

2026  
Joint Comprehensive Plan Update  
For  
Ware County and the City of Waycross

Adopted: April 26, 2021



Prepared by:  
Ware County  
City of Waycross  
Southern Georgia Regional Commission

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## I. Chapter 110-12-1. Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning

### I. Introduction

The 2026 Joint Ware County and the City of Waycross Comprehensive Plan were prepared per the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Chapter 110-12-1, Minimum Standards, and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, effective March 1, 2025.

As required by the Local Comprehensive Planning Standards, the 2025 Joint Ware County – City of Waycross Comprehensive Plan Update consists of the following elements:

- **Community Goals**
- **Needs and Opportunities**
- **Community Work Program**
- **Broadband Services**
- **Economic Development Element**

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

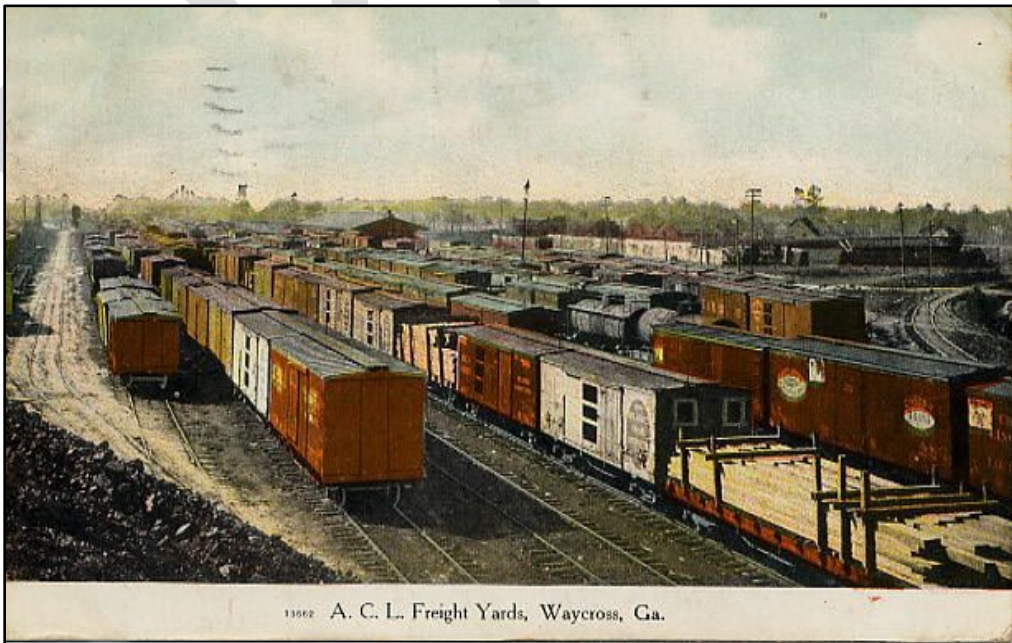
A separate summarized economic development element is included in this Comprehensive Plan. By reference, it adopts the current regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Also, any economic development goals, policies, needs, opportunities, and objectives about Ware County and the City of Waycross have been integrated directly into their parallel components in this Comprehensive Plan.)

- **Land Use**

(As a community with zoning or land development regulations subject to the Zoning Procedures Law)

- **Transportation**
- **Joint Land Use Study Comprehensive Land Use and Policies**

**II. History**  
Waycross/Ware County





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### Early and Pre-railroad history

- The area that would become Waycross lies in south-eastern Georgia’s coastal plain. ([Encyclopedia Britannica](#))
- Ware County, Georgia was established in 1824 when Appling County was divided. ([New Georgia Encyclopedia](#))
- Native American presence was significant, and conflict remained—one example: the “Wildes Massacre” of 1838 in Ware County during the Second Seminole War, where Creek warriors killed nine people and then escaped into the nearby Okefenokee Swamp. ([New Georgia Encyclopedia](#))
- Early settlers also used nearby rivers (e.g., Satilla) for rafting pine logs to sawmills on the coast in the mid-1800s. ([New Georgia Encyclopedia](#))

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### Naming & Incorporation

- The settlement that became Waycross began around a junction of railroads and earlier stage/trader trails. According to the city’s website:
- In 1857 a station named “Tebeauville” was established (after Frederic E. Tebeau) near where the Savannah-Thomasville railroad under construction would intersect. ([waycrossga.gov](#))
- The older name “Old Nine” or “Number Nine” was applied locally to the area. ([Wikipedia](#))
- The name “Waycross” reflects its character as a crossing of ways (trajectories, trails, rail lines). The city website notes a story: Dr. Daniel Lott, Major Henry Haines (Savannah Railroad superintendent), and B.F. Allen (newspaper editor) chose the name “Waycross” when deciding on a name for the railroad junction. ([waycrossga.gov](#))
- Official incorporation: The town was incorporated as “Way Cross” on March 3, 1874. ([Wikipedia](#))

## Railroad & Boom Era

- The growth of Waycross is closely tied to railroads. The junction of several lines (including the Plant System and Brunswick & Western) made it a transportation hub. ([waycrosschamber.org](http://waycrosschamber.org))
- From 1872 to about 1920 the town experienced rapid growth; it was even called “The Magic City of Southern Georgia” during that period. ([NPGallery](http://NPGallery))
- The railroad’s presence influenced the layout of downtown: for example the grid of streets in the historic district reflects the “Maltese cross” pattern of the Plant System’s logo. ([waycrosschamber.org](http://waycrosschamber.org))
- Because of its rail yard and rail-traffic role, Waycross became central in regional transport of goods (timber, turpentine, farming produce) and passengers. ([Encyclopedia Britannica](http://Encyclopedia Britannica))

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## Economic and Social Development

- Timber, turpentine, sawmills and farming were mainstays of the economy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. ([Encyclopedia Britannica](http://Encyclopedia Britannica))
- The proximity to the Okefenokee Swamp and forested land added natural-resource dimension to the economy and culture. ([waycrosschamber.org](http://waycrosschamber.org))
- In 1917, Waycross became the first city in Georgia to open municipal primary elections to white women. (Note: fully universal women’s suffrage at state level came in 1922.) ([Wikipedia](http://Wikipedia))
- Key buildings & institutions:
- The former YMCA building (built in 1911 and later repurposed as City Hall) stands as a sign of the town’s early ambition. ([waycrossga.gov](http://waycrossga.gov))
- Historic districts and buildings (e.g., downtown historic district, First African Baptist Church & Parsonage) preserve architectural heritage. ([Wikipedia](http://Wikipedia))

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## Mid-20th Century & Beyond

- During WWII the local airport (now Waycross–Ware County Airport) was part of the U.S. Army Air Forces training activity. ([Wikipedia](http://Wikipedia))
- In the ‘50s an interesting local tourist gimmick: the Police would stop out-of-state license plates, escort visitors to downtown Waycross, give them lodging/dinner and a trip to the swamp. This faded after the Interstate system bypassed the town. ([Wikipedia](http://Wikipedia))
- The shift in transportation (decline of passenger rail, rise of highways) and broader structural changes meant that rail-based towns like Waycross had to adapt.
- More recently, Waycross remains a regional hub: e.g., the rail yard (operated by CSX Transportation) is cited as one of the largest computerised switching/classification yards on the East Coast. ([waycrosschamber.org](http://waycrosschamber.org))

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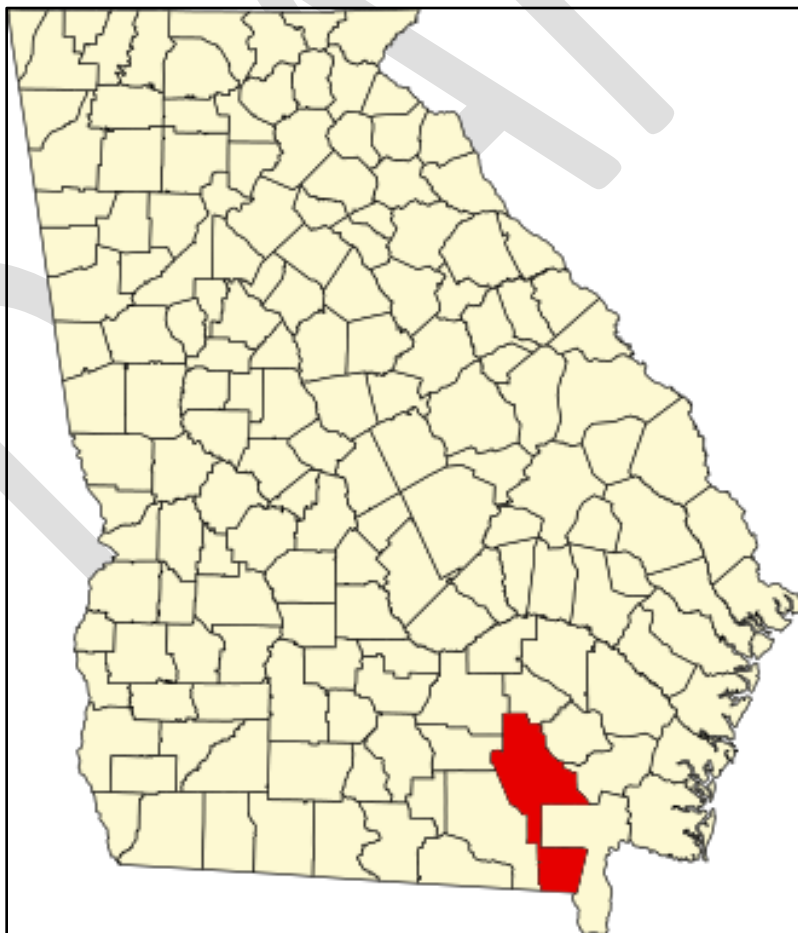
## Heritage & Identity

- The city’s historic downtown area, with over 200 heritage-listed buildings, draws tourists and reflects its past. ([expedia](http://expedia))
- As the “northern gateway” to the Okefenokee Swamp, Waycross links to a unique natural environment and to pioneer/Native American/forestry heritage. ([waycrosschamber.org](http://waycrosschamber.org))
- The name “Waycross” continues to symbolize its role where “ways cross” — roads, rail lines, commerce, people.

### Modern Snapshot & Challenges

- According to the 2010 Census, the city had about 14,649 people; in 2000 about 15,333; showing modest decline. ([waycrossga.gov](http://waycrossga.gov))
  - Its economy today includes manufacturing (forest products, tobacco), transportation/logistics, and serves a wider eight-county region. ([TED](#))
  - Like many small-city historic towns, Waycross faces challenges of revitalizing downtown, preserving historic buildings, adapting to economic change and leveraging heritage and environment for tourism. ([wwda.us](http://wwda.us))
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- It's a clear example of how transportation infrastructure (railroads, transportation junctions) can generate and shape a town's origin and growth.
- Its proximity to the Okefenokee Swamp and forest resources gives it a distinct ecological and historical character, tying together industrial, natural-resource and pioneer histories.
- The preserved historic districts and buildings allow insight into architectural and civic ambitions of a Southern railroad-town of the late 19th and early 20th century.
- Its early adoption of women's municipal primary voting speaks to a unique civic history in Georgia.





### Founding and early configuration

- Ware County was created on **December 15, 1824** out of a portion of Appling County, Georgia. (New Georgia Encyclopedia)
- It was named for Nicholas Ware, a U.S. Senator from Georgia (1821-1824) who never visited the area. (New Georgia Encyclopedia)
- At the time of its creation, the territory of Ware County was very large and over time portions of it were carved off to create new counties (for example: Charlton County, Georgia in 1854, Clinch County, Georgia 1850, Pierce County, Georgia 1857). (Wikipedia)
- The original county-seat was at Waresboro (sometimes spelled Waresborough) in the early years. (AHGP)

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### Indigenous presence & early settlement

- Prior to extensive settlement by people of European descent, this region was part of lands inhabited by Native American groups (primarily the Creek/Muscogee and other Indigenous peoples).
- The creation of Appling County (from which Ware was carved) followed Indian land cessions (e.g., the 1814 Treaty of Fort Jackson) that opened territory in southern Georgia. (AHGP)
- Ware County's territory includes part of the vast Okefenokee Swamp ("land of quaking earth"), which for a long time served as a frontier, wilderness refuge, and barrier to settlement. (Digital Library of Georgia)
- One of the more dramatic early conflicts: In 1838, during the Second Seminole War era, the so-called Wildes Massacre occurred in Ware County — nine people were killed by a group of Creek warriors who retreated into the Okefenokee. (New Georgia Encyclopedia)

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### Transportation, settlement & economic growth

- The county benefited from its geography: rivers (such as the Satilla River) and the swamp influenced settlement, industry and transport. For example, in the mid- to late-1800s, the Satilla River was used to raft longleaf pine from inland forests to sawmills on the coast. (okefenokeeheritagecenter.org)

- The Okefenokee Swamp contributed cypress timber (especially from operations like the Hebardville Cypress Mill) and the development of narrow-gauge railroads to haul timber out of the swamp. (okefenokeeheritagecenter.org)
- The city of Waycross, Georgia (now the county seat) emerged as a transportation hub. The name “Waycross” reflects the intersection of several roads/trails — “ways crossing” — and later railroads. (New Georgia Encyclopedia)
- By the late 19th century, the railroad era bolstered Waycross and Ware County’s development. The shift of the county seat from Waresboro to Waycross occurred as Waycross grew. (AHGP)

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### Government, infrastructure & key structures

- According to historical markers: After the county’s creation, in early 1825 an inferior court was set up with justices named (William Smith, Solomon Hall, John L. Stewart Jr., Philemon Bryan, Absalom Thomas) and then in 1826 the first county officers were elected (sheriff, clerk, surveyor, etc.). (Georgia Historical Society)
- The present county courthouse in Waycross was built in 1956-57, a modern structure of Georgia marble and concrete, the “U”-shaped building designed by William J. J. Chase & Associates. (American Courthouses)

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### Land, size, and geography

- Ware County is the largest county in Georgia by land area (over 900 square miles) in some accounts. (Digital Library of Georgia)
- A significant portion of the county is forestland or swamp. In fact, forest covers ~88-89% of the land area in modern data. (Digital Library of Georgia)
- The presence of the Okefenokee Swamp in the southern part of the county gives the region a unique ecological, cultural, and economic dimension. (New Georgia Encyclopedia)

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### Economy & industry

- In the 19th and early-20th centuries, the dominant economic activities included agriculture (small farms, subsistence), timber harvesting (especially pine and cypress), turpentine distilling, sawmills, and later railroads and transport. (Amazon Web Services, Inc.)
- Timber was especially important: the longleaf pine and cypress operations in the county and adjacent region fed coastal markets and industries. (okefenokeeheritagecenter.org)
- Over time, transportation (railroads) and retail also grew in importance; Waycross emerged as a regional commercial center for the region. (okefenokeeheritagecenter.org)

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### Cultural & natural heritage

- The presence of the Okefenokee Swamp gives Ware County significant natural heritage. It has been a site for wildlife, tourism (e.g., swamp tours), and conservation efforts. (Digital Library of Georgia)
- A notable state park: Laura S. Walker State Park was established near Waycross. The park’s land was purchased in the 1930s (Depression-era federal land-use projects) and the park was officially established in 1941. It’s named after writer-conservationist Laura Singleton Walker. (Georgia State Parks)
- The county has produced a number of artists and writers; for example, author Caroline Miller (Pulitzer Prize winner) is from the area. (New Georgia Encyclopedia)

### Social & demographic developments

- Like many rural Georgia counties, Ware County has gone through periods of population growth (in the 19th/early 20th centuries) and also decline especially in towns when industries or transportation patterns shift. For instance, in the 1980s the city of Waycross lost a sizable portion of its population (~15 %) according to data in a 1994 snapshot. (Digital Library of Georgia)
  - Education, community institutions, and local government have grown over time. For example, local colleges (such as the former Waycross College) and technical colleges contribute to regional development. (okefenokeeheritagecenter.org)
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### Modern era & challenges

- In more recent times Ware County continues to leverage its regional role: as the county seat and regional retail hub, as a gateway to nature/tourism via the swamp, and as a forested landscape with forestry and conservation.
  - There are challenges too: economic shifts, employment changes (for example, decline of railroads and some industries), and natural-resource issues (wildfires in forestlands are noted in county hazard mitigation plans). (sgrc.us)
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### Why Ware County matters

- Its large size, forested/swamped terrain, and strategic position in southeast Georgia make it historically significant in terms of timber, transportation and ecology.
- The story of Ware County illustrates the broader patterns of southern Georgia: settlement from the 1800s, logging of pine and cypress, railroads, and changing economies.
- The Okefenokee Swamp and associated wilderness in the county form a distinctive natural and cultural landmark in the Southeast.

