

2025 Joint Comprehensive Plan Update For Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland



Prepared by:
Charlton County
City of Folkston
City of Homeland



Adopted: July 17, 2025

Expires: June 30, 2030

Elected Officials of Charlton County, City of Folkston, and City of Homeland:**Charlton County:**

Alphya Benefield – Chairwoman
 Lucas (Luke) Gowen – Vice-chair
 Jesse Crews - Commissioner
 James Everett – Commissioner
 Joseph (Drew) Jones – Commissioner
 Glenn Hull – County Administrator
 Madeline Nettles – County Clerk

City of Folkston:

Lee Gowen – Mayor
 Marion Davis – Mayor Pro Tem
 Ruby Baker – Councilmember
 Ricky Carter – Councilmember
 Rob Roberson – Councilmember
 Bruce Young – Councilmember
 Leonard (Pender) Lloyd - City Manager
 Darlene Williamson – City Clerk

City of Homeland:

Leroy (LC) Guinn – Mayor
 Mark Williams – Mayor Pro Tem
 Brian Lloyd – Councilmember
 Delbert Shelton – Councilmember
 Joseph Taylor – Councilmember
 Lee Waterfield – Councilmember
 Bernice Pascal – Chief Clerk
 Nikki Johnson – City Clerk

Stakeholders for the: Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland Comprehensive Plan Update 2025		
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I. Chapter 110-12-1. Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning

1. Introduction

The 2025 Joint Comprehensive Plan Update for Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland was prepared in accordance with the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Chapter 110-12-1, Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, effective October 1, 2018.

As required by the Local Comprehensive Planning Standards, the 2025 Joint Comprehensive Plan Update for Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland consists of the following elements:

1. Community Goals
2. Needs and Opportunities
3. Community Work Program
4. Broadband Services Element
5. Economic Development Element

(As a community included in the Georgia Job Tax Credit Tier 1 category)

The required economic development element in this comprehensive plan is the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) which is adopted by reference in the plan. In addition to the CEDS plan, any economic development goals, policies, needs, opportunities, and objectives pertaining to Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland have also been integrated directly into their parallel components in this Comprehensive Plan.

Land Use Element – City of Folkston (As a community with zoning or land development regulations subject to the Zoning Procedures Law)

6. Update, with Character Areas for Charlton County and the City of Homeland

For more information on Tax Credits:
<https://dca.georgia.gov/financing-tools/incentives/job-tax-credits>



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Tier Map for Georgia showing Charlton Tier 1

1. Community Involvement

All of the required elements have been developed with multiple opportunities for involvement and input from stakeholders and steering committee members throughout the Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland. The following steps were taken to ensure the plan reflects the full range of needs and opportunities from the many stakeholders and residents in Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland:

2. Stakeholder/Steering Committee

An extensive outreach into the community was conducted to involve a very wide range of Stakeholders/Steering Committee members. The members included the local governments of Charlton County, and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland; local businesses and industries; watershed groups; Okefenokee Refuge personnel, local business owners, and members of the general public.

3. Participation Techniques

Participation techniques were identified. Techniques used included a kick-off public information meeting, printed public information in local newspapers, and information on the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's website and local government websites. A stakeholder/steering committee was formed using many techniques from contacting the local governments for assistance, intense internet research into potential participants from government, business, and community citizens to oversee and direct the plan development, and assistance from local contacts to help recruit participants. In all, the Stakeholder committee consisted of 27 active participants who attended workshops which is evidenced by the sign-in sheets attached to the rear of the document.

4. Participation Program

The participation program included inviting stakeholders who were contacted by telephone and email, and attended yielding specific input in plan content. The committee participated in the three workshops, and via email and telephone conversation, to provide input and feedback. Draft versions of portions of the plan were sent to committee members during the development of the draft.

Community involvement is documented with workshop and public meeting photographs in the plan and plan appendix.

5. 1st Public Hearing – “Kick-Off”

The public hearing kicking off the comprehensive planning process was held on October 3, 2024 in the Charlton County Commissioners Meeting Room. It was held for the purpose of making any potential stakeholders and residents aware of the comprehensive plan update and review; to explain the purpose of the update; and to encourage residents and other stakeholders to actively participate in the plan update.

a) Identification of Stakeholders/Steering Committee

A comprehensive list of potential Stakeholders/Steering Committee members was put together with input from elected officials, local government staff, and residents. A complete list of all the stakeholders is included in this plan in the Appendix.

b) Identification of Participation Techniques

The following practices were used during the update process:

- Public Hearings
- Workshops
- E-mail and telephone correspondence
- Dissemination of information in the newspaper
- SGRC Website

c) Participation Program

A foundational principle utilized by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission in all of its planning projects is public and stakeholder participation from, and coordination with, multiple and diverse interest groups. Due to the relatively small population of Charlton County and the Cities of Homeland and Folkston, the entire stakeholder group was utilized as the steering committee – with several key additions from the public and private sector, ensuring the broadest buy-in and diversity of input into the comprehensive plan update. Outreach to the public, local governments and other stakeholders and interested parties was accomplished by e-mail correspondence, direct communication, the project website, and updates provided at workshops and at other group meetings. Opportunity for public comment was provided during the public hearings.

In addition to the two required public hearings, SGRC held a series of three workshops to discuss several elements of the plan. Following are the three workshops explained as to what was accomplished in each.

6. Workshop One (1)

The first workshop, held on November 21, 2024 was used to review the existing goals, needs, and opportunities. Attendees participated in a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis and updated the list of goals, needs, and opportunities. Copies of the sign-in sheets are provided in the appendix along with public hearing notices.



1st Workshop (Introduction to the Update Process and SWOT Analysis)

7. Workshop Two (2)

The Policies were developed in the second workshop, held on December 17, 2024. Policies from the 2020 plan were reviewed for accuracy and deletion as necessary and the new policies based on the new SWOT were reviewed as well.



2nd Workshop - Policies

8. Workshop Three (3)

The third workshop, held on January 21, 2025, was utilized to discuss transportation and economic development opportunities, and review and make changes to the character area maps for Charlton, Folkston, and Homeland.



3rd. Workshop - Land Use Element/Character Areas

Following the third workshop, staff met individually with each community to review the applicable Community Work Plans and Land Use maps/Character Area descriptions and designations.

9. Final Public Hearing

A final public hearing was held on **May 15, 2025** at the Charlton County Administration Building in Folkston at 6:00 PM. The final draft of the plan was reviewed and public comment was sought. As a result of this hearing, the draft plan was transmitted to the Department of Community Affairs for review.

Adoption

The 2025 Joint Comprehensive Plan Update for Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland was adopted by Charlton County on July 17, 2025. The City of Folkston adopted the plan on July 21, 2025 and the City of Homeland adopted the plan on July 10, 2025. The resolutions are provided in the Appendix which is attached to the end of this document.

10. History of Charlton County

Charlton County, in southeast Georgia is the state's 111th county. Comprising 781 square miles, the county borders Florida and includes most of the Okefenokee Swamp. It was carved from a part of Camden County in 1854. Portions of Ware County were added to Charlton County in 1855. Charlton County was named for Robert Milledge Charlton, a nineteenth-century jurist, U.S. senator, and mayor of Savannah. The current courthouse was built in 1928 and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 along with other courthouse in Georgia that were historic at the time. The area was originally inhabited by Creek Indians, and the first white settlers came from neighboring counties in Florida, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

Folkston, the County Seat of Charlton since 1901, became the focal point for transportation after the arrival of the railroads in the 188's and grew to become the county's largest city by the end of the nineteenth century. Named after William Brandon Folks of Waycross, Folkston was not officially incorporated until 1911. For many years it was the major stopping point for railroad passengers traveling between Florida and points north, giving rise to a number of fine hotels around the train depot. The depot has been restored today, and now houses the Okefenokee Chamber of Commerce and the Folkston-Charlton County Development Authority.

The major attraction in the county is the Okefenokee Swamp. Floyd's Island Hammock in the swamp is the site of a cabin used by naturalists and writers in the 1930's. Folkston Train Depot and the "Folkston Funnel" Train viewing platform have been restored, allowing railroad fans to see as many as 60 trains go by within one twenty-four-hour period.

More than 98 percent of the county's land is forest, making it the most timbered of Georgia's counties.

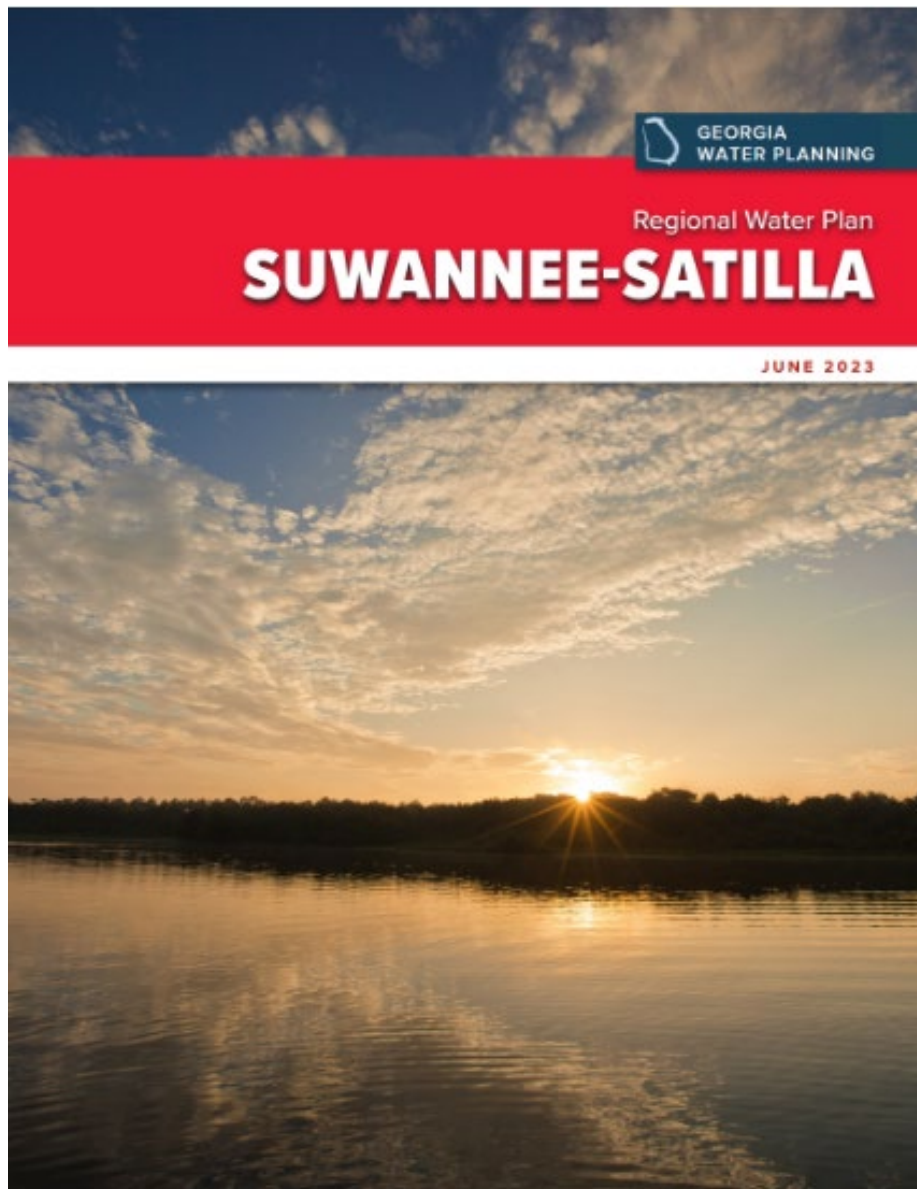
Cooksey, Elizabeth. "Charlton County." New Georgia Encyclopedia, last modified Jun 17, 2022. <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/counties-cities-neighborhoods/charlton-county/>

11. Consideration of Regional Water Plan and Environmental Planning Criteria

During the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan, the local governments must review both the Regional Water Plan covering its area and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria, as laid out in Chapter 391-3-16, to determine whether any local implementation practices or development regulations need to be adapted to be consistent with both.

Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan

Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland are within the area of the Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan, which was adopted in June 2023.





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Introduction and Overview of the Suwannee-Satilla Region

Of all of Georgia's natural resources, none is more important to the future of our State than water. Over the last several decades, Georgia continues to be one of the most populous states in the nation. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, between 2010 and 2020, Georgia ranked fifth in total population gain (1.02 million new residents) and 12th in percentage increase in population (10.6%). During a portion of this same period, our State also experienced critical areas of severe drought. Georgia's growth and economic prosperity are vitally linked to our water resources.

As our State has grown, the management and value of water resources has also changed. Ensuring a bright future for our State requires thoughtful planning and wise use of our water resources. The water planning process began in 2008, when the State of Georgia's leadership authorized a comprehensive state-wide water planning process to help address these challenges and take a forward look at how our State is expected to grow and use water through 2060. The Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Planning Council (Suwannee-Satilla Council) was established in February 2009 as part of this state-wide process. The Suwannee-Satilla Council completed the initial Regional Water Plan in 2011, and in 2016-2017 the Suwannee-Satilla Council updated the Regional Water Plan. This current update builds upon the original

Water Resource Trends and Key Findings for the Suwannee-Satilla Region

The Suwannee-Satilla Region includes 18 counties in the south central portion of Georgia. Over the next 40 years, the population of the region is projected to increase by 4% growing from approximately 416,000 to 435,000 residents.

Key economic drivers in the region include agriculture, forestry, professional and business services, education, healthcare, manufacturing, public administration, and construction. Recreation and fishing are also important to the area. Water supplies, wastewater treatment, and related infrastructure will need to be developed and maintained to support these economic drivers and maintain a high quality of life.

The rivers in the region are unique in comparison to most of Georgia Rivers in that the watersheds are much smaller in size. This results in more frequent surface water lower flow conditions and increases the importance of groundwater to the region.

Surface water is forecasted to meet about 21% of the region's water use and agriculture accounts for 99% of this use. Surface water use in the region is highest in the Suwannee River basin, followed by the Satilla River basin.

Groundwater is predominately used from the Floridan aquifer and is needed to meet about 79% of the region's water needs. Agriculture, municipal, domestic, and industry are the major demand sectors for groundwater.

Water resource challenges in the region include projected surface water shortfalls during some periods of time throughout the region, associated with flows that would likely be unable to satisfy withdrawal needs or adequately assimilate wastewater discharges; and water quality challenges associated with trophic-weighted residual mercury in fish tissue, fecal coliform, and low dissolved oxygen in some portions of the region.

Management practices are needed to address these challenges including: water conservation; refining planning information; use of existing or new storage to help reduce the frequency/severity of critical low flow conditions; sustainable use of groundwater during times of limited surface water flows; improving/upgrading wastewater treatment; and addressing non-point sources of pollution.

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A detailed map of Georgia showing its 159 counties and major cities. The map is color-coded by region: North Georgia (light blue), Central Georgia (light green), South Georgia (light yellow), and West Georgia (light orange). Major cities are marked with yellow dots and labeled. The map also shows the state's borders with North Carolina, Florida, and Alabama, and the locations of the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. A scale bar and a north arrow are included in the bottom right corner.

vary greatly across the State, water supply planning on a regional and local level is the most effective way to ensure that current and future water resource needs are met.

The Suwannee, Satilla, and St. Marys Rivers are a popular fishing resource to the region. There are several species of fish found in the rivers, offering excellent fishing for chain pickerel, warmouth, largemouth bass, bluegill, topminnow, sunfish, crappie, and catfish. The coastal estuaries of the Satilla and St. Mary's Rivers also provide recreationally and commercially important ecosystems for fish, crustaceans, and shellfish. Several parks along these rivers provide an important recreational resource for the region, offering opportunities for various outdoor activities. Perhaps the most well-known natural habitat and recreational resource in the region is the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. The Okefenokee Swamp is home to 234 bird species, 50 mammal species, 39 fish species, 64 reptile species, and 37 amphibian species. The swamp is also home to over 620 species of plants.

The Suwannee-Satilla Region encompasses several population centers, including the cities of Valdosta, Tifton, and Douglas. The Suwannee-Satilla Region is projected to grow by approximately 18,000 residents, or 4%, from 2020 to 2060 with the highest growth occurring in Lowndes and Clinch Counties (Georgia's Office of Planning and Budget, 2019). To accommodate this growth, the region requires reliable water supplies and sufficient wastewater treatment to



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meet its growing needs. In addition, the region has a vibrant agricultural base that requires water supply to continue supporting the economics of the region.

The primary economic sectors in the region include agriculture, forestry, professional and business services, education, healthcare, manufacturing, public administration, and construction. The rural economies of five counties in the region (Atkinson, Brantley, Charlton, Clinch, and Pierce Counties) are categorized as very or critically dependent on the forestry industry by the Georgia Forestry Commission in the 2008 report “Economic Impact of Forest Products Manufacturing in Georgia.” Forested lands and agriculture are major land covers in the region, which are also important drivers for the region’s economy.

Establishing a Water Resource Vision for the Suwannee-Satilla Region

A foundational part of the water planning process was the development of a vision for the region that describes the economic, population, environmental, and water use conditions that are desired for the region. On September 23, 2009, the Suwannee-Satilla Council adopted the following Vision for the region.

“The Vision of the Suwannee-Satilla Regional Council is to manage water resources in a sustainable manner under Georgia’s regulated riparian and regulated reasonable use laws to support the state’s and region’s economy, to protect public health and natural resources, and to enhance the quality of life for all citizens; while preserving the private property rights of Georgia’s landowners, and in consideration of the need to enhance resource augmentation and efficiency opportunities.”

On November 11, 2009, the Suwannee-Satilla Council identified 13 goals to complement the Vision. These goals can be found in Section 1 of the Regional Water Plan.

In addition to providing these regional vision and goals, the Suwannee-Satilla Council believes it is critically important for the Council to have an ongoing role in regional water planning. The information in the Regional Water Plan is complex and will require ongoing education and an emphasis on cooperation to help obtain local support for, and maximize the effectiveness of the Plan’s recommendations. The leadership, knowledge and experience of the Suwannee-Satilla Council establishes a uniquely qualified group to assist in facilitating implementation of the Plan, clarifying questions regarding the intent of the Regional Water Plan recommendations, and refining and updating existing information as well as executing future planning efforts. More information regarding the region and its water resource needs, challenges, and solutions is provided below.

Overview of Water Resources and Use in the Suwannee-Satilla Region

Surface Water

Major surface water features in the region include the Alapaha, Satilla, St. Marys, Suwannee, and Withlacoochee Rivers. The Alapaha and Withlacoochee Rivers are major tributaries to the Suwannee River, which flows through Florida into the Gulf of Mexico downstream of these confluences. The headwaters of the Suwannee River are in the Okefenokee Swamp. The Satilla

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River flows to the southeast and discharges to the Atlantic Ocean between Cumberland and Jekyll Islands. This water body is a blackwater stream consisting of tannins and other natural leachates, which cause the river to have a darkly stained appearance and have unique physical and chemical characteristics and dissolved oxygen dynamics. Over half (59%) of the St. Marys River tributary area lies in Georgia and the remainder is in Florida. The St. Marys River is also a blackwater stream. However, the St. Marys River flows north and east, forming the border between southeast Georgia and northeast Florida and discharges into the Atlantic Ocean.

As shown in Figure ES-2, in 2015 surface water provided 19% of the water supply within the region (USGS, 2019). Based on water use trends and forecast information through 2060, the majority of the agricultural and industrial surface water use in the region is projected to come from the Suwannee River basin (72%) and Satilla River basin (27%). This information is based on the assumption that future use will follow current practices and trends.

Groundwater

As shown in Figure ES-2, groundwater provided 81% of the region's water supply needs in 2015. Based on 2020 groundwater withdrawal data, approximately 99% of groundwater in the region is supplied from the Floridan aquifer, which is one of the most productive groundwater aquifers in the United States.

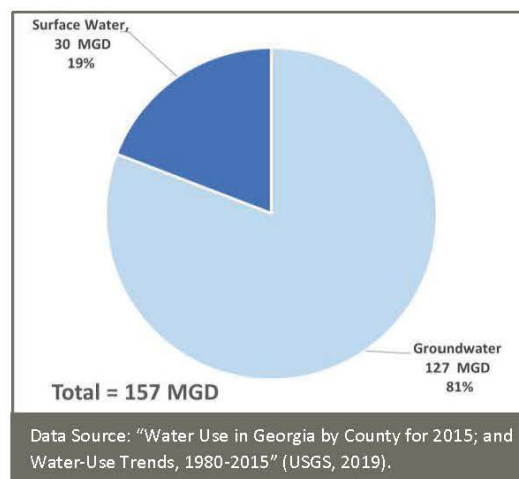


Figure ES-2 2015 Water Supply by Source

Water and Wastewater Needs in the Suwannee-Satilla Region – A Closer Look

Figure ES-3 presents 2015 surface water and groundwater use by sector in the Suwannee-Satilla Region. All surface water withdrawals in the region are for the agricultural sector. Of the 127 MGD of groundwater withdrawn in 2015, 52% was used to supply agricultural, 37% municipal users and 11% industrial users.

Wastewater treatment types representing current conditions in the region are shown in Figure ES-4. According to the Suwannee-Satilla Wastewater Forecast developed for the Regional Water Plan (CDM Smith, 2022), 51% of treated wastewater in the region is disposed of as a municipal/industrial point source discharge or to a land application system (25%). The remaining wastewater is treated by on-site sewage treatment (septic) systems (24%).



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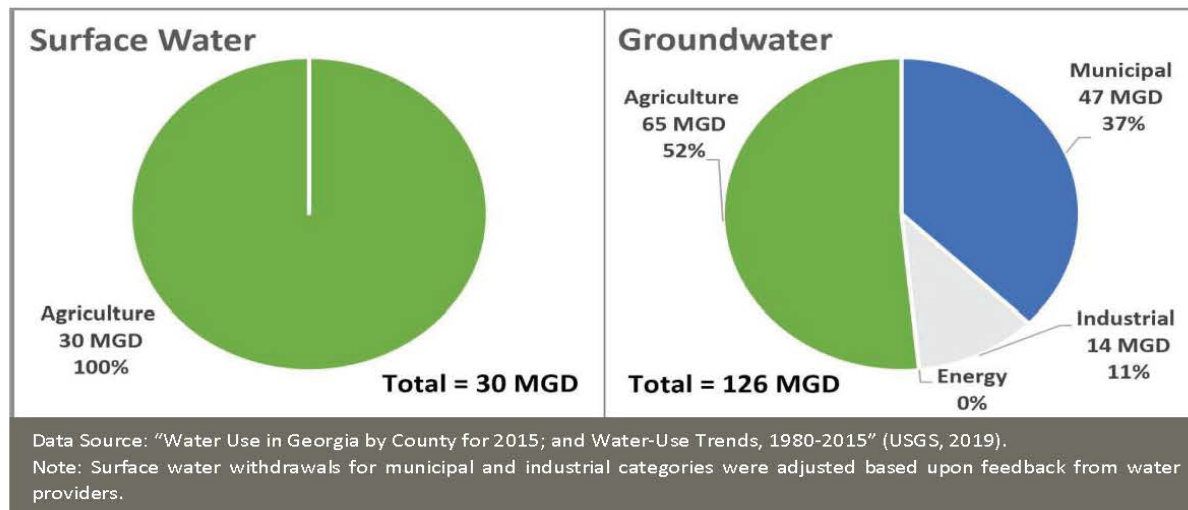


Figure ES-3 2015 Water Use by Category

Suwannee-Satilla Forecasted Water Resource Needs from the Year 2020 to 2060

Municipal water and wastewater forecasts are closely tied to population projections for the counties within the Suwannee-Satilla Region. The population projections were developed by the Georgia Governor's Office of Planning and Budget and are shown in Figure ES-5. Industrial, energy, and agricultural water and wastewater forecasts were estimated separately from population projections. Overall, the region's water supply needs are expected to grow by 23% (74 MGD) in demand from 2020 through 2060. Wastewater return flows are expected to grow by 5% (3 MGD) from 2020 through 2060.

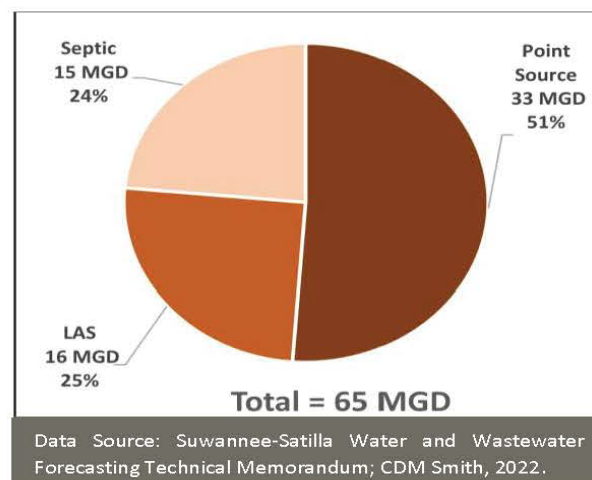


Figure ES-4 2020 Patterns of Wastewater Discharge and Return Flows

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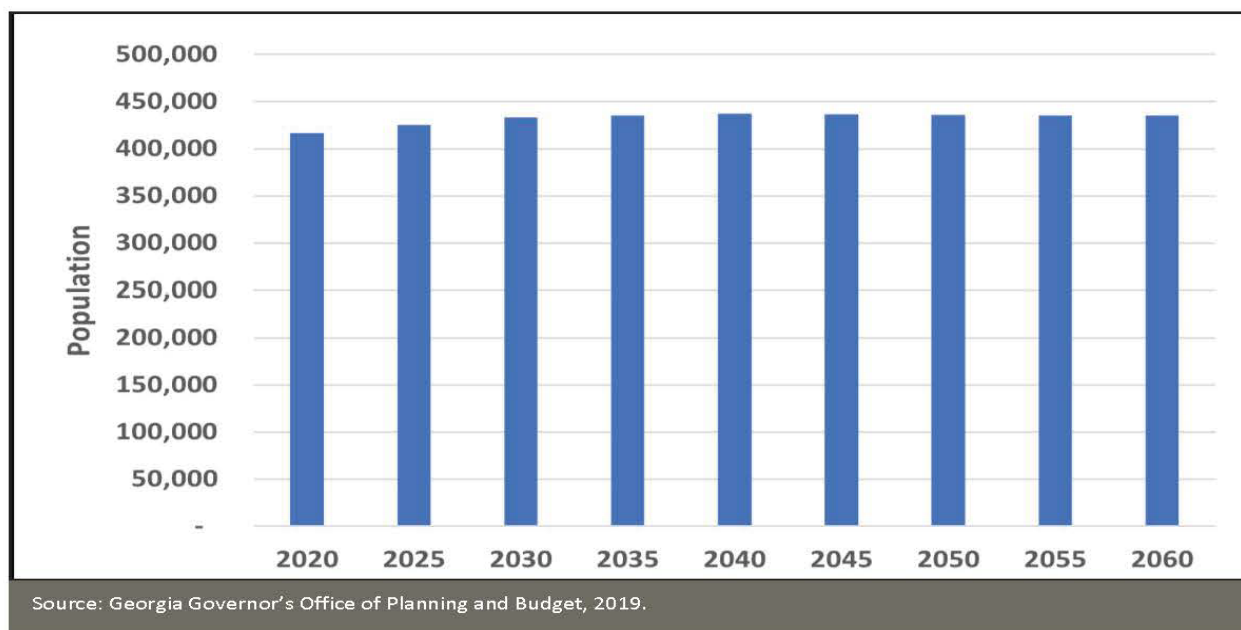


Figure ES-5 Suwannee-Satilla Region Population Projections (2020-2060)

Comparison of Available Resource Capacity to Future Water Resource Needs

Groundwater Availability

Groundwater is projected to meet about 79% of the region's water supply needs. Groundwater from the Floridan aquifer is a vital resource for the Suwannee-Satilla Region. Overall, the results from the Groundwater Availability Resource Assessment (EPD, March 2010) indicate that the sustainable yield for the modeled portions of the regional aquifer(s) is greater than the forecasted demands. Therefore, at this time no groundwater resource shortfalls are expected to occur in the Suwannee-Satilla Region over the planning horizon. However, localized issues such as excessive drawdown or reduction in baseflow to streams could arise in areas where there is a high well density and/or high volumes of groundwater withdrawal.

Surface Water Availability

Surface water is an important resource used to meet current and future needs of the Suwannee-Satilla Region, especially in the agricultural sector. There are many surface water model nodes located in and around the Suwannee-Satilla Region. The modeling tools currently used to assess surface water availability are described in Section 3. From the updated Surface Water Availability Resource Assessment (EPD, 2023b), the basic conclusions of the current and future conditions modeling show that some potential surface water challenges (i.e., times when there may be insufficient water to meet off-stream demands and also meet the targets for support of instream uses) do exist in the region.



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An important update to this plan was the conversion of surface water modeling to a more detailed simulation platform (BEAM), which includes all water users (withdrawals and discharges) as specific nodes instead of aggregating their impacts into downstream nodes as was done in previous rounds of planning. It should be noted that due to the utilization of BEAM in resource assessment modeling, some of the previous approaches in expressing potential issues at the planning nodes have become obsolete. The resource issues identified previously are now replaced by these new resource assessment results (higher level of site-specific detail). Table ES-1 summarizes potential surface water challenges by 2060. Many of the challenges involve streamflows that are insufficient to adequately assimilate wastewater discharges. Others involve shortfalls relative to withdrawal needs.

Table ES-1 Summary of Modeled 2060 Potential Surface Water Challenges

BEAM Model Node	% of Total Days with Projected Challenge by 2060	Total Volume of Shortage	Corresponding 7Q10 Flow (Reference, used to determine ability to assimilate wastewater)	Change in Duration of Challenge from Current Condition
2188 (Town of Alapaha (Alapaha WPCP))	17.9%	4,543 MG	1.4 cfs (0.90 MGD)	729 (2.5%)
2198 (City of Fitzgerald (C.A. Newcomer))	2.8%	172 MG	0.25 cfs (0.16 MGD)	520 (1.7%)
2248 (City of Lakeland (Lakeland WPCP))	0.6%	84.2 MG	2.0 cfs (1.29 MGD)	26 (0.1%)
2568 (City of Nashville (Nashville WPCP))	20.7%	3,558 MG	0.01 cfs (0.006 MGD)	4,577 (15.7%)
2578 (City of Tifton (New River WPCP))	9.6%	490 MG	0.06 cfs (0.04 MGD)	-1,749 (-6.0%)
2598 (City of Sparks (Sparks WPCP))	2.5%	14.6 MG	0.02 cfs (0.01 MGD)	-6,992 (-23.9%)
2628 (Ray City (Ray City WPCP))	7.8%	410 MG	0.26 cfs (0.17 MGD)	152 (0.5%)
2868 (City of Valdosta (Withlacoochee WPCP))	2.8%	1,076 MG	4.3 cfs (2.78 MGD)	756 (2.6%)
3158 (City of Alma (Alma WPCP))	11.5%	1763 MG	1.77 cfs (1.14 MGD)	-87 (-0.3%)
3188 (Milliken & Company (Alma Plant))	2.5%	222 MG	0.55 cfs (0.36 MGD)	246 (0.9%)
3258 (City of Douglas (Southeast WPCP))	12.9%	11,033 MG	0.04 cfs (0.03 MGD)	286 (1.0%)
3298 (City of Pearson (Pearson WPCP))	0.4%	7.8 MG	0.29 cfs (0.19 MGD)	-15 (-0.1%)
3418 (City of Waycross (Waycross WPCP))	14.3%	34,233 MG	14.2 cfs (9.18 MGD)	746 (2.6%)
3528 (City of Patterson (Patterson WPCP))	0.6%	13.6 MG	0.21 cfs (0.14 MGD)	1 (0.0%)

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BEAM Model Node	% of Total Days with Projected Challenge by 2060	Total Volume of Shortage	Corresponding 7Q10 Flow (Reference, used to determine ability to assimilate wastewater)	Change in Duration of Challenge from Current Condition
4238 (City of Folkston (Folkston WPCP (Pond)))	0.7%	12.3 MG	0.15 cfs (0.10 MGD)	0 (0.0%)
4248 (City of Folkston (Folkston WPCP Wetlands))	0.6%	136 MG	1.83 cfs (1.18 MGD)	18 (0.0%)
Source: Surface Water Availability Resource Assessment, 2023b, EPD. Note: Surface Water Availability modeling simulation period is from 1939 to 2018.				

Assessment of Water Quality Conditions

One measure of the capacity of surface water to maintain its health and the health of the aquatic species living therein is the amount of residual dissolved oxygen in the water. As part of the Water Quality (Assimilative Capacity) Resource Assessment (EPD, 2017 and 2023a), modeling of dissolved oxygen concentrations was performed for each surface water reach in the region that has upstream wastewater discharges to the reach. The modeling estimates the ability of the surface water to assimilate the amount of waste being discharged without creating adverse conditions (also referred to as assimilative capacity). Each modeled river segment was classified as exceeding dissolved oxygen capacity, meeting dissolved oxygen capacity, or having available dissolved oxygen capacity. The assimilative capacity assessment for dissolved oxygen at baseline and/or permitted conditions is presented in Section 3 and Section 5, and Section 6 (Management Practices) outlines the recommendations that have been made to address these impairments in the future. Assimilative capacity assessments indicate the potential need for improved wastewater treatment in some facilities within the Suwannee, Satilla, St. Marys, and Ochlockonee River Basins.

Under Section 303d of the federal Clean Water Act, a total maximum daily load (TMDL) must be developed for waters that do not meet their designated uses. A TMDL represents the maximum pollutant loading that a water body can assimilate and continue meeting its designated use (i.e., not exceeding State water quality standards). A water body is deemed to be impaired if it does not meet the applicable criteria for a particular pollutant; consequently, TMDLs are required to be established for these waters to reduce the concentrations of the exceeding parameters in order to comply with State water quality standards.

For the Suwannee-Satilla Region, there are 118 impaired stream reaches (total impaired length of 1,279 miles) and 3 impaired lakes (total impaired area of 3,181 acres).



