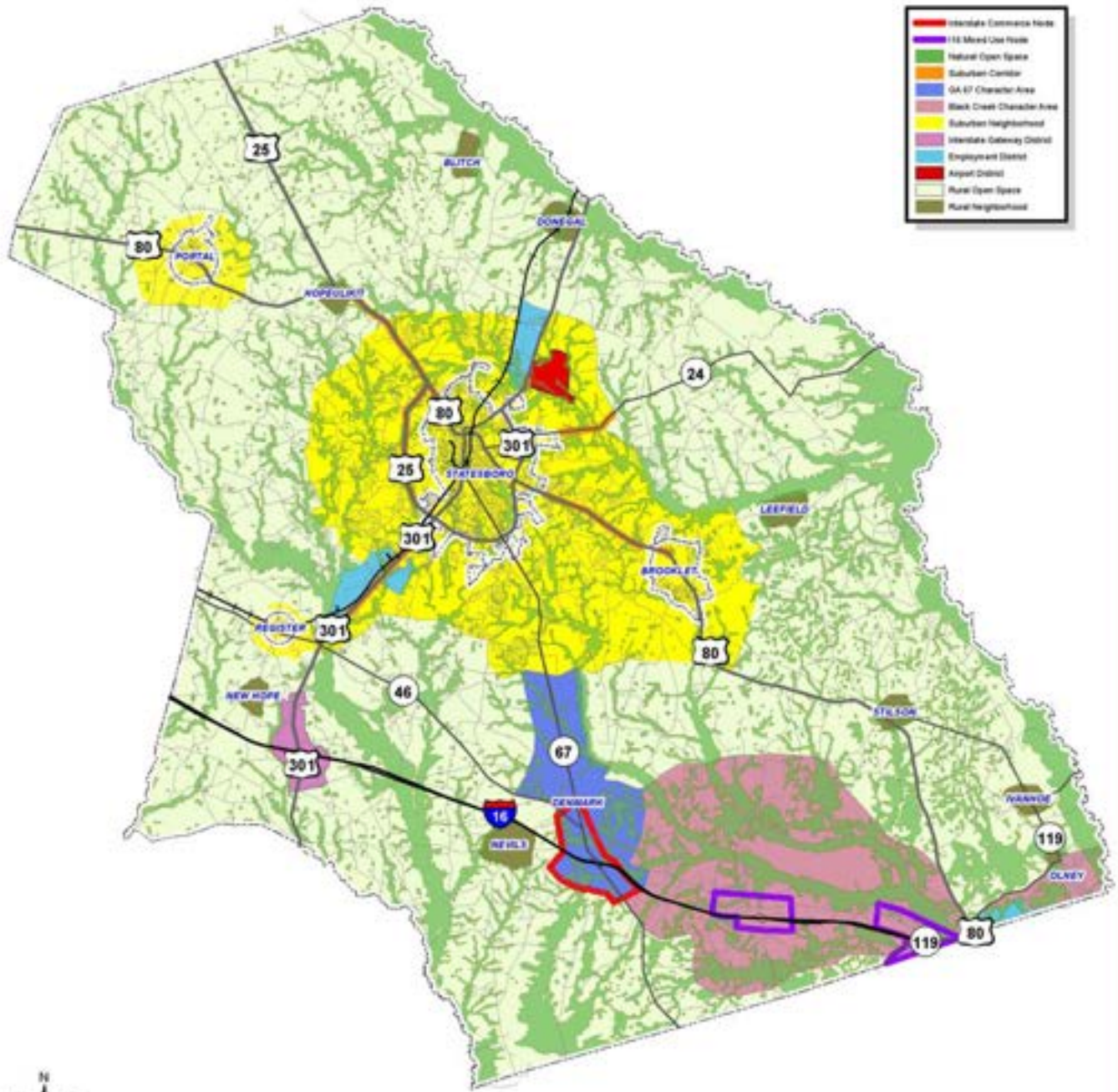
Conservation Subdivision



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Incorporate and incent design principles into development ordinances, or by zoning conditions.
- Encourage the use of planned unit developments (PUD's).
- Develop and promote incentives for amenities, aesthetics, and infill.
- Implement the Countywide Greenways Master Plan and define priorities for development.
- Develop architectural guidelines for inclusion by overlay adoption

Future Development Map: Bulloch County



Bulloch County Comprehensive Plan

Joint Comprehensive Plan for the Cities of Brooklet, Portal, and Register