## 1. Community Involvement

All of the required elements have been developed with extensive opportunity for involvement and input from stakeholders throughout the community. The following steps were taken to ensure that this plan reflected the full range of needs and opportunities from the many stakeholders and residents in the community:

- a. Stakeholders were identified. These included:
  - i. The local governments' elected officials and staff
  - ii. Local educational institutions (Ware County Board of Education, South Georgia State College)
  - iii. The Waycross-Ware County Chamber of Commerce
  - iv. Waycross-Ware County Development Authority
  - v. Public safety departments, including police, fire, and the Ware County Emergency Management Agency
  - vi. The Satilla Riverkeeper
  - vii. Waycross-Ware County Airport
  - viii. Waycross-Ware County Public Library
  - ix. Local businesses and industries
  - x. The general public
- b. Participation techniques were identified. Techniques used included public hearings and meetings open to the public with open discussion; printed public information in local newspapers; e-mail correspondence with stakeholders; individual meetings with local government officials; and information on the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's website, local government websites, and social media.
- c. A participation program was conducted. This included an initial public hearing to give an overview of the plan update and receive initial public comments; four workshops, open to the public, for the development of the plan update; and a final public hearing to receive any final public comments before transmitting the plan draft to DCA for review. Identified stakeholders were invited to all the meetings and attended, yielding specific input in plan content.
- d. Public participation activities were documented. The documentation of public participation activities is included in the Appendix to this plan, which contains sign-in sheets and published advertisements.

### **1st Public Hearing – “Kick-Off”**

The public hearing kicking off the comprehensive planning process was held on August 11, 2025 at the Ware County Administration Building in Waycross. It was held for the purpose of making any potential stakeholders and residents aware that the comprehensive plan update and review was now underway; to explain the purpose of the update; and to encourage residents and other stakeholders to actively participate in the plan update.



### **First Workshop**

First Workshop was held on October 28, 2025. The purpose of the workshop was to update the goals, needs, and opportunities in the comprehensive plan. This was done through open discussion, using the goals, needs, and opportunities from the previous comprehensive plan as a starting point. SGRC staff took notes from the discussion, revised the goals, needs, and opportunities based on those notes, and shared the results with stakeholders via e-mail.

In addition, a SWOT analysis was performed in which each attendee noted the community’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The results of this SWOT analysis were used to further inform the Needs and Opportunities. The SWOT analysis was also made available to the general public to complete online. Link were provided to the online analysis by the SGRC, the City of Waycross, Ware County, and others through social media. SGRC Staff members gathered the information of the online version and added to this document. Ware posted meeting dates on social media platforms to invite the public to participate in the process.

### **Second Workshop**

The second workshop was held on November 19, 2025 was held on January 29, 2026 at the Ware County Government Building. The purpose of the workshop was to continue and finish updating the needs and opportunities.



### **Third Workshop**

The third workshop was held on January 29, 2026 at the Ware County Government Building. SGRC staff took notes from the discussion, revised the goals, needs, and opportunities based on those notes, and shared the results with stakeholders via e-mail. Additional comments and edits were received via e-mail and were included by SGRC staff as part of the preparation of the draft plan document.

### **Fourth Workshop**

The fourth workshop was held on March 10, 2026. The purpose of the workshop was updated the Community Work Programs for both the City of Waycross and Ware County.

### **Character Area Meeting**

A fifth meeting was held on April 15, 2026 to discuss changes to Waycross and Ware County's Character Area Map.



## Final public hearing

A final public hearing was held on May 11, 2026 in order to present the final version of the plan to the community, receive any additional public input, and approve the transmittal of the draft plan to DCA. The plan was transmitted to DCA directly after the public hearing.

## Adoption

The 2021 Comprehensive Plan for Ware County and the City of Waycross was adopted by Ware County on April 26, 2021. The City of Waycross adopted the plan on April 20, 2021. The resolutions are provided in the Appendix.

DRAFT

### 3. 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 applicable to their area and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria (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

Ware County is within the area of the Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan, which was adopted in June 2023. The Suwannee-Satilla Council is one of 11 planning regions charged with developing Regional Water Plans and encompasses 18 counties in the southeastern portion of Georgia (shown in Figure ES-1). An overview of the updated findings and recommendations for the Suwannee- Satilla Region are provided in this Executive Summary. The Suwannee- Satilla Council's Regional Water Plan is available on the Council's website.



Source: CDM Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan Figure ES-1

The Suwannee-Satilla Council has identified 13 goals for the region. It is important to note that the goals are summarized below, not presented in order of priority, but instead were assigned a number to identify specific goals addressed as part of the water management practice selection process.

*“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.”*

#### Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan Goals:

1. Manage and develop water resources to sustainably and reliably meet domestic, commercial, industrial water needs, and agricultural water needs, including all agricultural sectors (this includes the agroforestry economy of the region).

2. Manage groundwater and surface water to encourage sustainable economic and population growth in the region.
3. Manage the region's and state's water resources in a manner that preserves and protects private property rights.
4. Ensure an adequate water supply of suitable quality to meet current and future human needs, while protecting environmental resources.
5. Identify opportunities to optimize existing and future supplies, and water and wastewater infrastructure.
6. Promote efficient use and management of surface and groundwater resources to allow for sufficient supplies for current and future generations.
7. Protect and manage surface and groundwater recharge areas to ensure sufficient long-term water supplies for the region.
8. Protect, maintain, and where appropriate and practicable, identify opportunities to enhance water quality, and river base flows.
9. Protect and maintain regional water-dependent recreational opportunities.
10. Identify opportunities to manage stormwater to improve water quantity and quality.
11. Identify and implement cost-effective water management strategies.
12. Seek to provide economically affordable power and water resource service to all citizens of the region.
13. Identify and implement actions to better measure and share water use data and information.

***Addressing Water Needs and Regional Goals***

This Section presents the Suwannee-Satilla Council's water management practices selected to address resource shortfalls or challenges identified and described in Section 5, and/or meet the Council's Vision and Goals described in Section 1.

***Identifying Water Management Practices***

The comparison of Resource Assessments and forecasted needs presented in Section 5 identifies the Region's likely resource shortfalls or challenges and demonstrates the need for region and resource specific water management practices. In the cases where shortfalls or challenges appear to be unlikely based on the comparison of the Region's Resource Assessments and forecasted needs, the management practices described in this section have been selected to also meet those needs specified by the Council (e.g., facility/infrastructure needs and practices, programmatic practices, etc.) that are aligned with the Region's Vision and Goals. In selecting the actions needed (i.e., water management practices), the 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 who share these water resources.

***Review of Existing Plans and Practices***

The Council conducted a comprehensive review of existing local and regional water management plans and relevant related documents to frame the selection of management practices. The types of plans/studies that were reviewed to support identification and selection of management practices for the Suwannee-Satilla Region consisted of the following:

- Comprehensive Work Plans (local and regional scale)
- Regional infrastructure and permitting plans

- EPD databases (permitted withdrawals, planned projects, and proposed reservoirs)
- State-wide guidance documents (conservation, cost, and water planning)
- Best Management Practices (forestry, agriculture, and stormwater management)
- Water quality studies including Watershed Protection Plans (basin, watershed, and local scale)
- TMDL evaluations

When possible, successful management practices already planned for and/or in use in the Suwannee-Satilla Region formed the basis for the water management practices selected by the Council.

#### Chapter 391-3-16, Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria

The Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria 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 Department of Natural Resources (DNR) 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 DNR, 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 regulations.

## 2. Plan Elements

### Community Goals

#### Vision and Goals

The following Vision and Goals are intended to serve as guiding principles for the future of Ware County and the City of Waycross. The Vision and Goals were updated during the 2025/2026 Comprehensive Plan Update based on input from the stakeholders. The previous plan didn't contain an Education Goal was added to the plan in order to showcase the importance of the education in every aspect of the future of Waycross and Ware County.

#### **Vision**

To improve the overall lifestyle of our citizens with smart and controlled growth that takes advantage of our City's and County's rich history, resources, and talents.

#### **Goals**

1. **Population Goal:** Ensure that all segments of the population benefit from overall community growth and development.
2. **Economic Development Goal:** Improve the economy by developing and enhancing new and existing strengths that will draw new business, expand existing businesses, expand tourism, diversify the local economy, support a vibrant Downtown, and help the County and the City compete in the regional and global economies.
3. **Housing Goal:** Provide opportunities for homeownership and housing resources for all citizens of Ware County and the City of Waycross through public/private partnerships.
4. **Natural Resources Goal:** Conserve, protect, and develop the functions and values of the City's and County's natural resources for future generations' appropriate use and enjoyment.
5. **Cultural Resources Goal:** Protect, preserve, develop, and promote the City's and County's historic and cultural resources through such measures as regulations, adaptive reuse, tourism, and education programs focused on historic preservation.
6. **Land Use Goal:** Ensure the highest quality of living environment possible by improving the community's aesthetic quality through a mixture of compatible land uses and character areas reflecting the needs and desires of the local residents.
7. **Community Facilities Goal:** Ensure that adequate community facilities, such as water, sewer, broadband, solid waste, police, fire, and EMS, are provided in an effective, environmentally sound, safe, and economic system, consistent and concurrent with present demand and future growth.
8. **Transportation Goal:** Provide a safe and efficient transportation system that addresses the future needs of the County and the City for the movement of people and freight, while considering that system's social, economic, energy, and environmental effects.

9. **Intergovernmental Coordination Goal:** Establish effective coordination measures among all pertinent public and quasi-public entities to best maintain the City’s and the County’s quality of life and resources.

10. **Broadband:** Provide digital broadband and communications in a manner that ensures the current and future needs of residents, businesses, and industry within Ware County and the City of Waycross.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

### **Needs and Opportunities**

The Needs and Opportunities listed in this section were developed by stakeholders and residents as part of the 2026 Comprehensive Plan Update process. The method used to develop the Needs and Opportunities was open discussion among stakeholders during community workshops, during which a consensus was reached regarding what the Needs and Opportunities should be and how they should be updated. Input from stakeholders, including the results of a SWOT analysis conducted in the first workshop and through an online survey. The information was gathered by Southern Georgia Regional Commission staff and then organized into this section of the Comprehensive Plan. Additional input sent via e-mail and phone calls was integrated into the draft plan document by SGRC staff, and many successive drafts of the plan were reviewed by the stakeholders and publicized via the SGRC website before the draft was finalized. Each of the needs is addressed by corresponding policies in the “Policies” section.

#### **Population**

##### **Needs:**

- 1.1. Young people need more incentives to remain in Ware County/Waycross rather than leaving. The community’s appeal to younger people needs to be emphasized. Outreach is needed in order to change the attitudes of younger people who wish to leave the community.
- 1.2. More involvement from younger people is needed in order to determine what they want in the community. This involvement could come through Leadership Waycross or through creating a youth leadership program, for example.
- 1.3. Ware County/Waycross needs incentives for workers to live in the community rather than commuting in from elsewhere.
- 1.4. Population needs to be stabilized and continued growth encouraged.

##### **Opportunities:**

- 1.1. Increase efforts to retain/attract younger adults through job opportunities and available activities.
- 1.2. Pursue attraction of retirees to the area by emphasizing the quality of life and continuing to develop quality retirement communities.

#### **Economic Development**

##### **Needs:**

- 1.5. Better job opportunities are needed for people who graduate from the local colleges. Waycross has two excellent technical colleges (Coastal Pines and South Georgia State College); however, insufficient jobs are available locally to retain the educated workforce.

- 1.6. A more centralized vision is needed for the area by the city, County and the business community.
- 1.7. More public relations and marketing of the City and County are needed. The area's greatest assets, such as quality of life and small-town feel with large-town amenities, are inadequately promoted. The Rural Center at ABAC may be a resource for this.
- 1.8. There needs to be more awareness of the Downtown Visitor's Center located inside City Hall and the resources it provides.
- 1.9. Downtown needs more evening events and businesses that stay open after 5:00.
- 1.10. A Downtown Business Resource Center is needed.
- 1.11. There are several properties in prime Downtown locations that are occupied but not actively used (for example, being used for storage). The use of these properties needs to be regained in order to spur the local economy.
- 1.12. A comprehensive listing of economic development and community websites and information resources is needed.
- 1.13. The existing rail system is under-utilized in helping to recruit new businesses. At the same time, there is a need for additional developable property close to rail lines.
- 1.14. Southern Georgia as a whole needs more adequate representation and consideration by the State Legislature.

**Opportunities:**

- 2.1. Pursue the development of a comprehensive Master Plan for economic development and promotion of Waycross/Ware County.
- 2.2. Capitalize on the existing geography of Waycross/Ware County, with its close location to the coast, I-95, US-1, Hwy. 82, and Hwy. 84, as well as its proximity to Jacksonville Airport and the Ports of Brunswick, Jacksonville, and Savannah. The area is also less subject to impact by hurricanes than coastal areas.
- 2.3. Waycross/Ware County has 5 direct rail lines, including a rail connection to the industrial park.
- 2.4. Attract industries that can utilize rail. Research funds and opportunities to develop additional properties along rail lines.
- 2.5. The train-watching platform is an asset for tourism.
- 2.6. Encourage the development of RV facilities in the county to support tourism.
- 2.7. Space Port Camden offers many great economic opportunities due to Waycross/Ware County's proximity to that area.
- 2.8. Investing in a young professionals' organization could expand networking and economic opportunities. This could be a collaboration between the Chamber of Commerce and Leadership Waycross, or a youth leadership program could be created.

2.9. The Rural Center at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College or the Rural Development Institute at Valdosta State University has done marketing plans for other communities in the region, and could be a resource for marketing for Ware County/Waycross.

2.10. The SEEDS Business Resource Center in Lowndes County could be a successful model for a Downtown Business Resource Center in Waycross.

2.11. Encourage and assist local entrepreneurs to increase homegrown small businesses; for example, with an incubator program or by partnering with an existing incubator program (for example, a partnership to share resources with the incubator program that is being started by the Valdosta Chamber of Commerce).

2.12. Continue to work with local colleges to better train the future current and future workforce.

2.13. Encourage aesthetic improvements to the community, especially aesthetic improvements to downtown buildings.

2.14. Take advantage of brownfield redevelopment and infill opportunities.

2.15. A RAS (Revitalization Area Strategy) could help to spur economic development.

#### **Housing**

##### **Needs:**

1.15. Revitalization is needed for blighted neighborhoods and large areas of blighted homes in Waycross/Ware County.

1.16. Revitalize vacant houses in the community in order to improve the housing stock in Waycross/Ware County

1.17. There is an overall need for more affordable housing, especially good-quality, homes to purchase and low-cost rental housing.

1.18. Examine zoning codes to ensure that more families can find suitable housing in walkable urban neighborhoods.

1.19. Educate citizens about zoning codes.

1.20. There are insufficient funds and programs to address the homeless population. Homeless shelters and housing for people experiencing homelessness are needed.

##### **Opportunities:**

3.1. Promote the small-town atmosphere with its good quality of life to attract more residents to the area.

3.2. There are vacant tracts of land that could be used for housing development.

3.3. Increase housing opportunities in downtown, including additional apartments and loft living.

3.4. Consider programs to encourage more quality affordable housing developments with access to downtown and other job centers.

3.5. Promote increased housing revitalization and /or infrastructure upgrades in neighborhoods.

3.6. Encourage innovative techniques for developing affordable housing.

- 3.7. Ensure that zoning is not a barrier to affordable housing.
- 3.8. On-site recreation facilities can make new housing developments more attractive to potential buyers and renters.
- 3.9. The land bank can be used to facilitate the repurposing of vacant homes and blighted properties. Identify the land bank lots and locations that have been or could be utilized to provide affordable housing units for residents and community college students.
- 3.10. Identify existing regulations and zoning regulations that prevent these land bank lot locations from being repurposed or utilized to provide affordable housing units.
- 3.11. The Okefenokee Alliance for the Homeless advocates for people experiencing homelessness.
- 3.12. There is a need for broadband access for people experiencing homelessness in order to connect them to work and housing opportunities as well as other needed services.
- 3.13. Utilize housing study to determine the variety housing types need in Ware County/Waycross that include apartments and townhomes.
- 3.14. Conservation subdivisions could be an opportunity to provide higher-end housing integrated with the natural environment.