SUWANNEE SATILLA | REGIONAL WATER PLAN

Executive Summary

All impaired lakes in the region are impaired for trophic-weighted residual mercury in fish tissue. TMDLs have been completed for 95 of the impaired stream reaches. A full list of impaired waters can be found on the EPD website (epd.georgia.gov/georgia-305b303d-list-documents). This list is updated every 2 years by EPD; the above information is based upon the approved 2022 list.

Identifying Water Management Practices to Address Water Resource Challenges and Future Needs

The comparison of the Resource Assessments and forecasted demands identified the region's likely resource shortfalls or potential challenges and demonstrated the necessity for region and resource specific water management practices. In selecting the actions needed (i.e., water management practices), the Suwannee-Satilla Council considered practices identified in existing plans, the Region's Vision and Goals, and coordinated with local governments and water providers as well as neighboring Councils that share these water resources.

The Suwannee-Satilla Council developed a management practice strategy based on the best data and modeling results available. The Council recognizes that as data are refined and modeling results improve—including water and wastewater projections and Resource Assessments—the resulting future needs and challenges may change. Therefore, the Council has prioritized short-term management practices to address challenges with the understanding that more complex management practices may be required in the future. These short-term management practices are presented in Table ES-2 and Table ES-3.

Summary of Resource Assessment Results

Management Practices should be developed and implemented to address water resource shortfalls as determined by the three Resource Assessments.

Groundwater: Overall, results indicate that the sustainable yield for the modeled portions of the regional aquifer(s) is greater than the forecasted demands, but site-specific challenges could arise without careful planning.

Surface Water Quantity: Refined modeling suggests that there are numerous challenges with the ability of surface water to provide sufficient flow for wastewater assimilation or withdrawals throughout the region.

*Surface Water Quality: Throughout the region, 1,279 miles of stream reaches are impaired, principally for trophic-weighted residual mercury in fish tissue, *E. coli*, and dissolved oxygen.*

Executive Summary

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**Table ES-2 Short-Term Water Quantity Management Practices (0 – 10 Years)**

Utilize surface water and groundwater sources within the available resource capacities
Water conservation
Data collection and research to confirm the frequency, duration, severity, and drivers of surface water challenges (forecast methodology assumptions and Resource Assessment modeling)
Evaluate and ensure that current and future surface water permit conditions do not contribute to challenges/low flow concerns
Encourage sustainable groundwater use as a preferred supply in regions with surface water challenges/low flow concerns
Identify incentives and a process to sustainably replace a portion of existing agricultural surface water use with groundwater use (for agricultural irrigation) to address challenges/low flow concerns
Evaluate the potential to use existing storage to address challenges/low flow concerns
Education to reduce shallow aquifer groundwater use where it impacts surface water in areas with challenges/low flow concerns

Table ES-3 Short-Term Water Quality Management Practices (0 – 10 Years)

Point Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support current permitting and waste load allocation process to improve treatment of wastewater and increase treatment capacity Data collection and research to confirm discharge volumes and waste concentrations as well as receiving stream flows and chemistry
Non-point Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collection to confirm source of pollutants and causes; encourage stormwater ordinances, septic system maintenance, and coordinated planning Ensure funding and support for Best Management Practices programs by local and state programs, including urban, rural, forestry, and agricultural Best Management Practices
Non-point Source Existing Impairments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total maximum daily load listed streams: Improve data on source of pollutant and length of impairment; Identify opportunities to leverage funds and implement non-point source Best Management Practices

Members of the Suwannee-Satilla Council have invested significant time and expertise into the planning process and wish to capitalize on the expertise gained by the Council prior to the end of their third term as Council members.

The Suwannee-Satilla Council believes the Regional Water Plan should be reviewed in defined increments in the future such as every 5 years to evaluate how the implemented management practices are performing toward addressing challenges and meeting forecasted needs and what additional measures might be required. This is the second of such updates. If the selected management practices have not sufficiently addressed the challenges identified by the Resource Assessments, then additional management practices should be selected and implemented. Over time, the selected management practices will address identified challenges and meet future uses. Addressing surface water challenges will require that management practices also be implemented by adjacent water planning councils that share resources with the Suwannee-Satilla Council.



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Executive Summary

Implementing Water Management Practices

The Suwannee-Satilla Council supports the concept of regional water resource planning with a focus on planning Councils composed of local governments, water users, water providers, industry, business and affected stakeholders. Local representatives are typically most familiar with local water resource issues and needs. The State has a vital role providing technical support, guidance, and funding to support locally focused water resource planning.

Implementation of the Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan will be primarily by various water users and wastewater utilities in the region. The most cost-effective and more readily implemented management practices will be prioritized for short-term implementation via an incremental and adaptive approach as shown in Figure ES-6. If resource needs are not met and/or challenges are not addressed, then more complex management practices will be pursued. Future planning efforts should confirm current assumptions and make necessary revisions and/or improvements to the conclusions reached during this round of planning.

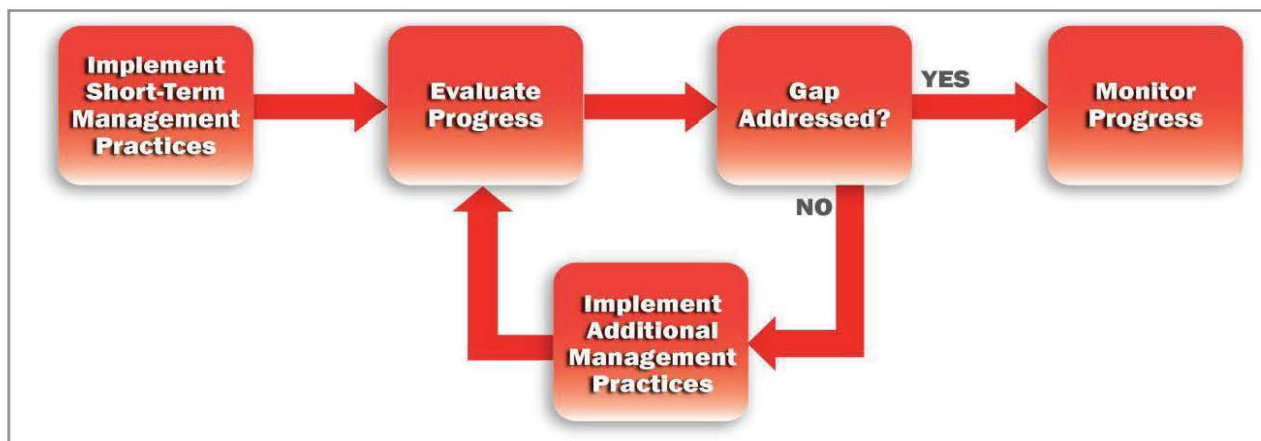


Figure ES-6 Implementation of Management Practices

Cost Considerations

Planning level cost estimates were prepared for the various categories of management practices. A detailed summary of costs can be found in Section 7 of the Regional Water Plan. In general, addressing surface water needs in the region from both a water supply and a water quality perspective are expected to present the largest challenges and have the most fiscal impact. For the Regional Water Plan to be most effective, wastewater utilities and agricultural water users will need planning and implementation support to help them meet current and future needs. It is anticipated that several different funding sources and options will be used to secure funding for the various management practices outlined in the Regional Water Plan, and adequate funding will be a critical component of the successful implementation of the state-wide water planning effort.

Executive Summary

SUWANNEE SATILLA | REGIONAL WATER PLAN



Water conservation remains a cost-effective means to address future water supply needs and could be applied region-wide, especially in areas of limited future surface water withdrawals. Wastewater treatment will likely also require funding sources, both to upgrade plants and to address aging infrastructure.

Implementation Considerations and Benchmarks – Helping Ensure Progress toward Meeting Future Needs

Effective implementation of the Regional Water Plan will require the availability of sufficient funding in the form of loans, and in some cases, possibly grants. In addition, many of the proposed management practices require ongoing coordination with affected stakeholders/water users and collaboration to help ensure successful solutions are identified and implemented. Finally, in many cases monitoring progress toward addressing future needs will require improved data and information on the current actions and management practices that are already in place.

To assess progress toward meeting regional needs, the Suwannee-Satilla Council identified several benchmarks, which can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the Regional Water Plan. The benchmarks are shown in Section 8 of the Regional Water Plan and include both the activities to be accomplished and the measurement tools that can be used to assess progress.

The Suwannee-Satilla Council supports the concept of regional water planning led by local representatives. The Council members wish to express their gratitude to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House for their nomination to the Suwannee-Satilla Council. The Regional Water Plan provides a recommended path forward to help achieve social, economic, and environmental prosperity for the region. The Council members are grateful for the opportunity to serve the region and State. The Suwannee-Satilla Council members wish to remain involved in facilitating attainment of the Regional Water Plan benchmarks and making necessary revisions to the Plan.

Chapter 391-3-16. Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria

The Environmental Planning Criteria that are part of the Minimum Planning Standards deal specifically with the protection of water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, river corridors, and mountains, the last of which is not applicable in this region. These criteria were developed by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GDNR) as mandated in Part V of the Georgia Planning Act and in the Mountains and River Corridor Protection Act.

The criteria require that local governments shall identify existing and future water supply watersheds and adopt a water supply watershed protection plan for their jurisdiction. Some uses may be grandfathered, such as land uses existing prior to the adoption of a watershed plan, mining activities permitted by GDNR, certain utility placements, special forestry, or agricultural services.

The environmental guidelines also spell out criteria for the delineation of small and large water supply watersheds, for the protection of groundwater recharge areas, for the protection of wetlands, and for the protection of river corridors. These criteria shall be incorporated into this comprehensive plan and addressed specifically and in more detail through local ordinances and land development code regulations.

II. Plan Elements

Community Vision and Goals

1. Community Vision

Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland place a strong value on their immense natural and cultural resources. The citizens of the County and Cities appreciate the economic and recreational value of these resources and will continue to be stewards of them while also placing a high priority on the fiscal welfare of the community and the economic, quality of life, and educational needs of the residents.



2. Community Goals

Goal 1- Economic: Improve the greater Charlton County economy by diversifying and establishing an economic and cultural climate that will allow the County to become a regional center for eco-tourism and other coastal area-oriented businesses.

Goal 2 - Housing: Ensure all residents of Charlton County have access to adequate and affordable housing with a suitable and healthy living environment.

Goal 3 – Natural Resources: Protect, appropriately use, or conserve the natural resources of the County, notably the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge and Rivers, to maximize their functions and values in a sustainable manner for perpetuity.

Goal 4 – Cultural Resources: Effectively protect, preserve, and promote the historic and cultural resources of Charlton County. Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland should promote adaptive reuse of vacant historic buildings, heritage tourism, and public education programs focusing on historic preservation.

Goal 5 – Community Facilities: Provide needed community facilities including digital broadband and communications, water, sewer, solid waste, police, fire, and EMS in a manner that ensures current and future needs of residents and businesses of Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland are met.

Goal 6 – Land Use: Ensure a high-quality living environment through a mixture of compatible land uses reflecting the needs and desires of local residents and businesses and their vision for Charlton County.

Goal 7 - Transportation: Provide a safe and efficient integrated multi-modal transportation system including Greenways, Bikeways, and Blueways addressing the future needs of Charlton County businesses, residents, and visitors.

Goal 8 – Intergovernmental Coordination: Establish effective coordination measures among all pertinent public and quasi-public entities to continuously improve Charlton County's quality of life and resources.

Goal 9 - Broadband: Enhance the provision of broadband infrastructure to better support educational opportunities and career advancement for residents of the Cities and County to effectively compete in the global economy.

3. Needs and Opportunities

The Needs and Opportunities listed in this section were developed through discussions with stakeholders; from the experiences of stakeholders; through analysis of statistical data and information; and through review and revision as applicable of the needs and opportunities identified in the 2020 Joint Comprehensive Plan Update for Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland. Each of the following needs and opportunities is addressed by corresponding policies in the “Community Policies” section.

A. Economic Development

Needs

- There is a lack of new industries and businesses coming to the County, resulting in a tight labor market.
- There is a lack of a coordinated tourism marketing program to effectively market the area including marketing opportunities specific to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, Railwatch, Satilla and St. Mary’s Rivers, and other diverse opportunities.
- There is a lack of younger, educated workforce and a lack of skilled labor.
- There is a loss of population due to a lack of local available jobs.
- The film industry has approached the County about film production; however, there is a lack of lodging within the County which leads the industry to film in other areas.
- There is a lack of quality lodging available.
- Downtowns in both Folkston and Homeland need beautification.
- More downtown businesses needed.
- Business development, outreach, and support is not strong in downtown areas.

Opportunities

- A tourism roundtable could coordinate many marketing opportunities. With a future tourism increase due to improvements at the Okefenokee, there will be more opportunities to capture more tourism dollars.
- Develop a tourism corridor on US 1 from the city limits of Folkston to the entrance to the Okefenokee Swamp Wildlife Preserve.
- Connection of the tourism program with the coastal tourism program could provide for additional economic development opportunities.
- Continue to promote the Economic Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce in their efforts to coordinate marketing programs and events for natural and historic resources.
- Attraction of retirees, especially military retirees, could diversify the population and the workforce.
- An increase in job opportunities could stem the population out-migration.
- There is the potential for agri-tourism within the County.
- Continue to improve upon the safety of the airport.
- Seek the reclassification of the Satilla and St. Marys Rivers to a Recreational Use listing.

- Develop downtown beautification plans and maintenance policies.
- Develop better cellular service.

B. Housing

Needs

- Charlton County has a countywide shortage of affordable quality housing for all income groups.
- A significant portion of the properties and housing stock is in serious neglect; lack of property maintenance and housing maintenance are a serious issue.
- A small number of property owners contribute towards the majority of property taxes due to the low value of a portion of the housing stock. A high percentage of manufactured homes are not occupied or not owner occupied which contributes to their lessened valuation.
- A significant portion of the housing for the elderly or families with young children is substandard.
- Rents are high compared to rents for similar housing in surrounding areas.

Opportunities

- Raise the standards for existing manufactured homes to meet proper building codes and pass inspections.
- Code Enforcement (nuisance ordinances) encourages increased property and housing maintenance and reduces the amount of trash.
- The private market could provide more housing choices in a small housing market.
- Non-governmental organizations/non-profits could assist with housing options for low- and moderate-income populations.
- The development of affordable housing in the form of apartment buildings would be an efficient way to more quickly eliminate the affordable housing gap.

C. Natural and Cultural Resources

Needs

- The Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, St. Marys River, and Satilla River need to have their existing public access points upgraded with proper oversight.
- Enforcement is vital at river access points to keep up maintenance and minimize dumping of trash, which both rivers are experiencing.
- The St. Marys River and Satilla River both have existing grandfathered septic tanks located within the floodplain.
- Promote the connection of the Okefenokee Trail with the Suwanee Wilderness Trail to create a large scale, interconnected eco-tourism resource.
- Charlton County has a unique and remarkable history that needs to be preserved.

The Historical Society is a huge asset but needs staffing to record local histories.

- Lack of maintenance of downtown buildings is a big problem seen by many and is causing unsightly/blighted areas.
- Historic buildings are being lost (Topper Theater, Citizens Bank) due to failure to appreciate and to maintain.
- There is a lack of cultural resources like a museum and more entertainment opportunities are needed (theater).
- World Heritage Site designation of the Okefenokee is seen as a threat by some local citizens.
- The train depot needs a park and a permanent theater.
- More parks and greenspaces are needed in cities.

Opportunities

- Both Charlton County and the City of Folkston have historical properties surveys, which can be used to identify and protect historical resources.
- The City of Folkston and the County own most of the historic properties and structures and utilize public investment to preserve and maintain historic properties and structures and encourage the private sector to do the same.
- Possibilities to upgrade and improve existing access points at the rivers include installing dumpsters, running garbage trucks and continuing with the Spring River clean-up.
- Charlton County now has accurate floodplain maps which can be used for permitting.
- Continue the working relationship with the Department of Natural Resources, the applicable Riverkeepers (Suwanee, Satilla, and St. Marys), and the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge.
- The Chamber of Commerce preserves historical documents and plans to display the history of Charlton County both in their building and on their website.
- Seek State funding for additional public access points along the Satilla and St. Marys Rivers.
- Develop a code enforcement program to enforce downtown building maintenance.
- Develop an Ecotourism plan for the Okefenokee that would include water trail development
- Charlton County and the cities of Folkston and Homeland could set aside funds in their budgets to support the historical society hiring paid staff for local history collection.

D. Community Facilities and Services

Needs

- The length of the County (54 miles) poses logistical issues to provide sufficient law enforcement coverage for the Sheriff, EMS and Fire.
- The Cities of Folkston and Homeland only have small utilities. Federal and state regulations, including a periodic water quality testing fee redirect needed monetary resources from provision of services to regulatory expenditures.
- A community center is needed in Folkston for activities and events.

- Homeland needs a new city hall but lacks sufficient revenue sources.
- Animal control services are needed and an animal shelter to house stray animals is needed.
- A local hospital or at the very least, an urgent care center is needed. The lack of medical facilities is hindering industrial development.

Opportunities

- All five volunteer fire stations were brought under the control of a professional paid Fire Chief to improve compliance, increase effectiveness, and lower the ISO rating for the County and City.
- Improve the capacity for responding to brushfires.
- There are grant opportunities for improving waste water treatment plants.
- Move toward having full-time firefighters in conjunction with volunteers.
- Upgrading of the county library.
- Raise taxes to generate more income for the county and cities.

E. Land Use

Needs

- The City of Folkston has a zoning ordinance; the unincorporated county and City of Homeland do not. Some development standards need to be put into place countywide to protect the existing quality of life while still allowing new residential and non-residential development.
- The County is 54 miles long and due to the length has developed into two distinct North Charlton County and South Charlton County portions. An overall sense of community is minimal and the unique characteristics of each area need to be addressed separately.
- Charlton County does not permit septic tanks in the flood plain areas; however, septic tanks are installed without permits.
- Charlton County needs managed growth and a growth development plan.

Opportunities

- Code Enforcement provides an effective tool to protect the floodplain. Grant and public/private/non-profit opportunities may exist to assist with floodplain protection efforts.
- Seek the development of additional sidewalk infrastructure.
- Seek the development of additional blueways and water trails; in addition to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge which is a National Scenic Water Trail.
- The designation of lands for industrial development.
- Develop a public park/festival ground for shows, exhibitors, and events in Homeland.
- Focus on developing a strategy to attract more use of the existing forested and natural areas for sporting opportunities.
- Develop a growth management plan for Charlton County.

F. Transportation

Needs

- Streets and roads need repaving/maintenance. There is a lack of local and state funding to support resurfacing and maintenance of local roads.
- There is a lack of state funds and maintenance on existing state roads.
- There is a need for more sidewalks in commercial areas.
- There is no public transportation.
- Bicycle and walking paths are needed.

Opportunities

- Seek the development of additional bicycle and/or multi-use trails.
- Utilize grant programs (CDBG) to construct additional sidewalks in qualifying areas.
- Capitalize on TSPLOST funding for improvement of street maintenance and development of sidewalks, bike, and walking trails.
- Promote the location of the county as an asset being close to Jacksonville, Brunswick, and the Georgia Ports.

G. Intergovernmental Coordination

Needs

- There is a lack of coordination with some of the State agencies – too much disconnect to the higher levels of government, especially as Charlton County is geographically removed from the Capital.
- There is a lack of coordination and cooperation between State and Federal agencies to market the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge.
- There is a severe lack of coordination of any services and/or coordinated efforts between Charlton County, Folkston, and Homeland.

Opportunities

- The school system has created a real fabric of unity, especially with the success of sports teams, the band, and its music program.
- The school system has done an exceptional job with improving their facilities, outreach, and programs.
- Charlton County, Folkston, and Homeland governments may set up some type of regular meetings or retreats together annually.

H. Broadband Services

Needs

- The lack of sufficient digital broadband coverage in large areas of Charlton County limits education and economic development opportunities and causes communication problems for police, fire, and EMS.
- More affordable, accessible, consistent, and higher-speed broadband access is needed throughout all of Charlton County and the Cities of Homeland and Folkston.
- The school system, medical providers, and businesses need improved Broadband coverage.
- Communication systems need to be improved.
- An alternative to fiber infrastructure needs to be promoted for rural areas as it is cost-prohibitive to install fiber broadband.
- Cellular service is absent in large areas of the county.
- Broadband development is occurring in Charlton County but at a very slow rate and is not reaching the southern portion of the county.

Opportunities

- More robust broadband services may enable greater opportunity for citizens and businesses.
- Public/Private Partnerships could be developed to provide comprehensive broadband coverage that is consistent, reliable, and equitable.
- Develop a broadband action plan for the development of broadband services in the county.
- Research and apply for broadband grants and funding opportunities.

4. Analysis of Data of Charlton County

Charlton County Demographics

Charlton County has a total population of 13,021 according to the July 1, 2024 population estimates of the United States Census Bureau. This is a 6.98% increase since 2020 when the population was 12,171. The median age for the county's population is 38 years old. The largest population by age group is the 10–19-year-olds at 18%. The majority of the population is White and there are more males at 58% or 7,552 total, than females in the county at 42% or 6,250. Charlton County has a total land area of 780.1 square miles, making it the fifth largest county in Georgia in land size.



Age

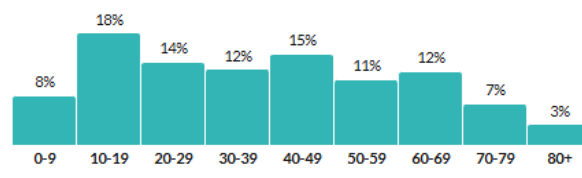
38

Median age

about the same as the figure in Georgia: 37.4

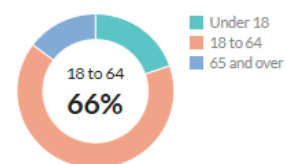
about the same as the figure in United States: 38.7

Population by age range



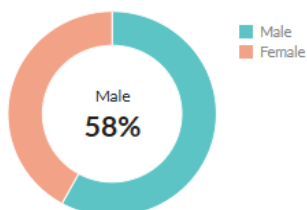
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Population by age category



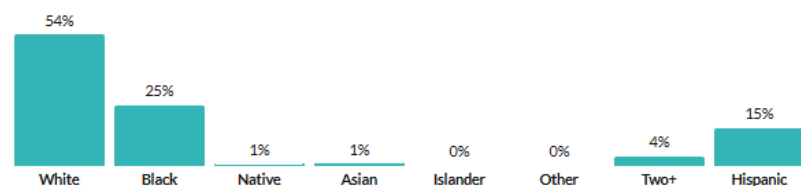
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Sex



[Show data / Embed](#)

Race & Ethnicity



* Hispanic includes respondents of any race. Other categories are non-Hispanic.

[Show data / Embed](#)

Fifty-three percent (53%) of the households in Charlton County bring in under \$50,000 per year, while 27% bring in between \$50,000 and \$100,00. A smaller percentage, 16% of the households have an income of between \$100,000 and \$200,000, while a very small percentage, 4% of the households have an income of over \$200,00.

Poverty in Charlton County is evident with 22.5% of the total population below the national poverty line. This is 1.5 times the rate of poverty in Georgia and nearly double the national average at 12.4%.

Income

\$24,015

Per capita income

about three-fifths of the amount in Georgia: \$39,525

about half the amount in United States: \$43,289

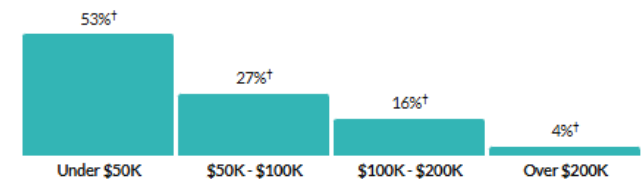
\$48,534

Median household income

about two-thirds of the amount in Georgia: \$74,664

about three-fifths of the amount in United States: \$78,538

Household income



[Show data / Embed](#)

Poverty

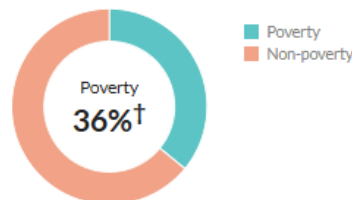
22.5%

Persons below poverty line

more than 1.5 times the rate in Georgia: 13.5%

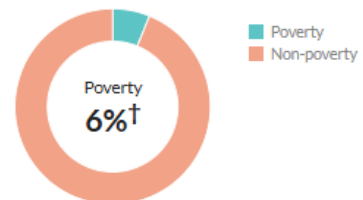
nearly double the rate in United States: 12.4%

Children (Under 18)



[Show data / Embed](#)

Seniors (65 and over)



[Show data / Embed](#)

Transportation to work

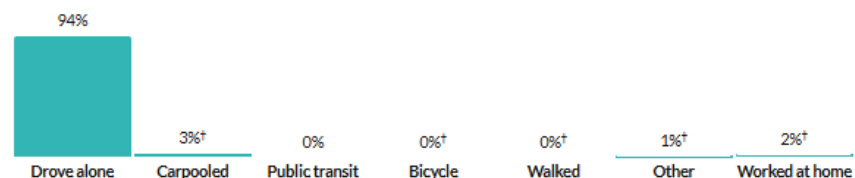
25.4 minutes

Mean travel time to work

about 90 percent of the figure in Georgia: 28.3

a little less than the figure in United States: 26.6

Means of transportation to work



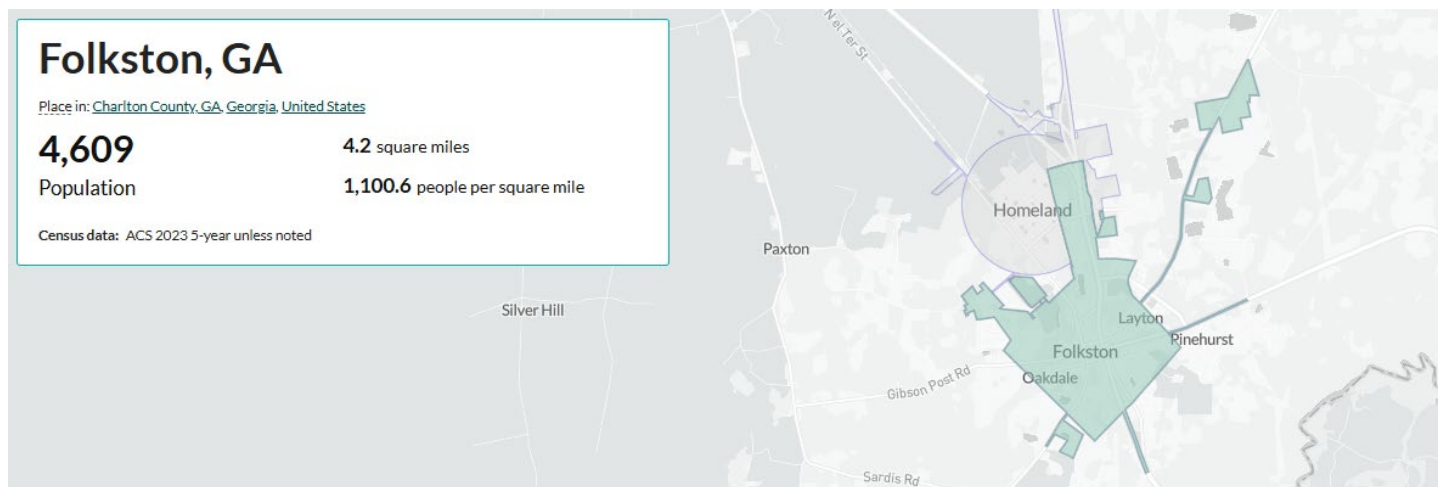
* Universe: Workers 16 years and over

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Source: <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/05000US13049-charlton-county-ga/>

City of Folkston Demographics

The City of Folkston has a population of 4,609 according to the American Community Survey projections for 2023-2025. The median age of Folkston is 37.6 years which is slightly younger than Charlton County's median age at 38 years. The largest population group in Folkston by age is 20-29 years at 20%. As was the case in Charlton County, there are more men than women in Folkston at 57% male vs. 43% female. The ethnicity of Folkston, however is different from Charlton County, with the majority of the population being Black as opposed to 41% White. The number of people below the poverty line in Folkston is 33.2% which is 10.7% higher than the poverty in the county.



Age

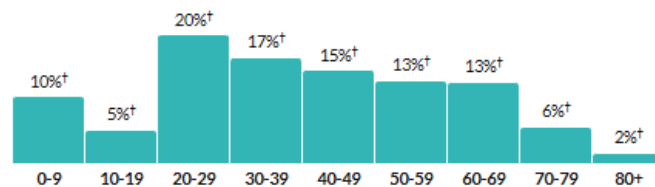
37.6

Median age

about the same as the figure in
Charlton County: 38

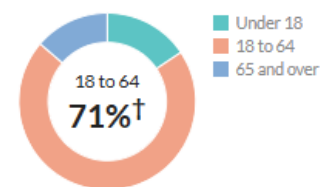
about the same as the figure in
Georgia: 37.4

Population by age range



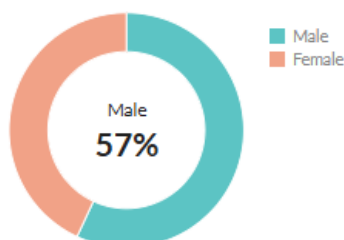
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Population by age category



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Sex



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Race & Ethnicity

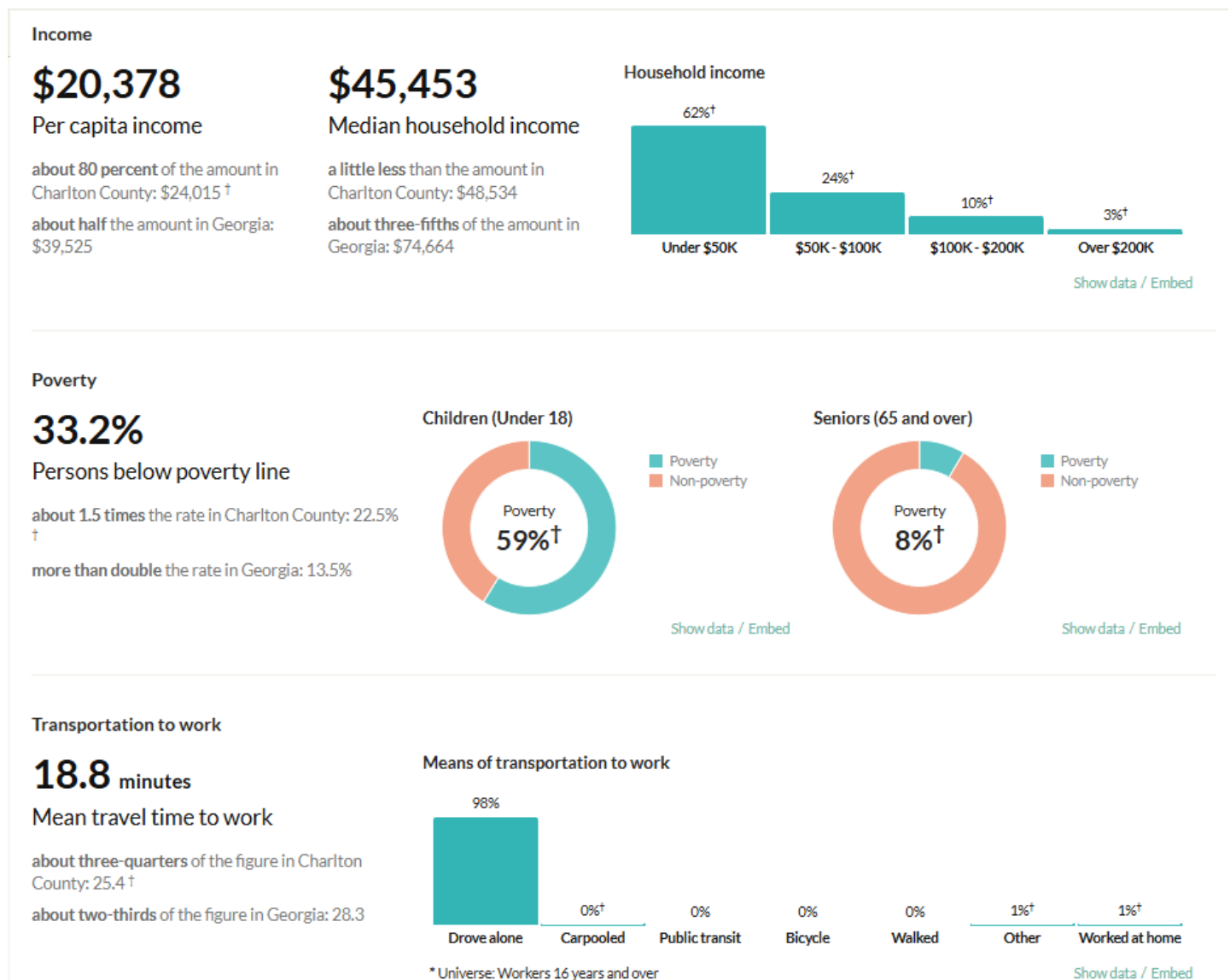


* Hispanic includes respondents of any race. Other categories are non-Hispanic.

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The median household income in Folkston is \$45,453 which is 6.34% less than the

\$48,534 per household in the county.



Source: <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US1330424-folkston-ga/>

City of Homeland Demographics

The City of Homeland has a total population of 877 according to the American Community Survey population projection for the years 2023-2025. Of both Charlton County and the City of Folkston, the City of Homeland has by far the lowest median age of 33.6 years. Homeland's median age is 4.4 years younger than that of Charlton County and 4.0 years younger than the median age of Folkston. Two age ranges vie for the largest group at 18% of the population and they are the group of 10-19 years and 30-39 years. The City of Homeland has more males than females with 63% of the population being male compared to 37% female. Sixty four percent of the population is White with the next largest group being Black at 19%.