#### **Natural Resources**

##### **Needs:**

- 1.21. Ware County and Waycross have world-class natural resources such as the Okefenokee Swamp, but these resources need more promotion to the mainstream tourist market.
- 1.22. Wetlands in Ware County need to be protected from development.

##### **Opportunities:**

- 4.1. The Satilla River is an excellent resource for recreation, including fishing and canoeing. The City and County are in the process of supporting/promoting the Satilla River Water Trail with signs, markers, and a website: <https://garivers.org/water-trails-and-paddling/satilla-river-water-trail/>.
- 4.2. The Satilla Riverkeeper's quarterly clean-up events should be supported and promoted.
- 4.3. There are many eco-tourism opportunities in the community. Eco-tourism can benefit the local economy and help to raise people's awareness of the need to preserve the natural environment.
- 4.4. Ware County/Waycross has the most tourist-friendly and accessible entrance to the Okefenokee Swamp. Encourage promotion for mainstream tourism, including family-friendly amenities, accessibility, educational opportunities, hotels and other non-camping facilities, and RV facilities.
- 4.5. Promote cabins and a new boardwalk have been constructed at Laura Walker State Park.
- 4.6. Increase the use of green technology (such as the recently installed litter trap in the Satilla River) to attract business and industry, provide clean energy, and provide a high-quality living environment.
- 4.7. Research and consider the establishment of a wetland mitigation bank or other wetland mitigation standards to encourage development while minimizing impact on the natural environment.

4.8. The Cherokee Heights neighborhood has a great diversity of plant life. The availability of this natural resource could be promoted as a tourist attraction in the form of a driving or walking tour.

4.9. Encourage promotion of Ware County as a region for boar/wild pig hunting.

4.10. There is a fiber optic line running from the swamp to the highway, providing opportunities for broadband connectivity.

4.11. The Okefenokee Partnership has a marketing program to promote the Okefenokee Swamp regional at all three entrances to the swamp. World Heritage designation will bring tourism to the area.

4.12. Promote RV Park near the Okefenokee Swamp for tourism

4.13. Promote Southern Forest World as a tourist destination

**Cultural Resources:**

**Needs:**

1.23. The historic character of Downtown Waycross needs to be utilized and promoted to its full potential.

1.24. Downtown Waycross needs to be promoted more to people traveling on the major roads that bypass Downtown.

1.25. More publicity is needed for the Airport Terminal Museum.

**Opportunities:**

5.1. The community's historic districts are a cultural asset. Encourage promotion of Waycross as a National Register Historic City. Encourage identification and research of areas in the community that may have historic significance.

5.2. Pursue expansion of the Historic Preservation Commission to include all eligible areas of the City.

5.3. Encourage more community events Downtown and increase promotion of those events, such as art shows.

5.4. Continue providing incentives for revitalization of historic areas through overlay zoning districts.

5.5. Encourage continued support of the Community Theater.

5.6. The Historic Passenger Railway Depot is an asset and tourism opportunities there could be expanded.

5.7. The Okefenokee Heritage Center is a major cultural resource, including exhibits and information on the area's African American community and history. (For example: Martin Luther King gave a speech in Waycross two weeks before his death.)

**Land Use and Development**

**Needs:**

1.26. Many blighted areas are located along the main thoroughfares, which influences the perception of the community by tourists and other visitors.

1.27. There is a need for better architectural design guidelines for Downtown Waycross and the historic districts.

1.28. Unmaintained and blighted properties need to be addressed.

**Opportunities:**

6.1. Continue enacting county-wide development regulations protecting existing agriculture/silviculture industry from encroachment by incompatible uses, while monitoring industrial uses.

6.2. Encourage development of architectural design guidelines for the downtown area and historic districts in Waycross.

6.3. Encourage continued support of Downtown revitalization projects, including Downtown apartments/condos.

6.4. Draft and complete a strategic Downtown Master Plan.

**Community Facilities and Services**

**Needs:**

1.29. Cost-effective recycling solutions are needed for the community.

1.30. Mandatory garbage pickup needed to be encouraged in Ware County and explore options for bulk pick item.

1.31. Examine the need for additional paid fire stations and EMS Stations in Ware County.

1.32. In some locations, utility lines are at the rear of properties and are difficult for the power company to access; options for improved access need to be investigated.

1.33. Locations for community evacuation shelters with generators, other than schools, need to be identified.

1.34. Lighting is needed at Monroe Street Park.

1.35. A system is needed that enables volunteer firefighters and other public safety to be notified of events via text message to their cell phones.

1.36. The public safety training center needs to be expanded with classroom space and training.

1.37. Explore a back-up area for 911 services.

1.38. Improved broadband is needed throughout the entire county including the city limits.

1.39. Better broadband coverage is needed for public safety.

1.40. The communities are at capacity for water and sewer services. Need more capacity to attract more industries, businesses, and residential. Explore sewer lines to be expanded in the county.

1.41. Pickle ball courts to be built for more recreation opportunities.

**Opportunities:**

7.1. The City of Waycross has bulk trash pickup services that are advertised on Facebook and City websites.

7.2. Explore grant funding could enable paid Fire and EMS services for Ware County.

7.3. The area has GA Partnership for Tele-Medicine center.

- 7.4. Encourage continued promotion and utilization of the City and County recreation facilities. City parks stay booked year-round and the new recreation complex has been received very well. The Trembling Earth recreational facility especially should be promoted.
- 7.5. Encourage the construction of more multi-use trails for bicycling and walking esp. in downtown Waycross. (\*safety)
- 7.6. Partnered with the SGRC transit to help with transit needs
- 7.7. Promote the The Action Pact, community action agency, for community use.
- 7.8. The Public Library has programs and activities for people of all ages.
- 7.9. The South Georgia Social Services Database (<https://www.socialservicesdatabase.com/>) has information about services available in the area.
- 7.10. The Ware County Recreation Department facilities could be used as drop off and pick up centers for students of the Waycross/Ware Schools system. This could be a beneficial collaborative program for the students, parents, and the school transportation program.
- 7.11. The Education SPLOST would help to upgrade the Ware County School System equipment needs.
- 7.12. Public-private partnerships can be used to expand broadband access.

**Transportation Needs**

- 1.42. Improved access to Downtown is needed through traffic pattern improvements and better signage.
- 1.43. Adopt and utilize new transportation plan from 2026.
- 1.44. Crash/fatality study on various routes to increase safety.
- 1.45. Continuous and safe bicycle trails are needed, both for the recreational and utilitarian bicyclist.
- 1.46. Crash/fatality study on downtown routes including possible perimeter road. Truck traffic has increased due to the Georgia port.
- 1.47. Effective routes/detours are needed for crossing CSX railroads, especially for emergency vehicles and to reduce truck traffic backups at railroad crossings. Improved access to the Jamestown area is especially needed. (\*Overpass/Bypass study)
- 1.48. Traffic congestion is problematic. (\*Traffic study is in process, continue to implement traffic improvements).
- 1.49. More electric vehicle charging locations are needed. Need an electric vehicle charging station ordinance for proper development.
- 1.50. The boat ramp at the US-84 landing on the Satilla River needs to be replaced. Adding more access points on the Satilla River would be beneficial to recreation and economic development. Partner with DNR & GDOT to discuss possibilities.

1.51. Road signs are needed identifying the route to the hospital.

1.52. Upgrades and expansion of the traffic signal control system are needed, due to anticipated traffic increases. Improved technology such as signal preemption is needed for emergency vehicles in order to provide safer travel and shorter response times.

1.53. The possibility of a Waycross Perimeter Road/Truck route is being studied. Improve emergency response times, and reduce congestion and crashes. Trucks are going into local routes causing more maintenance. Need to adjust weight limits on local roads through google.

1.54. US-84/Plant Avenue in Downtown needs pedestrian safety improvements due to heavy truck traffic and faded crosswalks.

1.55. CSX is restructuring and may change how our terminal is used, and may impact employment.

**Opportunities**

8.1. Promote SGRC Transit in the community. Possibility of Micro-transit could be explored.

8.2. Encourage promotion and increased utilization of the airport in Waycross. The airport now has a 6,000-foot runway.

8.3. The National Safety Council has multiple programs that can be used to improve the safety of the transportation system, such as Safe System Innovative Grants.

8.4. Explore possibilities for boat ramps in other locations.

**Intergovernmental Coordination**

**Needs**

1.56. Local governments and school system continue meeting once a quarter to ensure a single direction for the county.

1.57. Become a hospitality center due to the economic development from growth of Okefenokee Swamp international designation.

1.58. An annual review of the Waycross/Ware Comprehensive Plan is needed.

**Opportunities**

9.1. Review some services between Ware County and City of Waycross to improve the delivery of services during the SDS process.

9.2. Encourage development of a common vision for the Schools System, County and City to tie all the opportunities together.

9.3. Encourage development of joint public relations tools for use by the School System, County and City.

9.4. Improve effective communication and coordination between (which ones?) agencies and local governments.

9.5. Encourage and promote public/private partnerships.

9.6. Hold annual intergovernmental meetings with all tax collecting entities.

DRAFT

### **3. Analysis of Data and Information**

#### **Ware County (including the City of Waycross)**

The estimated population of Ware County (including the City of Waycross) is 35,958 a slight increase since the 2010 census.

Ware County and the City of Waycross are located within the Waycross Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) which also includes Pierce County. The population is 50.1% female and 49.9% male. 25% of the population is under age 18, and 17% is over age 65. There are 12,866 households. 61% of housing units are owner-occupied. The median home value is \$106,500

62% of the population is White, 30% Black or African American, 1.0% Asian, 0.5%, and 2% two or more races. Hispanic or Latino (of any race) are 5% of the population.

The median annual household income is \$44,833. 22.8% of people live in households with income below the federal poverty level.

#### **City of Waycross**

The estimated population of the City of Waycross is 13,813, The population is 55% female and 45% male. 31% of the population is under age 18, and 16% is over age 65. There are 5,253 households. 75% of housing units are owner-occupied. The median home value is \$88,600.  
<https://datausa.io/profile/geo/waycross-ga?redirect=true>

53% of the population is Black or African American, 37% White, 0.1% Asian, 0.1% American Indian and Alaska Native, and 2% two or more races. Hispanic or Latino (of any race) are 6% of the population.

The median annual household income is \$37,398. 34% of people live in households with income below the federal poverty level.

# Ware County, GA

County in: [Georgia, United States](#)

**35,958**

Population

899.2 square miles

40 people per square mile

Census data: ACS 2023 5-year unless noted

## Age

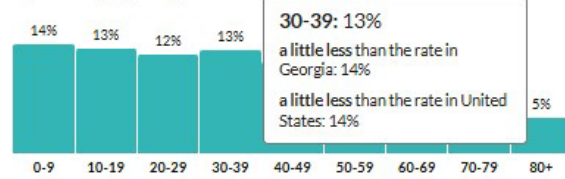
**38**

Median age

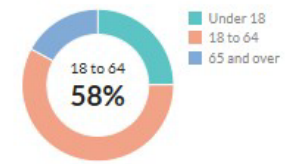
about the same as the figure in Georgia: 37.4

about the same as the figure in United States: 38.7

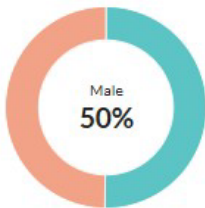
Population by age range



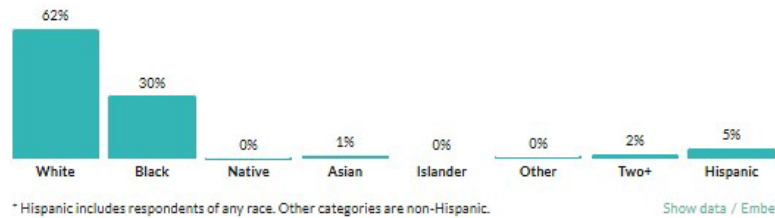
Population by age category



## Sex



## Race & Ethnicity



## Ware County – Demographics -

**Income**

**\$23,550**

Per capita income

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

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

**\$44,833**

Median household income

about three-fifths of the amount in Georgia: \$74,664

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

**Household income**



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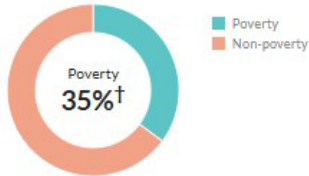
**Poverty**

**22.8%**

Persons below poverty line

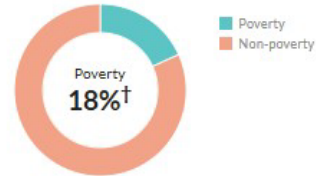
more than 1.5 times the rate in Georgia: 13.5%  
nearly double the rate in United States: 12.4%

**Children (Under 18)**



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**Seniors (65 and over)**



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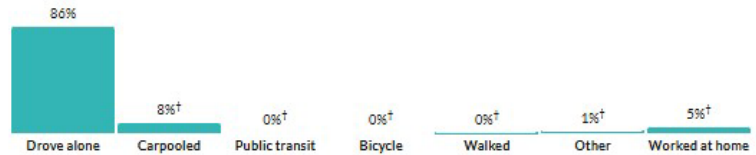
**Transportation to work**

**20.3 minutes**

Mean travel time to work

about three-quarters of the figure in Georgia: 28.3  
about three-quarters of the figure in United States: 26.6

**Means of transportation to work**



\* Universe: Workers 16 years and over

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**Ware County - Economics**

Households

**12,866**

Number of households

Georgia: 4,008,013

United States: 127,482,864

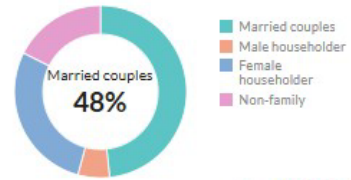
**2.6**

Persons per household

about the same as the figure in Georgia: 2.6

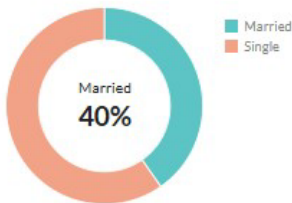
a little higher than the figure in United States: 2.5

Population by household type



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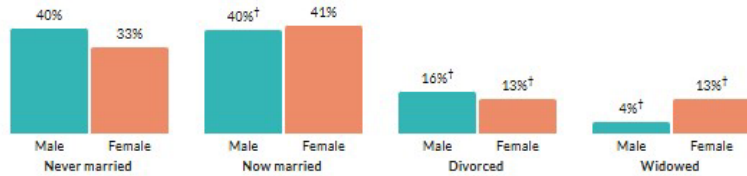
Marital status



\* Universe: Population 15 years and over

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Marital status, by sex



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Fertility

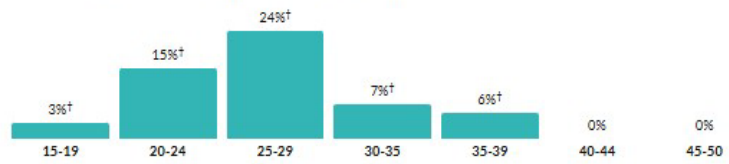
**7.6%**

Women 15-50 who gave birth during past year

about 1.5 times the rate in Georgia: 5.2%

about 1.5 times the rate in United States: 5.2%

Women who gave birth during past year, by age group



\* Universe: Women 15 to 50 years

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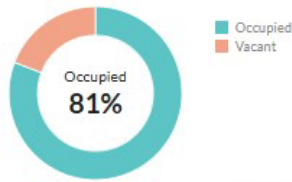
Ware County - Households

Units & Occupancy

**15,926**  
Number of housing units

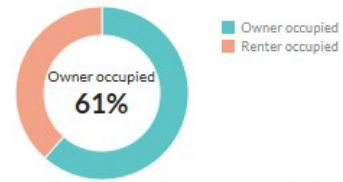
Georgia: 4,483,873  
United States: 142,332,880

Occupied vs. Vacant



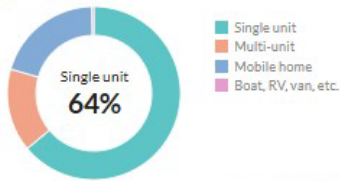
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Ownership of occupied units



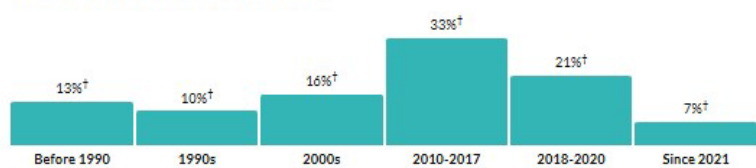
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Types of structure



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Year moved in, by percentage of population



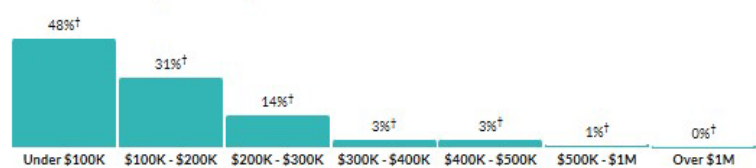
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Value

**\$106,500**  
Median value of owner-occupied housing units

about two-fifths of the amount in Georgia: \$272,900  
about one-third of the amount in United States: \$303,400

Value of owner-occupied housing units



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Geographical mobility

**8.5%**  
Moved since previous year

about two-thirds of the rate in Georgia: 13.3%  
about two-thirds of the rate in United States: 12.7%

Population migration since previous year



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Ware County - Housing

**Educational attainment**

**81.5%**

High school grad or higher

about 90 percent of the rate in Georgia: 89%

about 90 percent of the rate in United States: 89.4%

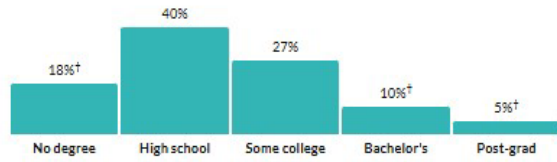
**15%**

Bachelor's degree or higher

about two-fifths of the rate in Georgia: 34.2%

about two-fifths of the rate in United States: 35%

Population by highest level of education



\* Universe: Population 25 years and over

[Show data / Embed](#)

**Language**

**N/A**

Persons with language other than English spoken at home

Language at home, children 5-17

No data available

Language at home, adults 18+

No data available

**Place of birth**

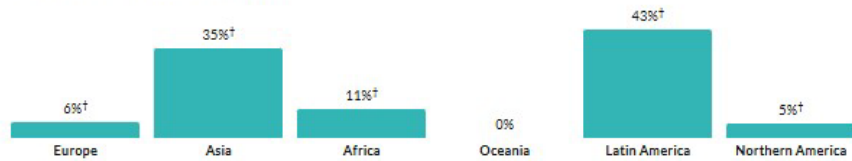
**2.8%**

Foreign-born population

about one-quarter of the rate in Georgia: 10.8%

about one-fifth of the rate in United States: 13.9%

Place of birth for foreign-born population



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**Veteran status**

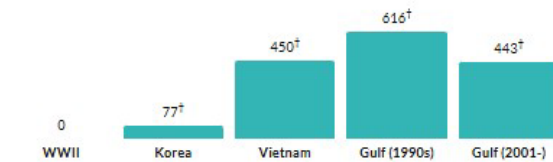
**6.2%**

Population with veteran status

about 80 percent of the rate in Georgia: 7.4%

a little less than the rate in United States: 6.4%

Veterans by wartime service



\* Civilian veterans who served during wartime only

[Show data / Embed](#)

**1,659** Total veterans

**1,488** Male

**171** Female

Ware County - Social

# Waycross, GA

Place in: [2 counties](#), [Waycross, GA Micro Area](#), [Georgia](#), [United States](#)

## 13,813

Population

11.9 square miles

1,163.9 people per square mile

### Age

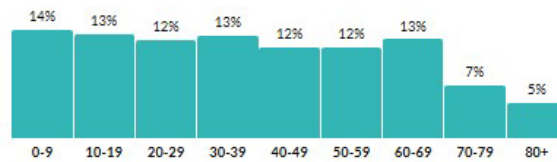
## 38

Median age

about the same as the figure in Georgia: 37.4

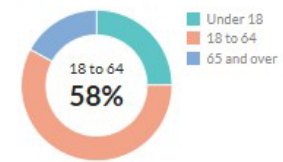
about the same as the figure in United States: 38.7

Population by age range



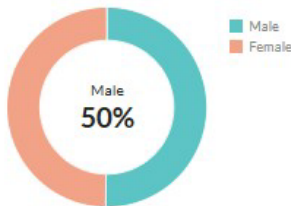
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Population by age category



Show data / Embed

### Sex



Show data / Embed

### Race & Ethnicity



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

Show data / Embed

Income

**\$23,550**

Per capita income

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

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

**\$44,833**

Median household income

about three-fifths of the amount in Georgia: \$74,664

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

Household income



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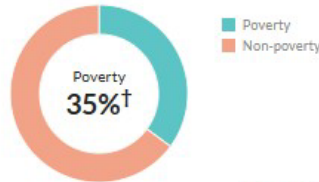
Poverty

**22.8%**

Persons below poverty line

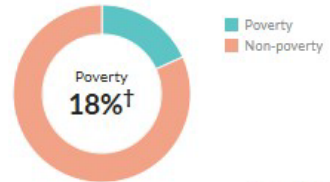
more than 1.5 times the rate in Georgia: 13.5%  
nearly double the rate in United States: 12.4%

Children (Under 18)



Show data / Embed

Seniors (65 and over)



Show data / Embed

Transportation to work

**20.3** minutes

Mean travel time to work

about three-quarters of the figure in Georgia: 28.3

about three-quarters of the figure in United States: 26.6

Means of transportation to work



\* Universe: Workers 16 years and over

Show data / Embed

**Educational attainment**

**81.5%** ±4.2%

(19,781 ±1,024.3)

**High school grad or higher**

about 90 percent of the rate in Georgia: 89% 6,451,736 (±0.3% / ±23,526)

about 90 percent of the rate in United States: 89.4% 204,204,445 (±0.1% / ±279,113.6)

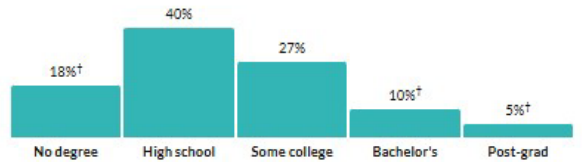
**15%**

**Bachelor's degree or higher**

about two-fifths of the rate in Georgia: 34.2%

about two-fifths of the rate in United States: 35%

**Population by highest level of education**



\* Universe: Population 25 years and over

Show data / Embed

**Language**

**N/A**

Persons with language other than English spoken at home

**Language at home, children 5-17**

No data available

**Language at home, adults 18+**

No data available

**Place of birth**

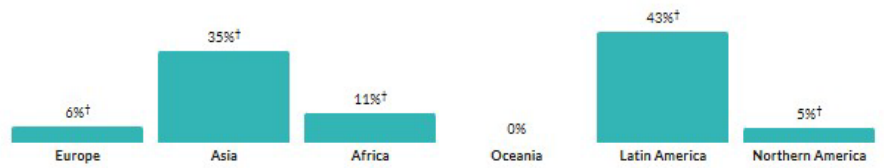
**2.8%**

**Foreign-born population**

about one-quarter of the rate in Georgia: 10.8%

about one-fifth of the rate in United States: 13.9%

**Place of birth for foreign-born population**



Show data / Embed

**Veteran status**

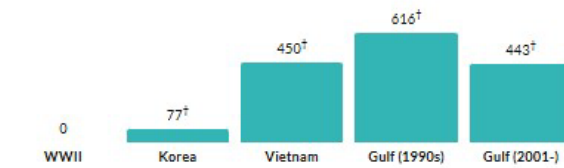
**6.2%**

**Population with veteran status**

about 80 percent of the rate in Georgia: 7.4%

a little less than the rate in United States: 6.4%

**Veterans by wartime service**



\* Civilian veterans who served during wartime only

Show data / Embed

**1,659** Total veterans

**1,488** Male

**171** Female

Households

**12,866**

Number of households

Georgia: 4,008,013

United States: 127,482,864

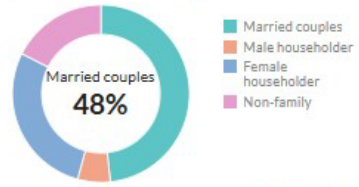
**2.6**

Persons per household

about the same as the figure in Georgia: 2.6

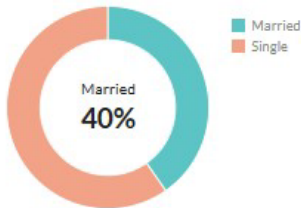
a little higher than the figure in United States: 2.5

Population by household type



Show data / Embed

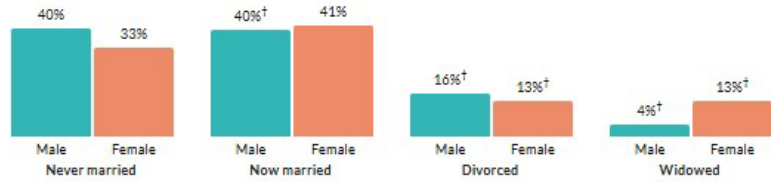
Marital status



\* Universe: Population 15 years and over

Show data / Embed

Marital status, by sex



Show data / Embed

Fertility

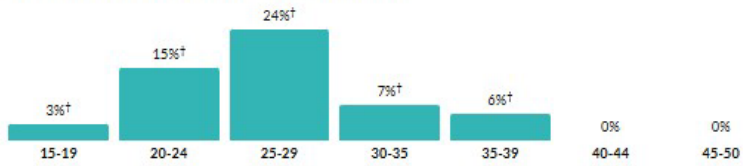
**7.6%**

Women 15-50 who gave birth during past year

about 1.5 times the rate in Georgia: 5.2%

about 1.5 times the rate in United States: 5.2%

Women who gave birth during past year, by age group



\* Universe: Women 15 to 50 years

Show data / Embed

Units & Occupancy

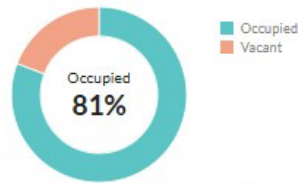
**15,926**

Number of housing units

Georgia: 4,483,873

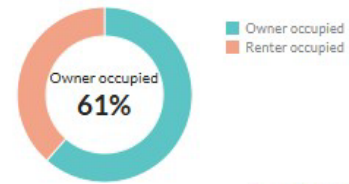
United States: 142,332,880

Occupied vs. Vacant



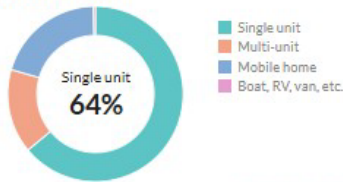
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Ownership of occupied units



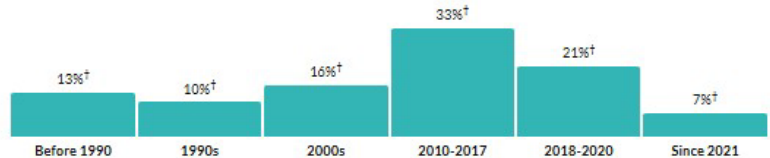
Show data / Embed

Types of structure



Show data / Embed

Year moved in, by percentage of population



Show data / Embed

Value

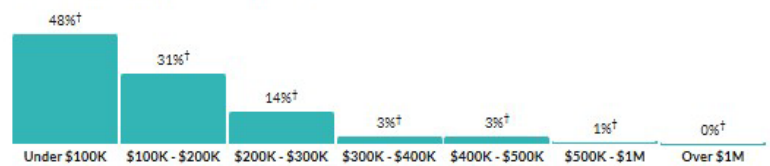
**\$106,500**

Median value of owner-occupied housing units

about two-fifths of the amount in Georgia: \$272,900

about one-third of the amount in United States: \$303,400

Value of owner-occupied housing units



Show data / Embed

Geographical mobility

**8.5%**

Moved since previous year

about two-thirds of the rate in Georgia: 13.3%

about two-thirds of the rate in United States: 12.7%

Population migration since previous year



Show data / Embed

# Waycross, GA

Place in: [2 counties](#), [Waycross, GA Micro Area](#), [Georgia](#), [United States](#)

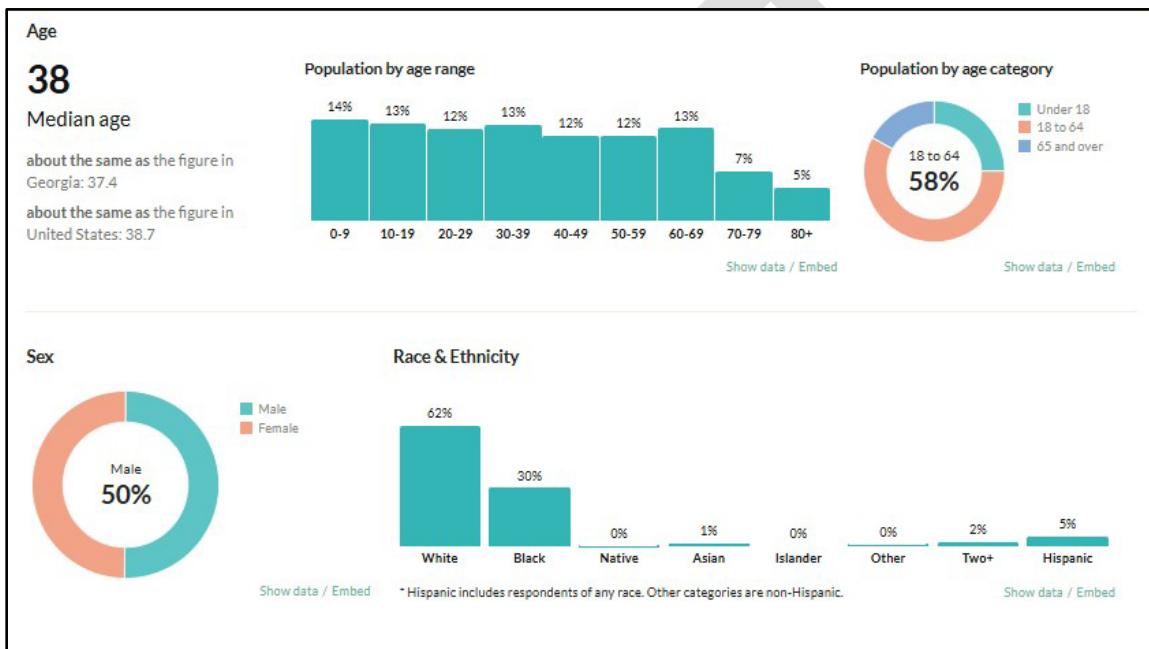
**13,813**

Population

**11.9** square miles

**1,163.9** people per square mile

Waycross – Population



Waycross - Demographics

**Income**

**\$23,550**

Per capita income

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

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

**\$44,833**

Median household income

about three-fifths of the amount in Georgia: \$74,664

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

**Household income**



Show data / Embed

**Poverty**

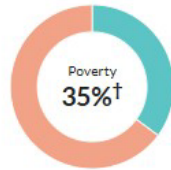
**22.8%**

Persons below poverty line

more than 1.5 times the rate in Georgia: 13.5%

nearly double the rate in United States: 12.4%

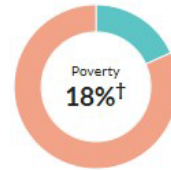
**Children (Under 18)**



Legend: Poverty (teal), Non-poverty (orange)

Show data / Embed

**Seniors (65 and over)**



Legend: Poverty (teal), Non-poverty (orange)

Show data / Embed

**Transportation to work**

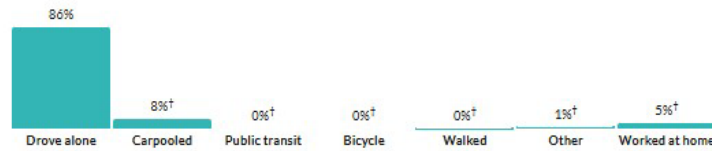
**20.3 minutes**

Mean travel time to work

about three-quarters of the figure in Georgia: 28.3

about three-quarters of the figure in United States: 26.6

**Means of transportation to work**



\* Universe: Workers 16 years and over

Show data / Embed

**Waycross - Economics**

**Educational attainment**

**81.5%** ±4.2%

(19,781 ±1,024.3)