Age

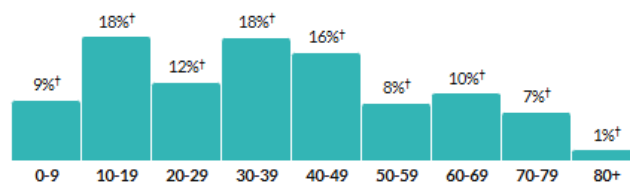
33.6

Median age

about 90 percent of the figure in
Charlton County: 38

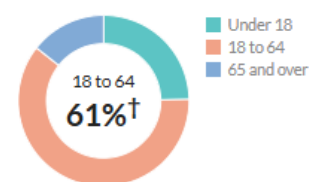
about 90 percent of the figure in
Georgia: 37.4

Population by age range



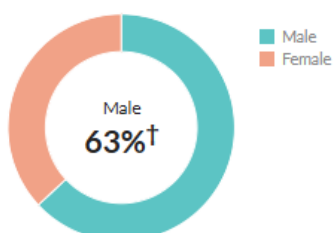
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Population by age category



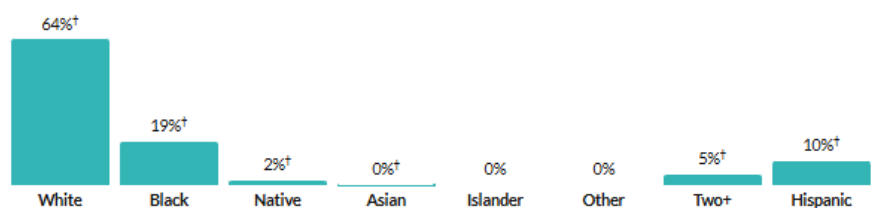
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Sex



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Race & Ethnicity



* Hispanic includes respondents of any race. Other categories are non-Hispanic.

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The median household income for Homeland is \$51,324 which is 5.45% higher than that of Charlton County and 11.4% higher than that of the City of Folkston. The percentage of the population in Homeland below the poverty line is 21.7%, which is .8% lower than that of Charlton County, and 11.5% lower than that of the City of Folkston.

Income

\$22,925

Per capita income

a little less than the amount in
Charlton County: \$24,015[†]

about three-fifths of the amount in
Georgia: \$39,525

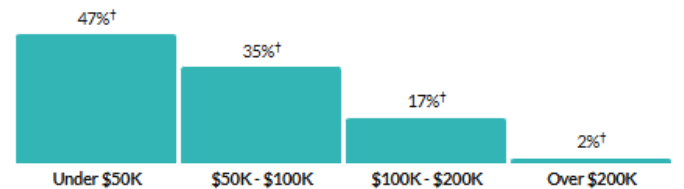
\$51,324

Median household income

a little higher than the amount in
Charlton County: \$48,534

about two-thirds of the amount in
Georgia: \$74,664

Household income



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Poverty

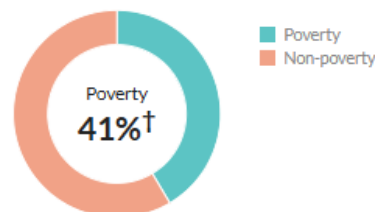
21.7%

Persons below poverty line

a little less than the rate in Charlton County: 22.5%
[†]

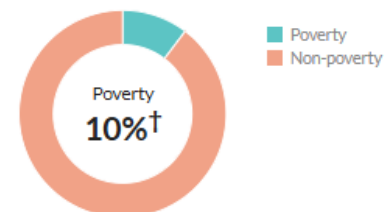
more than 1.5 times the rate in Georgia: 13.5%

Children (Under 18)



[Show data / Embed](#)

Seniors (65 and over)



[Show data / Embed](#)

Transportation to work

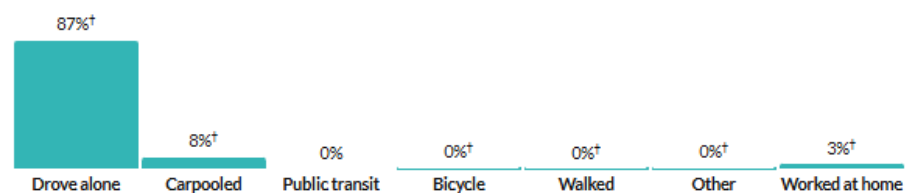
32.8 minutes

Mean travel time to work

about 1.3 times the figure in Charlton County: 25.4
[†]

about 20 percent higher than the figure in Georgia:
28.3

Means of transportation to work



* Universe: Workers 16 years and over

[Show data / Embed](#)

Source: <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US1339692-homeland-ga/>

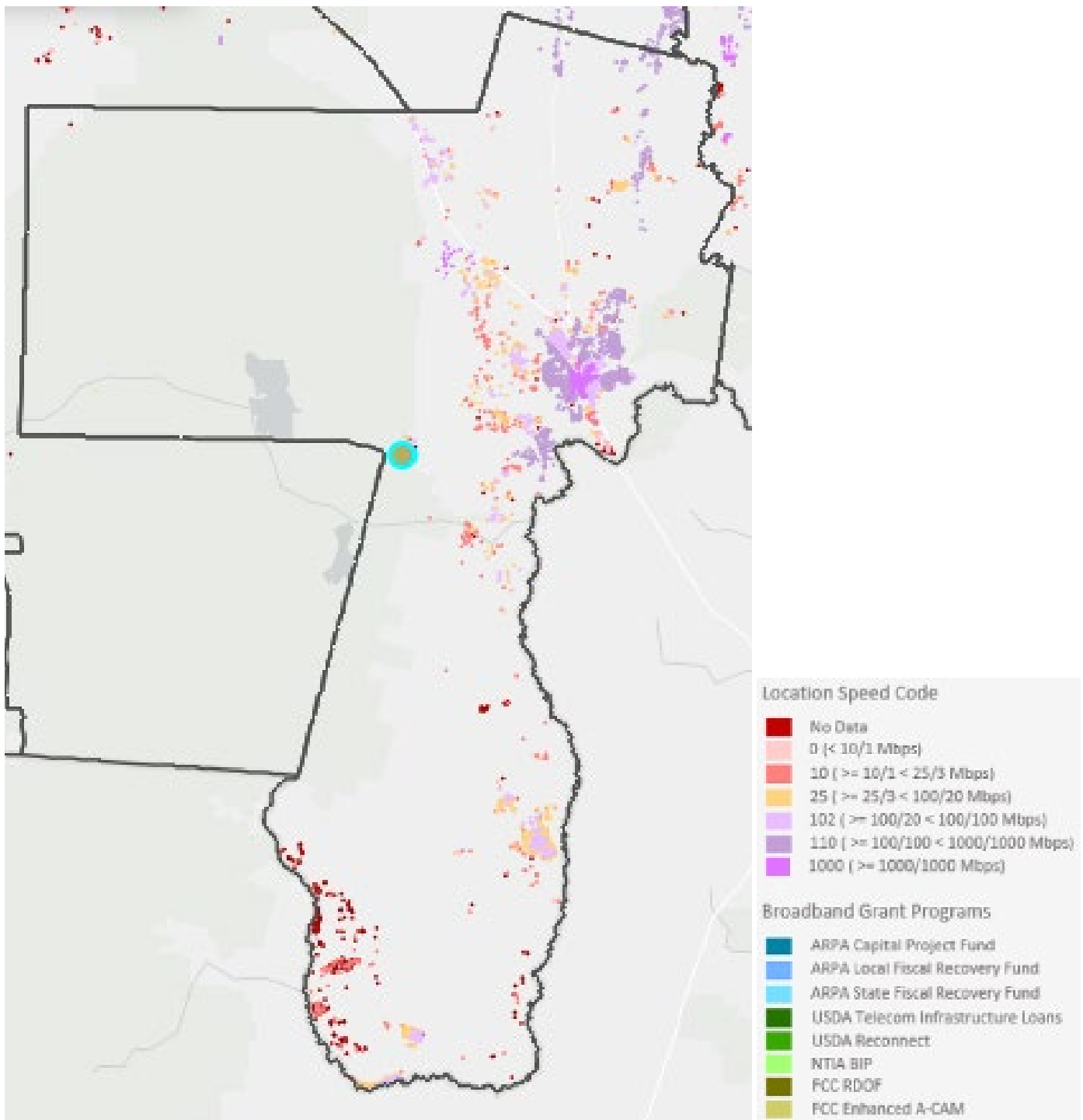
5. Broadband Element

In recognition of the importance of broadband infrastructure to the vitality of communities, the Georgia legislature passed the Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Act (SB 402) in 2018. The Act provides planning, deployment, incentives, and other purposes for broadband services. It also requires comprehensive plans to promote the deployment of broadband services. Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland recognize the importance of broadband expansion by including this Element in their Comprehensive Plan.

Broadband services enable residents to access vital services such as healthcare, economic opportunity, and education. Expansion of rural broadband and improvement in the position of broadband services can address concerns of resident out-migration. Effective and efficient broadband enables internet-based businesses to succeed in the global economy. Educating upcoming generations of students in web literacy and digital skills training with adequate broadband speed and connectivity is challenging.

The following chart contains countywide broadband initiatives that are general in nature and are shared goals between the county and the cities of Folkston and Homeland. This list of initiatives has been continued from the previous plan as general guidance in the area of broadband for the entire county population.

BROADBAND – The following are generalized broadband Action Items that apply to Charlton County and to the cities of Folkston and Homeland. Additional, and more individual Broadband Action Items can be found within the individual Work Programs for Charlton County, Folkston, and Homeland.								
Projects	Estimated Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	FY26	FY27	Fy28	Fy29	FY30
Enhance the communication network for the county and the cities, including establishment of a Wireless Network Center	\$500,000	Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland	General Funds, SPLOST	x	x	x	x	x
Increase broadband coverage in underserved areas	\$10,000	Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland	General Funds, SPLOST , Grants	x	x	x	x	x
Establish broadband coverage for the county (including hot spots) and participate in regional efforts in cooperation with GTA	\$500,000	Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland	General Funds, SPLOST , Grants	x	x	x	x	x



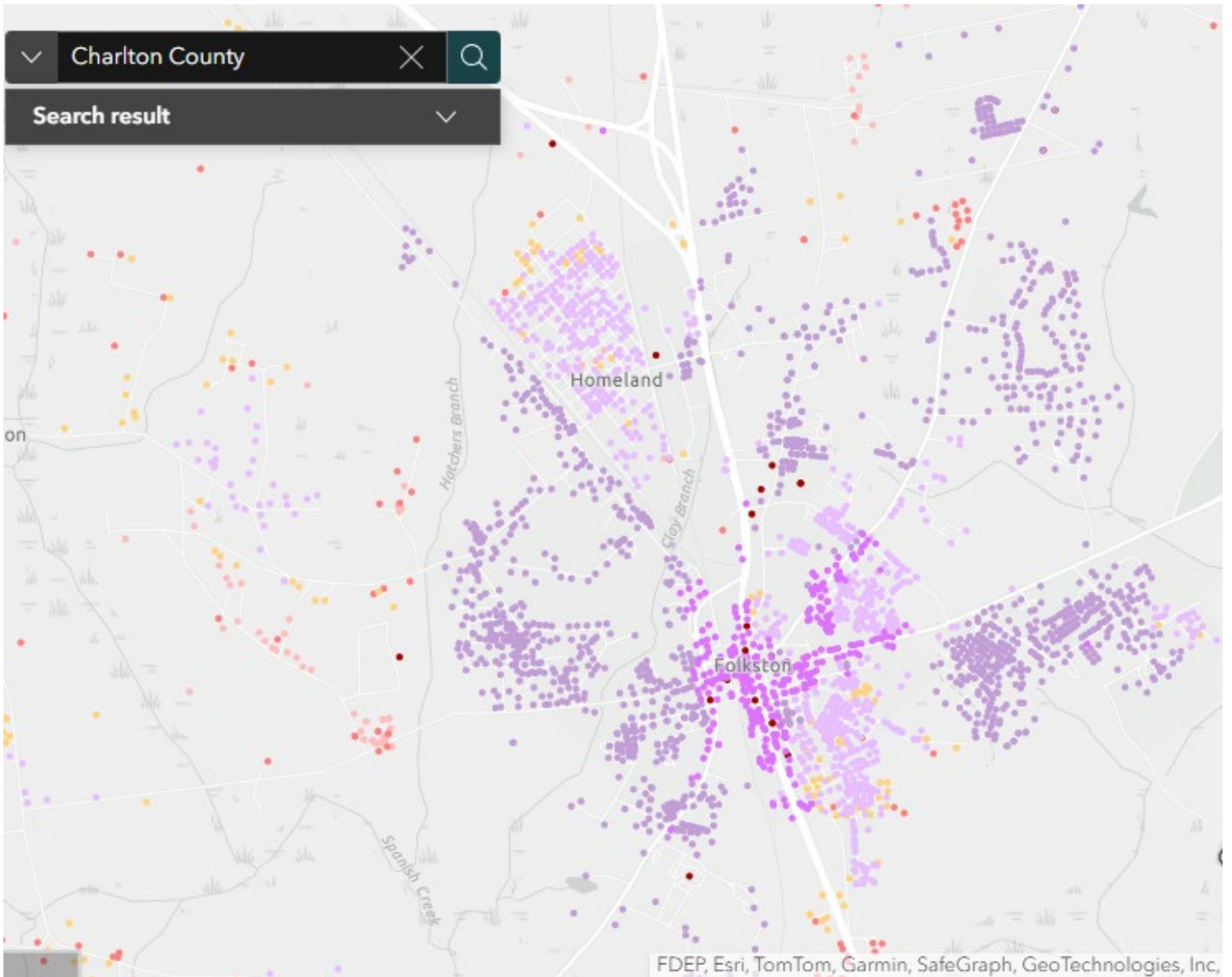
Map 1: Served & Unserved Areas in Charlton County, Folkston, and Homeland

County statistics are based on a fixed, terrestrial broadband definition of 25 megabits per second down and 3 megabits per second up, and where the broadband service is available to at least ONE consumer (residential and business) in a census block. Populated census blocks that did not meet this definition are delineated in Map 1 (above) as 'Unserved'. It has been noted by residents of Charlton County that there are people living in areas on the map above in the "Unserved" areas also identified as having "No Locations." In Charlton County, 81.9% of the population has a broadband internet subscription according to the 2019-2023 US Census and that is up from the 60.4% of households in 2020.

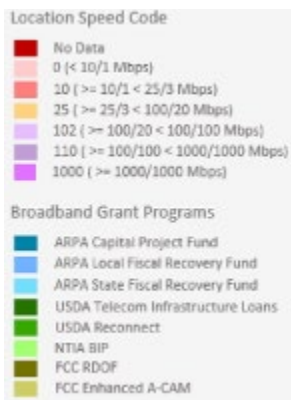
With the Okefenokee Wildlife Preserve eastern entrance just south of Folkston, tourism is a major attraction and economic stronghold in Charlton County. For navigation purposes and sense of safety, visitors depend on reliable cellular service. The southern and western portions of the County experience the largest gaps in cellular service coverage.

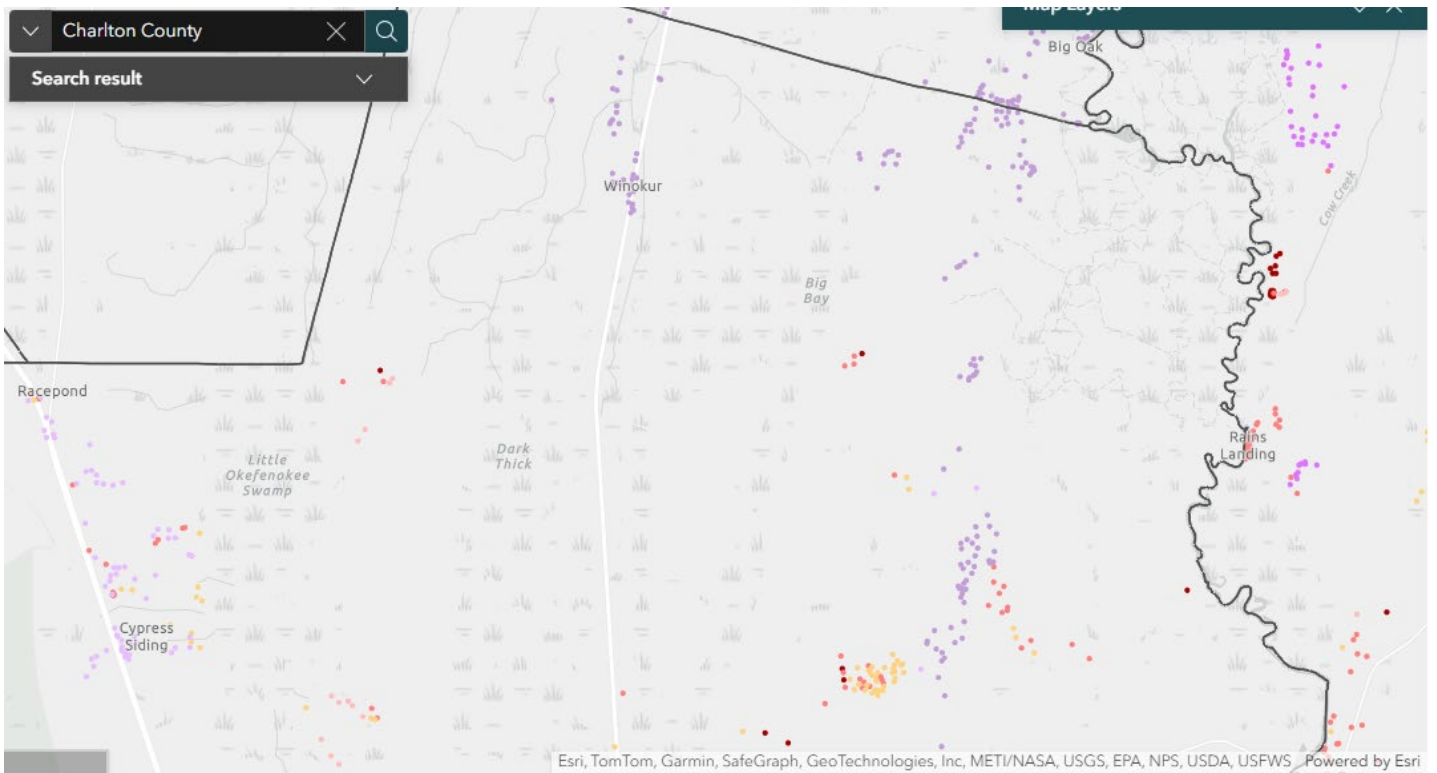
Fiber infrastructure is very expensive due to the rural nature, propensity for wetlands, and vastness of the County. Non-fiber solutions to broadband infrastructure are sought by County leaders especially as new technologies develop.

Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland recognize there are many barriers for private broadband services providers to effectively roll-out necessary broadband infrastructure in rural areas of the State. City and County leaders recognize the importance of broadband quality for industry retention and recruitment within this small, rural community. Community leaders continuously seek improvement in the quality of life for the rural residents of the Cities and County. Industry relocation and business creation are dependent on the necessary infrastructure being in place. The lack of high-quality broadband infrastructure is a major impediment to not only recruitment but also for the expansion of established local industry. The Broadband Ready Community and Site designation has been established to incentivize private investment in the provision of rural broadband services. Charlton County and the City of Folkston plan to apply for these designations and signal to the State and to private Internet Service Providers their prioritization of rural broadband improvement and expansion in the community.

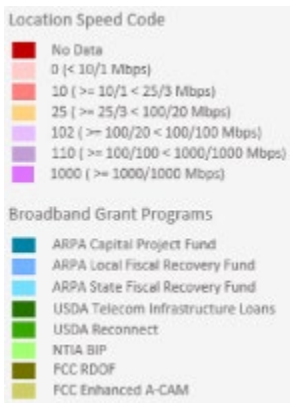


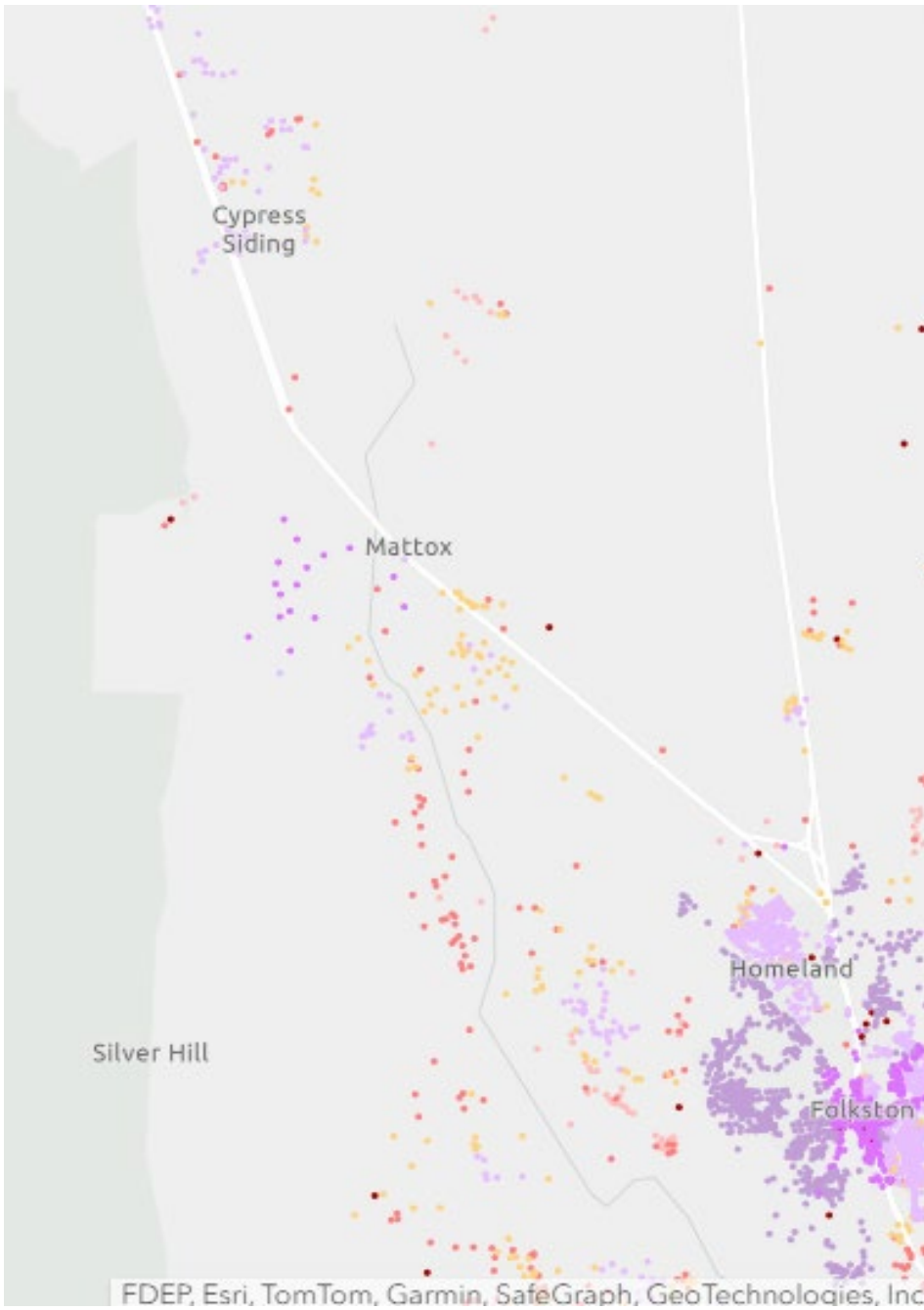
Map 2 Folkston and Homeland Broadband Coverage Existing 2024



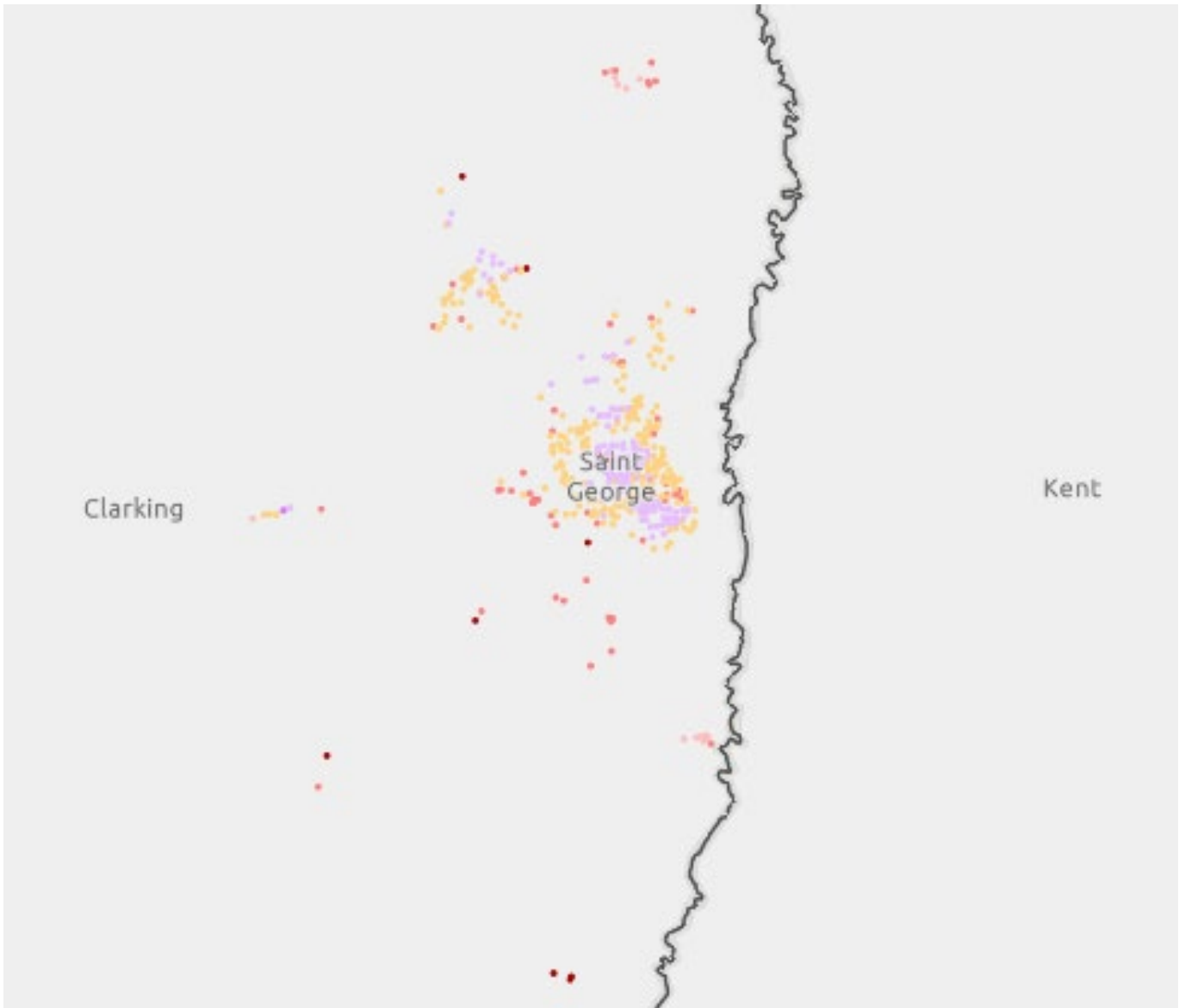


Northern section of Charlton County Broadband Coverage Existing 2024

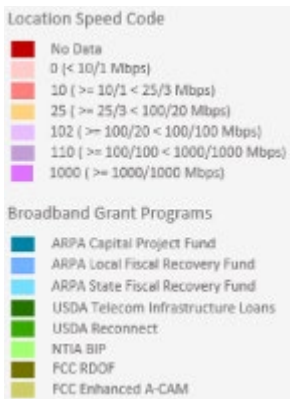


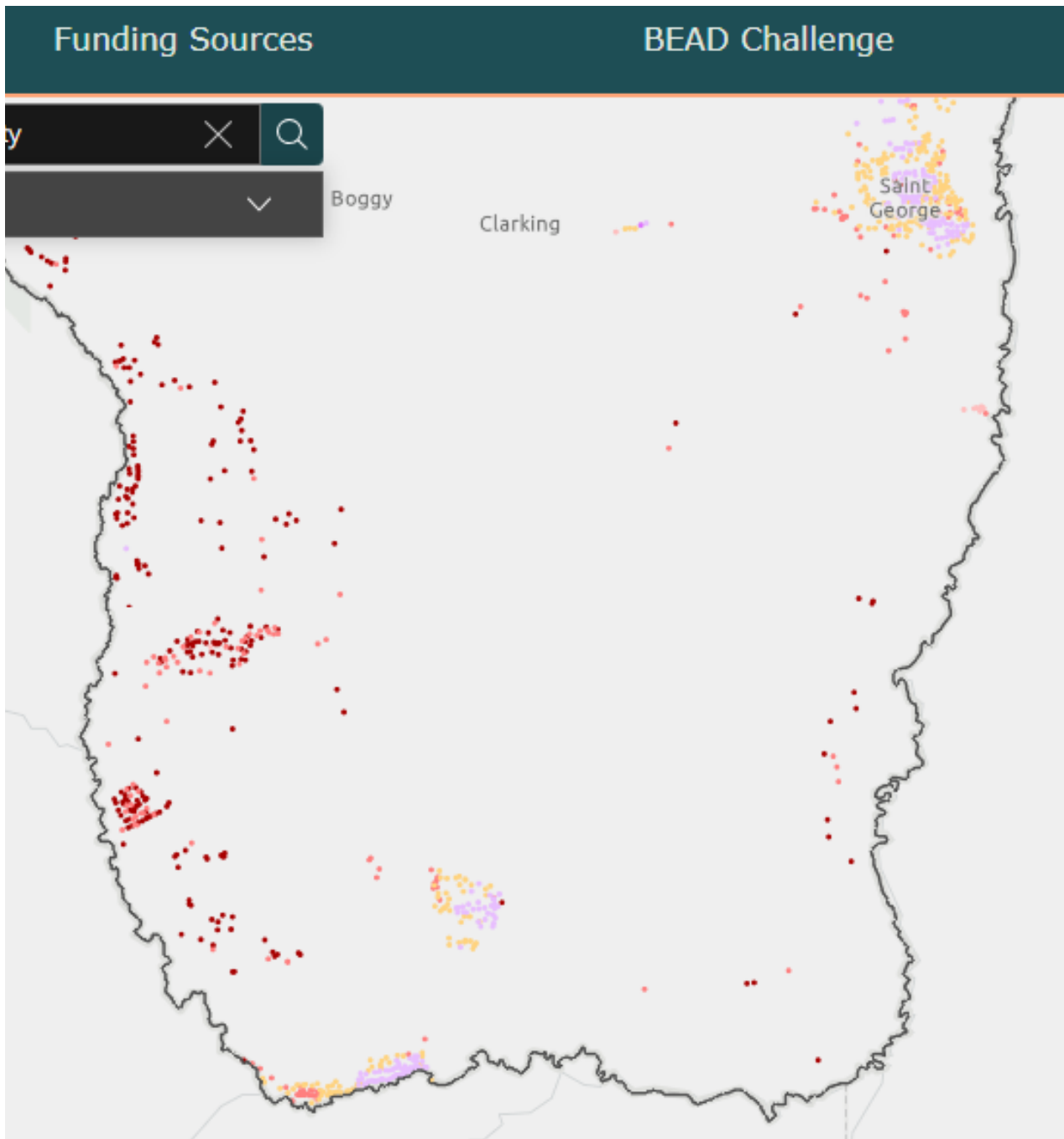


Cypress Siding and Mattox Area of Charlton County Broadband Coverage Existing 2024

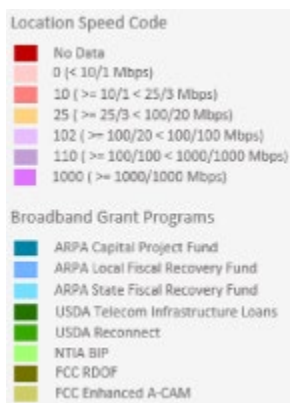


Saint Georgia Broadband Coverage Existing 2024





South End of Charlton County Broadband Coverage Existing 2024



6. Consideration of DCA Community Quality Objectives

The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has crafted a series of objectives dealing with a broad range of issues that concern local governments. The objectives, which are listed below, are only recommendations, but provide local governments with a tool to guide them in the assessment of their needs and opportunities and in the development of their implementation activities. If they are used as such a tool by many of the local governments in their planning efforts, these objectives also have the potential to result in consistent planning projects and goals, which may translate into greater efficiency and a better quality of life for the residents.

1. Economic Prosperity

Encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community. Factors to consider when determining suitability include: job skills required; long-term sustainability; linkages to other economic activities in the region; impact on the resources of the area; and prospects for creating job opportunities that meet the needs of a diverse local workforce.

Best Practices recommended for Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland

- Partner with county school system to develop programs of study that align with the available in-county jobs and industries.
- Offer workforce training opportunities.
- Complete a corridor study.
- Track business needs, explore a business incubator.
- Develop an economic development strategy to capture food and lodging from potential new Okefenokee Swamp visitors.
- Explore an overall economic development study with a strategy.
- Enterprise Zone designation can help underutilized downtowns.

2. Resource Management

Promote the efficient use of natural resources and identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the community. This may be achieved by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy generation; encouraging green building construction and renovation; utilizing appropriate waste management techniques; fostering water conservation and reuse; or setting environmentally sensitive areas aside as green space or conservation reserves.

Best Practices recommended for Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland

- Water resource protection and management.
- Stormwater management.
- Conservation easements to include the setting aside of flood-prone land and preservation of regionally important resources.

3. Efficient Land Use

Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the periphery of the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the traditional core of the community; designing new development to minimize the amount of land consumed; carefully planning expansion of public infrastructure; or maintaining open space in agricultural, forestry, or conservation uses.

Best Practices recommended for Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland

- Infill development program to utilize vacant land in developed areas.
- Adaptive re-use of existing buildings prior to the construction of new ones.
- Preservation of agricultural land through conservation easements.
- Develop a map of Prime Agricultural Farmland with County Tax Assessor.
- Consider land management practices where none currently exist.

4. Local Preparedness

Identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve. These prerequisites might include infrastructure (roads, water, and sewer) to support or direct new growth; ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired; leadership and staff capable of responding to opportunities and managing new challenges; or undertaking an all-hazards approach to disaster preparedness and response.

Best Practices recommended for Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland

- Update the County Hazard Mitigation Plan when due and implement the plan.
- Utilize the Comprehensive Plan Work Program to implement new infrastructure (water, sewer, and roads).
- Staff training and professional development is important.
- Coordination with federal and state partners for potential loans and grants for development needs.