**High school grad or higher**

about 90 percent of the rate in Georgia: 89% 6,451,736 (±0.3% / ±23,526)

about 90 percent of the rate in United States: 89.4% 204,204,445 (±0.1% / ±279,113.6)

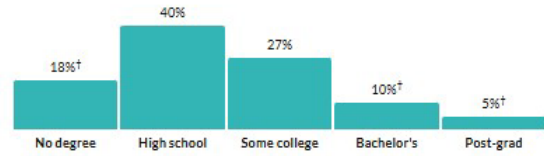
**15%**

**Bachelor's degree or higher**

about two-fifths of the rate in Georgia: 34.2%

about two-fifths of the rate in United States: 35%

**Population by highest level of education**



\* Universe: Population 25 years and over

[Show data / Embed](#)

**Language**

**N/A**

Persons with language other than English spoken at home

**Language at home, children 5-17**

No data available

**Language at home, adults 18+**

No data available

**Place of birth**

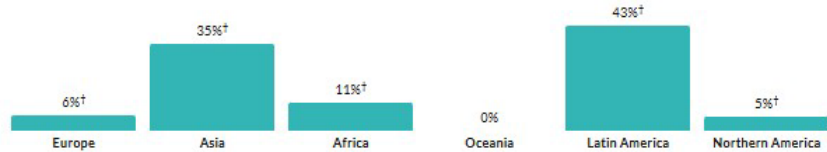
**2.8%**

**Foreign-born population**

about one-quarter of the rate in Georgia: 10.8%

about one-fifth of the rate in United States: 13.9%

**Place of birth for foreign-born population**



[Show data / Embed](#)

**Veteran status**

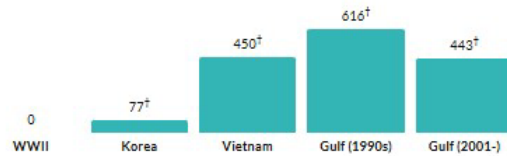
**6.2%**

**Population with veteran status**

about 80 percent of the rate in Georgia: 7.4%

a little less than the rate in United States: 6.4%

**Veterans by wartime service**



\* Civilian veterans who served during wartime only

[Show data / Embed](#)

**1,659** Total veterans

**1,488** Male

**171** Female

**Waycross – Educational Attainment**

Households

**12,866**

Number of households

Georgia: 4,008,013

United States: 127,482,864

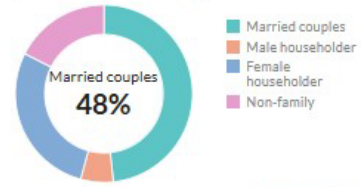
**2.6**

Persons per household

about the same as the figure in Georgia: 2.6

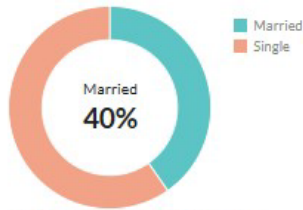
a little higher than the figure in United States: 2.5

Population by household type



Show data / Embed

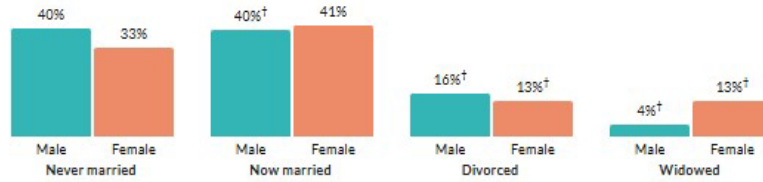
Marital status



\* Universe: Population 15 years and over

Show data / Embed

Marital status, by sex



Show data / Embed

Fertility

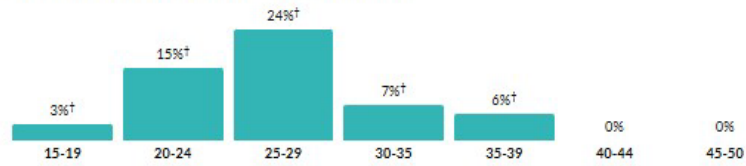
**7.6%**

Women 15-50 who gave birth during past year

about 1.5 times the rate in Georgia: 5.2%

about 1.5 times the rate in United States: 5.2%

Women who gave birth during past year, by age group



\* Universe: Women 15 to 50 years

Show data / Embed

Waycross - Households

Units & Occupancy

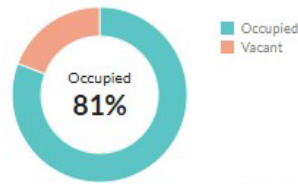
**15,926**

Number of housing units

Georgia: 4,483,873

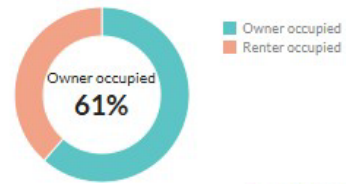
United States: 142,332,880

Occupied vs. Vacant



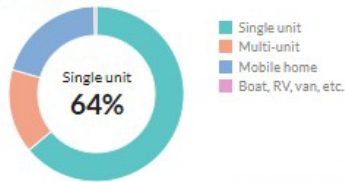
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Ownership of occupied units



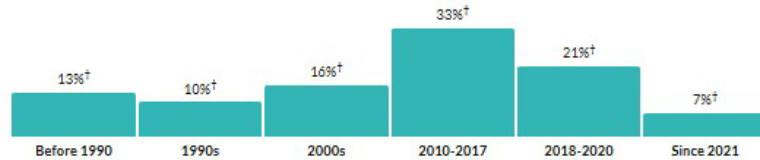
Show data / Embed

Types of structure



Show data / Embed

Year moved in, by percentage of population



Show data / Embed

Value

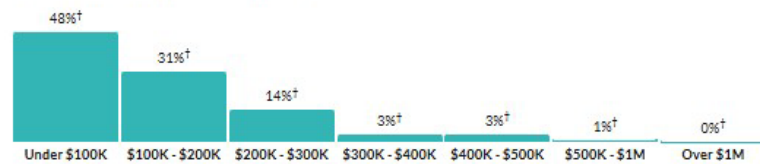
**\$106,500**

Median value of owner-occupied housing units

about two-fifths of the amount in Georgia: \$272,900

about one-third of the amount in United States: \$303,400

Value of owner-occupied housing units



Show data / Embed

Geographical mobility

**8.5%**

Moved since previous year

about two-thirds of the rate in Georgia: 13.3%

about two-thirds of the rate in United States: 12.7%

Population migration since previous year



Show data / Embed

Waycross - Housing

## 4. Broadband Element

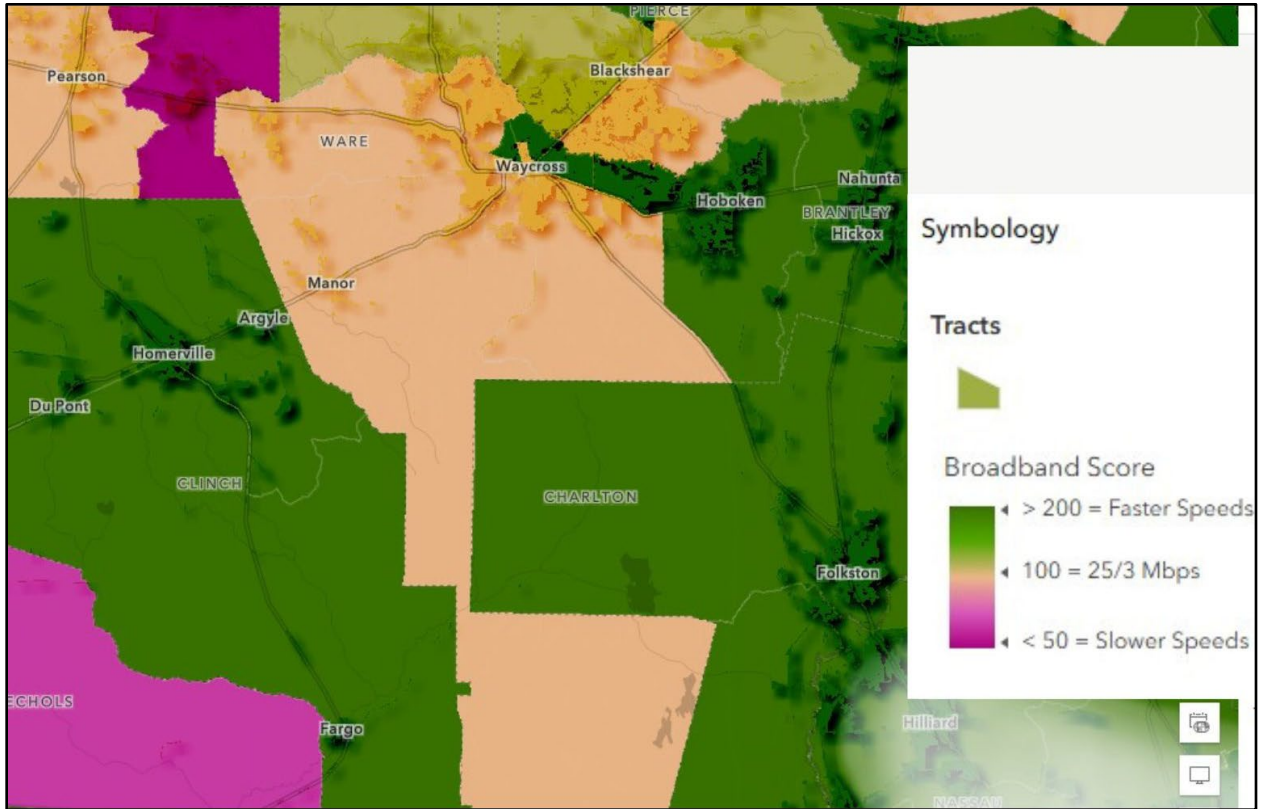
### Existing Conditions

- Rural southern Ware County — low-density areas with limited fiber and heavy reliance on satellite or fixed wireless.
- Western unincorporated communities — pockets where fewer than 20% of homes meet the 25/3 Mbps threshold, marking them as “unserved” under Georgia’s definition.
- Northeastern agricultural corridors — long stretches where provider infrastructure is sparse and speeds fall below 100/20 Mbps.
- Outskirts of Waycross — mixed-service zones where cable is available but fiber penetration is low, creating speed disparities.

Ensuring sufficient and reliable broadband service in Ware County and the City of Waycross is critical, particularly in the developing areas just outside the city limits and along key transportation corridors, including U.S. 1, U.S. 23, U.S. 82 (South Georgia Parkway), U.S. 84, and State Routes 4, 38, 122, 158, 177, and 520. These corridors serve as vital four-lane connections for logistics and transportation, linking the region to I-75 and I-95 and carrying significant daily traffic that supports regional commerce.

In addition, adequate broadband infrastructure is needed along the railway system to support rail operations and the many rail-dependent and industrial users that are central to Waycross and Ware County’s economy. Given the county’s strategic location at the intersection of major highway corridors and rail lines, the community is well positioned to play a key role in broadband deployment across South Georgia.

As broadband has become essential to education, workforce participation, economic development, and overall quality of life, it should be treated as a necessary utility with equal importance to other core infrastructure investments.



<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=812dee8a368245d497cfc87ffc390e1a>

DRAFT

### Ware County ISP Report Card: C-

| Metric<br><i>(hover for details)</i> | Ware County | Georgia    | USA        |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Fiber Availability Percent           | 28.48%      | 80.68%     | 67.25%     |
| Average Download Speed               | 1,262 Mbps  | 4,127 Mbps | 3,293 Mbps |
| Provider Count                       | 4.1         | 7.1        | 6.8        |

### Ware County Digital Connectivity Index: 36 / 100

| Metric<br><i>(hover for details)</i> | Ware County | Georgia | USA |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|---------|-----|
| Average Household Size               | 2.7         | 2.7     | 2.7 |
| Work From Home Percent               | 6%          | 14%     | 14% |
| Households with Devices              | 91%         | 95%     | 95% |
| Households with Internet             | 72%         | 90%     | 90% |
| Households with Broadband            | 57%         | 75%     | 75% |
| Broadband Usage vs. Availability     | 58%         | 76%     | 76% |

<https://ispreports.org/internet-service-providers-ware-county-ga/>

## Data Reported to FCC by ISPs: Average Maximum Available in Ware County

Max Advertised Speed in Ware County, GA

| ISP / Tech Type        | Max Advertised Speed |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| TruVista               | 5,000 Mbps           |
| AT&T                   | 5,000 Mbps           |
| EarthLink              | 5,000 Mbps           |
| Conexon Connect        | 2,000 Mbps           |
| XFINITY from Comcast   | 1,200 Mbps           |
| ATC Broadband          | 1,000 Mbps           |
| Vyve Broadband         | 1,000 Mbps           |
| Verizon                | 300 Mbps             |
| Viasat                 | 100 Mbps             |
| T-Mobile Home Internet | 100 Mbps             |
| HughesNet              | 25 Mbps              |

<https://ispreports.org/internet-service-providers-ware-county-ga/>

### Broadband Action Steps

| Project  | Cost        | Funding Source                            | FY 27 | FY 28 | FY 29 | FY 30 | FY 31 | Responsibility                |
|--|-------------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------------------------|
| Continue to expand broadband service for the purpose of Economic Development, Education, and person use. | \$1,000,000 | General funds, private/public partnership | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | Ware County, City of Waycross |

## 5. 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. This section contains an analysis of the consistency of the community's current policies, activities, and development patterns with the Quality Community Objectives, and recommends related best practices as provided by DCA.

| Quality Community Objective   | Notes on consistency with Comprehensive Plan for Ware County and City of Waycross   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>1. Economic Prosperity</b><br/>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.</p>   | <p>Community activities, including economic development efforts, are consistent with this objective.<br/>Recommended best practices:<br/>Business incubator<br/>Corridor study<br/>Downtown program</p>   |
| <p><b>2. Resource Management</b><br/>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.</p>          | <p>Land use element and goals and policies related to natural resources are consistent with this objective.<br/>Recommended best practices:<br/>Conservation easements<br/>Pervious paving<br/>Riparian buffers<br/>Water resource protection</p>   |
| <p><b>3. Efficient Land Use</b><br/>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.</p> | <p>The land use element and infrastructure-related goals and policies of this plan are consistent with this objective.<br/>Recommended best practices:<br/>Adaptive reuse<br/>Brownfield redevelopment<br/>Infill development program<br/>Preserve agriculture land use<br/>Urban redevelopment plan</p>  |
| <p><b>4. Local Preparedness</b><br/>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.</p>                         | <p>Projects and policies in this plan, and local ordinances, are consistent with this objective. The community also has a multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan that is consistent with this objective, and capable leadership and staff.<br/>Recommended best practices:<br/>All-hazards strategy<br/>Comprehensive planning<br/>Professional development-planning staff<br/>Subdivision development standards</p> |
| <p><b>5. Sense of Place</b><br/>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.</p>               | <p>Projects and policies in this plan, and local ordinances, are consistent with this objective.<br/>Recommended best practices:<br/>Create a detailed inventory of its natural resources<br/>Code enforcement</p>  |

| Quality Community Objective   | Notes on consistency with Comprehensive Plan for Ware County and City of Waycross  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>6. Regional Cooperation</b><br/>           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.</p>   | <p>There is a high level of cooperation and collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions.<br/>           Recommended best practices:<br/>           Regional roundtable<br/>           Shared service agreements</p>   |
| <p><b>7. Housing Options</b><br/>           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.</p>      | <p>Projects and policies in this plan, and local ordinances, are consistent with this objective.<br/>           Recommended best practices:<br/>           Georgia Initiative for Community Housing<br/>           Housing for the disadvantaged<br/>           Housing for the elderly</p>                |
| <p><b>8. Transportation Options</b><br/>           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.</p>  | <p>Transportation goals, policies, and projects are consistent with this objective.<br/>           Recommended best practices:<br/>           Complete streets<br/>           Sidewalk/trail network<br/>           Improving street connectivity<br/>           Safe Routes to School</p>                 |
| <p><b>9. Educational Opportunities</b><br/>           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.</p> | <p>Goals, policies, and projects in this plan are consistent with this objective.<br/>           Recommended best practices:<br/>           Public internet access<br/>           Coordinate with the Ware County Schools to ensure that graduates will create an incentive for prospective industries</p> |
| <p><b>10. Community Health</b><br/>           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.</p>                              | <p>Goals, policies, and projects in this plan are consistent with this objective.<br/>           Recommended best practices:<br/>           Transportation to services<br/><br/>           Work with the hospital to ensure it can successfully service the citizens of Ware County</p>                    |

## 6. Community Policies

The following policies, numbered to align with the Community Goals, were developed in conjunction with all stakeholders and are intended to provide qualitative guidance to address the Issues and Opportunities identified in this Plan and to provide a framework for the development of the Community Work Program. The Community Work Program then addresses the Issues and Opportunities through specific projects, for each of which the participants, anticipated cost, and time frame are identified.