5. Sense of Place

Protect and enhance the community's unique qualities. This may be achieved by maintaining the downtown as focal point of the community; fostering compact, walkable, mixed-use development; protecting and revitalizing historic areas of the community; encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community; or protecting scenic and natural features that are important

to defining the community's character.

Best Practices recommended for Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland

- Work with the Okefenokee National Wildlife Preserve to protect and promote it while providing resources for day and overnight visitors to the site.
- Prioritize growth in areas already served by utilities such as water, sewer, and electricity.
- Protect downtowns and enhance for beauty and usability. Landscaping and code enforcement are key to this initiative.
- Upgrade and add new sidewalks and bike paths where needed.
- Recognize and protect existing historic resources in the cities and in the county.

6.Regional Cooperation

Cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions to address shared needs. This may be achieved by actively participating in regional organizations; identifying joint projects that will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer; or developing collaborative solutions for regional issues such as protection of shared natural resources, development of the transportation network, or creation of a tourism plan.

Best Practices recommended for Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland

- Continue to update the Service Delivery Strategy as needed.
- Continue to upgrade utilities as needed and plan for future capacity. Plan to expand utilities where none exist but are needed.
- Develop an environmental resource inventory.
- Explore a joint economic development strategy for the county and the Cities to capture potential new tourism opportunities presented by the Okefenokee.

7.Housing Options

Promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource-efficient housing in the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development of a variety of housing types, sizes, costs, and densities in each neighborhood; promoting programs to provide housing for residents of all socioeconomic backgrounds, including affordable mortgage finance options; instituting programs to address homelessness issues in the community; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure availability of adequate workforce housing in the community.

Best Practices recommended for Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland

- Apply for Community Development Block Grants and Community Home Investment Grants as often as needed.
- Utilize Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH).
- Consult with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs on a myriad of housing development programs for affordable housing, creative housing options, and housing development options.
- Utilize zoning for higher density housing development and the development of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's).
- Cluster development or planned developments are a tool of zoning.

8. Transportation Options

Address the transportation needs, challenges, and opportunities of all community residents. This may be achieved by fostering alternatives to transportation by automobile, including walking, cycling, and transit; employing traffic calming measures throughout the community; requiring adequate connectivity between adjoining developments; or coordinating transportation and land use decision-making within the community.

Best Practices recommended for Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland

- Safe routes to school is a program to explore safe, active transportation.
- Complete streets can add multiple new transportation options.
- Greenways provide pedestrian and bicycle active transportation options.
- Identify areas where right of way improvements are needed.
- Study pedestrian safety in dangerous areas.
- Continue participation in the Let's Ride public transportation system of the Southern Georgia Region.
- Participate in TSPLOST with local needed projects submitted.

9. Educational Opportunities

Make educational and training opportunities readily available to enable all community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, manage their finances, or pursue life ambitions. This can be achieved by expanding and improving local educational institutions or programs; providing access to other institutions in the region; instituting programs to improve local graduation rates; expanding vocational education programs; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure an adequately trained and skilled workforce.

Best Practices recommended for Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland

- Work with local school system to develop programs of study that relate to existing and upcoming job opportunities within the county.
- Workforce training when possible.

- Countywide broadband coverage will offer more opportunities for industries, work-from-home opportunities, and learn-from-home educational opportunities.

10. Community Health

Ensure that all community residents, regardless of age, ability, or income, have access to critical goods and services, safe and clean neighborhoods, and good work opportunities. This may be achieved by providing services to support the basic needs of disadvantaged residents, including the disabled; instituting programs to improve public safety; promoting programs that foster better health and fitness; or otherwise providing all residents the opportunity to improve their circumstances in life and to fully participate in the community.

Best Practices recommended for Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland

- Develop public parks with walking trails and play equipment to offer opportunities for exercise.
- Trail and greenway development offer opportunities for walking and biking.
- Inventory current medical facilities and treatment options and work towards the development of facilities that protect the entire community within the county.
- Health fairs and health classes will educate citizens on best health practices.
- Target clean industries with more salaried positions and less assembly jobs.

7. Community Policies

a) Economic Development

Charlton County, in partnership with the Cities of Folkston and Homeland, will foster a robust and sustainable economy by diversifying industries, expanding and enhancing tourism including: nature-based, sports, and cultural attractions, strengthening workforce development and education, improving infrastructure and technology access, promoting its rural quality of life, and ensuring fiscal health. Through thoughtful planning, partnerships, and community engagement, these local governments will support responsible growth that respects their unique natural assets while providing opportunities for residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

Goal 1: Expand and Diversify Local Industry

- **Policy 1.1:** Work in coordination with the City of Folkston, Homeland, the Southeast Georgia Regional Commission, and economic development agencies towards the designation of and marketing of a certified industrial area. Streamline permitting and site-readiness requirements to encourage new and diverse industries to locate in Charlton County.
- **Policy 1.2:** Support small businesses by developing targeted incentives (financial, density bonuses, expedited permitting) for new ventures in niche farming, specialty forestry products, and value-added food processing industries that complement the County's existing agricultural base.
- **Policy 1.3:** Investigate a master-planned retirement community that includes a full range of services—such as a community center, health center, and dining—to diversify the economic base and attract both investment and new residents.
- **Policy 1.4:** Research how to leverage the rising elderly population to strengthen the local economy, focusing on both the opportunities for senior services and the transfer of their knowledge and experience into the wider labor market.

Goal 2: Strengthen and Diversify Tourism

- **Policy 1.5:** Formulate short-term and long-term tourism marketing plans that highlight the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, the Satilla and St. Mary's Rivers, and other natural assets—ensuring that all promotion respects the carrying capacity of these resources.
- **Policy 1.6:** Promote hunting, fishing, and other nature-based tourism to diversify recreational offerings, generate revenue, and support local lodging, retail, and service businesses.
- **Policy 1.7:** Support the development of an ecotourism program in partnership with local outfitters, guides, and environmental organizations to showcase Charlton County's unique ecosystems and attract a broad range of outdoor enthusiasts.
- **Policy 1.8:** Enhance year-round tourism marketing efforts by partnering with neighboring cities, chambers of commerce, and regional agencies to coordinate advertising campaigns and share promotional resources.
- **Policy 1.9:** Work towards creating and promoting sports tourism opportunities by identifying or developing facilities suitable for sporting events such as: baseball, softball, fishing tournaments, paddling regattas, equestrian, and foot races; and marketing them regionally to bring new visitors and revenue into Charlton County.

Goal 3: Revitalize Downtowns and Promote Local Culture

- **Policy 1.10:** Support creating a downtown master plan for Folkston and Homeland that includes beautification strategies, façade improvements, and pedestrian-friendly amenities. Develop specific incentives (such as tax abatements or grants) to attract businesses to these districts.
- **Policy 1.11:** Support leveraging the Train Watching Platform to attract railfan tourism, artisan shops, and complementary businesses (arts, crafts, performing arts). Pursue the development of a public park and permanent theater near the train station to bolster local cultural attractions.
- **Policy 1.12:** Support coordination with the Chamber of Commerce and local economic development organizations to plan festivals, markets, and events in downtown areas to strengthen their appeal and stimulate foot traffic.

Goal 4: Enhance Workforce Development and Retain Younger Residents

- **Policy 1.13:** Investigate a partnership with the School Board and local businesses, expand vocational training, internships, and apprenticeships that build practical business skills and provide hands-on experience for youth.
- **Policy 1.14:** Strengthen literacy and foundational education programs (reading, writing, basic business competencies) to raise overall skill levels and improve workforce readiness.
- **Policy 1.15:** Promote higher education opportunities (e.g., distance learning, satellite campuses, online courses) accessible to all ages to enhance educational attainment and encourage younger residents to stay in or return to Charlton County.
- **Policy 1.16:** Offer non-cash incentives (e.g., favorable housing or community integration programs) to encourage retired military personnel and related support businesses to relocate to Charlton County, tapping into a pool of trained and disciplined workers.
- **Policy 1.17:** Strengthen volunteer programs with local nonprofits, the Chamber of Commerce, the school system, recreation services, and the library to encourage civic engagement and skill-building among residents of all ages.

Goal 5: Improve Infrastructure and Technology Access

- **Policy 1.18:** Promote the expansion of high-speed internet and broadband across the County. Collaborate with service providers to improve connectivity and educate residents on digital literacy to enhance e-commerce, remote work, and telehealth services.
- **Policy 1.19:** Pursue the development of a county job center or business incubator that provides shared office space, mentorship, and resources for start-ups and remote workers, with a focus on retaining local talent.

Goal 6: Attract Residents and Strengthen Quality of Life

- **Policy 1.20:** Emphasize Charlton County's rural quality of life and lower cost of living when marketing to residents of nearby metro areas (e.g., Jacksonville) who seek a more peaceful lifestyle.
- **Policy 1.21:** Highlight the County's first-class natural resources (Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, St. Mary's and Satilla Rivers) to attract outdoor enthusiasts and retirees looking for a nature-centric community.

- **Policy 1.22:** Encourage lodging development (hotels, bed-and-breakfasts, campgrounds) to better accommodate visitors and potential film industry operations, reducing the need for overnight stays outside the County.

Goal 7: Leverage Potential of Film and Media Productions

- **Policy 1.23:**
Market Charlton County as a film-friendly community by identifying scenic or historically significant sites and providing clear guidelines on permits, local contacts, and logistical support.
- **Policy 1.24:** Facilitate lodging and service options (e.g., short-term rentals, pop-up accommodations) to handle the influx of production crews, ensuring the County captures more of the film industry's economic benefits.

Goal 8: Strengthen Fiscal Sustainability

- **Policy 1.25:** Explore adjustments to the local tax millage rate—balanced with other funding strategies—to ensure sufficient operational funds for the County's growing needs without placing undue burden on residents.
- **Policy 1.26:** Pursue public/private partnerships and regional grant opportunities to supplement local revenues, bolster community development projects, and reduce reliance on tax-based income alone.
- **Policy 1.27:** In partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, increase outreach to existing businesses to understand their challenges, foster their expansion, and identify new revenue sources for local government.

b) Housing

Charlton County, in partnership with the Cities of Folkston and Homeland, seek to foster safe, vibrant communities through a comprehensive housing approach that provides affordable, high-quality homes for all income levels; preserves neighborhood character and rural landscapes; strengthens infrastructure and public services; and builds partnerships with employers, nonprofits, and community groups to ensure that every resident benefits from safe, healthy, and sustainable housing opportunities.

Goal 1: Address the Countywide Shortage of Affordable, Quality Housing

- **Policy 2.1:** Encourage construction of affordable, good-quality housing for all income groups by offering incentives such as density bonuses, expedited ("one-stop") permitting, and other in-kind measures to reduce development costs.
- **Policy 2.2:** Provide incentives for constructing quality housing in mixed-use developments within the cities by offering tax incentives or fee waivers for developments that leverage existing infrastructure.

Goal 2: Improve Property Maintenance and Reduce Blight

- **Policy 2.3:** Enforce the maintenance and clean-up of vacant lots and properties by strengthening code enforcement procedures, increasing penalties for non-compliance, and conducting regular property inspections.

- **Policy 2.4:** Require owners to remove dilapidated or illegally placed mobile homes by amending ordinances to expedite removal orders, offering disposal assistance programs, and coordinating with local waste/recycling facilities.

Goal 3: Strengthen the Housing Tax Base and Preserve Neighborhood Character

- **Policy 2.5:** Support older neighborhoods that provide quality and character by offering rehabilitation grants or low-interest loans for historic/aging homes and promoting preservation programs that maintain community character.
- **Policy 2.6:** Eliminate low-value, substandard, or dilapidated housing through the Code Enforcement Inspector Program and nuisance ordinances by formalizing procedures for demolition or removal of unfit structures and collaborating on programs to replace them with higher-quality, affordable units.
- **Policy 2.7:** Encourage the development of affordable apartment buildings by modifying zoning to allow multifamily construction in appropriate areas and providing density or height bonuses to quickly increase the supply of affordable units.

Goal 4: Ensure Safe, Quality Housing for Vulnerable Populations

- **Policy 2.8:** Attract quality housing and strengthen neighborhood services by providing zoning flexibility for neighborhood-serving commercial uses, partnering with community development organizations, and locating essential services (e.g., grocery stores) closer to residential areas.
- **Policy 2.9:** Explore the potential to build and market affordable infill housing in areas of need by utilizing land banking, collaborating with nonprofit developers, and using data from county-wide housing surveys to target specific locations.

Goal 5: Reduce High Rental Costs and Expand Quality Rental Options

- **Policy 2.10:** Support the provision of incentives to developers of high-quality, affordable rental housing by allowing a mix of housing sizes, contributing to construction and development costs, offering land acquisition assistance, and streamlining permitting processes.

Goal 6: Expand Workforce Housing Options

- **Policy 2.11:** Partner with local employers to develop or subsidize workforce housing projects by coordinating on financial contributions, land donations, or housing allowances that help workers secure stable living situations near workplaces.
- **Policy 2.12:** Establish employer-assisted housing programs by offering down-payment assistance, rental deposit support, or matched savings plans for employees who purchase or rent homes locally.

Goal 7: Improve Infrastructure to Support Housing Development

- **Policy 2.13:** Prioritize water, sewer, and broadband upgrades in targeted growth areas by creating capital improvements plan identifying necessary expansions or modernizations to support higher-density or multifamily housing.
- **Policy 2.14:** Seek state and federal grants—such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) or USDA Rural Development loans—to fund critical infrastructure projects without overburdening local taxpayers.

Goal 8: Encourage Homeownership and Financial Literacy

- **Policy 2.15:** Strengthen local homeownership counseling and financial literacy programs by partnering with nonprofits, extension offices, or local banks to offer classes on budgeting, mortgage readiness, and responsible home maintenance.
- **Policy 2.16:** Promote down-payment and closing-cost assistance by publicizing locally administered grant/loan opportunities, Federal Housing Administration (FHA) initiatives, or Georgia Dream Homeownership Program benefits.

Goal 9: Preserve Agricultural and Open Spaces While Accommodating Housing

- **Policy 2.17:** Implement conservation subdivisions or cluster development standards by clustering homes on smaller lots, preserving larger tracts of agricultural/open space, and offering density bonuses for developments that conserve significant acreage.
- **Policy 2.18:** Encourage agrihoods or farm-based communities by allowing or zoning for mixed agricultural/residential developments that maintain working farmland alongside housing, thereby preserving rural character and local food production.

Goal 10: Strengthen Partnerships with Nonprofits and Community Organizations

- **Policy 2.19:** Collaborate with groups like Habitat for Humanity or Community Land Trusts by identifying suitable land for donation, expediting permitting, or reducing impact fees to facilitate affordable housing projects.
- **Policy 2.20:** Establish or support a rural housing coalition by convening local officials, nonprofits, social service agencies, and financial institutions to align strategies, pool resources, and coordinate housing initiatives.

Goal 11: Promote Housing Rehabilitation and Weatherization

- **Policy 2.21:** Seek grant funding for low-income home repair or weatherization by partnering with nonprofits or state-run programs to preserve housing for elderly or disabled homeowners.
- **Policy 2.22:** Develop a volunteer-based repair network for minor home fixes by organizing trade schools, churches, or civic groups to assist with small repairs, thereby improving livability without major costs.

c) Natural and Cultural Resources

Charlton County, in partnership with the Cities of Folkston and Homeland seeks to foster a vibrant and resilient community by preserving and sustainably managing the natural, cultural, and historic resources of the region while promoting responsible growth, economic development, and community engagement. Through collaborative efforts among local governments, stakeholders, and residents, we aim to protect our rivers, wetlands, and sensitive ecosystems, celebrate and safeguard our cultural heritage, and ensure the continued vitality of our agricultural lands and historic sites. We will work together to enhance public safety, encourage eco-tourism, and strengthen local economies, all while respecting and enhancing the unique character of our communities. By integrating sustainable practices into land-use planning, investing in infrastructure, and prioritizing education and community participation, we seek to create a thriving, culturally rich, and resilient future for Charlton County and its cities.

Natural Resources

Goal 1: Enhance Public River Access & Resource Stewardship

- **Policy 3.1:** Pursue effective management options—whether public (e.g., state park designation) or private (e.g., concessionaires)—for river access points and the Okefenokee Refuge to improve security and reduce vandalism.
 - **Policy 3.2:** Collaborate with local water trail partnerships to enhance access through improved signage and traveler information, thereby supporting safe and responsible recreation.
-

Goal 2: Strengthen Enforcement, Maintenance & Public Safety

- **Policy 3.3:** Coordinate with the Sheriff's Department, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and community groups to enforce speed limits and control activities like dumping and other crimes near natural resources. Use fines or fees to help finance these enforcement efforts.
 - **Policy 3.4:** Support and participate in annual river cleanups, adopt-a-river programs, and volunteer-led initiatives that promote maintenance and public safety.
 - **Policy 3.5:** Encourage local governments and agencies to investigate and implement ordinances that preserve the environmental character of riverbanks, corridors, and surrounding residential areas, while also seeking funding opportunities for these programs.
-

Goal 3: Protect the Environment Through Septic System Management & Waste Solutions

- **Policy 3.6:** Explore ways to enforce strict septic system setback regulations in floodplains and near sensitive water bodies (such as along the St. Mary's and Satilla Rivers and within the Okefenokee Wildlife Refuge) and promote educational outreach on proper septic system maintenance.
 - **Policy 3.7:** Investigate and encourage alternative, eco-friendly wastewater disposal methods to protect groundwater quality.
-

Goal 4: Promote Compatible Uses, Land Preservation & Interagency Coordination

- **Policy 3.8:** Consider incentive programs that ensure both existing and new developments are compatible with surrounding natural and cultural resources.
 - **Policy 3.9:** Pursue state, federal, and public funding sources to purchase or preserve environmentally sensitive lands, wetlands, and riparian corridors.
 - **Policy 3.10:** Support local agencies and stakeholder groups—such as the DNR, riverkeepers, and regional committees—in efforts to restore and clean up degraded waterways, promote environmental education, and foster sustainable tourism.
-

Goal 5: Develop Interconnected Eco-Tourism & Trail Networks

- **Policy 3.11:** Raise awareness of and actively pursue partnerships or grants to connect the Okefenokee Water Trail with the Suwannee Wilderness Trail, laying the groundwork for a large-scale, interconnected eco-tourism resource.

Cultural Resources

Goal 1: Protect, Preserve, and Promote Historic and Cultural Resources

- **Policy 4.1:** Support the historical society in curating collections of historic papers, books, photographs, textiles, and memorabilia.
 - **Policy 4.2:** Assist the historical society to incorporate comprehensive historic resource surveys and cultural studies in the archive.
 - **Policy 4.3:** Assist the historical society in developing a digitization and cataloging strategy to enhance public access and preservation.
-

Goal 2: Support the Existing Historical Society

- **Policy 4.4:** Designate annual funds within the general budgets of Charlton County, Folkston, and Homeland to support the current operations of the Historical Society.
 - **Policy 4.5:** Allocate resources to expand the Society's capacity for record collection, documentation, and community outreach.
 - **Policy 4.6:** Establish performance benchmarks to assess and improve the effectiveness of the Society's preservation and educational programs.
-

Goal 3: Rehabilitate the Topper Theater

- **Policy 4.7:** Conduct a feasibility study to assess the potential purchase and rehabilitation of the Topper Theater.
 - **Policy 4.8:** Develop funding proposals that leverage both grant funds and local contributions.
 - **Policy 4.9:** Engage community stakeholders in the planning process for adaptive reuse.
 - **Policy 4.10:** Explore the creation of a renovation plan to convert the theater into a vibrant community performance and event center.
-

Goal 4: Develop a Park and Permanent Theater at the Old Train Station

- **Policy 4.11:** Collaborate with urban planners and design experts to integrate a permanent outdoor theater within a new park setting.
 - **Policy 4.12:** Secure funding, as available, through public-private partnerships and community grants.
 - **Policy 4.13:** Preserve and highlight historical elements of the old train station in the park's design.
 - **Policy 4.14:** Establish a timeline for construction, community programming, and ongoing maintenance.
-

Goal 5: Enhance Greenspace and Park Opportunities in Folkston and Homeland

- **Policy 4.15:** Identify and assess available sites for potential green spaces in both cities.
 - **Policy 4.16:** Integrate historical and cultural themes into the design of these parks.
-

- **Policy 4.17:** Foster community involvement in the planning and design process to ensure local needs are met.
- **Policy 4.18:** Secure necessary budget allocations for development, landscaping, and long-term maintenance.

d) Community Facilities and Services

Charlton County, the cities of Folkston and Homeland are committed to enhancing the well-being of its residents by prioritizing public health and safety, infrastructure development, community facilities, animal control, and cultural engagement. The county will work to improve emergency medical services, pursue innovative infrastructure solutions, and ensure equitable access to essential services, such as water and sewer systems, while fostering sustainable development. Efforts will be made to explore new community centers, government facilities, and parks to support social, recreational, and cultural activities. Additionally, collaboration with regional partners, such as the South Georgia Regional Commission, and local healthcare providers will be key to improving access to medical services and promoting long-term community growth. As part of its commitment to animal welfare, Charlton County will explore options for animal control facilities or creating a partnership to ensure responsible and safe management of stray animals. With these goals in mind, the county will also continue to enhance public resources like libraries, ensuring they serve as valuable community assets for education, leisure, and engagement.

Goal 1: Public Health and Safety

- **Policy 5.1:** Encourage supplemental medical transport options, aside from EMS, to ensure sufficient coverage for medical emergencies. Research alternatives, their associated costs, and feasibility, with a focus on improving emergency response times and accessibility.
- **Policy 5.2:** Investigate the possibility of developing a fee-for-services menu to generate revenue for non-emergency services, such as transport or other services provided by EMS, while maintaining fair access for all residents.
- **Policy 5.3:** Pursue CDBG grants for water and sewer infrastructure specifically in the St. George area to protect groundwater and surface water from contamination caused by over-reliance on septic tanks. These improvements will allow for smaller lot sizes, ranging from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ acre, within the St. George Character Area limits.

Goal 2: Infrastructure and Development

- **Policy 5.4:** Prevent or redirect developments that cannot be supported by current infrastructure, ensuring that any new construction is well-coordinated with the availability of essential services, including water, sewer, and utilities.
- **Policy 5.5:** Encourage clustered development patterns that promote the provision of water and sewer services while also protecting natural resources, such as wetlands, forests, and groundwater, from overdevelopment.
- **Policy 5.6:** Continue to work closely with the Regional Commission to apply for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and other applicable funding sources for the construction and rehabilitation of necessary infrastructure in the county, including water and sewer systems.
- **Policy 5.7:** Monitor the development pressure resulting from the outmigration of Florida residents to Charlton County and its municipalities. Ensure timely responses to any impacts on

local community facilities and services as a result of this growth, including the provision of adequate law enforcement, EMS, and fire services.

Goal 3: Public Buildings and Facilities

- **Policy 5.9:** Explore the potential for reusing an existing building or constructing a new community center in Folkston that will meet the social, recreational, and event needs of the community, with appropriate amenities and accessibility.
- **Policy 5.10:** Identify funding sources and explore the construction of a new City Hall building in Homeland, addressing both administrative needs and the ability to serve as a hub for local government services and community activities.
- **Policy 5.13:** Explore the potential to develop a public park or festival grounds in Homeland to accommodate community events, shows, festivals, and exhibitions. This will provide a venue for local and regional gatherings, promoting cultural and social engagement in the community.

Goal 4: Animal Control and Public Services

- **Policy 5.11:** Explore the feasibility of constructing or creating a partnership for an animal control facility and hiring personnel to manage the intake of stray animals. The goal is to provide a safe and responsible means of housing animals for potential adoption, ensuring public safety and animal welfare.

Goal 5: Medical and Health Services

- **Policy 5.12:** Encourage collaboration among local officials from Charlton County, Folkston, and Homeland to establish a local medical services committee. This committee should meet with regional healthcare providers to explore the feasibility of building a stand-alone emergency room facility within the county to address the lack of medical facilities.

Goal 6: Cultural and Community Engagement

- **Policy 5.14:** Assess the current condition and needs of the county library. Allocate appropriate funds within the general budget to address deficiencies, including upgrades to infrastructure, resources, and facilities to better serve the community's educational and recreational needs.

e) Land Use

Charlton County, along with the Cities of Folkston and Homeland, are dedicated to creating a high-quality living environment by balancing agricultural preservation with sustainable development. Through thoughtful land use planning, we will build vibrant, cohesive communities that meet the needs of both residential and non-residential growth. By aligning development with the county's vision, implementing best practices, and promoting innovation, we aim to enhance infrastructure, housing, and economic growth. We will protect agricultural land, support responsible water management, and promote sustainable resource use. Continued investment in infrastructure, renewable energy, and high-speed internet will ensure connectivity and growth, while preserving the county's cultural heritage and fostering community engagement. These goals reflect our shared commitment to a prosperous, sustainable future.

Goal 1: High-Quality Living Environment through Compatible Land Uses

- **Policy 6.1:** Develop a clear sense of purpose and geographic identity for various areas of Charlton County, promoting innovative development practices that align with local desires and long-term sustainability.
- **Policy 6.2:** Ensure that proposed developments are compatible with the character areas identified in the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Support the creation of a comprehensive growth management plan to guide the county's development, balancing both residential and non-residential needs.
- **Policy 6.3:** Establish adequate buffering and setback requirements between agricultural and non-agricultural uses to minimize conflicts. Protect agricultural and forestry operations from the encroachment of non-agricultural development, and vice versa, by using Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) and Forest BMPs.
- **Policy 6.4:** Encourage new residential developments within the Mixed-Use Preferred Development or Gateway Corridor Character Areas. This will ensure adequate infrastructure services are in place, reducing the cost burden on the county for road maintenance and public services.
- **Policy 6.5:** Explore the potential to create an inventory of available developable land, focusing on the Homeland and County Industrial Parks (16 and 7 acres, respectively). Promote the development of commercial and industrial properties in these areas to stimulate economic growth and job creation.
- **Policy 6.6:** Implement development standards that prioritize landscaping and land use best practices to prevent wildfires, especially in areas near timberlands and the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. Reference the Community Wildfire Protection Plan from the Georgia Forestry Commission for fuel reduction and structure ignitability reduction methods.
- **Policy 6.7:** Work closely with the School Board to align Future Land Use designations with areas suitable for residential development, ensuring that schools are located near residential neighborhoods. This will promote walkability and safety for students.
- **Policy 6.8:** Initiate proactive community place-making projects to foster a sense of cohesion between the distinct northern and southern portions of Charlton County. Recognize and address the unique characteristics of each region to help build stronger community ties.
- **Policy 6.9:** Ensure that properties with industrial uses have access to both water and sewer services upon development. This is essential for protecting public health, avoiding groundwater contamination, and ensuring adequate fire protection.
- **Policy 6.10:** Increase code enforcement to prevent the illegal installation of septic tanks in floodplain areas. Research and implement new sewage technologies that meet the needs of rural floodplain areas while adhering to environmental and public health standards.

Goal 2: Sustainable Agricultural and Natural Resource Preservation

- **Policy 6.11:** Encourage the voluntary preservation of agricultural land through the use of agricultural easements, conservation agreements, and local incentive programs. Promote zoning and land use regulations that prevent the fragmentation of farmland into smaller residential parcels.
- **Policy 6.12:** Support the adoption of agricultural Best Management Practices to improve land and water quality and enhance soil productivity. Incentivize farmers to implement erosion control, water management, and nutrient management systems.
- **Policy 6.13:** Implement land use policies that protect local water resources by limiting high-density development in areas vulnerable to groundwater contamination. Encourage low-impact development practices, such as rainwater harvesting, permeable pavements, and green infrastructure.
- **Policy 6.14:** Promote sustainable forestry management practices, including reforestation and selective harvesting, to ensure long-term economic and environmental health of Georgia's timberlands. Support local timber-related industries and markets for sustainable forest products.

Goal 3: Housing and Community Development

- **Policy 6.15:** Encourage the development of affordable housing options for families, seniors, and workforce populations, ensuring that rural areas can meet the needs of diverse demographics. Provide incentives for affordable housing construction and development, including tax incentives and grants.
- **Policy 6.16:** Encourage the construction of a mix of housing types, including single-family homes, duplexes, and multi-family units, to accommodate different lifestyles and income levels. Promote flexible zoning that allows for different densities within designated growth areas.
- **Policy 6.17:** Develop policies to preserve the unique character of historic rural neighborhoods and communities. Support restoration and adaptive reuse of historic buildings to prevent urban sprawl and maintain the county's cultural heritage.

Goal 4: Infrastructure and Transportation Enhancement

- **Policy 6.18:** Invest in expanding and maintaining rural road networks to improve connectivity between communities, agricultural areas, and major transportation routes. Promote transportation options that are efficient, sustainable, and safe, especially for rural and elderly populations.
- **Policy 6.19:** Encourage the use of renewable energy sources, including solar and wind, within rural areas. Support the development of infrastructure for renewable energy generation, including incentives for farmers to install solar panels on agricultural land.

- **Policy 6.20:** Work to expand high-speed internet access to rural areas to enhance economic development, improve education opportunities, and increase telework options. Partner with internet service providers to expand coverage in underserved areas.

f) Transportation

We will provide a safe, efficient, and integrated multi-modal transportation system in Charlton County, along with the Cities of Folkston and Homeland, that includes Greenways, Bikeways, and Blueways (water trails). Our efforts will focus on improving road infrastructure, enhancing connectivity, expanding public transportation options, and prioritizing safety, sustainability, and community engagement. We will pursue additional funding, implement innovative solutions, and collaborate with local, state, and regional stakeholders to ensure that our transportation system meets the needs of our residents, businesses, and visitors now and in the future. Through these actions, we will create a transportation network that supports economic growth, improves accessibility, and enhances the overall quality of life for our community.

Goal 1: Increase funding for road resurfacing, maintenance, and improvements.

- **Policy 7.1:** Continue to pursue and lobby for additional funding to improve local roads, including seeking resources through Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST), Floating Local Option Sales Tax (FLOST), Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG), and additional funds as available. This effort will focus on creating a consistent funding stream that supports regular resurfacing and overall road maintenance, ensuring safe travel for residents, businesses, and visitors.
- **Policy 7.2:** Develop and implement innovative solutions for multi-modal transportation, including a focus on bicycle and pedestrian safety initiatives. Identify locations in urban areas where additional sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure are essential. Where possible, construct and expand bicycle and walking paths to improve non-motorized mobility, encourage healthy activity, and provide alternative transportation options.
- **Policy 7.3:** Raise awareness among local and state elected officials about the critical maintenance issues on state roads. Advocate for prioritized state funding and maintenance programs to address the deteriorating conditions of key transportation routes that support commerce and daily life in Charlton County.
- **Policy 7.4:** Continue to support the Transportation Infrastructure Act (TIA), which has enabled the local Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST). Encourage the continuation of TIA to further develop road improvements and infrastructure necessary to meet the evolving needs of Charlton County's growing population and economy.

Goal 2: Improve and Enhance Rural Road Connectivity and Access

- **Policy 7.5:** Prioritize the improvement of rural road networks that provide access to key agricultural, industrial, and residential areas. This includes the construction and maintenance of rural roads and bridges that connect towns, farms, and commercial hubs to major highways.
- **Policy 7.6:** Implement a rural road assessment program to identify areas in need of immediate attention, focusing on roads with heavy agricultural traffic and those used for essential services.

- **Policy 7.7:** Secure additional federal and state funding specifically for rural road upgrades and improvements, including the development of low-cost solutions like chip sealing and grading for less-trafficked rural roads.

Goal 3: Enhance Public Transportation Options in Rural Areas

- **Policy 7.8** Develop or expand regional public transit services, such as rural bus routes or vanpool services, to provide reliable transportation options for residents who do not own vehicles or require transportation to work, medical appointments, or shopping centers.
- **Policy 7.9:** Establish partnerships with private organizations or non-profit groups to provide community shuttle services, particularly for seniors and individuals with disabilities who may have limited transportation options.
- **Policy 7.10:** Explore the feasibility of demand-response transportation services (e.g., on-call van or bus service) in less populated areas where fixed-route public transit is not economically viable.

Goal 4: Promote Safety and Reduce Traffic-Related Accidents

- **Policy 7.11:** Implement safety improvements such as signage, road markings, and lighting on rural roads that are often unlit and may lack proper visibility at night or in inclement weather. This includes rural intersections that are prone to accidents.
- **Policy 7.12:** Introduce traffic-calming measures in high-traffic areas, such as near schools, community centers, or commercial districts, to reduce speeding and increase pedestrian safety.
- **Policy 7.13:** Increase public awareness and educational campaigns about driving safety, especially in rural areas where residents might not be as familiar with traffic laws, hazardous conditions, or road maintenance schedules.

Goal 5: Foster Transportation System Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility

- **Policy 7.14:** Incorporate environmentally friendly initiatives into transportation projects, such as the use of permeable pavements, stormwater management systems, and natural landscaping for greenways, bike paths, and trails to reduce the environmental impact of transportation infrastructure.
- **Policy 7.15:** Promote the development of alternative fuel infrastructure, such as electric vehicle charging stations in key rural locations like parks, community centers, or near public transit hubs.
- **Policy 7.16:** Encourage the integration of sustainable transportation options into local planning, such as bike-share programs, electric vehicle (EV) car-share options, and the use of hybrid or electric buses in public transit systems.

Goal 6: Increase Awareness and Community Engagement in Transportation Planning

- **Policy 6.1:** Establish a transportation advisory committee composed of local residents, business owners, and elected officials to provide feedback and guide transportation decision-making processes.

- **Policy 7.17:** Hold regular community meetings and workshops to discuss transportation issues, project updates, and future needs. Encourage public input on the prioritization of transportation projects and policies.
- **Policy 7.18:** Develop and distribute informational materials on transportation options, funding opportunities, and safety initiatives through community centers, local government offices, and online platforms.

Goal 7: Support the Development of Infrastructure for Rural Economic Growth

- **Policy 7.19:** Ensure transportation networks are designed to accommodate the needs of local businesses, particularly those involved in agriculture, tourism, and light industry. This includes providing access to major freight corridors and ensuring the smooth flow of goods.
- **Policy 7.20:** Develop and improve transportation infrastructure that supports tourism, such as scenic byways, rest areas, and clear signage for major tourist destinations.
- **Policy 7.21:** Collaborate with regional and state transportation agencies to improve connections between rural communities and economic hubs, facilitating easier access to markets and business opportunities.

g) Intergovernmental Coordination

Strengthen the coordination between Charlton County, the cities of Folkston and Homeland, state agencies, and federal partners to ensure efficient resource distribution, improved service delivery, and the successful achievement of shared development and community goals. Through regular communication, collaborative planning, and joint initiatives, the goal aims to streamline efforts in public safety, tourism development, infrastructure, grant writing, and crisis management, while fostering stronger relationships at local, regional, and state levels.

Goal 1: Improve State Agency Coordination:

- **Policy 8.1:** Encourage active participation in state and regional committees, groups, and organizations promoting intergovernmental cooperation. The County should actively engage with neighboring jurisdictions to ensure stronger communication and align strategies for shared development goals.
- **Policy 8.2:** Charlton County shall adopt the practice of holding an annual intergovernmental roundtable that brings together local government officials, state representatives, and key regional agency staff. This forum will provide an opportunity for counties and municipalities to discuss shared challenges, collaborate on resource distribution, and align development plans. Through this initiative, Charlton County aims to strengthen its relationships with state agencies and enhance coordination on regional and state-level priorities.

Goal 2: Increase coordination between state and federal agencies to promote the Okefenokee Refuge.

- **Policy 8.3:** Facilitate ongoing collaboration between state and federal agencies to promote the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. Local agencies, businesses, and tourism boards should be included in state and federal planning to ensure a unified approach to marketing the Refuge and attracting visitors.

- **Policy 8.4:** Charlton County shall establish a Joint Tourism and Economic Development Task Force, comprising local government officials, tourism leaders, state agencies, and business representatives, to develop and implement effective tourism marketing campaigns that leverage state and federal resources to attract visitors.

Goal 3: Improve Coordination Between Charlton County, Folkston, and Homeland:

- **Policy 8.5:** Establish an annual meeting or retreat between Charlton County and the cities of Folkston and Homeland to discuss coordination of services, share resources, and eliminate duplication of efforts. Topics should include public safety, transportation planning, and shared community development initiatives.
- **Policy 8.6:** Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland shall explore regional public safety agreements and intergovernmental collaborations to improve response capabilities and reduce costs. This includes joint fire departments, regional EMS agreements, jail inmate management, shared dispatch services, joint training programs, and coordinated public safety communications systems.
- **Policy 8.7:** Charlton County, Folkston, and Homeland shall explore opportunities for coordinated grant writing efforts to enhance their ability to access funding and address shared regional needs and priorities.
- **Policy 8.8:** Develop and maintain a comprehensive service delivery schedule that coordinates shared services such as public safety, transportation, waste management, and community development projects. The schedule should align project timelines and resources to optimize service delivery.
- **Policy 8.9:** Charlton County, along with the Cities of Folkston and Homeland, shall develop and implement joint service delivery plans that coordinate major infrastructure projects (e.g., road improvements and facility upgrades) and establish a framework for addressing unexpected service demands, such as natural disasters or public health emergencies. This will ensure a unified and responsive approach to community needs.

h) Broadband Services

Enhance broadband access in Charlton County through strategic partnerships, targeted infrastructure improvements, and collaboration with state and local agencies to support education, public safety, and economic development.

Goal 1: Improve broadband access in Charlton County to support education, careers, and public safety.

- **Policy 9.1:** Continue to market Charlton County to cell phone providers for the strategic placement of communication towers to close coverage gaps, ensuring robust connectivity for emergency services including police, fire, and EMS.

- **Policy 9.2:** Pursue funding opportunities to establish public-private partnerships aimed at improving broadband infrastructure. Adopt a Broadband Action Plan and pursue designation as a Broadband Ready Community by applying for and adopting a broadband ordinance. Participate in the Georgia Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) grant program to strengthen broadband services.
- **Policy 9.3:** Collaborate with state agencies and local government representatives to advocate for the expansion of broadband services, focusing on the needs of educational institutions, healthcare providers, and businesses. Address broadband deficiencies that are limiting industrial development in the region.
- **Policy 9.4:** Conduct a comprehensive analysis of gaps in communication capabilities and seek grant funding to bridge these gaps, ensuring consistent access to high-speed broadband for all residents.
- **Policy 9.5:** Foster ongoing dialogue with the broadband industry to explore and promote technological developments that offer viable alternatives to fiber infrastructure, particularly for rural areas where the cost of fiber installation is prohibitive.

8. Community Work Program

(Including Report of Accomplishments for Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland)

a) Charlton County 5-year Short-Term Work Program Update Report of Accomplishments

(FY2021 - 2025)

(Charlton County operated on a Fiscal Year Calendar of July 1 through June 30)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	GOAL	F Y 21	FY 22	F Y 23	F Y 24	FY 25	Action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed Postponed & Explain Cancelled & Explain Underway and move to new plan
CULTURAL RESOURCES										
Display items of historical significance at the Chamber of Commerce building and on the Chamber website.	Staff time	Okefenokee Chamber of Commerce	General Fund	4	X	X	X	X	X	Completed
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT										
Provide funding for Charlton/Folkston Development Authority and its programs.	\$29,000 per year	Charlton County	General Fund	1	X	X	X	X	X	Completed FY21-25 and Underway for FY25-FY30 Continue in new work program
Provide funding to the Chamber of Commerce for promotion of the County to attract business and promote eco-tourism.	\$10,000 per year	Charlton County	General Fund	1	X	X	X	X	X	Completed FY21-25 and Underway for FY25-FY30 Continue in new work program
Participate in workforce development.	\$7,500	Charlton County	General Fund	1	X	X	X	X	X	Completed FY21-25 and Underway for FY25-FY30 Continue in new work program
Improve the General Class Business Airport.	\$25,000 per year	Charlton County	General Fund	1	X	X	X	X	X	Underway - Continue in new work program

Evaluate methods of incentivizing medical services to locate in the County.	Staff time	Charlton County; Chamber of Commerce	General Fund	1	X	X	X	X	X	Not Accomplished/Cancelled due to infeasibility upon exploration
PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	GOAL	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	Action
HOUSING										
Provide funding for building and code enforcement program.	\$40,000 per year	Charlton County	General Fund	2	X	X	X	X	X	Underway - Continue in new work program
Conduct review of ordinances on an as-needed basis.	\$2,500	Charlton County	General Fund	2	X	X	X	X	X	Underway - Continue in new work program
Establish & Maintain Firewise Community Programs/Plans for all communities within the county.	\$80,000	Charlton County, City of Folkston, City of Homeland	Georgia Forestry Commission	2	X	X	X	X	X	Underway - Continue in new work program
Fund neighborhood revitalization to address substandard housing within the Thomas Camp neighborhood.	\$750,000/project	Charlton County	General Fund, CDBG, grants, CHIP	2	X	X	X			Not Accomplished/Cancelled due to lack of eligibility for grant application
Fund housing rehabilitation to upgrade the quality of existing substandard housing within the northeast border of Folkston; specifically, the area of SR 252 and HWY 40.	\$750,000/year	Charlton County	General Fund, CDBG, grants, CHIP	2	X	X	X	X	X	Not Accomplished/Cancelled due to lack of eligibility for grant application
LAND USE										
Adopt a Zoning Ordinance in an effort to support land uses that encourage growth, enhance economic development, provide employment opportunities, and promote environmental sustainability.	\$15,000	Charlton County	General Fund	6	X	X	X	X	X	Cancelled due to infeasibility and lack of funding
NATURAL RESOURCES										
Provide funding and support for the St Marys River Management Committee.	\$800/year	Charlton County	General Fund	3	X	X	X	X	X	Completed
Develop a Master Plan for outdoor recreation that will not contribute adverse	\$15,000 (one-time fee)	Charlton County	General Fund	3	X	X	X	X	X	Completed

environmental impacts.										
PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	GOAL	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	Action
Implement recommendations from the Master Plan for outdoor recreation to support increased river access and sports programming and facilities.	\$300,000	Charlton County	General Fund, SPLOST, grants	3	X	X	X	X	X	Underway – pursuing funding options - Continue in new work program
Implement the highest priority management measures recommended in the Spanish Creek Watershed Management Plan to address fecal coliform and dissolved oxygen impairments in Spanish Creek.	\$650,000	Charlton County	319 grant, General Fund, grants	3	X	X	X	X	X	Underway – testing is being conducted Continue in new work program
TRANSPORTATION										
Pave portions of Newell Road and other Connector Roads.	\$500,000	Charlton County	General Fund, SPLOST, grants	7	X	X	X	X	X	Postponed so that it can be moved to the new Transportation Investment Act (TIA 2)
Maintain Roads & Bridges, to include street paving and Drainage.	\$500,000 per year	Charlton County	General Fund, SPLOST, grants, CDBG	7	X	X	X	X	X	Underway - Continue in new work program
Resurface Suwannee Canal Road with Bike Lane from Hwy 121 to Refuge.	\$750,000	Charlton County and ONWR	General Fund, SPLOST, grants	7	X	X	X	X	X	Completed
Support regional efforts to identify and support bicycle trails and supportive infrastructure.	\$15,000	Charlton County	General Fund, SPLOST, grants	7	X	X	X	X	X	Underway - Continue in new work program
Upgrade dirt roads to paved roads with associated improvements (curb, gutter, drainage, and sidewalks) in the St. George community.	\$750,000 per year	Charlton County, GDOT	SPLOST, TSPLOST, CDBG, grants	7			X	X	X	Postponed due to CDBG ineligibility – move to LIP for 2025
COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES										
Build Voting Precinct Building at GA Bend Area.	\$50,000	Charlton County	SPLOST, grants	5	X	X	X	X	X	Underway - Continue in new work program

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	GOAL	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	Action
Make general improvements and perform necessary preventative maintenance to government buildings.	\$100,000	Charlton County	SPLOST, General Fund, grants	5	X	X	X	X	X	Underway - Continue in new work program
Schedule and implement park Improvements, such as playgrounds and landscaping.	\$175,000	Charlton County	SPLOST, General Fund, grants	5	X	X	X	X	X	Completed FY21-25 and Underway for FY25-FY30 Continue in new work program
Purchase Fire Equipment.	\$400,000	Charlton County	SPLOST, General Fund, grants	5	X	X	X	X	X	Completed FY21-25 and Underway for FY25-FY30 Continue in new work program
Purchase Sheriff's Vehicles & Equipment.	\$500,000	Charlton County	SPLOST, General Fund	5	X	X	X	X	X	Completed FY21-25 and Underway for FY25-FY30 Continue in new work program
Renovate and upgrade Fire Stations.	\$200,000	Charlton County	SPLOST, General Fund, grants	5	X	X	X	X	X	Completed FY21-25 and Underway for FY25-FY30 Continue in new work program
Increase participation by senior citizens in meal programs and Senior Center activities.	Staff time	Charlton County	General Fund, grants	5	X	X	X	X	X	Completed FY21-25 and Underway for FY25-FY30 Continue in new work program
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION										
Hold Municipal Elections by Municipal Contracts.	\$30,000	Charlton County	General Fund	8	X	X	X	X	X	Completed FY21-25 and Underway for FY25-FY30 Continue in new work program

Implement County-wide Building Inspection & Permitting Services.	\$40,000	Charlton County	General Fund	8	X	X	X	X	X	Completed FY21-25 and Underway for FY25-FY30 Continue in new work program
PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	GOAL	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	Action
Implement County-wide Recreation Program.	\$80,000	Charlton County	General Fund, grants	8	X	X	X	X	X	Completed FY21-25 and Underway for FY25-FY30 Continue in new work program
Implement County-wide E-911 Service for Cities.	\$10,000	Charlton County	General Fund, grants	8	X	X	X	X	X	Completed
Implement County-wide Fire Services for Cities.	\$100,000	Charlton County	General Fund, grants	8	X	X	X	X	X	Underway - Continue in new work program
BROADBAND										
Provide adequate high speed broadband access for local industries and commercial businesses.	\$10,000,000	Charlton County, City of Folkston, Public/Private Partnership	General Fund, SPLOST, grants, private funding	9	X	X	X	X	X	Underway – Continue in new work program
Adopt a Broadband Ordinance.	Staff time	Charlton County	General Fund	9	X	X	X	X	X	Completed
Apply for Broadband Ready Certification.	Staff time	Charlton County	General Fund	9	X	X	X	X	X	Completed
Review and reduce any obstacles to roll-out or development of broadband infrastructure.	Staff time	Charlton County	General Fund	9	X	X	X	X	X	Underway - Continue in new work program

b) Charlton County 5-year Community Work Program Update

- Key:** 1. Charlton County Operates on a July 1 through June 30 Calendar year
 2. Text in the Color Purple has been continued from the previous FY 21-25 Work Program
 3. Text in the Color Black indicates new work items added in the FY26 – 30 Work Program

(FY26 -FY30)

(Charlton County operates on a Fiscal Year Calendar of July 1 through June 30)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	G O A L	F Y 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30
CULTURAL RESOURCES									
Plan Downtown Festivals and Events	\$100,000	Charlton County, City of Folkston, City of Homeland, Chamber of Commerce	General Fund, Event Sponsors	1, 4	X	X	X		
Develop Interconnected Eco-Tourism & Trail Networks	\$500,000	Charlton County, Environmental Organizations	GDEcD Tourism Grants, State Funding	4		X	X	X	
Curate Collections of Historic Resources	\$250,000	Charlton County and Charlton County Historical Society	General Funds, GHRA Cultural Grants	4	X	X			
Conduct Historic Resources Surveys and Cultural Studies	\$200,000	Charlton County, Local Researchers	HPD Survey and Planning Grants, Federal Grants	4	X	X			
Develop Digitization Strategy for Cultural Resources	\$150,000	Charlton County and Charlton County Historical Society	HPD Survey and Planning Grants, Cultural Preservation Grants	4		X	X		
Support Historical Society Operations	\$100,000	Charlton County, City of Folkston, City of Homeland	General Funds	4	X	X			
Expand Historical Society Capacity	\$150,000	Charlton County Historical Society	State Grants, Local Grants (South Georgia Heritage Trust)	4		X	X		
Create Performance Benchmarks for Historical Society Programs	\$50,000	Charlton County, Charlton County Historical Society	General Fund	4		X	X		
Integrate Historical Themes into Greenspace Design	\$150,000	Charlton County, City of Folkston	General Fund, State Grants (GA Outdoor Stewardship Program)	4		X	X	X	
Foster Community Design in Park Design	\$100,000	Charlton County, Local Communities	General Fund, Community Contributions	4		X	X	X	

Secure Funds for Park Development and Landscaping	\$250,000	Charlton County, City of Homeland	State Grants (LWCF), Federal Grants	4		X	X	X	
Apply for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and other funding for Infrastructure	\$500,000	Charlton County with assistance from Southern Georgia Regional Commission	CDBG Grants, General Fund	4	X	X	X		
Monitor Impact of Florida Outmigration on Local Services	\$100,000	Charlton County	General Fund	4	X	X			
Feasibility Study for Animal Control Facility	\$150,000	Charlton County	CDBG, General Fund	4	X	X			
Collaborate to Build an Emergency Room Facility	\$200,000	Charlton County, City of Folkston, City of Homeland	State Health Grants (DCH and GRHC), Sow a Seed Grant Program	4		X	X		
Assess County Library Needs	\$200,000	Charlton County, Charlton County Library	General Fund, State Grants (Georgia Public Library Service (GLPS))	4	X	X			
Develop a Sense of Purpose and Identity for Areas of Charlton County	\$150,000	Charlton County, Urban Planners	General Fund, State Grants (Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP))	4	X	X			
Support Historic Rural Neighborhood Preservation	\$400,000	Charlton County	Historic Preservation Grants – Georgia Historic Preservation Division	4		X	X		
Establish a Joint Tourism & Economic Development Task Force	\$250,000	Charlton County, Local Tourism Organizations	State Tourism Grants (Explore Georgia), Federal Tourism Grants (USDA)	4		X	X		
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT									
Provide funding for Charlton/Folkston Development Authority and its programs.	\$29,000 per year	Charlton County	General Fund	1	X	X	X	X	X
Provide funding to the Chamber of Commerce for promotion of the County to attract business and promote eco-tourism.	\$10,000 per year	Charlton County	General Fund	1	X	X	X	X	X
Participate in workforce development.	\$7,500	Charlton County	General Fund	1	X	X	X	X	X
Improve the General Class Business Airport.	\$25,000 per year	Charlton County	General Fund	1	X	X	X	X	X
Designate and Market Certified Industrial Areas	\$60,000	Charlton County, City of Folkston, Development Authority	General Fund, Local Funding, State Funding (Georgia Dept. of Economic Dev.)	1	X	X			
Support Small Business Incentives	\$500,000	Charlton County, City of Folkston, Development Authority, Downtown Development Authority	General Fund, Local Funding (Enterprise Zones)	1	X	X			

Target Elderly Population for Economic Growth	\$150,000	Charlton County	General Fund	1	X	X			
Enhance Year-Round Tourism Marketing	\$25,000	Charlton County, City of Folkston, City of Homeland, Regional Tourism Agencies	Tourism Grants (Explore Georgia)	1	X	X	X	X	
Create and Promote Sports Tourism	\$20,000,000	Charlton County, Development Authority, Sports Organizations	Federal, State, and Local Funding U.S. Economic Development Administration, All Kids Play	1		X	X	X	
Expand Vocational Training and Internships	\$350,000	Charlton County, Charlton County School Board, Coastal Pines, Local Businesses	Workforce Development Grants (WIOA)	1, 8	X	X			
Promote Higher Education Opportunities	\$250,000	Charlton County, Charlton County School Board, State Colleges	State Education Grants (Georgia Student Finance Commission)	1		X	X	X	
Incentives for Military Personnel	\$150,000	Charlton County, Military Outreach	Private Investment	1		X	X	X	
Strengthen Volunteer Programs	\$100,000	Charlton County, Local Nonprofits, Chamber of Commerce	General Fund	1	X	X	X		
Develop County Job Center/Business Incubator	\$1,000,000	Charlton County, Development Authority, City of Folkston, Others	State Grants, Federal Grants, Private Investment (Georgia Department of Economic Development Grants and Loans)	1	X	X	X		
Marketing Charlton County's Rural Lifestyle	\$150,000	Charlton County, City of Folkston, Chamber of Commerce	General Fund, Tourism Grants, Local Funds (USDA Value-Added Producer Grants)	1	X	X			
Encourage Lodging Development	\$500,000	Charlton County, City of Folkston, Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce, Hotel Developers	Private Investment, General Fund, Staff Time	1	X	X	X	X	
Market Charlton County for Film Production	\$200,000	Charlton County, Film Commission	State Grants (Film Impact Georgia Filmmaker Grant), Private Investment	1	X	X	X		
Explore Local Tax Millage Adjustments of Floating Local Option Sales Tax	\$50,000	Charlton County	General Fund	1	X	X			
Public Private Partnership Development	\$200,000	Charlton County, City of Folkston, Development Authority, Downtown Development Authority	Private Investment, State Grants (Rural Site Development Initiative)	1	X	X	X		
Business Outreach and Expansion Programs	\$100,000	Charlton County, City of Folkston, Chamber of Commerce	General Fund	1	X	X	X	X	X

Explore Coordinated Opportunities for Coordinated Grant Writing	\$150,000	Charlton County, City of Folkston, City of Homeland	State Grants (Criminal Justice Coordinating Council), Federal Grants (Raphael Warnock)	1, 8		X	X		
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HOUSING									
Provide funding for building and code enforcement program.	\$40,000 per year	Charlton County	General Fund	2	X	X	X	X	X
Conduct review of ordinances on an as-needed basis.	\$2,500	Charlton County	General Fund	2	X	X	X	X	X
Establish & Maintain Firewise Community Programs/Plans for all communities within the county.	\$80,000	Charlton County, City of Folkston, City of Homeland	Georgia Forestry Commission	2	X	X	X	X	X
Investigate Master Planned Retirement Community	\$200,000	Charlton County, City of Folkston, Private Sector	Private Investment	2	X	X			
Encourage Affordable Housing Construction	\$1,000,000	Charlton County, Private Developers	Low-interest Loans, Tax Incentives	2	X	X			
Incentives for Mixed-Use Developments	\$500,000	Charlton County, City of Folkston, City of Homeland, Private Developers	Tax Incentives, Fee Waivers	1, 2	X	X			
Incentivize Military Housing Construction	\$600,000	Charlton County	Density Bonuses, Land-use Modifications/Relaxations, Streamlined Permitting	1, 2		X	X		
Construct Affordable Housing	\$500,000	Charlton County, Non-profit Organizations	Land Banking, Housing Grants (USDA, HUD, Georgia Dream Homeownership Program, CHIP)	2		X	X	X	
Provide Rental Housing Incentives	\$400,000	Charlton County, Local Developers	Land Acquisition Assistance, Streamlined Permitting	2		X	X		

Partner for Workforce Housing Developments	\$700,000	Charlton County, Local Employers	General Fund, Financial Contributors, Housing Allowances	2		X	X	X	
Establish Employer-Assisted Housing Program	\$250,000	Charlton County, Employers	Down-Payment Assistance, Matched Savings Plans	2		X	X		
Strengthen Home Ownership Counseling Programs	\$200,000	Charlton County, Local Businesses	General Fund, Non-Profit Partnerships	2	X	X			
Promote Down payment Assistance Programs	\$300,000	Charlton County, State Programs	FHA Incentives, Local Grants	2	X	X	X		
Collaborate with Nonprofits for Affordable Housing Programs	\$350,000	Charlton County, Habitat for Humanity	Land Donation, Permitting Assistance	2	X	X			
Seek Funding for Home Repair and Weatherization	\$250,000	Charlton County, Non-profits	State and Federal Grants (Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP))	2	X	X			
Create Volunteer-based Home Repair Network	\$150,000	Charlton County, Local Organizations	General Fund, Volunteer Support	2		X	X		
Promote a Mix of Housing Types for Different Lifestyles	\$350,000	Charlton County	General Fund, Incentives for Developers	2		X	X		
LAND USE									
Enforce Property Maintenance and Clean-up	\$250,000	Charlton County Code Enforcement	General Fund, Fines to Offenders	6, 1	X	X			
Dilapidated Mobile Home Removal Program	\$300,000	Charlton County, Local Waste/Recycling Facilities	General Fund, CDBG	6	X	X			
Address Blighted Properties	\$400,000	Charlton County Code Enforcement	Code Enforcement Staff Time, Public-private Partnerships, Blight Tax	6	X	X	X		

Provide Land-use Flexibility for Neighborhood Services	\$200,000	Charlton County, Charlton County Community Development Organizations	General Fund	6	X	X			
Encourage Agrihoods and Farm-based Communities	\$500,000	Charlton County	Land-use Modifications, Development Incentives	1, 6		X	X	X	X
Consider Incentive Programs for Compatible Developments	\$200,000	Charlton County, Developers	Private Investment, General Fund	6		X	X		
Assess Greenspace Sites in Folkston and Homeland	\$200,000	Charlton County, City of Folkston, City of Homeland	General Fund, Staff Time	6		X	X		
Discourage Developments Unsupported by Infrastructure	\$200,000	Charlton County Planning	General Fund	6		X	X		
Encourage Clustered Developments for Efficient Water and Sewer	\$200,000	Charlton County	General Fund, State Grants (GEFA), USDA	6	X	X	X		
Ensure Compatibility of Proposed Developments	\$200,000	Charlton County Planning Department	General Fund	6	X	X			
Establish Buffering and Setback Requirements for Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Areas	\$250,000	Charlton County	State Grants (Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD)), Local Grants	6		X	X		
Encourage Development in Mixed-Use Zones	\$300,000	Charlton County	Incentives from Developers	6		X	X		
Create Inventory of Developable Land in Industrial Parks	\$150,000	Charlton County	General Fund	1, 6	X	X	X		

Initiate Proactive Community Place-Making Projects	\$250,000	Charlton County	General Fund	6		X	X		
Encourage Access to Water and Sewer for Industrial Properties	\$500,000	Charlton County	General Fund, State Grants (GEFA), USDA, and Rural Site Development Initiative	6	X	X			
Prevent Illegal Installation of Septic Tanks in Floodplains	\$150,000	Charlton County	General Fund	6		X	X		
Preserve Agricultural Lands Through Easements and Conservation Programs	\$200,000	Charlton County, Agricultural Groups	State Grants (Georgia Land Conservation Program (GLPC), LWCF, ACEP, RCCP	6	X	X			
Support Agricultural Best Management Practices	\$250,000	Charlton County, Local Farmers	State Agricultural Grants (Georgia Soil & Water conservation (GA-SWCC)	6		X	X		
Protect Land-Use Policies Protecting Water Resources	\$200,000	Charlton County	State Grants (Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program), Local Grants	6		X	X	X	
Encourage Sustainable Forestry Practices	\$300,000	Charlton County, Timber Industry	State Forestry Grants, Georgia ReLeaf Grant Program	6		X	X	X	
NATURAL RESOURCES									
Implement recommendations from the Master Plan for outdoor recreation to support increased river access and sports programming and facilities.	\$300,000	Charlton County	General Fund, SPLOST, Recreational Trails Program (RTP)	3	X	X	X	X	X
Implement the highest priority management measures recommended in the Spanish Creek Watershed Management Plan to address fecal coliform and dissolved oxygen impairments in Spanish Creek.	\$650,000	Charlton County	319 (h) Grant, General Fund	3	X	X	X	X	X
Tourism Marketing Plan for Natural Resources	\$300,000	Charlton County, Tourism Bureau	Private Investment, CDBG	1, 3	X	X	X		
Promote Nature-Based Tourism	\$200,000	Charlton County, Okefenokee Wildlife Refuge Partnership, Local Outfitters	Tourism Grants (Explore Georgia)	1, 3		X	X		

Develop Ecotourism Program	\$150,000	Charlton County, Okefenokee Wildlife Refuge Partnership, Local Outfitters	Tourism Grants (Explore Georgia)	1, 3		X	X		
Promote Natural Resources for Tourism	\$200,000	Charlton County, State Agencies	State Grants (Explore Georgia), Tourism Revenue	1, 3	X	X	X		
Pursue Management Options for River Access and Okefenokee Refuge	\$500,000	Charlton County, Department of Natural Resources	Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP), Georgia Power's Waters for Georgia Grant Program, Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	3	X	X			
Collaborate on Water Trail Access and Public Signage	\$200,000	Charlton County, Water Trail Partnerships	Tourism Grants (Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA), Recreational Trails Program (RTP), Georgia DNR Boating Infrastructure Grant Program	3	X	X			
Enforce Speed Limits and Control Access and Public Signage	\$200,000	Charlton County Sheriff's Department, Georgia Department of Natural Resources	General Fund, Fines	3	X	X			
Support Annual River Clean-ups	\$100,000	Charlton County, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Volunteer Groups	General Fund, Volunteer Contributions	3	X	X			
Investigate Ordinances to Preserve Environmental Character of Riverbanks	\$150,000	Charlton County, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Local Stakeholders	Staff Time, General Fund	3	X	X			
Enforce Septic System Setbacks Near Sensitive Water Bodies	\$200,000	Charlton County, Environmental Agencies	General Fund, State Grants (USDA Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program)	3	X	X			

Investigate Eco-friendly Wastewater Disposal Methods	\$150,000	Charlton County, Environmental Agencies	State Grants (USDA Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program, Federal Grants (EPA Section 319)	3		X	X		
Pursue Funding for Preservation of Sensitive Lands	\$300,000	Charlton County, Environmental Groups	Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP), Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), USDA Rural Development, OneGeorgia Authority	3		X	X		
Support Restoration of Degraded Waterways	\$400,000	Charlton County, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Local Stakeholders	Georgia Department of Natural Resources Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP)	3		X	X	X	
TRANSPORTATION									
Pave portions of Newell Road and other Connector Roads.	\$500,000	Charlton County	TIA 2	7	X	X	X	X	X
Maintain Roads & Bridges, to include street paving and Drainage.	\$500,000 per year	Charlton County	General Fund, SPLOST, CDBG, Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program, Local Road Administration (LRA), LMIG	7	X	X	X	X	X
Support regional efforts to identify and support bicycle trails and supportive infrastructure.	\$15,000	Charlton County	General Fund, SPLOST	7	X	X	X	X	X
Upgrade dirt roads to paved roads with associated improvements (curb, gutter, drainage, and sidewalks) in the St. George community.	\$750,000 per year	Charlton County, GDOT	SPLOST, TSPLOST, CDBG	7	X	X	X	X	X
Invest in Expanding Road Networks	\$1,000,000	Charlton County	CDBG, State Funding	7	X	X			
Lobby for Additional Road Maintenance Funding	\$500,000	Charlton County, State Legislators	CDBG, TSPLOST, LMIG, SPLOST	7	X	X			

Raise Awareness for State Road Maintenance Issues	\$150,000	Charlton County, Elected Officials	General Fund	7	X	X			
Support Transportation Infrastructure (TIA)	\$200,000	Charlton County, Southern Georgia Regional Commission	TSPLOST, General Fund, LMIG	7		X	X		
Improve Rural Road Networks for Agriculture and Industry	\$500,000	Charlton County	DCA Rural Site Development Initiative, USCA Rural Business Development Grant, Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI)	7	X	X			
Improve Rural Road Assessment Program	\$250,000	Charlton County, Georgia Department of Natural Resources	General Fund, Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program, Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)	7		X	X		
Secure Additional Funding for Rural Upgrades	\$600,000	Charlton County	State Grants, Federal Grants	7		X	X	X	X
Spanish Creek Road Resurfacing	\$1,817,000	Charlton County	TIA 2	7			X	X	X
Sardis Road Resurfacing	\$821,000	Charlton County	TIA 2	7			X	X	X
Paxton Road Resurfacing	\$752,000	Charlton County	TIA 2	7			X	X	X
COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES									
Build Voting Precinct Building at GA Bend Area.	\$50,000	Charlton County	SPLOST, grants	5	X	X	X	X	X
Make general improvements and perform necessary preventative maintenance to government buildings.	\$100,000	Charlton County	SPLOST, General Fund, Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program	5	X	X	X	X	X

Schedule and implement park Improvements, such as playgrounds and landscaping.	\$175,000	Charlton County	SPLOST, General Fund, Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP), Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program	5	X	X	X	X	X
Purchase Fire Equipment.	\$400,000	Charlton County	SPLOST, General Fund, FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG), and Raphael Warnock's Office Funding Initiatives	5	X	X	X	X	X
Purchase Sheriff's Vehicles & Equipment.	\$500,000	Charlton County	SPLOST, General Fund	5	X	X	X	X	X
Renovate and upgrade Fire Stations.	\$200,000	Charlton County	SPLOST, General Fund, FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG)	5	X	X	X	X	X
Increase participation by senior citizens in meal programs and Senior Center activities.	Staff time	Charlton County	General Fund, Older Americans Act (OAA)	5	X	X	X	X	X
Upgrade Water, Sewer, and Broadband in Growth Areas	\$1,500,000	Charlton County	General Fund, State and Federal Grants	1, 5	X	X	X	X	X
Upgrade Critical Facilities Infrastructure	\$1,000,000	Charlton County	USDA Rural Development Loans, CDBG	5		X	X		
Research Supplemental Medical Transport Options	\$200,000	Charlton County, EMS	General Fund, Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH)	5	X	X			
Develop Fee-for-Services and Better Reimbursement Rate for EMS	\$150,000	Charlton County, EMS	General Fund	5		X	X		
Encourage Renewable Energy Use in Rural Areas	\$300,000	Charlton County, Farmers	Incentives for Renewable Energy Installations	5		X	X		
Support Community Shuttle Services for Seniors and Disabled	\$250,000	Charlton County, Non-Profit Partners	General Fund, Private Donations	5		X	X		
Explore Demand-Response Transportation Services	\$300,000	Charlton County, Transportation Providers	State Grants, General Fund	5			X	X	X
Implement Safety Improvements to Rural Roads	\$400,000	Charlton County, Georgia Department of Natural	General Fund, GDOT 5311	5	X	X			

		Resources							
Increase Public Awareness of Driving Safety	\$100,000	Charlton County, Public Safety	General Fund	5		X	X		
Promote Alternative Fuel Infrastructure (EV Stations)	\$500,000	Charlton County, Private Partners	Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grant Program (CFI), National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment Program (NEVI), Private Investment						
Hold Community Meetings and Workshops on Transportation	\$150,000	Charlton County	General Fund	5	X	X	X		
Ensure Transportation Networks for Local Business Needs	\$350,000	Charlton County, Business Leaders	General Fund, Private Funding	5	X	X			
Develop Scenic Byways & Tourism Signage	\$200,000	Charlton County, Tourism Agencies	National Scenic Byways Program, Georgia Department of Transportation, DCA REBC Grant Program	5		X	X		
Encourage Active Participation in State and Regional Transportation Committees	\$150,000	Charlton County	General Fund	5	X	X			
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION									
Hold Municipal Elections by Municipal Contracts.	\$30,000	Charlton County	General Fund	8	X	X	X	X	X
Implement County-wide Building Inspection & Permitting Services.	\$40,000	Charlton County	General Fund	8	X	X	X	X	X
Implement County-wide Recreation Program.	\$80,000	Charlton County	General Fund, DNR Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP), Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	8	X	X	X	X	X
Implement County-wide Fire Services for Cities.	\$100,000	Charlton County	General Fund, Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER)	8	X	X	X	X	X
Hold Annual Intergovernmental Roundtable Meeting	\$100,000	Charlton County	General Fund	8	X	X	X	X	X
Facilitate Collaboration Between State & Federal Agencies for	\$200,000	Charlton County, State Agencies	Staff Time, General Fund, Clean Water	3,	X	X	X		