These policies are organized around the issues identified in the "Needs and Opportunities" section, and are further organized around the seven important topics of the Plan:

1. Population
2. Economic Development
3. Housing
4. Natural Resources
5. Cultural Resources
6. Land Use and Development
7. Community Facilities and Services
8. Transportation
9. Intergovernmental Coordination
10. Broadband Services

### Population

***Population Goal: Ensure that all segments of the population benefit from overall community growth and development.***

*Need: Young people need more incentives to remain in Ware County/Waycross rather than leaving. The community's appeal to younger people needs to be emphasized. Outreach is needed in order to change the attitudes of younger people who wish to leave the community.*

*Need: More involvement from younger people is needed in order to determine what they want in the community. This involvement could come through Leadership Waycross or through creating a youth leadership program, for example.*

*Policy 1.1 Improve communications to younger generations on opportunities provided to them to increase retention young professionals.*

*Need: Ware County/Waycross needs incentives for workers to live in the community rather than commuting in from elsewhere.*

*Need: Population needs to be stabilized and continued growth encouraged.*

*Policy 1.2 Examine potential ways to persuade commuters to live in Waycross/Ware County.*

### Economic Development

***Economic Development Goal: Improve the economy by developing and enhancing new and existing strengths that will draw new business, expand existing businesses, expand tourism, diversify the local economy, support a vibrant Downtown, and help the County and the City compete in the regional and global economies.***

*Need: Better job opportunities are needed for people who graduate from the local colleges. Waycross has two excellent technical colleges (Coastal Pines and South Georgia State College); however, insufficient jobs are available locally to retain the educated workforce.*

*Policy 2.1 Examine ways to retain college graduates and how to bring in industry that keeps them in Waycross/Ware County*

*Need: A more centralized vision is needed for the area by the city, County and the business community.*

*Policy 2.2 Improve communication channels throughout the community to maintain one centralized vision.*

*Need: More public relations and marketing of the City and County are needed. The area's greatest assets, such as quality of life and small-town feel with large-town amenities, are inadequately promoted. The Rural Center at ABAC may be a resource for this.*

*Policy 2.3 Approve marketing to emphasis the community's greatest assets.*

*Need: There needs to be more awareness of the Downtown Visitor's Center located inside City Hall and the resources it provides.*

*Policy 2.4 Improving marketing of Downtown Visitor's Center.*

*Need: Downtown needs more evening events and businesses that stay open after 5:00.*

*Policy 2.5 Examine ways to bring events to downtown*

*Need: A Downtown Business Resource Center is needed.*

*Need: There are several properties in prime Downtown locations that are occupied but not actively used (for example, being used for storage). The use of these properties needs to be regained in order to spur the local economy.*

*Policy 2.6 Encourage Downtown property owners to not use properties as storage*

*Need: A comprehensive listing of economic development and community websites and information resources is needed.*

*Policy 2.7 Approve information list for economic development purposes*

*Need: The existing rail system is under-utilized in helping to recruit new businesses. At the same time, there is a need for additional developable property close to rail lines.*

*Policy 2.8 Approve marketing promote rail system to new businesses*

*Need: Southern Georgia as a whole needs more adequate representation and consideration by the State Legislature.*

*Policy 2.9 Approve ways to improve lobbying efforts for South Georgia at the State Legislature*

## **Housing**

***Housing Goal: Provide opportunities for homeownership and housing resources for all citizens of Ware County and the City of Waycross through public/private partnerships.***

*Need: Revitalization is needed for blighted neighborhoods and large areas of blighted homes in Waycross/Ware County.*

*Need: Revitalize vacant houses in the community in order to improve the housing stock in Waycross/Ware County*

*Need: There is an overall need for more affordable housing, especially good-quality, low-cost rental housing.*

*Policy 3.1 Develop strategies to best utilizes Ware/Waycross Housing Study being completed by Georgia Conservancy (Fall 2026 expected completion)*

*Policy 3.2 Approve plans to clean up blighted areas and development plans to add housing, include workforce housing, and rental for opportunities for citizens.*

*Need: Examine zoning codes to ensure that more families can find suitable housing in walkable urban neighborhoods.*

*Policy 3.3 Approve plans for additional sidewalks and bike lane*

*Need: Educate citizens about zoning codes.*

*Policy 3.4 Develop ways to educate citizens on zoning codes*

*Need: There are insufficient funds and programs to address the homeless population. Homeless shelters and housing for people experiencing homelessness are needed.*

*Policy 3.5 Develop and approve plans to better address homeless population in Waycross/Ware Co.*

### **Natural Resources**

***Natural Resources Goal: Conserve, protect, and develop the functions and values of the City's and County's natural resources for future generations' appropriate use and enjoyment.***

*Need: Ware County and Waycross have world-class natural resources such as the Okefenokee Swamp, but these resources need more promotion to the mainstream tourist market.*

*Policy 4.1 Will promote Okefenokee Swamp and natural resources better to the region and further*

*Need: Wetlands in Ware County need to be protected from development.*

*Policy 4.2 Will develop strategies to protect wetlands*

### **Cultural Resources**

***Cultural Resources Goal: Protect, preserve, develop, and promote the City's and County's historic and cultural resources through such measures as regulations, adaptive reuse, tourism, and education programs focused on historic preservation.***

*Need: The historic character of Downtown Waycross needs to be utilized and promoted to its full potential.*

*Need: Downtown Waycross needs to be promoted more to people traveling on the major roads that bypass Downtown.*

*Policy 5.1 Will develop better ways to promote historic downtown*

*Need: More publicity is needed for the Airport Terminal Museum.*

*Policy 5.2 Better promote Airport Terminal Museum*

### **Land Use and Development**

***Land Use Goal: Ensure the highest quality of living environment possible by improving the community's aesthetic quality through a mixture of compatible land uses and character areas reflecting the needs and desires of the local residents.***

*Need: Many blighted areas are located along the main thoroughfares, which influences the perception of the community by tourists and other visitors.*

*Need: Unmaintained and blighted properties need to be addressed.*

*Policy 6.1 Approve plans to clean up blighted areas in main corridors*

*Need: There is a need for better architectural design guidelines for Downtown Waycross and the historic districts.*

### **Community Facilities and Services**

***Community Facilities Goal: Ensure that adequate community facilities, such as water, sewer, broadband, solid waste, police, fire, and EMS, are provided in an effective, environmentally sound, safe, and economic system, consistent and concurrent with present demand and future growth.***

*Need: Cost-effective recycling solutions are needed for the community.*

*Policy 7.1 Examine opportunities for citizens to recycle using a private business*

*Need: Mandatory garbage pickup needed to be encouraged in Ware County and explore options for bulk pick item.*

*Policy 7.2 Approve proposal to have mandatory garbage pickup*

*Need: Examine the need for additional paid fire stations and EMS Stations in Ware County.*

*Policy 7.3 Study the need for additional paid fire and EMS staff*

*Need: In some locations, utility lines are at the rear of properties and are difficult for the power company to access; options for improved access need to be investigated.*

*Policy 7.4 Approve a committee to determine plans for difficult to access utilities lines*

*Need: Locations for community evacuation shelters with generators, other than schools, need to be identified.*

*Policy 7.5 Approve a plan to identify evacuation shelter*

*Need: Lighting is needed at Monroe Street Park.*

*Policy 7.6 Determine the possibility of adding lighting to city parks*

*Need: A system is needed that enables volunteer firefighters and other public safety to be notified of events via text message to their cell phones.*

*Policy 7.7 Determine if first responders need another form of emergency communication*

*Need: Explore a back-up area for 911 services.*

*Policy 7.8 Approve a committee to determine a backup 911 location*

*Need: Need more water capacity to attract more industries, businesses, and residential. Explore sewer lines to be expanded in the county.*

*Policy 7.9 Form a committee to determine the water capacity for industry recruitment and expansion*

*Need: Pickleball could be built for more recreation opportunities.*

*Policy 7.10 Study the possibility to find a location and build pickleball courts*

### **Transportation**

***Transportation Goal: Provide a safe and efficient transportation system that addresses the future needs of the County and the City for the movement of people and freight, while considering that system's social, economic, energy, and environmental effects.***

*Need: Improved access to Downtown is needed through traffic pattern improvements and better signage.*

*Need: Adopt and utilize new transportation plan from 2026.*

*Need: Crash/fatality study on various routes to increase safety.*

*Policy 8.1 Follow guidance for 2026 Transportation Plan and 2026 Perimeter Feasibility Study.*

<https://www.warecountyga.gov/sysinfo-documents/2026-ware-county-comprehensive-transportation-plan>

<https://www.warecountyga.gov/sysinfo-documents/2026-ware-county-perimeter-feasibility-study>

*Need: Continuous and safe bicycle trails are needed, both for the recreational and utilitarian bicyclist.*

*Policy 8.2 Follow trends to make travelling through Ware County easier for all road users.*

*Need: Crash/fatality study on downtown routes including possible perimeter road. Truck traffic has increased due to the Georgia port.*

*Need: Effective routes/detours are needed for crossing CSX railroads, especially for emergency vehicles and to reduce truck traffic backups at railroad crossings. Improved access to the Jamestown area is especially needed. (\*Overpass/Bypass study)*

*Need: Traffic congestion is problematic. (\*Traffic study is in process, continue to implement traffic improvements).*

*Need: More electric vehicle charging locations are needed. Need an electric vehicle charging station ordinance for proper development.*

*Policy 8.3 Determine if the city needs an electric charging station ordinance*

*Need: The boat ramp at the US-84 landing on the Satilla River needs to be replaced. Adding more access points on the Satilla River would be beneficial to recreation and economic development. Partner with DNR & GDOT to discuss possibilities.*

*Policy 8.4 Determine if addition boat ramp(s) are a possibility for Ware County*

*Need: Road signs are needed identifying the route to the hospital.*

*Need: Upgrades and expansion of the traffic signal control system are needed, due to anticipated traffic increases. Improved technology such as signal preemption is needed for emergency vehicles in order to provide safer travel and shorter response times.*

*Policy 8.5 Approve development of a plan to study the need for upgraded traffic signal control system*

*Need: The possibility of a Waycross Perimeter Road/Truck route is being studied. Improve emergency response times, and reduce congestion and crashes. Trucks are going into local routes causing more maintenance. Need to adjust weight limits on local roads through google.*

*Policy 8.6 Form a committee to determine the feasibility of a Perimeter Road*

*Need: US-84/Plant Avenue in Downtown needs pedestrian safety improvements due to heavy truck traffic and faded crosswalks.*

*Need: CSX is restructuring and may change how our terminal is used, and may impact employment.*

*Policy 8.7 Develop proposals to adjust to CSX changes*

### **Intergovernmental Coordination**

***Intergovernmental Coordination Goal: Establish effective coordination measures among all pertinent public and quasi-public entities to best maintain the City's and the County's quality of life and resources.***

*Need: Local governments and school system continue meeting once a quarter to ensure a single direction for the county.*

*Need: Become a hospitality center due to the economic development from growth of Okefenokee Swamp international designation.*

*Policy 9.1 Approve development that improves the hospitality industry in Waycross/Ware Co.*

*Need: An annual review of the Waycross/Ware Comprehensive Plan is needed.*

### **Broadband**

***Broadband: Provide digital broadband and communications in a manner that ensures the current and future needs of residents, businesses, and industry within Ware County and the City of Waycross.***

*Need: Improved broadband is needed throughout the entire county including the city limits.*

*Need: Better broadband coverage is needed for public safety.*

*Policy 10.1 Approve proposals to all the expansion of broadband throughout the community*

## 7. Community Work Program

### 2022-2026 Community Work Program Ware County

| PROJECT   | COST          | FUNDING SOURCE  | FY 22 | FY 23 | FY 24 | FY 25 | FY 26 | RESPONSIBILITY                           | RELATED GOAL | STATUS    |
|---|---------------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--|--------------|-----------|
| <b>TRANSPORTATION</b>   |               |   |       |       |       |       |       |  |              |           |
| Continue implementing Airport Capital Improvement Program as adopted by the County Commission.  | \$5 million   | GDOT, Ware County, FAA, Federal Funds                           |       |       |       | X     | X     | GDOT, Ware County, FAA                   | 8            | Ongoing   |
| Rehabilitate sidewalks and add bike lanes on Pinehurst Rd. (900- foot sidewalk) and Tebeau Rd. (750- foot sidewalk).  | \$250,000     | GDOT, Ware County   |       |       |       |       |       | Ware County                              | 8            | Ongoing   |
| Pave approximately 5 miles of dirt roads, including Driggers Lane and T-SPLOST projects.  | \$10 Million  | SPLOST, Ware County, CDBG                                       |       |       |       | X     | X     | Ware County                              | 8            | Ongoing   |
| Construct entire Perimeter Road, beginning at Smith Road going south from US 82 West (Corridor Z), crossing US 84 South near Wahoma, thence easterly and northerly crossing US 1 South, US 82 east, and Central Ave., intersecting US 84 north near Pierce County line, and continuing to US 1 North. | \$80 Million  | GDOT, Federal Funds   |       |       |       |       |       | GDOT, Ware County                        | 8            | Ongoing   |
| Construct overpass at State Street (US 1) and CSX's Atlanta Lead Line in conjunction with Perimeter Road project.   | \$15 Million  | GDOT, CSX, Ware County, City of Waycross, State & Federal Funds |       |       |       | X     | X     | GDOT, CSX, Ware County, City of Waycross | 8            | Ongoing   |
| Widen Augusta Avenue/ Blackshear Avenue from US 82 to US 1.   | \$3.8 Million | GDOT, Ware County, City of Waycross, SPLOST, Federal Funds      |       |       |       | X     | X     | GDOT, Ware County, City of Waycross      | 8            | Completed |

| PROJECT   | COST        | FUNDING SOURCE                                | FY 22 | FY 23 | FY 24 | FY 25 | FY 26 | RESPONSIBILITY    | RELATED GOAL | STATUS   |
|---|-------------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------------|--------------|----------|
| Extend Tanner Lane to create additional access to the Jamestown area.   | \$6 Million | GDOT, Ware County, Federal Funds              |       |       |       |       | X     | GDOT, Ware County | 8            | Complete |
| <b>NATURAL AND CULTURAL/HISTORIC RESOURCES</b>  |             |   |       |       |       |       |       |                   |              |          |
| Construct a raised boat ramp at the Waycross-Blackshear bridge area on the Satilla River.   | \$100,000   | Grants (LWCF, TEA 21), DNR                    |       |       |       |       | X     | Ware County       | 4            | Ongoing  |
| Identify and protect prime agricultural soils in the county and protect with zoning and tax incentives.   | \$25,000    | Natural Resources Conservation Service Grants |       |       |       |       | X     | Ware County, NRCS | 4            | Ongoing  |
| <b>LAND USE</b>   |             |   |       |       |       |       |       |                   |              |          |
| Develop a countywide Zoning Ordinance that includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zoning districts appropriate to the character areas in the Comprehensive Plan.</li> <li>Development standards to regulate the distribution of land uses and prevent the encroachment of incompatible land uses on each other.</li> <li>Buffer areas between agricultural and non-agricultural uses.</li> <li>Flexibility in land uses to allow for a compatible mix of uses, including boulevard housing.</li> <li>Development standards to avoid undue concentration of population.</li> <li>Standards for senior/adult</li> </ul> | Staff time  | State & Federal Grants, Ware County           | X     | X     |       |       | X     | Ware County       | 6            | Ongoing  |