Okefenokee Refuge			State Revolving Fund (CWSRF), Water Quality Management Planning Grants (Section 604(b))	5,8					
Establish and Annual Meeting between Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland	\$100,000	Charlton County, City of Folkston, City of Homeland	General Fund	8	X	X			
Explore Public Safety Agreements	\$300,000	Charlton County, City of Folkston, City of Homeland	State and Federal Public Safety Grants	8		X	X		
Develop Comprehensive Service Delivery Strategy (SDS)	\$100,000	Charlton County, City of Folkston, City of Homeland	General Fund	8		X	X	X	
BROADBAND									
Provide adequate high speed broadband access for local industries and commercial businesses.	\$10,000,000	Charlton County, City of Folkston, Public/Private Partnership	General Fund, SPLOST, USDA ReConnect Loan and Grant Program, Private Funding	9	X	X	X	X	X
Review and reduce any obstacles to roll-out or development of broadband infrastructure.	Staff time	Charlton County	General Fund	9	X	X	X	X	X
Broadband Expansion Project	\$2,000,000	Charlton County, Brantley Telephone Company	American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and other Grants	9	X	X	X		
Expand High-Speed Internet Access to Rural Areas	\$2,000,000	Charlton County, Internet Service Providers	USDA ReConnect Loan and Grant Program and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Georgia Department of Community Affairs Broadband Expansion Program, USDA Community Connect Grants	9	X	X	X		
Market Charlton County to Cell Phone Providers for Tower Placement	\$200,000	Charlton County, Cell Phone Providers	Private Investment, Rural Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD)	9	X	X			

Pursue Public-Private Partnerships to expand Broadband	\$1,000,000	Charlton County, Broadband Providers	BEAD Grants, Local Investment	9	X	X	X		
Collaborate with State Agencies to expand Broadband	\$250,000	Charlton County, State Agencies	General Fund, BEAD Grants	9		X	X		
Conduct Comprehensive Analysis of Broadband Gaps in Charlton County	\$150,000	Charlton County	ReConnect Loan and Grant Program, Georgia Broadband Program	9		X	X		
Foster Ongoing Dialogue with Broadband Industry	\$100,000	Charlton County	Staff Time, Private Investment	9		X	X	X	

c) City of Folkston 5-Year Short-Term-Work Program Update and Report of Accomplishments

(FY2021-FY2025)

(Folkston operates on a calendar year: January 1 through December 31 Calendar Year)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	GOAL	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	ACCOMPLISHMENTS
CULTURAL RESOURCES										
Support programs and agencies that promote and protect the historical and unique character of Folkston.	\$20,000	City of Folkston	General Fund	4	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
NATURAL RESOURCES										
Complete water audits to reduce number of gallons not metered.	\$10,000 per year	City of Folkston	Water-sewer funds, grants	4	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
Support programs that encourage and promote eco-tourism for local businesses.	\$10,000 per year	City of Folkston	General Fund	4	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT										
Provide funding for the Charlton/Folkston Development Authority.	\$26,000	City of Folkston	General Fund	1	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
Revitalize the core downtown business districts.	\$25,000	City of Folkston	General Fund, grants	1	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
Provide funding and support for the Chamber of Commerce.	\$35,000 Add: yearly	City of Folkston	General Fund	1	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
HOUSING										
Request property owners clean up and maintain areas per the Dangerous Building Ordinance.	\$10,000 per year	City of Folkston	General Fund	2	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program

PROJECTS	ESTIMATE D COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	GOA L	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	ACCOMPLISHMENTS
LAND USE										
Revise ordinances in conflict with desired development and growth patterns.	\$15,000 per year	City of Folkston	General Fund	6	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
Support and enforce land use regulations.	\$10,000 per year	City of Folkston	General Fund	6	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES										
Complete maintenance on the train museum located in the historic depot. Change to read: Continue maintenance on the train museum located in the historic depot.	\$20,000 per year	City of Folkston	SPLOST, CDBG, General Fund	5	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
Maintain the Veteran's Park.	\$20,000 per year	City of Folkston	SPLOST, CDBG, General Fund	5	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
Repair, refurbish, and replace defective wastewater lift stations, manholes, and distribution lines. Change to read: Maintain, repair, refurbish, and replace defective wastewater lift stations, manholes, and distribution lines.	\$100,000	City of Folkston	General Fund Add: SPLOST, CDBG	5	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
Provide funding and monthly support for the Charlton County Library.	\$25,000 per year	City of Folkston	General Fund	5	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
Improve and maintain the rail viewing platform.	\$20,000 per year	City of Folkston	SPLOST, CDBG, General Fund	5	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
Repair and replace defective water/sewer lines.	\$25,000 per year	City of Folkston	Water/Sewer funds, grants, SPLOST	5	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
Expand water system and build 1.5 MGD wastewater treatment plant. Chante to read: Build 1.25 MGD wastewater treatment plant.	\$10,000,000-\$12,000,000	City of Folkston	USDA Loan/Grant program Remove: USDA Loan	5	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION										
Participate in committees, groups, and organizations promoting intergovernmental coordination.	\$5,000 per year	City of Folkston	General Fund	8	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
Pursue intergovernmental cooperation between Cities, County, and all boards and authorities. ..	\$5,000 per year	City of Folkston	General Fund	8	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
BROADBAND										
Provide adequate high speed broadband access for local industries and commercial businesses.	\$10,000,000	City, County, Public/Private Partnerships	General Fund, SPLOST, Grants, Private Funding	9	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
Adopt a Broadband Ordinance ..	Staff Time	City of Folkston	General Fund	9	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
Apply for Broadband Ready Certification	Staff Time	City of Folkston	General Fund	9	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
Review and reduce any obstacles to roll-out or development of broadband infrastructure	Staff Time	City of Folkston	General Fund	9	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
TRANSPORTATION										
Support drainage and paving of unpaved roads as funding is available *Remove “ LARP ” as a funding source and add “ LMIG ” as a funding source	\$1,000,000	City of Folkston	LARP, DOT, General Fund, CDBG, SPLOST Remove: LARP Add: LMIG	7	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program

d) City of Folkston 5-year Community Work Program Update
(FY2025 – FY2029) (Folkston operates on a January 1 through December 31 Calendar Year)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	G O A L	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29
CULTURAL RESOURCES									
Support programs and agencies that promote and protect the historical and unique character of Folkston.	\$20,000	City of Folkston	General Fund	4	X	X	X	X	X
NATURAL RESOURCES									
Complete water audits to reduce number of gallons not metered.	\$10,000 per year	City of Folkston	Water-sewer funds, USDA Rural Development (RD), Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA)	4	X	X	X	X	X
Support programs that encourage and promote eco-tourism for local businesses.	\$10,000 per year	City of Folkston	General Fund	4	X	X	X	X	X
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT									
Provide funding for the Charlton/Folkston Development Authority.	\$26,000	City of Folkston	General Fund	1	X	X	X	X	X
Revitalize the core downtown business districts.	\$25,000	City of Folkston	General Fund, DDRLF	1	X	X	X	X	X
Provide funding and support for the Chamber of Commerce.	\$35,000 yearly	City of Folkston	General Fund	1	X	X	X	X	X
New Provide funding and support for the Downtown Development Authority	\$10,000	City of Folkston	General Fund	1	X	X	X	X	X
HOUSING									

Request property owners clean up and maintain areas per the Dangerous Building Ordinance.	\$10,000 per year	City of Folkston	General Fund	2	X	X	X	X	X
LAND USE									
Revise ordinances in conflict with desired development and growth patterns.	\$15,000 per year	City of Folkston	General Fund	6	X	X	X	X	X

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	G O A L	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29
Support and enforce land use regulations.	\$10,000 per year	City of Folkston	General Fund	6	X	X	X	X	X
COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES									
Continue maintenance on the train museum located in the historic depot.	\$20,000 per year	City of Folkston	SPLOST, CDBG, General Fund	5	X	X	X	X	X
Maintain the Veteran's Park.	\$20,000 per year	City of Folkston	SPLOST, CDBG, General Fund	5	X	X	X	X	X
Maintain, repair, refurbish, and replace defective wastewater lift stations, manholes, and distribution lines.	\$100,000	City of Folkston	General Fund, SPLOST, CDBG	5	X	X	X	X	X
Provide funding and monthly support for the Charlton County Library.	\$25,000 per year	City of Folkston	General Fund	5	X	X	X	X	X
Improve and maintain the rail viewing platform.	\$20,000 per year	City of Folkston	SPLOST, CDBG, General Fund	5	X	X	X	X	X
Repair and replace defective water/sewer lines.	\$25,000 per year	City of Folkston	Water/Sewer funds, grants, SPLOST	5	X	X	X	X	X
Build 1.25 MGD wastewater treatment plant.	\$10,000,000-\$12,000,000	City of Folkston	USDA Grant program	5	X	X	X	X	X
New Construct a new Police Department building.	\$2,000,000	City of Folkston	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund	5			X	X	X
New Expand the water system adding a new water tank with new water lines.	\$6,000,000	City of Folkston	GEFA, SPLOST, USDA Rural Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program (DCA)	5			X	X	X
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION									
Participate in committees, groups, and organizations promoting intergovernmental coordination.	\$5,000 per year	City of Folkston	General Fund	8	X	X	X	X	X

Pursue intergovernmental cooperation between Cities, County, and all boards and authorities.	\$5,000 per year	City of Folkston	General Fund	8	X	X	X	X	X
BROADBAND									
Provide adequate high speed broadband access for local industries and commercial businesses.	\$10,000,000	City, County, Public/Private Partnership	General Fund, SPLOST, Broadband Infrastructure Grants, Private Funding	9	X	X	X	X	X
Adopt a Broadband Ordinance.	Staff time	City of Folkston	General Fund	9	X	X	X	X	X
Apply for Broadband Ready Certification.	Staff time	City of Folkston	General Fund	9	X	X	X	X	X
Review and reduce any obstacles to roll-out or development of broadband infrastructure.	Staff time	City of Folkston	General Fund	9	X	X	X	X	X
TRANSPORTATION									
Support drainage and paving of unpaved roads as funding is available.	\$1,000,000	City of Folkston	LMIG, GDOT, General Fund, CDBG, SPLOST	7	X	X	X	X	X
New Maintain and construct additional sidewalks as needed.	\$25,000	City of Folkston	LMIG, GDOT, General Fund, CDBG, SPLOST	7	X	X	X	X	X

e) City of Homeland 5-Year Short-Term-Work Program Update and Report of Accomplishments

(FY2021 -2025) (City of Homeland operates on a Fiscal Year Calendar of January 1 through December 31)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATE D COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	G O A L	F Y 2 0 2 1	F Y 2 0 2 2	F Y 2 0 2 3	F Y 2 0 2 4	F Y 2 0 2 5	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT										
Fund the Homeland Economic Development Authority and its programs.	\$50,000	City of Homeland	General Fund	1	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
HOUSING										
Fund the building and code enforcement program.	\$25,000	City of Homeland	Fees and General Fund	2	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES										
Upgrade all recreational facilities and parks on an as- needed basis.	\$20,000	City of Homeland	General Fund, grants	5	X	X	X	X	X	Underway Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
Upgrade water system facilities and infrastructure on an as needed basis.	\$50,000	City of Homeland	CDBG, USDA, grants, and General Fund	5	X	X	X	X	X	Underway – portions completed include new pump, new well, and new lines. Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
Construct new City Hall with built in fireproof vault.	\$300,000	City of Homeland	CDBG, USDA, grants, and General Fund	5	X	X	X	X	X	Cancelled due to lack of funds
Maintain and replace existing fleet on an as-needed basis. Change to read: Maintain and replace police vehicles and city vehicles and equipment on an as-needed basis.	\$25,000 - \$30,000	City of Homeland	General Fund, grants, and SPLOST	5	X	X	X	X	X	Underway – two police vehicles purchased, two city trucks purchased, and other misc. equipment has been purchased. Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program

BROADBAND										
Encourage broadband internet providers to offer services within Homeland.	Staff Time	City of Homeland	General Fund	9	X	X	X	X	X	Underway – Brantley Telephone, Windstream, and Comcast are in process. Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
TRANSPORTATION										
Provide storm water drainage improvements to Nature Trail Estates Subdivision. Change to read: Provide storm water drainage improvements by adding drainage ditches to Nature Trail Estates Subdivision.	\$100,000	City of Homeland	LMIG, DOT, CDBG, SPLOST, and General Fund	7	X	X	X	X	X	Underway – portions have been completed and maintenance on those portions has begun. Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program
Resurface roads on an as needed basis.	\$100,000	City of Homeland	General Fund, SPLOST, DOT	7	X	X	X	X	X	Underway – Completed paving two miles of dirt roads and resurfaced one mile of old paved roadway. Continue and move to new 2025-2029 Work Program

f) City of Homeland 5-Year Community Work Program Update

(FY2025 – 2029)

(City of Homeland operates on a Fiscal Year Calendar of January 1 through December 31)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	GOAL	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29
NATURAL RESOURCES									
New Support the St. Mary River Management Committee (SMRMC)	\$5,256	City of Homeland, SMRMC	General Funds	4	X	X	X		
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT									
Fund the Homeland Economic Development Authority and its programs.	\$50,000	City of Homeland	General Funds	1	X	X	X	X	X
HOUSING									
Fund the building and code enforcement program.	\$25,000	City of Homeland	Fees and General Funds	2	X	X	X	X	X
LAND USE									
New Enforce Codes on dilapidated and/or abandoned buildings and lots with trash or junk accumulation. Cause dilapidated or abandoned buildings to be repaired and secured or be demolished.	Staff Time	City of Homeland	General Funds	2	X	X	X	X	X
New Provide funding and support for failing septic systems and repairs 319H.	\$50,000	City of Homeland	319H Grant and General Funds	2	X	X			
COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES									
Upgrade all recreational facilities and parks on an as-needed basis.	\$20,000	City of Homeland	General Fund, grants	5	X	X	X	X	X
Upgrade water system facilities and infrastructure on an as needed basis.	\$50,000	City of Homeland	CDBG, USDA Grants, and General Funds	5	X	X	X	X	X

Maintain and replace police vehicles and city vehicles and equipment on an as-needed basis.	\$25,000 - \$30,000	City of Homeland	General Funds, Grants, and SPLOST	5	X	X	X	X	X
New Develop a ten-acre park with restrooms, water, and electric locations for vendors, a pole barn for a farmer's market, a train watching platform, a parking area for car shows, motorcycle shows, and fairgrounds.	\$150,000	City of Homeland	SPLOST and General Funds	5		X	X		
New Develop a 65-acre park with walking trails, bicycle trails, and a park area.	\$200,000	City of Homeland	GA Recreational Trails Program, General Funds, and Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	5	X	X	X	X	X
New Add playground equipment to Waughtel Park for small children and upgrade other city parks as needed.	\$25,000	City of Homeland	General Funds	5	X	X			
New Upgrade city equipment including the Gradall, Grader, and Backhoe and other equipment as needed.	\$50,000	City of Homeland	General Funds and SPLOST	5	X	X	X	X	X
New Install storm drains, and/or sidewalks, and/or trails along various streets in Homeland.	\$45,000	City of Homeland	LMIG	5	X	X	X	X	X
New Perform preventive culvert and ditch repair in spots in the city as needed and along nature trails in the city.	Staff Time	City of Homeland	General Funds	5	X	X	X	X	X
BROADBAND									
Encourage broadband internet providers to offer services within Homeland.	Staff Time	City of Homeland	General Funds	9	X	X	X	X	X
TRANSPORTATION									
Provide storm water drainage improvements by adding drainage ditches to Nature Trail Estates Subdivision.	\$100,000	City of Homeland	LMIG, DOT, CDBG, SPLOST, General Funds	7	X	X	X	X	X
Resurface roads on an as needed basis.	\$100,000	City of Homeland	General Funds, SPLOST, DOT	7	X	X	X	X	X
New Repave Ohio Avenue, Dogwood Lane, Jenny Court, and Dove Lane as needed and identify and resurface other streets as needed.	\$727,000	City of Homeland	TIA, TSPLOST	7	X	X	X	X	X

New Pave Carter Lane.	\$75,000	City of Homeland	TSPLOST, General Funds	7		X	X	X	
New Pave east end of Dove Lane, south end of East Hazel, and south end of Chestnut streets.	\$405,000	City of Homeland	TSPLOST, General Funds, LMIG	7	X	X	X	X	X

9. Economic Development Element

The 2022 - 2026 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), as developed by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission under a grant from the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, is hereby incorporated by reference into this Comprehensive Plan to serve as the Economic Development Element for Charlton County and the Cities of Homeland and Folkston.



The following link goes to the 2022-2026 CEDS Document:

<https://www.canva.com/design/DAFH04UvQ60/I9qwVhIHkVzCfDaRkQzZzA/view#1>

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission's (SGRC) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) was designed to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen the regional economy. The SGRC CEDS analyzed the regional economy and serve as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives, a regional plan of action, and investment priorities and funding sources.

As a performance-based plan, this CEDS plays a critical role in adapting to global economic conditions by fully utilizing the region's unique advantages to maximize the economic opportunity for its residents by attracting private investment that creates jobs. The SGRC CEDS is a regionally owned strategy that is the result of a continuing economic development planning process developed with the regional public- and private-sector participation. This plan sets forth the goals and objectives necessary to solve the economic development problems of the Southern Georgia region and clearly defines the measures of success.

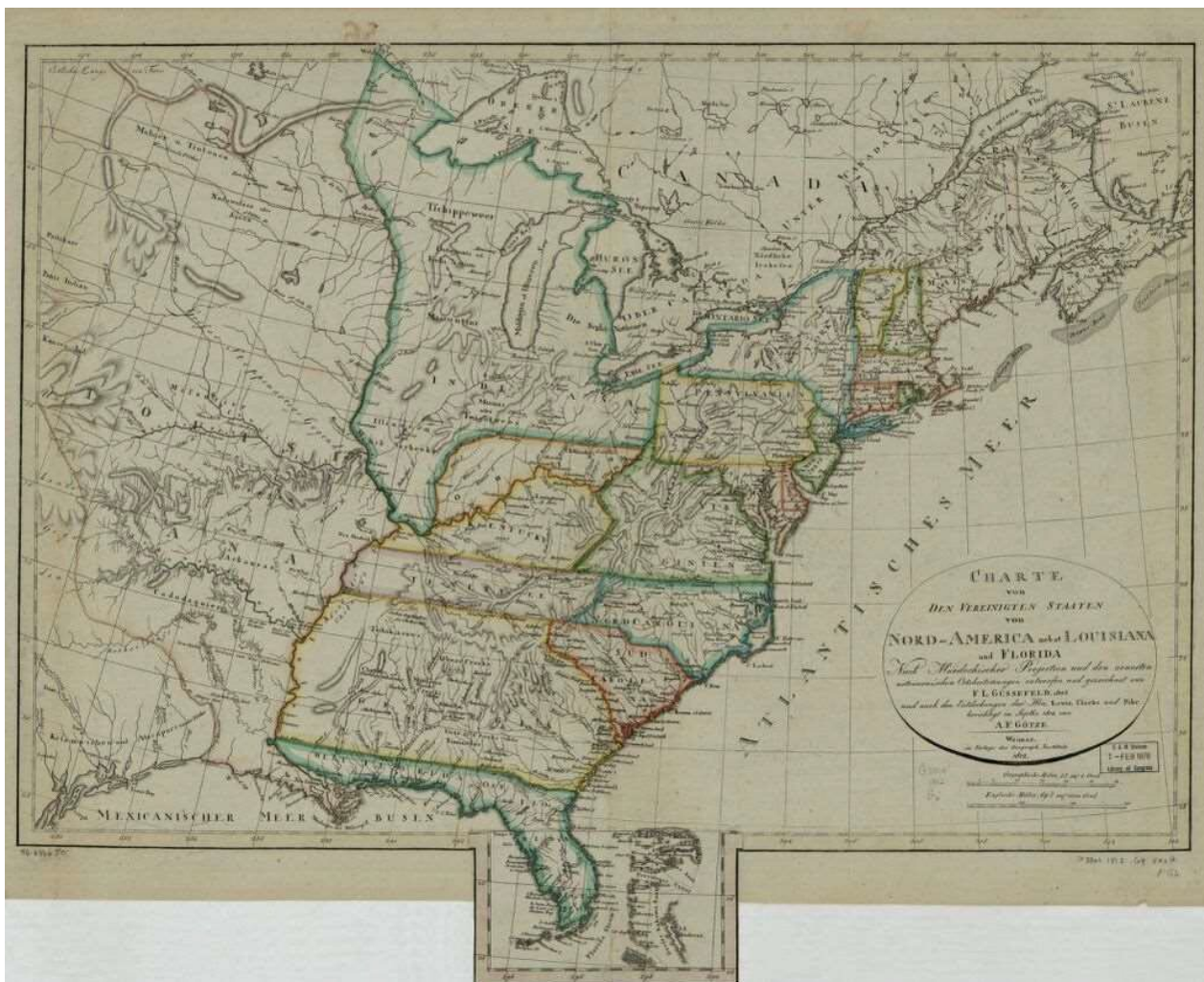
The Southern Georgia CEDS gives an overview of the region, briefly describing the geography, population, economy, labor and workforce development and use, education, transportation access, environment, and regional resources. It reviews the state of the regional economy and provides a list of achievable Goals and Objectives for the region, a Plan of Action to ensure success, and Performance Measures used to evaluate the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's successful development and implementation of the 2018-2022 CEDS. Implementation of the goals identified in this plan is significant to the economic future of the SGRC District.

Policies, issues, and opportunities, and Short-term Work Program implementation strategies located in the current Comprehensive Plans for each jurisdiction in our 18-county region were used extensively to develop the CEDS Goals and Objectives, Vital Projects, and Problems and Opportunities.

10. Land Use Element

Background

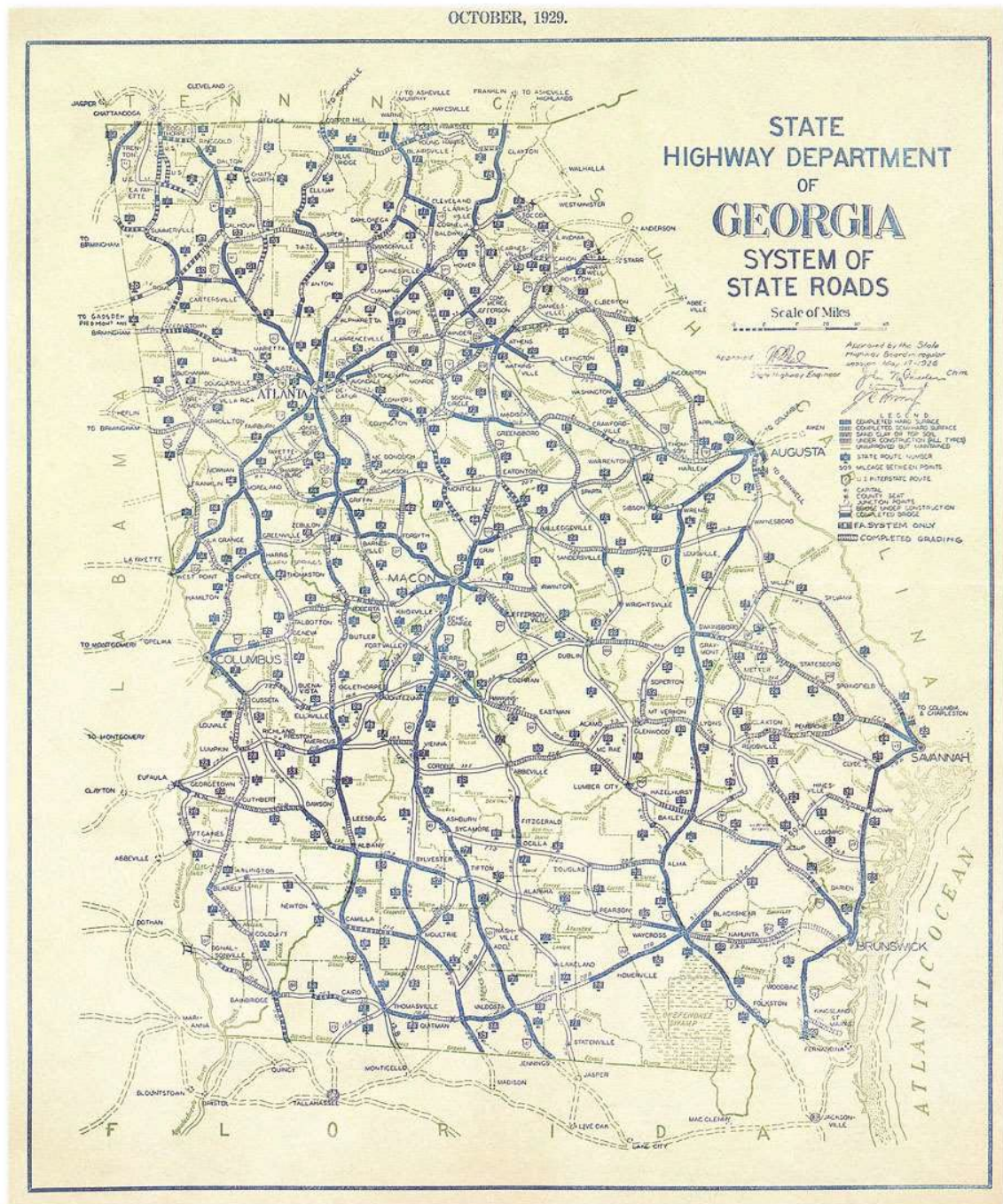
As can be seen on the below map of the United States in 1812, Charlton County was a part of the southern US border while Florida was under colonial rule by Spain. Once Florida became a territory of the United States in 1821, the land currently in Charlton County was a part of Camden and Appling counties. Charlton County was created in 1854 by an act of the Georgia General Assembly, with land from Ware County. It was named for former U.S. Senator Robert M. Charlton, who died that same year. The first county seat was Traders Hill, a community located on the St. Mary's River previously known as Fort Alert.



Charte von den Vereinigten Staaten von Nord-America nebst Louisiana und Florida: nach Murdochischer Projection und den neuesten astronomischen Ortsbestimmungen; 1812, Library of Congress

The City of Folkston was created as the Savannah, Florida, and Western Railroad needed a station in that location. Originally, the city was known as "the station." The first train passed through Charlton County in 1881. Most of the early settlers came from nearby Center Village. These settlers built homes and stores near the platform that was used for railroad passengers. Once the city began to grow, the

settlement was named for Dr. William B. Folks of Waycross, Georgia. It was officially incorporated as a city in 1895. In 1901, Folkston replaced Traders Hill as the county seat of Charlton County. Folkston soon became the commercial center of the county. The City of Homeland was created as a Colony Community for retirees in 1906.



State Highway Map, 1929

As can be seen on the above map of State Highways from 1929, a major highway (Route 1) has crossed through Charlton County, between Folkston and Waycross, which predates the construction of Interstate-95 (construction began in 1966 to the east of Charlton County, in Camden County). Train and vehicular routes have brought people through Charlton County since the 1880's. With the construction

of I-95 to the east and I-75 to the west, vehicular traffic is able to bypass the County. As such, strategies to bring visitors to the County are necessary, since travel through the County is not necessarily incidental to north/south travel through the state.

The County is relatively isolated due to the size, characteristics, and location of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. It is not possible to directly access the County by entering through the western edge of the Refuge. The County seat must be accessed by traveling a northern or southern route around the Refuge when approaching from the west. Access to the south, into the State of Florida, is hindered by the St. Marys River. Additionally, access to the east is constrained by the Satilla River.

III. Maps

1. Character Area Map of Charlton County and Character Area Descriptions specific only to Charlton County
2. Character Area Map of the City of Folkston and Character Area Descriptions specific only to the City of Folkston
3. Character Area Map for the City of Homeland and Character Area Descriptions specific only to the City of Homeland

4.

In keeping with State Minimum Planning Standards, every part of the Greater Charlton Community was delineated into specific Character Areas. Character areas are intended to serve as guidance for future land use and land development. Each of the following character area narratives was developed based on stakeholder input, existing land uses, anticipated development, planned infrastructure improvements and expansions, and guidance found in the State Planning Recommendations, and as with the plan in general, these character area descriptions and goals should not be considered final. As the community gains a greater understanding of the role and value of character areas, their descriptions should be fine-tuned. Additionally, as the community continues to grow, specific character area depictions may need adjusting.

Each Character Area narrative has a unique Description stating either the existing or desired qualities for that area. Predominant Land Uses are then described. The required Quality Community Objectives outlined by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs relate the Character Areas. A copy of these objectives with the corresponding objectives for Charlton County can be found in Section 6 of the plan.

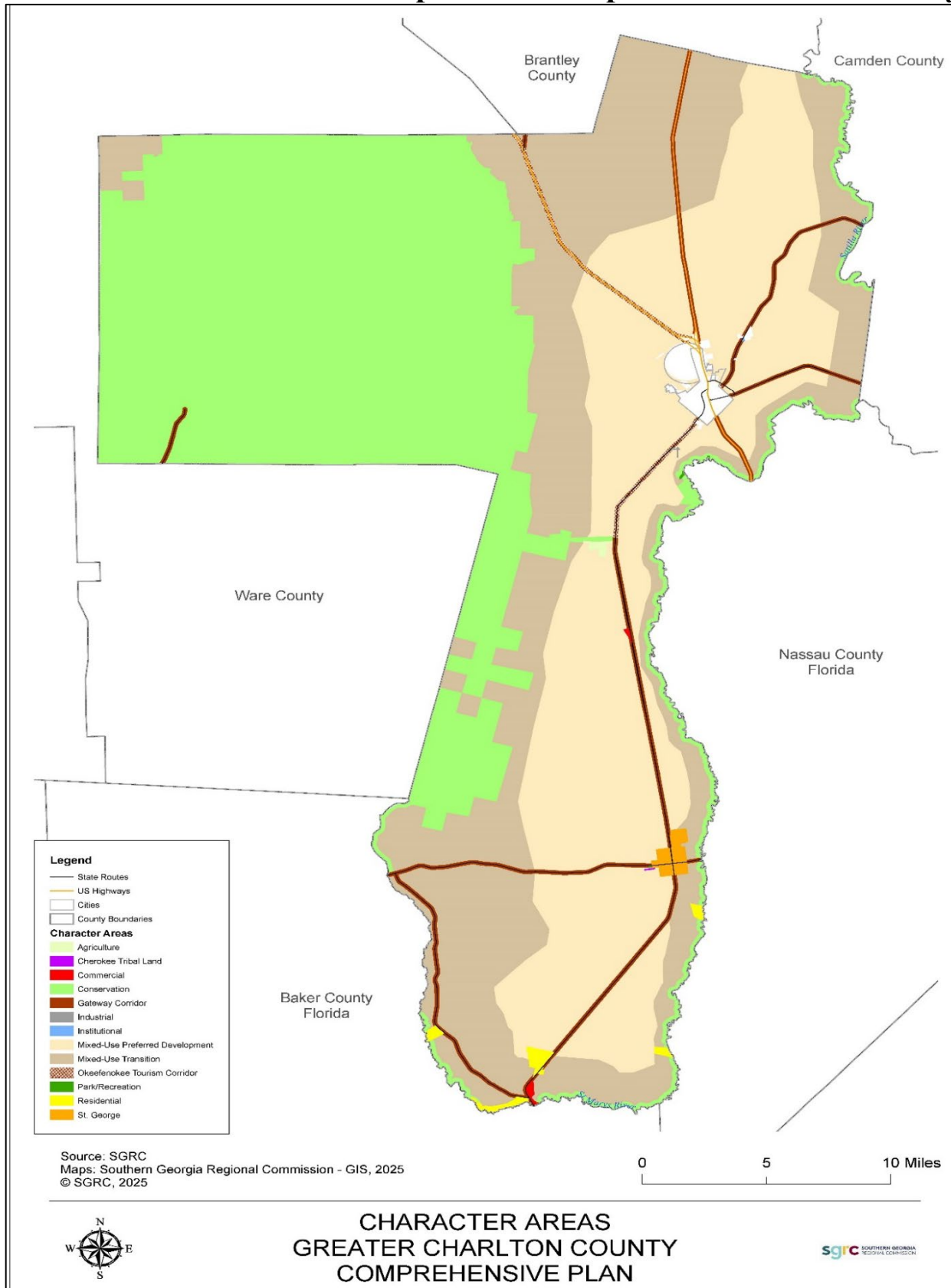
The stated Development Strategy should serve as a guide for all development and redevelopment taking place in the Character Area. Adherence to these development strategies will ensure consistent and complimentary development, which promotes a greater sense of place and overall improved quality of life.