| PROJECT  | COST        | FUNDING SOURCE                      | FY 22 | FY 23 | FY 24 | FY 25 | FY 26 | RESPONSIBILITY | RELATED GOAL |           |
|--|-------------|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----------------|--------------|-----------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>living.</li> <li>Standards and flexibility to encourage infill development, re-use of blighted development, and redevelopment of declining and revitalizing areas.</li> <li>Sufficient flexibility to encourage creative design, green space, and open space.</li> <li>Specific roles for each corridor to encourage revitalization.</li> <li>Standards to support additional growth in rural areas only where such growth is planned for and can be supported by appropriate services.</li> <li>Standards for property upkeep and screening.</li> <li>Limited mixed-use districts of compatible uses to serve neighborhood needs and create focal community points.</li> </ul> |             |                                     |       |       |       |       |       |                |              |           |
| Create a GPS database of bridges, box culverts, and infrastructure.  | \$10,000    | Ware County                         |       |       |       |       |       | Ware County    | 7            | postponed |
| <b>HOUSING</b>   |             |                                     |       |       |       |       |       |                |              |           |
| Develop affordable housing in Ware County.   | \$1,000,000 | General fund, private funds, grants |       |       |       |       | X     | Ware County    | 3            | Ongoing   |
| Implement measures to reduce and eliminate blight (through an urban redevelopment plan or similar effort).   | \$500,000   | General fund, private funds, grants |       |       |       |       | X     | Ware County    | 3            | Ongoing   |
| <b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES</b>   |             |                                     |       |       |       |       |       |                |              |           |

| PROJECT   | COST        | FUNDING SOURCE   | FY 22 | FY 23 | FY 24 | FY 25 | FY 26 | RESPONSIBILITY   | RELATED GOAL | STATUS                            |
|---|-------------|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| Construct miracle field at Trembling Earth Recreational Facility.   | \$500,000   | SPLOST, State & Federal Grants, Ware County  |       |       |       |       |       | Ware County  | 7            | Complete                          |
| Construct Phases V and VI of multipurpose recreation center (Regional Park). (pickleball)   | \$5 Million | State & Federal Grants, Ware County SPLOST   |       |       |       |       | X     | Ware County  | 7            | Ongoing                           |
| Develop a recycling program in collaboration with federal, state, and local partners.   | \$100,000   | Ware County, State & Federal Grants  |       |       |       |       |       | Ware County  | 7            | Cancelled No market for recycling |
| Conduct a project to strengthen and expand broadband access.  | \$1,000,000 | General funds, private funds, grants   |       |       |       |       | X     | Ware County, City of Waycross                                  | 7            | Ongoing                           |
| Expand the public safety training center with classroom space and training facilities.  | \$500,000   | SPLOST, State & Federal Grants, Ware County  |       |       |       |       |       | Ware County  | 7            | Complete                          |
| <b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>   |             |  |       |       |       |       |       |  |              |                                   |
| Create a marketing plan to capitalize on Ware County's proximity to the three major ports of Brunswick, Jacksonville, and Savannah; raise awareness of the Industrial Park's proximity to the local airport; and raise awareness of the 5 direct rail lines in Waycross/Ware County, including rail in the Industrial Park. | Staff time  | Ware County, City of Waycross, Chamber of Commerce, DWDA, WWDA, State & Federal Grants |       |       |       |       |       | Ware County, City of Waycross, Chamber of Commerce, DWDA, WWDA | 2            | Ongoing                           |
| Continue implementing a program to collaborate with federal, state, and local partners to develop local agricultural industry (such as blueberries, pine straw, honey, turpentine, compost, etc.) and promote agri-tourism.   | \$200,000   | Ware County, City of Waycross, Chamber of Commerce, State & Federal Grants             |       |       |       |       | X     | Ware County, City of Waycross                                  | 2            | Ongoing                           |

| PROJECT   | COST         | FUNDING SOURCE   | FY 22 | FY 23 | FY 24 | FY 25 | FY 26 | RESPONSIBILITY   | RELATED GOAL | STATUS  |
|---|--------------|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--|--------------|---------|
| Extend and upgrade water, sewer, gas, power, and telecommunication infrastructure, as well as railways and roads, to the Industrial Park and other areas suited for economic development. | \$10 million | Ware County, City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants, WWDA                            |       |       |       | X     | X     | Ware County, City of Waycross,                                 | 2, 7         | Ongoing |
| <b>INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION</b>   |              |  |       |       |       |       |       |  |              |         |
| Design joint collateral marketing materials and public relations tools to market Ware County/Waycross to tourists and businesses.   | Staff time   | Ware County, City of Waycross, Chamber of Commerce, DWDA, WWDA, State & Federal Grants |       |       |       |       |       | Ware County, City of Waycross, Chamber of Commerce, DWDA, WWDA | 2            | Ongoing |

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**2022-2026 Community Work Program City of Waycross**

| PROJECT   | COST          | FUNDING SOURCE                                 | FY 22 | FY 23 | FY 24 | FY 25 | FY 26 | RESPONSIBILITY         | RELATED GOAL | STATUS                                   |
|---|---------------|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------------------|--------------|--|
| <b>TRANSPORTATION</b>   |               |  |       |       |       |       |       |                        |              |  |
| Redirect US 1 via State to Tebeau, Carswell, and Memorial Drive, with associated improvements.  | \$5 million   | GDOT, State Federal Grants &                   | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross, GDOT | 8            | Ongoing                                  |
| Resurface approximately 70 miles of city streets, as listed in the Capital Improvement Program.   | \$21 million  | City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants, GDOT | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross, GDOT | 8            | Ongoing                                  |
| Upgrade traffic signals at 6 intersections.   | \$1.5 million | GDOT, State Federal Grants &                   | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross, GDOT | 8            | Cancelled because they are state signals |
| Conduct traffic studies to identify the most efficient traffic flows through Waycross.  | \$100,000     | GDOT State Federal Grants &                    |       |       |       | X     | X     | City of Waycross, GDOT | 8            | Cancelled County Project                 |
| Make improvements to Downtown streetscapes, including bump-outs at intersections, pole banners, benches, and light poles.                         | \$3 million   | State Federal Grants &                         | X     | X     | X     |       |       | City of Waycross       | 8            | Ongoing                                  |
| Implement DOT Priorities - Traffic Lights and Paving.   | \$750,000     | GDOT   | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross, GDOT | 8            | Ongoing                                  |
| Construct Phase 2 (1 mile) of the Multi-Use Trail.  | \$1 million   | Grants (TEA, etc.)                             |       |       |       | X     | X     | City of Waycross       | 8            | Cancelled because grant over             |
| Adopt a Complete Streets Policy that incorporates improved bicycle and pedestrian safety measures.  | \$500         | GDOT   | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross       | 8            | Complete                                 |
| Revise development ordinances to integrate pedestrian/bicycle considerations and requirements into proposed subdivisions, and other developments. | \$500         | GDOT   | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross       | 8            | Complete                                 |

| PROJECT  | COST     | FUNDING SOURCE | FY 22 | FY 23 | FY 24 | FY 25 | FY 26 | RESPONSIBILITY   | RELATED GOAL | STATUS                    |
|--|----------|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| Revise ordinances to include requirements of the Georgia Streetscapes and Pedestrian Design Guide.   | \$500    | GDOT           | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross | 8            | Ongoing                   |
| Revise ordinances to include requirements of the Georgia Manual on Regulations for Driveway and Encroachment Control.  | \$500    | GDOT           | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross | 8            | Ongoing                   |
| Revise ordinances to include various requirements of the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Guides for improved bicycle and pedestrian safety design. | \$500    | GDOT           | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross | 8            | Ongoing                   |
| Work with SGRC to apply for Walk Friendly Community Status.  | \$5,000  | GDOT           | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross | 8            | Cancelled End of program  |
| Work with SGRC to apply for Age Friendly Community Status.   | \$7,000  | GDOT           | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross | 8            | Ongoing                   |
| Work with SGRC to apply for Bicycle Friendly Community Status.   | \$5,000  | GDOT           | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross | 8            | Cancelled End of program  |
| Complete a bikeability analysis of all roadways that includes a timeline to resurface/pave roads, adding bike lanes.   | \$10,000 | GDOT           | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross | 8            | Complete                  |
| Complete a sidewalk gap analysis and develop a plan to fund sidewalk construction to fill the gaps.  | \$5,000  | GDOT           | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross | 8            | Cancelled Lack of Funding |
| Work with GDOT and SGRC to complete Road Safety Audits along key corridors/intersections as needed, based on crash data analysis and other metrics.                              | \$2,000  | GDOT           | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross | 8            | Ongoing                   |

| PROJECT  | COST                                   | FUNDING SOURCE  | FY 22 | FY 23 | FY 24 | FY 25 | FY 26 | RESPONSIBILITY   | RELATED GOAL | STATUS                                     |
|--|--|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--|--------------|--|
| Administer the Georgia Pedestrian Safety Attitudes and Behaviors Survey to the general public and transportation practitioners. Analyze results to determine target audiences, messages, and training needs for pedestrian safety. | \$1,000                                | GDOT  | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross   | 8            | Cancelled reevaluating ways educate public |
| Work with SGRC to distribute "See and Be Seen" safety materials.   | \$100                                  | GDOT  | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross   | 8            | Cancelled Program Expired                  |
| Send elected officials, planning and other staff, and police/sheriff patrol officers to regional trainings for pedestrian and bicycle safety, education and enforcement.   | \$1,000 per training (less if virtual) | GDOT  | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross   | 8            | Completed                                  |
| Encourage police/sheriff patrol officers to participate in the GDOT Pedestrian Safety Task Team.   | \$750                                  | GDOT  | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross   | 8            | Completed                                  |
| Develop a local Bicycle and/or Pedestrian Safety Action Plan.  | \$10,000                               | GDOT  | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross   | 8            | Completed                                  |
| <b>NATURAL AND CULTURAL/HISTORIC RESOURCES</b>   |  |   |       |       |       |       |       |  |              |  |
| Maintain and restore canals with stabilization, vegetation control, and cleanup.   | \$200,000                              | State & Federal Grants, SPLOST                          |       |       |       | X     | X     | City of Waycross   | 4,7          | Ongoing                                    |
| Renovate/rehab 3 historic Downtown buildings (Bunn building, Bowen building, and Lyric theater).   | \$15 million                           | State & Federal Grants                                  |       |       | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross   | 2, 5         | Ongoing                                    |
| Conduct a marketing campaign to promote tourist attractions such as Obediah's Okefenok, Wildes Massacre Site, the Heritage Center, Laura Walker State Park, Okefenokee Swamp Park, and the Satilla River Water Trail.              | Staff time                             | State & Federal Grants, agency budgets, tourism dollars | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | Tourism Bureau, City of Waycross, Ware County, Chamber of Commerce, Hospitality Industry | 2, 4         | Ongoing                                    |

| PROJECT  | COST   | FUNDING SOURCE  | FY 22 | FY 23 | FY 24 | FY 25 | FY 26 | RESPONSIBILITY                | RELATED GOAL | STATUS    |
|--|--|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| <b>LAND USE</b>  |  |   |       |       |       |       |       |                               |              |           |
| Develop zoning districts appropriate to the character areas in the Comprehensive Plan.   | Staff time   | City of Waycross, Ware County, State & Federal Grants | X     | X     |       |       |       | City of Waycross, Ware County | 6            | Completed |
| Redevelop approximately 20 acres of vacant/underutilized parcels, including the Almar parcel.  | \$40 million   | City of Waycross, Ware County, State & Federal Grants | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross              | 6            | Completed |
| Develop design guidelines for the Crossroads gateways and corridors, including signage and landscaping.  | Staff time   | State & Federal Grants, City of Waycross, Ware County | X     | X     |       |       |       | City of Waycross, Ware County | 2, 7         | Completed |
| <b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES</b>   |  |   |       |       |       |       |       |                               |              |           |
| Improve and/ or Replace infrastructure, including sewer, water, street and drainage improvements, as listed in the adopted Capital Improvement Program.  | \$20 million   | City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants              | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross              | 7            | Ongoing   |
| Construct new Public Works facility.   | \$1,343,000  | City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants, SPLOST      | X     | X     |       |       |       | City of Waycross              | 7            | Completed |
| Continue updating of city parks to improve all recreational facilities, including playground facilities, restrooms, and lighting (including Bailey St., Camilla, E. E. Moore, Elizabeth, Garlington, Gilchrist, Monroe, Parnell, and Roberts Parks, and others). | \$1 million  | State & Federal Grants                                | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross              | 7            | Ongoing   |
| Install a Splash Pad in Parnell Roberts Park.  | \$140,000 Phase 1; \$140,000 each for Phases 2 and 3 | City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants              | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross              | 7            | Completed |

| Project   | Cost         | Funding Source                                  | FY 22 | FY 23 | FY 24 | FY 25 | FY 26 | Responsibility                      | Related Goal | STATUS    |
|---|--------------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Conduct a complete renovation/rehabilitation of the National Guard Armory.  | \$2,000,000  | City of Waycross State & Federal Grants, SPLOST | X     | X     |       |       |       | City of Waycross                    | 7            | Ongoing   |
| Renovate/revitalize the Bailey Street School, Colley Street School, and Grove Street Recreation Center brownfield sites.  | \$10 million | City of Waycross State & Federal Grants         |       | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross                    | 7            | Ongoing   |
| Assess Sewer and water systems in the City to address system deteriorations and to program capital upgrades (Phases I – IV).  | Staff time   | City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants        |       | X     | X     |       |       | City of Waycross                    | 7            | Ongoing   |
| Research and apply for funding and grants to provide paid Fire and EMS services for Ware County and the City of Waycross.   | Staff time   | City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants        | X     | X     |       |       |       | City of Waycross, Ware County       | 7            | Completed |
| Evaluate and implement flood control measures and floodplain management measures.   | \$500,000    | City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants        | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross, EPD, FEMA         | 7            | Completed |
| Develop and expand Reclaimed Water (“Purple-Pipe”) System.  | \$500,000    | City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants        |       |       |       |       | X     | City of Waycross                    | 7            | Ongoing   |
| <b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>   |              |   |       |       |       |       |       |                                     |              |           |
| Acquire property for expansion of the Industrial Park, and develop with utilities and other necessary infrastructure.   | \$20 million | City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants        |       |       | X     | X     | X     | WWDA, City of Waycross, Ware County | 2            | Completed |
| Implement a collaborative group process for the reclamation of the old business district of Oak Street between Tebeau Street and Vernon Willis Drive, beginning with aggressive code enforcement. | \$30,000     | City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants        | X     | X     | X     |       |       | City of Waycross, Ware County       | 2            | Ongoing   |
| <b>HOUSING</b>  |              |   |       |       |       |       |       |                                     |              |           |

| PROJECT  | COST          | FUNDING SOURCE  | FY 22 | FY 23 | FY 24 | FY 25 | FY 26 | RESPONSIBILITY                | RELATED GOAL | STATUS  |
|--|---------------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------------------------|--------------|---------|
| Implement an aggressive program to pursue grants for rehabilitation/renewal of approximately 50 homes in targeted areas. | \$1.5 million | City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants, Private Partnership |       |       | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross, Ware County | 3            | Ongoing |
| Deploy new street signage citywide to comply with federal retro-reflectivity standards.                                  | \$250,000     | City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants                      | X     | X     |       |       |       | City of Waycross              | 3            | Ongoing |
| Develop standards and incentives to protect residential neighborhoods from encroachment of non- residential uses.        | Staff time    | City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants                      | X     | X     |       |       |       | City of Waycross, Ware County | 3            | Ongoing |
| Develop, improve, and enforce zoning standards for property upkeep and screening.  | Staff time    | City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants                      | X     | X     |       |       |       | City of Waycross, Ware County | 3            | Ongoing |