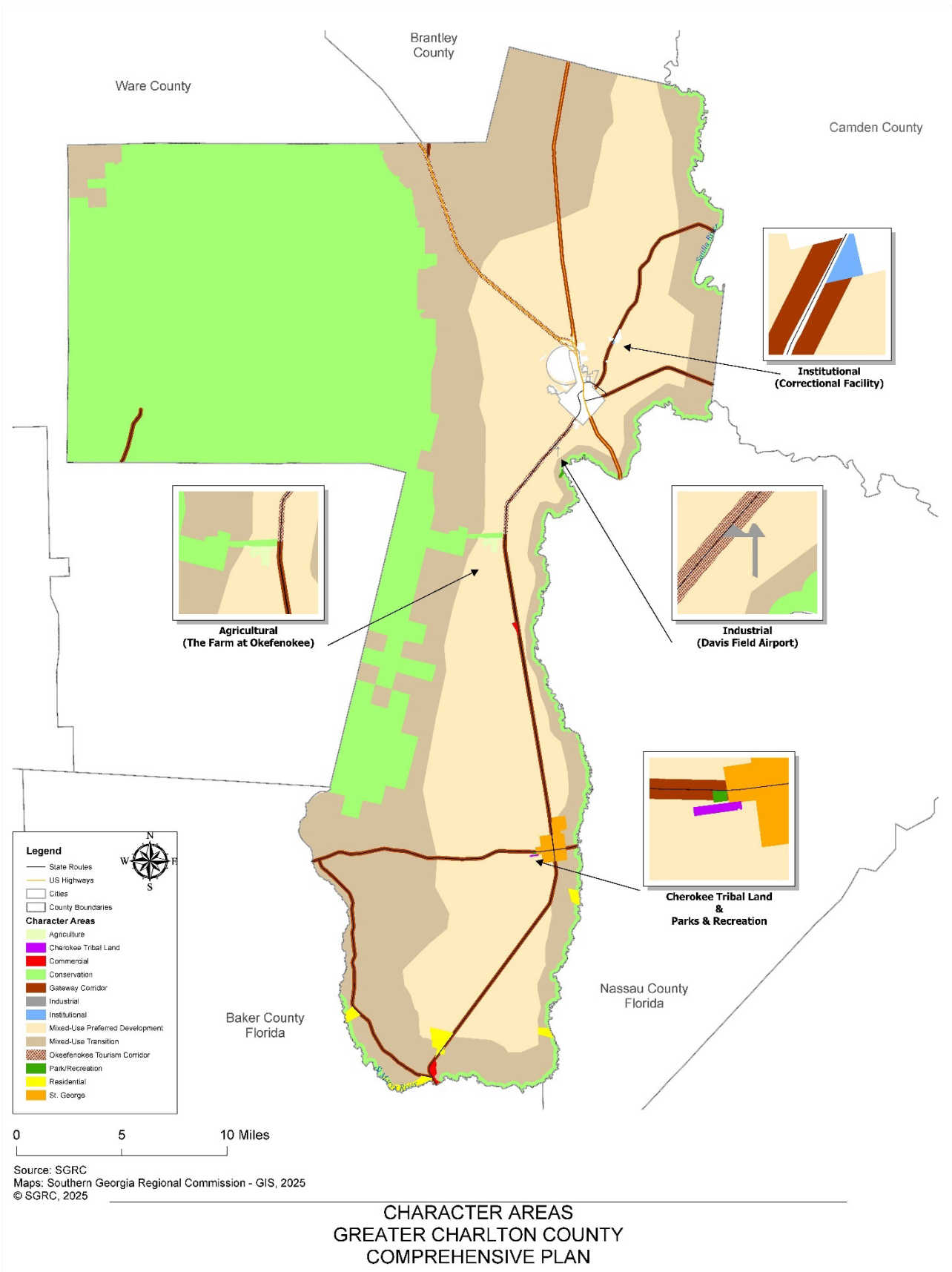
The listing of Permitted Zonings, for the City of Folkston, as they have zoning, provides guidance as to the type of land uses encouraged within each Character Area. While many of the differences between uses can be mitigated through site design and development standards, there are certain uses which are incompatible with surrounding uses, and should not be permitted.

The Implementation Measures are the specific activities or programs which could take place within each of the Character Areas. While the suggested list of measures may or may not currently exist in Greater Charlton County, their implementation in appropriate areas would help achieve the established objectives and overall development strategy for each Character Area. In most cases, these measures should be considered joint efforts between the local government, development community, and citizens alike.

Character Area and Existing Land Use maps are provided in the Mapping section of this document, following the Land Use Element.

1. Character Area Map for Unincorporated Charlton County





b)

1. Character Area descriptions related to Unincorporated Charlton County Only

a) Agriculture Character Area

(Unincorporated Charlton County)



DESCRIPTION:

Lands in open or cultivated state or sparsely settled, including woodlands, farmlands and pastures.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

The rural character should be maintained by supporting existing farming and agricultural operations. The regulation of new development to protect farmland and open space with large lot sizes should be employed. Roadways should be widened only when absolutely necessary. Roadway alterations should be carefully designed to minimize visual impact. These areas should be promoted for passive-use tourism and recreational destinations.

PREFERRED LAND USES:

Agriculture and Forestry, parks and recreation, conservation. It is further recommended that a regional trail network be explored in this area that could be connected to a county-wide or regional network.

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

- **Resource Management**
- **Efficient Land Use**
- **Local Preparedness**
- **Sense of Place**

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

Conservation Easements: An arrangement where private landowners donate the development rights of their property to a qualified conservation organization or government agency in exchange for tax savings. This protects the property from development and ensures that it remains as open space or farmland.

Agricultural Buffers: To minimize future potential conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural land uses and to protect public health, safety, and general welfare, all new non-agricultural development adjacent to designated agricultural land should provide an agricultural buffer.

Landscaping and Buffer Requirements and Guidelines: Require planting areas to mask unattractive land uses or to provide a visual and sound barrier between incompatible adjacent uses, increase aesthetic values, and protect water and quality of rivers and streams. Communities should consider adopting a tree protection ordinance in addition to landscaping and buffer regulations.

Tree Protection Ordinance: Require preservation of a significant portion of the trees on a new development site, particularly the larger, more mature specimens. As a supplement to tree protection measures, a community may choose to adopt specimen or “heritage” tree protections, which protect individual trees considered important because of unique characteristics.

Water Resource Management: Managing and protecting water supply and watersheds; providing safe drinking water and wastewater treatment services.

Storm Water Management: Mitigating the impact of development on watersheds, aquatic habitat, stream flow and geometry, and water quality.

Greenway Corridors: Can be created utilizing public land, privately donated land, and existing river and stream corridors. While these corridors may begin at a local level, there is tremendous opportunity to create and protect regional greenway corridors.

b) Cherokee Tribal Land

(Unincorporated Charlton County)



Description

Cherokee Tribal Land refers to the territory controlled by the Cherokee Nation in Charlton County. The Cherokee of Georgia are descendants of the Cherokee who avoided the forced migration known as the Trail of Tears in 1830's and are therefore recognized by the state as a tribe but not by the federal government. The Cherokee Tribal Land existing in Charlton County is located close to the St. George Community, a residential area in the southern portion of the county.

Development Strategy

Allow the Cherokee Nation to control the Cherokee Tribal Land as they wish.

c) Commercial

(Unincorporated Charlton County only)



Gas Station in St. Georgia Area of unincorporated Charlton County

DESCRIPTION:

These areas include both older, historic and newer commercial/service uses that may or may not be in close relation to each other and are located in areas within the unincorporated areas of Charlton County.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

Encourage and maintain higher-intensity commercial areas that are not compatible with residential areas due to their high automobile orientation, and promote a greater mix of uses (such as retail and services to serve industry employees) to reduce automobile reliance/use on site.

PREFERRED LAND USES:

These areas include a wide variety of both established and newer commercial uses.

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

- **Economic Prosperity**
- **Resource Management**
- **Efficient Land Use**
- **Local Preparedness**
- **Sense of Place**

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

Design Standards or Guidelines: Community design standards or guidelines can ensure that the physical appearance of new development (or improvements to existing properties) is compatible with the desired character of a community, is built to a high standard, and has a pleasant appearance. Overlay Districts can work in tandem with local zoning ordinances as a vehicle to implement design standards or guidelines.

Right-of-way Improvements: Right-of-way improvements are any type of public improvement made in a roadway's "right-of-way," which is the strip of land that includes the road itself and the narrow band of publicly owned property on either side of the road where sidewalks, curbing, and utility lines are typically located.

d)Conservation

(Unincorporated Charlton County only)



Source: James Horton photo Okefenokee 2025

Description

The Conservation Character Area is intended to identify those areas in Greater Charlton County which exhibit unique or special environmental characteristics, and may be held either publicly or privately. Conservation Character Areas in Greater Charlton County include the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, the St. Marys and Satilla Rivers, the Devil's Elbow and Trader's Hill.

Predominant Land Uses

Conservation areas contain significant natural resources including watershed and groundwater recharge areas. The land uses are undeveloped, natural lands with significant natural features including floodplains, wetlands, watersheds, wildlife management areas and other environmentally sensitive areas not suitable for development.

Development Strategy

Protect the natural habitat in order to maintain or improve water quality and groundwater recharge areas, protect significant natural resources such as pristine wetland and upland habitat and wildlife while utilizing the natural resources' attraction to visitors to build a sustainable economy around the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge and the St. Marys and Satilla Rivers. Passive and active recreation uses will be allowed in addition to some limited residential uses. The primary mission is to maintain and improve critical water quality, preserve endangered species, preserve wetlands, educate future generations, and add stability to the eco-system.

Quality Community Objectives

- **Resource Management**
- **Efficient Land Use**
- **Sense of Place**
- **Regional Cooperation**
- **Economic Prosperity**

Implementation Measures

- Support the conservation measures implemented by the US Fish and Wildlife Service at the Okefenokee
- Support the St Marys River Management Committee and the Satilla/St Marys/Suwanee River Keepers

e) Gateway Corridor

(Unincorporated Charlton County only)



Description:

The Gateway Corridor Character Area is intended for those areas in the County with developed or undeveloped land paralleling the route of a major thoroughfare that serves as an important entrance or means of access to the community. This character area contains land that is highly visible to visitors and residents as it serves as a gateway to the incorporated cities. As such, the County intends for these lands to be held to a higher design standard to enhance the place-making quality and aesthetic appearance of the community.

Predominant Land Uses:

Medium to high-density residential development, commercial development, and well screened industrial development.

Development Strategy:

The focus should be on encouraging an aesthetically pleasing blend of residential, commercial, and industrial uses that reflect the character of the community. Landscaping and attractive signage should be incorporated into the overall plan.

Quality Community Objectives:

- **Economic Prosperity**
- **Efficient Land Use**
- **Sense of Place**

Implementation Measures

- Develop a sense of purpose and intent and a geographic sense of space for the various areas of Charlton County and encourage innovative development practices (Policy 6.1).

- Encourage and request that any proposed development be compatible with the underlying Character Areas as shown in the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Research and implement measures to develop multi-modal systems including bicycle and pedestrian safety initiatives.

f) Industrial

(Unincorporated Charlton County Only)



Soggy Bottom Mud Park Charlton County, GA

Description:

The Industrial Character Area is intended for those areas in the unincorporated areas of the county with developed or undeveloped land utilized or intended for higher intensity industrial land uses and/or public utility areas.

Predominant Land Uses:

Manufacturing, processing, warehouses, open storage, rail/freight, and logistical uses.

Development Strategy:

The focus should be on encouraging an environment that supports higher intensity land uses that may include noise, vibration, odor, dust, or other potentially offensive effects. Attempts to mitigate the offensive effects should be taken such as by providing buffering, screening, separation from residential land uses and other incompatible land uses. Adequate access is necessary to ensure public safety and local preparedness steps should be taken to ensure safety should an unwanted event occur.

Quality Community Objectives:

- Economic Prosperity
- Efficient Land Use
- Local Preparedness

Implementation Measures:

- Property with industrial uses should have both water and sewer services available to it concurrent with development in order to provide sufficient protection to the health and safety of the public, avoid groundwater contamination and to provide for sufficient fire protection.

g) Institutional

(Unincorporated Charlton County Only)



St. George Elementary School



Electric Plant on Hwy. 94

DESCRIPTION:

This character area consists of large sites of a public or institutional type, such as schools, colleges and universities, large churches, hospitals, and government facilities.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

Development of new facilities within this character area should take place at a scale that is compatible with surrounding uses. New developments should be accessible by a variety of transportation options.

PREDOMINANT LAND USE:

- Public/Institutional

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

- Local Preparedness
- Educational Opportunities

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- Implement a balance of transportation options and design.
- Encourage development of essential facilities in locations where they can be conveniently accessed.
- Encourage development of new public/institutional uses at a scale that is compatible with surrounding uses.
- Encourage development to occur in areas where it will not adversely impact adjacent residential areas.

h) Mixed-Use Preferred Development

(Unincorporated Charlton County Only)



1143-1125 Cotton Street, St. George, Charlton County

DESCRIPTION:

The Mixed-Use Preferred Development character area contains activity centers in the unincorporated areas of Charlton County, which have an intricate mix of uses contributing to a working balance for smaller geographic areas. Greater regulatory flexibility is intended to encourage innovative design, high quality development and redevelopment, and a walkable environment. The mixed uses would traditionally be offices, services, retail sales, entertainment facilities, public/institutional uses, libraries, schools, fire stations, overnight accommodations, convenience stores, churches, and residential uses.

The Mixed-Use Preferred Development Character Area is intended for those areas in the County where the soil suitability and the availability of or potential for water, sewer and road infrastructure allows for compatible development of residential and non-residential uses. These areas are in relatively close proximity to major transportation corridors such as rail or highways, and water and sewer lines are either currently available or can be made available at a reasonable cost. The majority of this area also follows prior trends of growth, such as along north-south corridors (SR 121) into Florida or east towards I-95 and Kingsland.

Predominant Land Use:

Low-density residential development with industrial and commercial development along the major highway corridors.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

Provide guidelines and infrastructure to enhance the connectivity and accessibility of these areas in order to ensure business success while minimizing adverse impacts on neighborhoods and the environment. Continue to ensure adequate buffering between uses. Endeavor to strike a balance between encouraging economic development and preserving agricultural land and open space. Encourage a sustainable mix of residential and commercial businesses.

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:**Sense of Place****Efficient Land Use****Transportation Options****Community Health****IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:**

- Encourage clustered types of developments that will encourage the provision of water and sewer and protect natural resources.
- Develop some limited land development standards to plan for the future and steer development and economic growth where Charlton County would like to see it and to limit any potential negative environmental impacts. Provide for compatible development, market the County as a bedroom community to Jacksonville, and preserve a rural quality of life in the midst of the County's close proximity to a major metropolitan area.
- Encourage new residential development to locate within the Mixed-Use Preferred Development or the Gateway Corridor Character areas to ensure adequate service with infrastructure and minimize the cost on the County for road maintenance.
- Property with industrial uses should have both water and sewer services available to it concurrent with development in order to provide sufficient protection to the health and safety of the public, avoid groundwater contamination and to provide for sufficient fire protection.

i) Mixed-Use Transition

(Unincorporated Charlton County)



Description

The “Mixed Use Transitional” character area designation in Charlton County is intended for those areas outside of the more developed areas which are associated with agricultural/forestry and agriculture or forestry related activities. These areas are being recognized as appropriate for cash crops, livestock, and ranching activities. Many of these agriculturally/forestry utilized lands are under the 10-year (15-year for forest lands) conservation designation through the Tax Assessor and therefore, will not be available for development for those years. The Mixed-Use Transitional Area serves as a buffer between the Conservation Character Area and its natural constraints on development and the Mixed-Used Preferred Development Character Area, which is the preferred area for potential future development.

Many of the wetlands and groundwater recharge areas are located in the Mixed-Use Transitional Character Area. The soil suitability does not lend itself for prime development due to large coverage by wetlands or streams and incompatibility for development on septic systems. Water and sewer are generally not available within a cost feasible distance and will not be available in the near-term future. The Mixed-Use Transitional Area adjacent to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge is also subject to increased wildfire danger. As such, additional standards for fire resistant landscaping and construction should be encouraged.

Predominant Land Uses:

Agricultural farm/silviculture operations and related activities, natural resources conservation, groundwater recharge areas, low-density residential development accessory to agricultural or farm operations of varying sizes. Limited commercial operations that would not adversely impact the adjacent conservation areas would also be permitted.

Development Strategy:

Protect the rural/agricultural/forestry character of these areas by maintaining very low-density residential development primarily accessory to farm operations and large lot sizes. Use of conservation easements to protect environmentally sensitive areas should be encouraged. Roadways in these areas should be widened only when required to meet public safety standards.

Quality Community Objectives:

- **Resource Management**
- **Efficient Land Use**
- **Local Preparedness**

Implementation Measures:

- Consider incentives that will ensure existing and proposed uses are compatible and ensure proposed uses are appropriate and compatible with natural and cultural uses surrounding them.
- Provide adequate buffering and setbacks between agricultural and non-agricultural uses to protect any agricultural/forestry uses from adverse impacts associated with the encroachment of non-agricultural development and protect agricultural/forestry uses from nuisance complaints created by agricultural operations. Ensure that Agricultural Best Management Practices and Forest Best Management Practices are used in maintaining the county's agricultural and forest areas.
- Promote development standards for landscaping and land use based on best management practices for the prevention of wildfires, specifically in areas adjacent to the county's timber areas and Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. Appropriate types and methods of fuel reduction and structure ignitability reduction can be found in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), developed in 2019 by the Georgia Forestry Commission. The plan provides recommendations to protect the citizens of Charlton County and its essential infrastructure. Charlton CWPP: <https://gatrees.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Charlton-County-CWPP-revised-2019.pdf>
- Encourage increased code enforcement action to prevent illegal septic tanks in flood plain areas and research new advances in sewage technology to address the needs of rural flood plain areas.

j) Okefenokee Tourism Corridor



Camping Facility on the Okefenokee Tourism Corridor

(Unincorporated Charlton County only)

Description:

The Okefenokee Tourism Corridor is a section of US 1 from the Ware County line into Folkston and the Okefenokee Parkway from Folkston south to the entrance of the Okefenokee Swamp. This corridor has been designated as such to encourage uses related to the needs and desires of tourists on their way to visit the Okefenokee. The desired uses in this area would be geared to lodging, sporting gear sales, food (restaurants), sporting entertainment venues, camping opportunities – tent and RV, other related entertainment venues, and commercial services like gas/convenience stores and other support services like food stores.

Predominant Land Uses:

Much of the land in the Okefenokee Tourism Corridor is still vacant at the present time, but there are already a couple of camping facilities located along the route.

Development Strategy:

The City of Folkston, the City of Homeland and Charlton County would benefit from uniting to promote the area for commercial uses related to nature tourism and outdoor recreation. The corridor should contain services to tourists such as fueling stations (fossil fuel and electric charging stations), restaurants, lodging, camping, hiking gear and supplies stores, entertainment venues, visitor's center, etc., and ample signage to direct tourists to the Okefenokee and related tours and services.

Charlton County should adopt an Okefenokee related logo and develop a marketing campaign to help sell this area as the Okefenokee Tourism Corridor. Involve the Chamber of Commerce in the marketing strategy as well as local leaders. Discourage the area from being developed in private residential parcels and other non-related commercial uses. Propose a bicycle trail connecting the City of Folkston with the entrance to the Okefenokee.

Quality Community Objectives:

Economic Prosperity
Resource Management
Efficient Land Use
Sense of Place

Implementation Strategy:

Tourism Strategy - Plan a tourism initiative and marketing campaign based on the community's existing heritage and cultural resources that also focuses on the Okefenokee Swamp. The strategy might also entail employing well-designed logo and tourist-oriented directional signage systems, to help tourists find the services they need. Heritage and Cultural tourism are key components of economic success in Georgia.

k) Parks/Recreation



(Unincorporated Charlton County only)

DESCRIPTION:

Land in this area is dedicated for active or passive recreational uses and for areas that require special protection from development due to unique historical or natural resources and characteristics.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

Protect the areas from any negative impacts of development. Provide natural buffers within and along developments adjacent to the park. Conservation of sensitive environmental areas should be encouraged or required.

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

Resource Management

Regional Cooperation

Efficient Land Use

Sense of Place

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

Conservation Easements - Encourage owners of key properties (such as those in environmentally sensitive areas, included in the local greenspace plan, or designated for agricultural use in the comprehensive plan) to utilize conservation easements or sale of development rights to preserve their land from future development. Conservation easements allow private landowners to donate the development rights of their property to a qualified conservation organization or government agency, in exchange for tax savings. Sale of development rights is an arrangement whereby private landowners sell the development rights of their property to a qualified conservation organization or government agency. In both cases above, giving up the development rights permanently protects a property from development and thereby ensures that it remains as green

space or farmland.

Tourism Strategy - Plan a tourism initiative and marketing campaign based on the community's existing heritage and cultural resources. The strategy might also entail employing well-designed logo and tourist-oriented directional signage systems, to help tourists find the services they need. Heritage and Cultural tourism are key components of economic success in Georgia.

Green Space Plan - Develop, adopt, and implement a green space plan that provides for connectivity of permanently protected green space throughout the community. Setting aside the greenspace can be done through direct purchase by the local government, purchase of the development rights to the land only, or by working with local land trusts to focus their efforts to acquire conservation easements in the areas identified in the local greenspace plan.

I) Residential

(Unincorporated Charlton County only)



The Hill Road, Charlton County – Residential



Home on Trader's Hill Road, Charlton, Residential

DESCRIPTION:

These areas will typically have low pedestrian orientation and access, very large lots, open space, pastoral views, and a high degree of building separation. Such areas are usually transitional away from city boundaries into the truly agricultural and rural areas.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

The rural atmosphere should be maintained by limiting new residential developments and requiring the utilization of rural cluster or conservation subdivision design that incorporates significant amounts of open space. Compatible architecture styles should be encouraged to maintain the regional rural character. "Franchise" or "corporate" architecture should be discouraged. Where possible, there should be connections to regional networks of greenspace and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreational purposes.

PREFERRED LAND USES:

Agriculture and Forestry, parks and recreation, conservation, and residential. The adoption of a Conservation Subdivision (Con-Sub) Zoning District is recommended. It is further recommended that a regional trail network be explored in this Area that could be connected to a county-wide or regional network.

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

- **Resource Management**
- **Efficient Land Use**
- **Housing Options**

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

Agricultural Buffers: To minimize future potential conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural land uses and to protect public health, safety, and general welfare, all new non-agricultural development adjacent to designated agricultural land should be required to provide an agricultural buffer.

Agriculture Use Notice and Waiver: The use of Notices and Waivers to residential and potential residential land owners in this Area will help to minimize potential conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural land uses.

Cluster Development: Provides for small lot residential development in agricultural, forestry, and rural residential districts. Local governments that wish to consider preservation of open space more extensively will want to discuss such issues as how to involve land trusts and provide for conservation easements.

Conservation Easements: An arrangement where private landowners donate the development rights of their property to a qualified conservation organization or government agency, in exchange for tax savings. This permanently protects the property from development and thereby ensures that it remains as open space or farmland.

m) St. George



(Unincorporated Charlton County only)

Description

In 1904, St. George was founded as a Colony Company community for retired Civil War Veterans. St. George was incorporated as a town by the Georgia General Assembly in 1906; yet, the town's charter was repealed in 1924. St. George is also home to the Cherokee Tribal Grounds and is a cross roads for heavy truck traffic from I-10 near MacClenny to Valdosta, Folkston and Waycross, as well as truck traffic destined for the Chesser Island Landfill.

Predominant Land Uses:

The predominant land uses in St. George are one-to-five-acre residential parcels with many vacant infill parcels. The main intersection of SR 94 and SR 121 also features a small commercial center including a feed store, two restaurants, two gas stations, a general store, the volunteer fire department, community center and an elementary school.

Development Strategy:

To develop a thriving cross roads community that will provide services, employment, and quality housing for residents in south Charlton County.

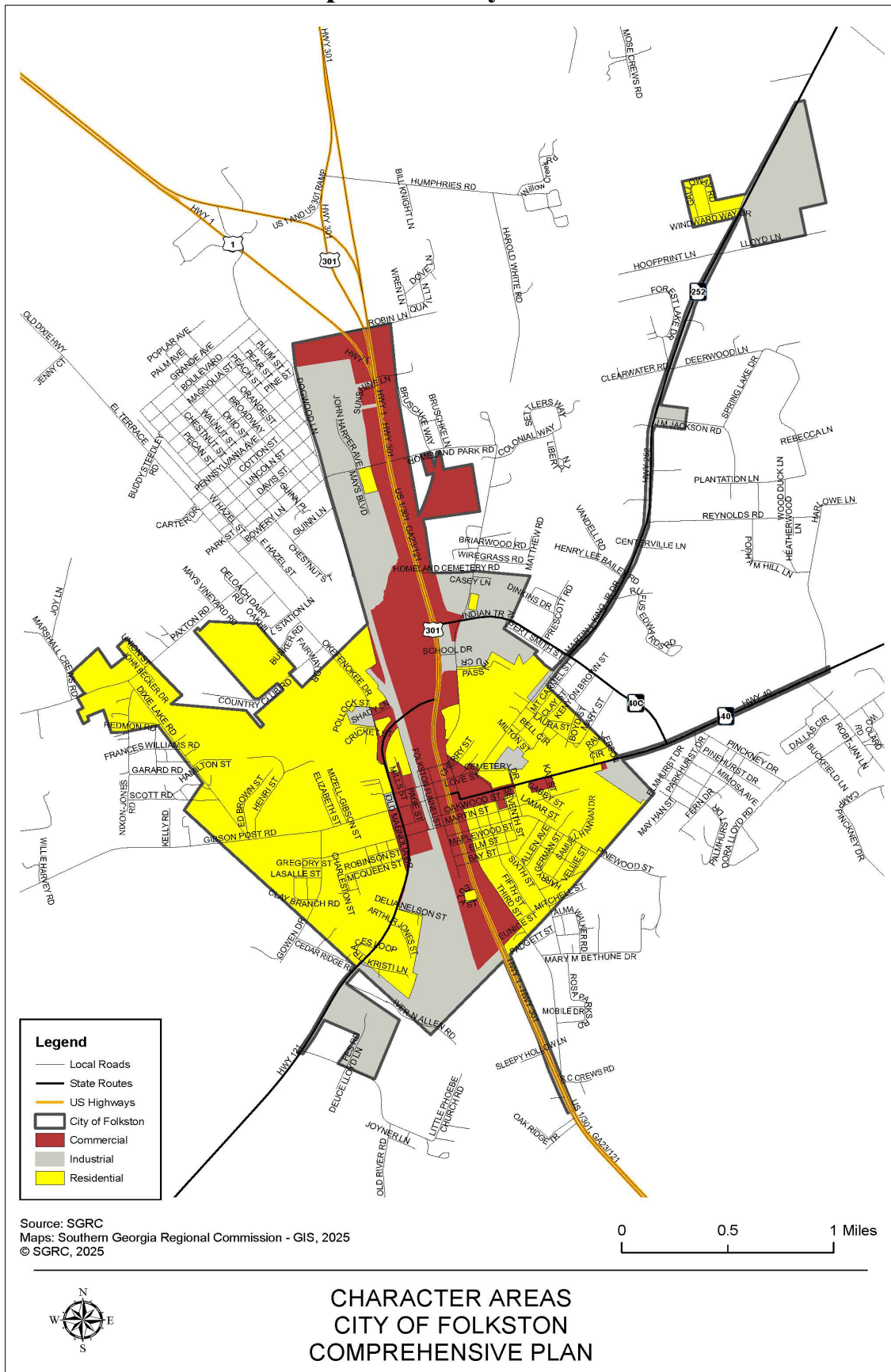
Quality Community Objectives:

- **Economic Prosperity**
- **Sense of Place**
- **Housing Options**
- **Transportation Options**

Implementation
Measures:

- Support non-cash incentives for military personnel and supporting businesses to locate in Charlton County.
- Promote the rural quality of life and low density of the area to residents of the Jacksonville area and other metro areas who may seek a more peaceful way of life.
- Maintain older neighborhoods that are also perceived as providing quality and character to the area.
Housing preserved in quality will subsequently raise the value of housing stock.
- Pursue CDBG grants for water and sewer for the St. George area to protect the groundwater and surface water from the impact of too many septic tanks and to enable smaller lot sizes of ¼ to ½ acre within the St. George Character Area limits.
- Continue to raise awareness of maintenance issues on existing state roads among local and State elected officials and staff.

2. Character Area Map of the City of Folkston



2. Character Area descriptions related to the City of Folkston only

a) Commercial

(City of Folkston only)



Description:

The City of Folkston was created in 1881 as a train station for the Savannah, Florida and Western Railroad. Trains no longer stop in Folkston, but as many as 60-70 trains per day travel through Folkston. Folkston has become a tourist destination for train enthusiasts and visitors to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. The commercial core of Folkston can be seen in the photograph above and contains a grid-like road network with a Main Street.

Predominant Land Uses:

Primary land uses for this area have been identified as city services, entertainment and commercial recreation, Main Street, mixed use businesses, business support services, newer residential subdivisions, and traditional older, but stable neighborhoods.

Permitted Zoning:

- General Commercial (CG)
- Downtown Development (DD)
- Planned Development (PD)

Development Strategy:

Preserve, restore & reuse historic buildings. Improve the environment for private investment and development. Expand downtown's green spaces and civic spaces. Mix land uses and control building architecture. Become a center for eco-tourism, local artisans and a niche farmer's and arts market drawing tourists and visitors from Jacksonville and become a quality, sustainable alternative to metro living. Interconnectivity and walkability have been identified as some of the primary factors for revitalization of the area along with preservation of historic resources, attracting private developers to the downtown and providing attractive outdoor spaces.

Quality Community Objectives:

- **Economic Prosperity**
- **Efficient Land Use**
- **Sense of Place**
- **Housing Options**
- **Transportation Options**

**Implementation
Measures:**

- In coordination with the City of Folkston and the Chamber of Commerce set a goal for creating a downtown master plan and develop incentives for businesses to locate downtown. The Train Watching Platform has the potential to encourage more train and tourism related businesses to relocate to the City, including arts and crafts and artisans.
- Provide incentives to developers of high quality, affordable rental housing. These could include: allowing a mixture of housing sizes, contributing towards construction/development/land acquisition costs, and creating a one-stop shop for permitting.
- Encourage and request that any proposed development be compatible with the underlying Character Areas as shown in the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan.
- To ensure walkability and safety, coordinate with the School Board on Future Land Use designations to locate schools in to areas where residential development is desirable and in such a manner that the schools are located near existing or future residential neighborhoods to ensure walkability and safety.

- Property with industrial uses should have both water and sewer services available to it concurrent with development in order to provide sufficient protection to the health and safety of the public, avoid groundwater contamination and to provide for sufficient fire protection.
- Research and implement measures to develop multi-modal systems including bicycle and pedestrian safety initiatives.

b)Industrial

(City of Folkston only)



AJM Packaging, Folkston

Description:

The Industrial Character Area is intended for those areas in the City with developed or undeveloped land utilized or intended for higher intensity industrial land uses and/or public utility areas.

Predominant Land Uses:

Manufacturing, processing, warehouses, open storage, rail/freight, and logistical uses.

Permitted Zoning:

- Industrial (IND)
- Utilities (U)

Development Strategy:

The focus should be on encouraging an environment that supports higher intensity land uses that may include noise, vibration, odor, dust, or other potentially offensive effects. Attempts to mitigate the offensive effects should be taken such as by providing buffering, screening, separation from residential land uses and other incompatible land uses. Adequate access is necessary to ensure public safety and local preparedness steps should be taken to ensure safety should an unwanted event occur.

Quality Community Objectives:

- **Economic Prosperity**
- **Efficient Land Use**
- **Local Preparedness**

Implementation Measures:

- Create a favorable environment towards a certified industrial area by implementing strategies in coordination with Folkston and all economic development agencies and authorities and the Regional Commission.
- Create an inventory of available developable land (Homeland has 16 acres and the County has 7 acres in the Industrial Park) and promote the development of commercial and industrial development in those areas.
- Property with industrial uses should have both water and sewer services available to it concurrent with development in order to provide sufficient protection to the health and safety of the public, avoid groundwater contamination and to provide for sufficient fire protection.

c) Residential

(City of Folkston only)



Pinewood Street, Folkston

Description:

The Residential Character Area is intended for those areas in the City with predominantly residential uses, ranging from single-family to multi-family uses. Also included in this character area are residential support uses such as schools, churches, funeral homes, and some business professional uses.

Predominant Land Uses:

A balanced mix of single family detached, single family attached, duplex and multi-family housing on moderately sized lots, including manufactured homes and residential professional uses.

Permitted Zoning:

- Residential Single Family (R-1)
- Residential Low Density (R-2)
- Residential Mixed-Use District (R-M)
- Planned Development (PD)

Development Strategy:

The focus should be on preservation of the Main Street historic character and adjacent residential uses. Infill developments and reuse of structures should be encouraged. A safe walking and bicycling environment should be supported.

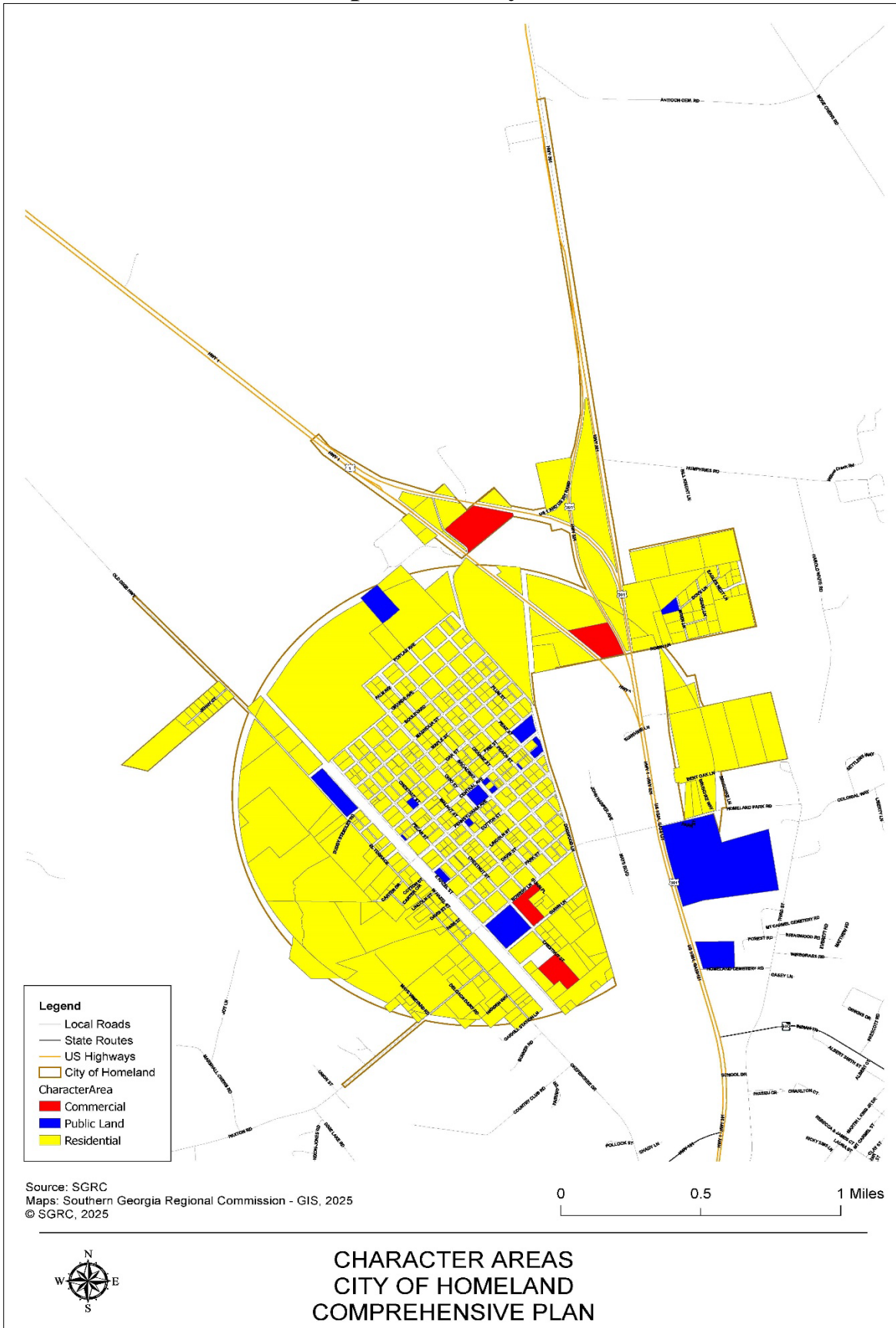
Quality Community Objectives:

- **Efficient Land Use**
- **Local Preparedness**
- **Sense of Place**
- **Housing Options**

Implementation
Measures:

- Provide incentives for the construction of good-quality housing in mixed-use developments within the cities to maximize infrastructure investments.
- Maintain older neighborhoods that are also perceived as providing quality and character to the area.
Housing preserved in quality will subsequently raise the value of housing stock.
- Encourage and request that any proposed development be compatible with the underlying Character Areas as shown in the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Research and implement measures to develop multi-modal systems including bicycle and pedestrian safety initiatives.

3. Character Area Map of the City of Homeland



3. Character Area descriptions related to the City of Homeland only

a) Commercial

(City of Homeland only)



Bowery Lane Commercial Business



RV Park, Bowery Lane



Mini-storage Facility in Homeland

Description:

In 1906, a group of investors purchased about 8,000 acres of land one mile north of Folkston and began surveying and platting the “1906 Homeland Colony Company Domains”. The town included 144 blocks, platted streets and alleys, a town square and approximately 800 acres of five- and ten-acre tracts for small scale homesteading and farming. While the town had been conceived as a self-sufficient retirement community that goal has not been implemented to date. As part of the adoption of this comprehensive plan, the City of Homeland is renewing its goal of becoming the retirement town envisioned by its founders.

Predominant Land Use:

Low density residential uses, limited commercial/industrial development, civic or institutional uses as well as any service uses to establish and maintain a well-functioning retirement community.

Development Strategy:

Preserve and rehabilitate what remains of the original housing stock, while rebuilding on vacant land new, attractive neighborhoods following the principles of traditional

neighborhood development. The neighborhoods should include a well-designed new neighborhood activity center at an appropriate location. Reactivate goal of being a retirement community.

Quality Community Objectives:

- **Sense of Place**
- **Housing Options**
- **Community Health**

Implementation Measures:

- Create an inventory of available developable land (Homeland has 16 acres and the County has 7 acres in the Industrial Park) and promote the development of commercial and industrial development in those areas.
- Enforce the maintenance and clean-up of vacant lots and properties.
- Maintain older neighborhoods that are also perceived as providing quality and character to the area. Housing preserved in quality will subsequently raise the value of housing stock).

b) Public Land

(City of Homeland only)



City of Homeland Police Dept. and City Hall, Pennsylvania Ave.



Waughtel Park, Pine Street, Homeland



275 Central Avenue, Utilities, Homeland

DESCRIPTION:

Concentration of public or private large-scale institutional uses such as hospitals, schools, colleges, and universities. These areas may be characterized by high degrees of access by vehicular traffic, large amounts of on-site parking, and low degrees of internal open space, high floor-area-ratios, and large tracts of land, campuses, or unified development.

PREDOMINANT LAND USES:

City facilities, Public Parks, Public Health Facilities, Schools, Religious facilities, and others.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

Uses supporting the area's primary institution should be supported and clustered around such institution when feasible. Institutionally compatible architecture should be encouraged over "franchise" or "corporate" architecture. Design should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between the institution and supporting uses. Direct connections to nearby networks of greenspace or trails, available to pedestrians and bicyclists should be provided.

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

- **Resource Management**
- **Sense of Place**
- **Educational Opportunities**
- **Community Health**

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

Design Standards or Guidelines: Community design standards or guidelines can ensure that the physical appearance of new development (or improvements to existing properties) is compatible with the desired character of a community, is built to a high standard, and has a pleasant appearance.

Landscaping and Buffer Requirements and Guidelines: Require planting areas to mask unattractive land uses or to provide a visual and sound barrier between incompatible adjacent uses, increase aesthetic values, and protect water and quality of rivers and streams. Communities should consider adopting a tree protection ordinance in addition to landscaping and buffer regulations.

Design for Walkable Communities: In an effort to promote active living, developers and planners should work together to ensure new development is designed in such a way as to encourage walking and biking. This includes such methods as interconnecting neighborhoods and commercial developments, providing sidewalks and bike lines, and situating buildings to promote pedestrian friendliness.

Bicycle Facility Standards (DCA Model Code 2-6) - Ensuring safe, adequate and well-designed facilities are provided for bicyclists, including pavement markings, signage, and intersection crossings.

c) Residential

(City of Homeland only)



Typical homes in Homeland – both stick-built and manufactured homes exist in tandem

DESCRIPTION:

Areas with predominantly residential character ranging from traditional historic single-family style homes (both stick-built and manufactured homes) to duplex or apartment buildings which may or may not be adjacent to Downtown/Town Centers, infill on small lots, residential areas and subdivisions.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

The focus should be on reinforcing stability by encouraging more home ownership and maintenance or upgrade of existing properties. Vacant properties in the neighborhood offer an opportunity for infill development of new, architecturally compatible housing. Strong pedestrian and bicycle connections should also be provided.

PREFERRED LAND USES:

The dominant land use in this area is residential. A mix of uses, including neighborhood commercial and office would be suitable as well. It is recommended that all communities identify a central point that can act as a gathering point for the immediate community.

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

- **Economic Prosperity**
- **Resource Management**
- **Efficient Land Use**
- **Sense of Place**

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

Promote Infill Housing: develop incentive and rewards programs to rehabilitate and utilize vacant or abandoned properties. Encourage re-use of non-used buildings and compatible infill construction where appropriate.

Promote Clean Up and Improved Maintenance of Existing Properties and Buildings: Cities have the authority to establish and enforce property maintenance codes, which address the condition of existing properties and ensure they are safe, sanitary, and fit for occupancy. These codes often cover issues like: Maintenance of structures, Maintenance of landscaping and/or yards, Storage of vehicles and other items, and Maintenance of decorative features. Enforcement of these codes is encouraged so that the community remains safe and attractive.

Creating a Network of Continuous Sidewalks: this will encourage pedestrian active transportation and provide connectivity to neighborhood activity centers. It will also increase the safety of neighborhoods while providing a more complete and finished appearance to neighborhood areas.

Sign Regulations: One way to have a positive impact on the aesthetic appearance of a community is through the implementation of a sign ordinance which controls the location, size and appearance of signage attached to buildings and on free-standing poles. Language should be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance for the regulation of all exterior signs, including lighted and electronic signboards. If zoning is not already in place such as in Barwick, Morven and Pavo, a sign ordinance could still be adopted and added to the city's municipal codes.


Tree Protection Ordinance: A tree ordinance defines how to manage and care for public or privately-owned trees and is meant to help build a healthy and sustainable community forest. Barwick, Morven, Pavo and Quitman are all historic cities and contain historic trees worthy of preservation. It would be suggested that Barwick, Morven, Pavo and Quitman look into adopting a tree ordinance.

IV. Public Hearing and Workshop Documentation

1. Kick-off Public Hearing October 3, 2024

Kick Off – Joint Public Hearing For Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland Comprehensive Plan Update

A public hearing will be held on Thursday October 3, 2024 in the Charlton County Commissioners Meeting Room, located at 68 Kingsland Drive, Room 117 Folkston, GA to announce the beginning of the 2024-25 Comprehensive Plan Update for Charlton County and the cities of Folkston and Homeland. The purpose of this hearing is to brief the community on the process to be used to develop the Comprehensive Plan, announce opportunities for public participation in development of the plan and obtain input on the proposed planning process. Persons with special needs relating to disability access or foreign language should contact the County Clerk at the Charlton County Commission Office at (912) 496 - 2549. Persons with hearing disabilities may consider using the Georgia Relay Service at 1-800-255-0135. All persons are invited to attend the public hearing. If you would like more information, please contact the Charlton County Board of Commissioners at (912) 496 - 2549 or James Horton at the Southern Georgia Regional Commission at (229) 333-5277.



Obituary

LON MADISON GIBSON

Lon Madison Gibson, 75, died the other day. It makes no difference where he was born, where he lived or where he died. He is survived by his wife, Patricia Machon; his daughters, Lonna Gibson-Brown, and Lisa Gibson-Floyd; his sister, Janice Gibson Pickett; his brother, Morris Fleming Gibson; and his grandsons, Reese Ellis Brown; Robert Phillips and Austin Pittman.

It matters not the cause or causes of his death. Just as it matters not how successful or muddled up his life in this world was or was not. The traditional obituary is an exercise in curtness. It is an art form nasty, brutish, and short, taking the scrambled up, complicated thing that is a human life and smashing it into a tidy, coherent narrative.

A man is not completely born until he is dead. As a soul now freed from his body, he is now just getting started. In this life he was just rehearsing for the "real life" that is immortality. God gives bodies to all of us wandering souls for a little while, to experience pleasure; love someone; learn some tricks; have a laugh or two; and hopefully to do some good for humanity. Eventually, these bodies

Ballot...

become painful or sad or just too gross to maintain, and are shuffled off while we get back to the business of being eternal. For Lon, then, life is never done.

Lon could see how this sentiment might be comforting to a believer, but for those of us living on the other side of faith, the question of what constitutes a completed life is still an open one. Aristotle thought of life as a sum of its total actions that couldn't be judged until those actions came to an end. This might be reassuring to those hovering about the frustrated middle of their lives, harshly judging their progress. Not to worry, says Aristotle, it isn't over till it's over. And it isn't really over until you've been judged by other people at a point when you can no longer prepare a defense, be reformed, pay restitution, be rehabilitated. Judgment completes life.

In essence, you're not really dead, unless you've been the subject of an obituary. It doesn't have to be fancy - a eulogy written by a friend, acquaintance or relative, a notice in the paper, a headstone with dates that say "he was born, he lived, and then he died." These will all do. Without an obituary, it's almost as if you never existed.

You are invited aboard on a party of pleasure - that is to last forever. His chair was first ready and he is gone before us - we could not all conveniently start together, and why should you and I be grieved at this, since we are soon to follow, and we know where to find him. There will be a memorial service for Lon at Folkston Methodist Church on Saturday, September 21st at 10 a.m.

Constitutional Amendment 2: Creation of a Georgia Tax Court

This vote will decide whether the Georgia Constitution should be amended to permit the General Assembly to add a Georgia Tax Court. This new Court would operate under the Judicial Branch of Georgia and replace the current Tax Tribunal which operates under the Executive Branch. The Tax Court would be a part of the Georgia Judiciary.

This Court shall have a governor-appointed judge approved by the General Assembly.

The Court shall conduct its proceedings in any County as the General Assembly may provide in legislation for operation of the Court.

The advantage of this Court is that its judges or judges will have expertise to decide cases pertaining to the assessment and collection of State or local taxes.

Appeals would be permitted from decisions of the Tax Court as currently apply for appeals from Superior Courts.

For the Tax Court to obtain jurisdiction of a case, it must be by agreement of the parties to the dispute.

Summary: This amendment was passed by near unanimous votes of the Georgia House and Senate. It does not appear to have any negative impact, and has the potential to provide

Public Notice

Charlton County Schools and Pope Construction Company, Inc. will receive bids for Charlton County High School Phase 1 Site Work on October 3, 2024 at 2:00PM EST. A prebid meeting will be held at Charlton County High School, 994 Indian Trail, Folkston, GA 31537 on Tuesday, September 24, 2024 at 10:00AM to discuss the project and introduce the project team. Plans, specifications and addenda will be available at no cost at www.popeconstructionco.com; subcontractor registration is required prior to accessing plans. Plans, Specifications and Addenda will also be available in the iSqrFt plan room. It is the proposer's responsibility to check for and acknowledge all addenda prior to submission of bids. Questions shall be directed to Bill Vickery, Project Manager & Estimator via fax or email only, 912-764-9408, bvickery@popeconstructionco.com

Public Notice

Charlton County Board of Education

Notice of Meeting

IDEA Initial Consultation Meeting

The Charlton County School System will conduct its FY26 consultation meeting for parents of home-schooled special education students who would like to participate in the proportionate share process. The meeting will take place on October 3, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. at the Charlton County Board of Education located at 37 Touchdown Lane in Folkston, Georgia. The meeting will cover the following:

- Child Find process
- The proportionate share amount and how it is calculated
- How the consultation process will operate throughout the school year
- How and where proportionate share resources will be used
- How the district will notify parties about disagreement of services

Thank You

To the eight volunteers who participated in the Annual Labor Day Cemetery Cleaning, thank you for help. If you were not able to attend this year, but would like to make a donation, make checks payable to Sardis Cemetery Trust, P.O. Box 236, Folkston, Ga. 31537.

Call Kelly Turner at (912) 496-3585 or 912-278-4680 for all your advertising needs!

PUBLIC NOTICE

Kick Off - Joint Public Hearing
For Charlton County, City of Folkston, and City of Homeland
Comprehensive Plan Update

A public hearing will be held during the Charlton County Board of Commissioners Meeting on Thursday, October 3, 2024, in the Charlton County Commissioners Meeting Room, located at 68 Kingsland Drive, Folkston, GA to announce the beginning of the 2024-25 Comprehensive Plan Update for Charlton County and the cities of Folkston and Homeland. The purpose of this hearing is to brief the community on the process to be used to develop the Comprehensive Plan, announce opportunities for public participation in development of the plan and obtain input on the proposed planning process. Persons with special needs relating to disability access or foreign language should contact the County Clerk at the Charlton County Commission Office at (912) 496-2549. Persons with hearing disabilities may consider using the Georgia Relay Service at 1-800-255-0135. All persons are invited to attend the public hearing. If you would like more information, please contact the Charlton County Board of Commissioners at (912) 496-2549 or James Horton at the Southern Georgia Regional Commission at (229) 333-5277.

Charlton County Board of Commissioners

PUBLIC NOTICE

Sealed proposals will be received in the office of the County Administrator, Charlton County Board of Commissioners (CCBOC), Suite B, 68 Kingsland Drive, Folkston, GA, 31537, until 4:00 PM on Friday, October 18th, 2024 for a pre-engineered steel building and its construction to serve as the Ga Bend Fire Station. Please see the RFP documents for full specifications.

At that time, date, and place given above, Suite B, the sealed bids will be publicly opened and read aloud. Specifications and bid forms are included in this solicitation and can be obtained from the Office of the County Administrator or the Charlton County website, www.charltoncountyga.us.

Questions regarding this RFP should be directed to Mr. David Headley, County Administrator via Email at countyadministrator@charltoncountyga.gov and shall be received no later than 4:00 PM on Monday, October 14th, 2024. The CCBOC reserves the right to cancel this solicitation and/or reject all proposals in whole or in part if Charlton County determines that cancellation and/or rejections are advantageous to the County. Proposals are legal and binding upon the Bidder when submitted. It will also be the responsibility of each Bidder to obtain any addenda issued from the County Administrator. The written RFP documents supersede any verbal or written prior communications between the parties.

Charlton County Board of Commissioners

Kick off Official Notice in Local Newspaper

Kick-off Public Hearing Agenda

CHARLTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
 REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
 COMMISSIONERS CONFERENCE ROOM
 68 KINGSLAND DRIVE, SUITE B
 FOLKSTON, GA 31537
 THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3RD, 2024
 6:00 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE TO THE FLAG
3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA
4. PUBLIC HEARING FOR 2024-2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE
5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES
6. HEAR ABOUT COASTAL INCENTIVES GRANT PROPOSAL *Rob Brown; Merrill Varn
Goodyn Miller Co*
7. CONSIDER PURCHASE OF TRUCK FOR FIRE DEPARTMENT.
8. CONSIDER PURCHASE OF REPLACEMENT RADIOS FOR FIRE DEPARTMENT *Purchased 2013 →*
9. CONSIDER ADOPTING SOP/SOG CHANGES IN FIRE DEPARTMENT *Chief Lewis
Needs a new truck
that he drives
Standard Operating Procedures*
10. PUBLIC COMMENTS: (PLEASE LIMIT TO 3 MINUTES)
11. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS
12. EXECUTIVE SESSION (IF REQUIRED)
13. NEXT MEETING: OCTOBER 17TH, 2024, AT 6:00 PM, IN THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONER'S MEETING ROOM
14. ADJOURN

Georgia EPD is developing a statewide flood map that should be available in December 2024.

*? Homeland or Coleman Cemetery Road petition to pave
Henrietta Bailey -*

*Commissioner Alphaia Bennfield - Windstream Internet deficiency
Luke Cowen - Thank community to come together as a whole in the storm*

Southern Georgia Regional Commission
2025 JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR
CHARLTON COUNTY AND THE CITIES OF FOLKSTON AND HOMELAND
Kick-off Public Hearing
Date: October 3, 2024

NAME	ORGANIZATION	PHONE	E-MAIL
Luke Gowen	Charlton Co.	912-276-4285	lukegowen@yahoo.com
Drew Jones	Charlton Co.	912-614-0647	drowjones2@gmail.com
Rebecca Harden	Charlton Co.	912-496-2349	harden@charltoncountyga.gov
Alphabeta	Charlton Co.	912-284-4668	alphabeta@yahoo.com
Jesse	Charlton Co.	912-276-0587	jesse-claws@yahoo.com
Hennie Bailey	Charlton Co.	912-276-0777	henniebailey@yahoo.com
Kim Bednarek	OSP - w/charlton	904-207-8057	Kim.Bednarek@okeswamp.org
C.D. Gault	Charlton County Fire/Rescue	912-390-8888	Clewis@charltoncountyga.gov
Antwon Nixon	Sowing Seeds	704-504-4566	Antwon608@yahoo.com
Rob Brown	Goulding Mill-Cum	912-226-4612	rob.brown@gre.network.com
Merrill Varre	SMARC	904-465-4064	merrillvarre@vrrg.org
Tammy King	Charlton Co	912-390-0220	tamboking4@gmail.com
James Herbert	SORC	229-300-0997	James.hirst@ps1917@icloud.com

Working together

merrillvarre@varnjax.com - Stakeholder

Kick-off Public Hearing Sign-in Sheet

A group of approximately 15 people are seated around several white folding tables in a well-lit room. The room features a large window with horizontal blinds on the left, a whiteboard on the back wall, and a circular seal mounted above it. Participants are engaged in various activities, including writing on papers, looking at a laptop, and talking. The group is diverse in age and appearance. Some individuals are wearing uniforms, such as a police officer in a dark uniform and a man in a light-colored uniform. The room has a carpeted floor and several pendant lights hanging from the ceiling. A black bag with the text "Escape with" is visible on the floor in the foreground.

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Southern Georgia Regional Commission
SGRC Regional Comprehensive Plan Annual Report
Public Hearing
Date: November 21, 2024

NAME	ORGANIZATION	PHONE	E-MAIL
Marion Davis	City of Folkston	912-776-0835	mariond1980@gmail.com
David Headley	County Sheraton	770-402-2944	headley4@yahoo.com
Pender Lloyd	City of Folkston	912-496-2563	penderlloyd@yahoo.com
Darlene Williamson	City of Folkston	912-496-2563	dwilliamson@cityoffolkston.ga.gov
Carolyn DeLoach	Charlton County Historical Society	912-276-2998	Charltonhistoricalsociety@gmail.com
Melody Martindale	Charlton County Chamber of Commerce	912-496-2536	melody@charltonchamber.com
Drew Jones	Charlton County	912-614-0847	drewjones@gmail.com
Eric Loft	Okefenokee Adventures	912-496-7156	eric_loft@okefenokee.org
Larry Woodward	USFWS Okefenokee NWR	352-493-3151	larry-woodward@fws.gov
Wesley Crews	City of Homeland	912-390-1570	City of homeland@yahoo.com
Merrill Vark	St. Marys River Management	904-465-406	merrillvark@verijex.com
Heather Harris	Charlton Co. Health Dept.	912-496-2542	heather.harris@dph.ga.gov
Emily Floure	St. Marys Riverkeeper	843-906-6548	emily@stmarysriverkeeper.org
Henric Elaine Bailey	Concerned Citizen	912-276-0775	henricbailey@yahoo.com
Leroy C. Gwynn	Mayor of Homeland	912-276-0663	city of homeland@yahoo.com
Bernice Pascal	City of Homeland	912-496-7332	cityofhomeland@yahoo.com
James Horton	Southern GA. Reg Comm	229-333-5977	jhorton@sgrc.us
Robert Phillips	Sheriff	912-276-4854	sheriff.philips@charltoncountyga.gov

3. Workshop Two (2)

Charlton County Comprehensive Plan Update 2025



Workshop 2 of the Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland Comprehensive Plan Update 2025

Southern Georgia Regional Commission
2024 JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR
CHARLTON COUNTY AND THE CITIES OF FOLKSTON AND HOMELAND
Workshop II
Date: December 17, 2024

NAME	ORGANIZATION	PHONE	E-MAIL
Carolyn DeLoach	Historical Society	912-276-2998	charltonhistoryandmore@gmail.com
Patricia Scott	Historians Society	423-281-1060	3tracscott@gmail.com
James Horton	SGRC	229-333-5371	jhorton@sgrc.us
Robert Phillips	Sheriff	912-276-4853	sheriff@charltonsheriffga.gov
Lee Waterfield	City of Homeland	912-390-1019	waterfield7483@gmail.com
Leroy C. Guinn	City of Homeland	912-276-0663	cityofhomeland@yahoo.com
Wesley Crews	City of Homeland	912-390-1572	cityofhomeland@yahoo.com
Dawn Allen	Charlton Public Lib	912-492-2041	charlton@trt.org
Emily Floore	St Marys Riverkeeper	943-906-6548	emilyestmcrpriverkeeper.org
Michael Lusk	Okechet Wildlife Refuge	912-390-2193	michael-lusk@us.gov
Penker Lloyd	City of Folkston	912-777-0320	penkerlloyd@yahoo.com
Aba Tuller	Deer Lake Middle Park	904-705-3501	abatauller@folkston.com
Melody Martindale	Chamber Commerce	912-496-2536	Melody@ocofolkstonchamber.com
Dea Jones	Charlton County	912-644-0657	deajones2@gmail.com
Veronica Kelly-Summers	Okechet Wildlife Refuge	561-523-1466	Veronica-Kelly@us.gov
Henriette Elaine Bailey	Charlton Citizen	912-276-0775	henriettebailey@yahoo.com
Merrill Varn	St. Marks River Wakulla River a private citizen	904-356-4881	merrillvarn@varnjex.com

Workshop 2 of the Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland Comprehensive Plan Update 2025 Sign-in Sheet

4. Workshop Three (3)

Charlton County Comprehensive Plan Update 2025



Workshop 3 Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland Comprehensive Plan Update 2025

**Southern Georgia Regional Commission
2024 JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR
CHARLTON COUNTY AND THE CITIES OF FOLKSTON AND HOMELAND
Workshop III**

Date: January 21, 2024

NAME	ORGANIZATION	PHONE	E-MAIL
Merrill Vukc	SKAKC	908 961 9066	merrillvukc@wkydc.com
Walden Hamilton	Owston County Family Connection	912 464 4414	owstoncountyfamilyconnection@gmail.com
Honnie & Elaine Bailey	Charlton County Family Connection	912-276-0775	honnibailey@wkydc.com
Kim Behnke	OSP	904-707-8057	Kim.behnke@okdss.wa.gov
MARION DAVIS DPH	City of Folkston	912 276 0235	mariond1980@gmail.com
Drew Jones	Charlton County	912-614-0647	drewjones2@gmail.com
Rene Lloyd	City of Folkston	912-496-2563	renerlloyd@yahoo.com
GLENN HULL	CHARLTON COUNTY	912-344-0373	ghull@charltoncountygov.gov
michael Lusk	okefenokee NWB	912-390-2193	Michael-Lusk@fwsgov
Veronica Kelly-Summers	Okefenokee NWB	561-523-1460	Veronica_Kelly@fwsgov
Jarolyn DeLoach	Historical Society	912-276-2498	charltonhistoryandmore@ymail.com

Workshop 3 Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland Sign-in Sheet

5. Final Public Hearing (Transmittal) Notice May 15, 2025

Crews family reunion slated

Attention family and friends of the late Ivey (Buddy Tye) Crews and Mary Jane Barber. The Annual Crews Reunion will be held on Saturday, May 3, at the Old Home Place (5699 Crews Community Road, Folkston, GA 31537). Lunch will be served at 1:00 p.m.

Anyone who would like to come early may do so after 10:00 a.m. Just as a reminder, please bring your favorite dish and lawn chairs. Plates, cups, etc. will be furnished.

Food giveaway May 3

The WWLTC Outreach Ministry's Food Giveaway will be held on Saturday, May 3. The event will be held from 8:00 - 11:00 a.m. The giveaway will be held at 210 Central Ave., in Homeland.

Southeast Georgia Health System hosts May Blood Drives

Donating blood is a selfless act by one person to help save the lives of others. Blood cannot be manufactured, and local hospitals rely on LifeSouth blood donors to make sure blood is on the shelf to help patients in their moment of need. Approximately 37 percent of the U.S. population is eligible to donate, yet less than 10 percent donate annually.

LifeSouth Community Blood Centers is holding blood drives at both the Southeast Georgia Health System Brunswick and Camden campuses. Donors will receive a \$20 e-gift card, T-shirt, free cholesterol screening, and the satisfaction of saving lives in their community. Half of the units collected will be donated directly to Southeast Georgia Health System.

Camden Campus: The LifeSouth Mobile Unit will be located at 2000 Dan Proctor Drive, Tuesday, May 6, from 8 a.m.-1 p.m.

To register for the blood drive, visit <https://bit.ly/DNTBLD>. Registration opens 14 days prior to event.

**THE DEADLINE FOR ALL
NEWS AND ADVERTISING
IS FRIDAY AT 4:00 P.M.**



Football Banquet held

On April 27, the football banquet was held at the Charlton County High School gym and cafeteria to honor those who competed on Champ Bailey Field and beyond. Honorees were 6U, 8U, 10U, 12U, Glover Brothers Cheer, and the CCHS football team. After the awards ceremony, everyone enjoyed a meal in the cafeteria. The CCHS football team and the Glover Brothers thanked everyone for coming out to the banquet. (Caption and photo by Kelvin Henderson)

PUBLIC NOTICE

FOR CHARLTON COUNTY AND THE CITIES OF FOLKSTON AND HOMELAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TRANSMITTAL

A public meeting to review and transmit the 2025-2029 Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland Comprehensive Plan Update to the Southern Georgia Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for review, will be held on Thursday May 15, 2025, at 6:00 PM. The meeting will be held in the Charlton County Commission Meeting Room at 68 Kingsland Drive, Folkston, GA 31537. Residents are invited to attend and ask questions or offer comments. Copies of the Plan Update are available for public review at the Charlton County Commissioners Office, and for download at the SGRC website www.sgrc.us. For more information, contact the Charlton County at 912-496-2549, or the Southern Georgia Regional Commission at (229) 333-5277.

Transmittal Public Hearing Sign-in May 15, 2025



SIGN IN SHEET
 Comprehensive Plan Transmittal Meeting
 COUNTY/CITIES: Charlton County
 DATE: 5/15/2025
 TIME: 6 pm

sgirc
 SOUTHERN GEORGIA
 REGIONAL COMMISSION

REGIONAL SERVICES • COMMUNITY FOCUSED

NAME	ORGANIZATION	TITLE	EMAIL
Jesse Clevs	Buety Commissioner	Commissioner	jesse-clevs@yaho.com
Alphonse Spangford	County Commissioner	Chairman	alphonse@yaho.com
Ed J.	County Commissioner	Vice Chairman	lufegov@yaho.com
Drew Jones	Charlton County	Commissioner	drewjones@gmail.com
James E. Everett	Chautauque	Commissioner	evins247@gmail.com
James Hutton	SGRC	Staff	jhutton@sgrc.us

Transmittal Letter for Charlton County



Alphya Benefield, Chairman
Luke Gowen, Vice Chairman
James E. Everett, Commissioner
Jesse Crews, Commissioner
Drew Jones, Commissioner

68 Kingsland Drive, Suite B
Folkston, GA 31537-2872
(912) 496-2549 (office)
(912) 496-1156 (fax)

Glenn Hull, Administrator
Madeline Nettles, County Clerk
John B. Adams, County Attorney

June 3, 2025

To: Southern Georgia Regional Commission
1937 Carlton Adams Dr.
Valdosta, Georgia 31601

RE: Comprehensive Plan Update Submittal

Charlton County has completed an update of its Comprehensive Plan and is submitting it with this letter for review by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission and the Department of Community Affairs.

I certify that we have held the required public hearings and have involved the public in development of the plan in a manner appropriate to our community's dynamics and resources. Evidence of this has been included with our submittal.

I certify that appropriate staff and decision-makers have reviewed both the Regional Water Plan(s) covering our area and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria (O.C.G.A. 12-2-8) and taken them into consideration in formulating our plan.

If you have any questions concerning our submittal, please contact Madeline Nettles at (912) 496-2541 or at mnettlles@charltoncountyga.gov.

Sincerely,


Alphya Benefield, Chairwoman
Charlton County Board of Commissioners

Visit our website at www.CharltonCountyGA.us

Transmittal Letter for the City of Folkston



LEE GOWEN, Mayor
RUBY BAKER, Councilmember
MARION DAVIS, Mayor Pro Tem
RICK CARTER, Councilmember
ROB ROBERSON, Councilmember
BRUCE YOUNG, Councilmember
LEONARD H. LLOYD, City Manager
DARLENE WILLIAMSON, City Clerk
WESLEY GREEN, Chief of Police
PATRICK BROOKS, City Attorney

June 3, 2025

To: Southern Georgia Regional Commission
1937 Carlton Adams Dr.
Valdosta, Georgia 31601

RE: Comprehensive Plan Update Submittal

The City of Folkston has completed an update of its Comprehensive Plan and is submitting it with this letter for review by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission and the Department of Community Affairs.

I certify that we have held the required public hearings and have involved the public in development of the plan in a manner appropriate to our community's dynamics and resources. Evidence of this has been included with our submittal.

I certify that appropriate staff and decision-makers have reviewed both the Regional Water Plan(s) covering our area and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria (O.C.G.A. 12-2-8) and taken them into consideration in formulating our plan.

If you have any questions concerning our submittal, please contact Darlene Williamson, City Clerk at (912) 496-2563 or at dwilliamson@cityoffolkston-ga.gov.

Sincerely,

Lee Gowen, Mayor
City of Folkston

541 First Street · Folkston, GA 31537 · Telephone (912) 496-2563 · Fax (912) 496-3844

Transmittal Letter for the City of Homeland

CITY OF HOMELAND
401 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE
HOMELAND, GA 31537
PHONE: 912-496-7332
FAX: 912-496-3747
cityofhomeland@yahoo.com

June 3, 2025

To: Southern Georgia Regional Commission
1937 Carlton Adams Dr.
Homeland, Georgia 31601

RE: Comprehensive Plan Update Submittal

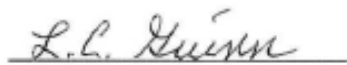
The City of Homeland has completed an update of its Comprehensive Plan and is submitting it with this letter for review by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission and the Department of Community Affairs.

I certify that we have held the required public hearings and have involved the public in development of the plan in a manner appropriate to our community's dynamics and resources. Evidence of this has been included with our submittal.

I certify that appropriate staff and decision-makers have reviewed both the Regional Water Plan(s) covering our area and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria (O.C.G.A. 12-2-8) and taken them into consideration in formulating our plan.

If you have any questions concerning our submittal, please contact Bernice Pascal, City Clerk at (912) 496-7332 or cityofhomeland@yahoo.com.

Sincerely,



LC Guinn, Mayor
City of Homeland

Charlton County Adoption Resolution July 17, 2025

CHARLTON COUNTY


**RESOLUTION TO ADOPT
2025 JOINT CHARLTON COUNTY and CITIES OF FOLKSTON AND HOMELAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**

WHEREAS, Charlton County has completed the 2025 Joint Charlton County and the Cities Folkston and Homeland Comprehensive Plan Update.

WHEREAS, this document was prepared according to the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that Charlton County does hereby adopt the 2025 Joint Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland Comprehensive Plan Update.

Adopted this 17th Day of July, 2025


Alpha Benefield, Chairwoman of the County Commission


ATTEST: Madeline Nettles, County Clerk

City of Folkston Adoption Resolution July 21, 2025

CITY OF FOLKSTON

**RESOLUTION TO ADOPT
2025 JOINT CHARLTON COUNTY, AND THE CITIES OF FOLKSTON AND
HOMELAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**

WHEREAS, the City of Folkston has completed the 2025 Joint Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland, Comprehensive Plan Update.

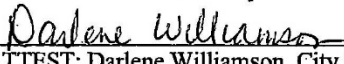
WHEREAS, this document was prepared according to the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, Chapter 110-12-1, Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning effective 2018.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the City of Folkston does hereby adopt the 2025 Joint Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland, Comprehensive Plan Update.

Adopted this 21st Day of July, 2025



Lee Gowen, Mayor City of Folkston



ATTEST: Darlene Williamson, City Clerk



City of Homeland Adoption Resolution July 10, 2025

CITY OF HOMELAND

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE 2025 JOINT CHARLTON COUNTY, AND THE CITIES OF FOLKSTON AND HOMELAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

WHEREAS, the City of Homeland has completed the 2025 Joint Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland, Comprehensive Plan Update.

WHEREAS, this document was prepared according to the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, Chapter 110-12-1, Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning effective 2018.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the City of Homeland does hereby adopt the 2025 Joint Charlton County and the Cities of Folkston and Homeland, Comprehensive Plan Update.

Adopted this 10th Day of July, 2025

L. C. Guinn
Mayor L.C. Guinn, Mayor City of Homeland

Nikki Johnson
ATTEST: Nikki Johnson, City Clerk