**2026-2031 Community Work Program Ware County**

| PROJECT   | COST         | FUNDING SOURCE  | FY 27                                     | FY 28 | FY 29 | FY 30 | FY 31 | RESPONSIBILITY                           | RELATED GOAL |
|---|--------------|---|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|--|--------------|
| <b>TRANSPORTATION</b>   |              |   |   |       |       |       |       |  |              |
| Continue implementing Airport Capital Improvement Program as adopted by the County Commission.  | \$5 million  | GDOT, Ware County, FAA, Federal Funds                           |   |       |       | X     | X     | GDOT, Ware County, FAA                   | 8            |
| Rehabilitate sidewalks and add bike lanes on Pinehurst Rd. (900- foot sidewalk) and Tebeau Rd. (750- foot sidewalk).  | \$250,000    | GDOT, Ware County   |   |       |       |       |       | Ware County                              | 8            |
| Pave approximately 5 miles of dirt roads, including Driggers Lane and T-SPLOST projects.  | \$10 Million | SPLOST, Ware County, CDBG                                       |   |       |       | X     | X     | Ware County                              | 8            |
| Construct entire Perimeter Road, beginning at Smith Road going south from US 82 West (Corridor Z), crossing US 84 South near Wahoma, thence easterly and northerly crossing US 1 South, US 82 east, and Central Ave., intersecting US 84 north near Pierce County line, and continuing to US 1 North. | \$80 Million | GDOT, Federal Funds   | Postponed long-term project (post-FY2026) |       |       |       |       | GDOT, Ware County                        | 8            |
| Construct overpass at State Street (US 1) and CSX's Atlanta Lead Line in conjunction with Perimeter Road project.   | \$15 Million | GDOT, CSX, Ware County, City of Waycross, State & Federal Funds |   |       |       | X     | X     | GDOT, CSX, Ware County, City of Waycross | 8            |

| PROJECT   | COST       | FUNDING SOURCE                             | FY 27 | FY 28 | FY 29 | FY 30 | FY 31 | RESPONSIBILITY    | RELATED GOAL |
|---|------------|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------------|--------------|
| <b>NATURAL AND CULTURAL/HISTORIC RESOURCES</b>  |            |  |       |       |       |       |       |                   |              |
| Construct a raised boat ramp at the Waycross- Blackshear bridge area on the Satilla River.  | \$100,000  | Grants (LWCF, TEA 21), DNR                 |       |       |       |       | X     | Ware County       | 4            |
| Identify and protect prime agricultural soils in the county and protect with zoning and tax incentives.   | \$25,000   | Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP) |       |       |       |       | X     | Ware County, NRCS | 4            |
| <b>LAND USE</b>   |            |  |       |       |       |       |       |                   |              |
| Develop a countywide Zoning Ordinance that includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zoning districts appropriate to the character areas in the Comprehensive Plan.</li> <li>Development standards to regulate the distribution of land uses and prevent the encroachment of incompatible land uses on each other.</li> <li>Buffer areas between agricultural and non-agricultural uses.</li> <li>Flexibility in land uses to allow for a compatible mix of uses, including boulevard housing.</li> <li>Development standards to avoid undue concentration of population.</li> <li>Standards for senior/adult</li> </ul> | Staff time | Ware County                                | X     | X     |       |       | X     | Ware County       | 6            |

| PROJECT  | COST        | FUNDING SOURCE                          | FY 27 | FY 28 | FY 29 | FY 30 | FY 31 | RESPONSIBILITY | RELATED GOAL |
|--|-------------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----------------|--------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>living.</li> <li>Standards and flexibility to encourage infill development, re- use of blighted development, and redevelopment of declining and revitalizing areas.</li> <li>Sufficient flexibility to encourage creative design, green space, and open space.</li> <li>Specific roles for each corridor to encourage revitalization.</li> <li>Standards to support additional growth in rural areas only where such growth is planned for and can be supported by appropriate services.</li> <li>Standards for property upkeep and screening.</li> <li>Limited mixed- use districts of compatible uses to serve neighborhood needs and create focal community points.</li> </ul> |             |   |       |       |       |       |       |                |              |
| Create a GPS database of bridges, box culverts, and infrastructure.  | \$10,000    | Ware County                             |       |       |       |       |       | Ware County    | 7            |
| Update ordinances to continue to meet standard for development including tourism <b>(new)</b>  | Staff Time  | Ware County                             |       |       |       |       |       | Ware County    | 7            |
| Review ordinances in order maintain the possibilities of Data Centers in Ware County <b>(new)</b>  | Staff Time  | Ware County                             |       |       |       |       |       | Ware County    | 7            |
| <b>HOUSING</b>   |             |   |       |       |       |       |       |                |              |
| Develop affordable housing in Ware County.   | \$1,000,000 | General fund, private funds, CHIP, CDBG |       |       |       |       | X     | Ware County    | 3            |
| Implement measures to reduce and eliminate blight (through an urban redevelopment plan or similar effort).   | \$500,000   | General fund, private funds, CHIP, CDBG |       |       |       |       | X     | Ware County    | 3            |
| <b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES</b>   |             |   |       |       |       |       |       |                |              |

| PROJECT   | COST        | FUNDING SOURCE  | FY 27 | FY 28 | FY 29 | FY 30 | FY 31 | RESPONSIBILITY   | RELATED GOAL |
|---|-------------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--|--------------|
| Conduct a project to strengthen and expand broadband access.  | \$1,000,000 | General funds, private funds, grants                            | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | Ware County, City of Waycross                                  | 7            |
| Add additional classroom to public safety training center (new)   | \$200,000   | SPLOST, State & Federal Grants, Ware County                     | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | Ware County  | 7            |
| Construct pickleball courts at multipurpose recreation center (new)   | \$500,000   | SPLOST, State & Federal Grants, Ware County                     | X     | X     | X     |       |       | Ware County  | 7            |
| Build new District Attorney/Magistrate Court Build Office (new)   | \$300,000   | SPLOST, State & Federal Grants, Ware County                     | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | Ware County  | 7            |
| Build new State Patrol Office (new)   | \$500,000   | SPLOST, State & Federal Grants, Ware County                     | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | Ware County  | 7            |
| Purchase new Public Safety Vehicles (new)   | \$120,000   | SPLOST, State & Federal Grants, Ware County                     | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | Ware County  | 7            |
| Purchase new fire truck (new)   | \$1,500,000 | SPLOST, State & Federal Grants, Ware County                     | X     | X     | X     |       |       | Ware County  | 7            |
| <b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>   |             |   |       |       |       |       |       |  |              |
| Create a marketing plan to capitalize on Ware County's proximity to the three major ports of Brunswick, Jacksonville, and Savannah; raise awareness of the Industrial Park's proximity to the local airport; and raise awareness of the 5 direct rail lines in Waycross/Ware County, including rail in the Industrial Park. | Staff time  | Ware County, City of Waycross, Chamber of Commerce, DWDA, WWDA, | X     | X     | X     |       |       | Ware County, City of Waycross, Chamber of Commerce, DWDA, WWDA | 2            |

|  |                  |   |          |          |          |          |          |  |          |
|--|------------------|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--|----------|
| <p>Continue implementing a program to collaborate with federal, state, and local partners to develop local agricultural industry (such as blueberries, pine straw, honey, turpentine, compost, etc.) and promote agri-tourism.</p> | <p>\$200,000</p> | <p>Ware County,<br/>City of<br/>Waycross,<br/>Chamber of<br/>Commerce</p> | <p>X</p> | <p>X</p> | <p>X</p> | <p>X</p> | <p>X</p> | <p>Ware County,<br/>City of<br/>Waycross</p> | <p>2</p> |
|--|------------------|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--|----------|

| PROJECT   | COST         | FUNDING SOURCE  | FY 27 | FY 28 | FY 29 | FY 30 | FY 31 | RESPONSIBILITY                 | RELATED GOAL |
|---|--------------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Extend and upgrade water, sewer, gas, power, and telecommunication infrastructure, as well as railways and roads, to the Industrial Park and other areas suited for economic development. | \$10 million | Ware County, City of Waycross, WWDA                         | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | Ware County, City of Waycross, | 2, 7         |
| Develop a plan to create a one stop shop for Economic Development for Ware Co./Waycross (new)   | Staff Time   | Ware County, City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants, WWDA | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | Ware County, City of Waycross, | 2, 7         |
| Define the type of industry to recruit to Waycross/Ware County (new)  | Staff Time   | Ware County, City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants, WWDA | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | Ware County, City of Waycross, | 2, 7         |
| Develop 75,000 sq ft. expandable spec building for Economic Development (new)   | \$5,000,000  | Ware County, City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants, WWDA | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | Ware County, City of Waycross, | 2, 7         |
| Create a Milage for Economic Development (new)  | Staff Time   | Ware County, City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants, WWDA | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | Ware County, City of Waycross, | 2, 7         |
| Expand land for economic development Opportunities (new)  | \$500,000    | Ware County, City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants, WWDA | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | Ware County, City of Waycross, | 2, 7         |
| Create a plan to build a backup site for E911/Emergency Operations Center (new)   | Staff Time   | Ware County, City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants, WWDA | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | Ware County, City of Waycross, | 2, 7         |
| Build new hangers for Waycross-Ware County Airport (new)  | \$500,000    | Ware County, City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants, WWDA | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | Ware County, City of Waycross, | 2, 7         |
| <b>INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION</b>   |              |   |       |       |       |       |       |                                |              |

|  |                   |   |          |          |          |          |          |   |          |
|--|-------------------|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---|----------|
| <p>Design joint collateral marketing materials and public relations tools to market Ware County/Waycross to tourists and businesses.</p> | <p>Staff time</p> | <p>Ware County,<br/>City of Waycross,<br/>Chamber of Commerce,<br/>DWDA,<br/>WWDA,<br/>State &amp; Federal Grants</p> | <p>X</p> | <p>X</p> | <p>X</p> | <p>X</p> | <p>X</p> | <p>Ware County,<br/>City of Waycross,<br/>Chamber of Commerce,<br/>DWDA, WWDA</p> | <p>2</p> |
|--|-------------------|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---|----------|

**2026-2031 Community Work Program City of Waycross**

| PROJECT  | COST         | FUNDING SOURCE         | FY 27 | FY 28 | FY 29 | FY 30 | FY 31 | RESPONSIBILITY         | RELATED GOAL |
|--|--------------|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------------------|--------------|
| <b>TRANSPORTATION</b>  |              |                        |       |       |       |       |       |                        |              |
| Redirect US 1 via State to Tebeau, Carswell, and Memorial Drive, with associated improvements.                             | \$5 million  | GDOT                   | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross, GDOT | 8            |
| Resurface approximately 70 miles of city streets, as listed in the Capital Improvement Program.<br>(Change Funding Source) | \$21 million | SPLOST                 | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross, GDOT | 8            |
| Make improvements to Downtown streetscapes, including bump-outs at intersections, pole banners, benches, and light poles.  | \$3 million  | SPLOST, TSPLOST, GDOT, | X     | X     | X     |       |       | City of Waycross       | 8            |
| Implement DOT Priorities - Traffic Lights and Paving.  | \$750,000    | GDOT                   | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross, GDOT | 8            |

| PROJECT  | COST    | FUNDING SOURCE | FY 27 | FY 28 | FY 29 | FY 30 | FY 31 | RESPONSIBILITY   | RELATED GOAL |
|--|---------|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------------|--------------|
| Revise ordinances to include requirements of the Georgia Streetscapes and Pedestrian Design Guide.   | \$500   | GDOT           | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross | 8            |
| Revise ordinances to include requirements of the Georgia Manual on Regulations for Driveway and Encroachment Control.  | \$500   | GDOT           | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross | 8            |
| Revise ordinances to include various requirements of the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Guides for improved bicycle and pedestrian safety design. | \$500   | GDOT           | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross | 8            |
| Work with SGRC to apply for Age Friendly Community Status.   | \$7,000 | GDOT           | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross | 8            |
| Work with GDOT and SGRC to complete Road Safety Audits along key corridors/intersections as needed, based on crash data analysis and other metrics.                              | \$2,000 | GDOT           | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross | 8            |

| PROJECT  | COST         | FUNDING SOURCE                    | FY 27 | FY 28 | FY 29 | FY 30 | FY 31 | RESPONSIBILITY   | RELATED GOAL |
|--|--------------|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--|--------------|
| Complete Raised medians from Memorial Dr. to Corridor Z (new)  | \$2,095,000  | GDOT, SPLOST                      |       |       |       |       | X     | City of Waycross   | 8            |
| <b>NATURAL AND CULTURAL/HISTORIC RESOURCES</b>   |              |                                   |       |       |       |       |       |  |              |
| Maintain and restore canals with stabilization, vegetation control, and cleanup.   | \$200,000    | Waycross, SPLOST                  |       |       |       | X     | X     | City of Waycross   | 4, 7         |
| Renovate/rehab 3 historic Downtown buildings (Bunn building, Bowen building, and Lyric theater) (Change funding source).   | \$15 million | Georgia Heritage Grant, SPLOST    |       |       | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross   | 2, 5         |
| Conduct a marketing campaign to promote tourist attractions such as Obediah's Okefenok, Wildes Massacre Site, the Heritage Center, Laura Walker State Park, Okefenokee Swamp Park, and the Satilla River Water Trail, and Southern Forest World. (added Southern Forest World) | Staff time   | Tourism dollars, City of Waycross | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | Tourism Bureau, City of Waycross, Ware County, Chamber of Commerce, Hospitality Industry | 2, 4         |

| PROJECT  | COST         | FUNDING SOURCE                 | FY 27 | FY 28 | FY 29 | FY 30 | FY 31 | RESPONSIBILITY   | RELATED GOAL |
|--|--------------|--------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------------|--------------|
| <b>LAND USE</b>  |              |                                |       |       |       |       |       |                  |              |
| Review current ordinances to allow for increase tourist industry in Waycross (new)   | Staff Time   | City of Waycross               |       |       |       |       |       | City of Waycross | 6            |
| <b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES</b>   |              |                                |       |       |       |       |       |                  |              |
| Improve and/ or Replace infrastructure, including sewer, water, street and drainage improvements, as listed in the adopted Capital Improvement Program. (Change funding source)  | \$20 million | City of Waycross, CDBG, SPLOST | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross | 7            |
| Continue updating of city parks to improve all recreational facilities, including playground facilities, restrooms, and lighting (including Bailey St., Camilla, E. E. Moore, Elizabeth, Garlington, Gilchrist, Monroe, Parnell, and Roberts Parks, and others). (Change funding source) | \$1 million  | City of Waycross, CDBG, SPLOST | X     | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross | 7            |

| Project   | Cost         | Funding Source                                  | FY 27 | FY 28 | FY 29 | FY 30 | FY 31 | Responsibility                | Related Goal |
|---|--------------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Conduct a complete renovation/rehabilitation of the National Guard Armory. (Change funding source)  | \$2,000,000  | City of Waycross Georgia Heritage Grant, SPLOST | X     | X     |       |       |       | City of Waycross              | 7            |
| Renovate/revitalize the Bailey Street School, Colley Street School, and Grove Street Recreation Center brownfield sites. (Change funding source)  | \$10 million | City of Waycross, CDBG, SPLOST                  |       | X     | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross              | 7            |
| Assess Sewer and water systems in the City to address system deteriorations and to program capital upgrades (Phases I – IV). (Change funding source)  | Staff time   | City of Waycross, CDBG, SPLOST                  |       | X     | X     |       |       | City of Waycross              | 7            |
| Develop and expand Reclaimed Water (“Purple-Pipe”) System. (Change funding source)  | \$500,000    | City of Waycross, CDBG, SPLOST                  |       |       |       |       | X     | City of Waycross              | 7            |
| <b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>   |              |   |       |       |       |       |       |                               |              |
| Implement a collaborative group process for the reclamation of the old business district of Oak Street between Tebeau Street and Vernon Willis Drive, beginning with aggressive code enforcement. (Change funding source) | \$30,000     | City of Waycross, CDBG, SPLOST                  | X     | X     | X     |       |       | City of Waycross, Ware County | 2            |
| <b>HOUSING</b>  |              |   |       |       |       |       |       |                               |              |

| PROJECT  | COST          | FUNDING SOURCE  | FY 27 | FY 28 | FY 29 | FY 30 | FY 31 | RESPONSIBILITY                | RELATED GOAL |
|--|---------------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Implement an aggressive program to pursue grants for rehabilitation/renewal of approximately 50 homes in targeted areas. | \$1.5 million | City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants, Private Partnership |       |       | X     | X     | X     | City of Waycross, Ware County | 3            |
| Deploy new street signage citywide to comply with federal retro-reflectivity standards.                                  | \$250,000     | City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants                      | X     | X     |       |       |       | City of Waycross              | 3            |
| Develop standards and incentives to protect residential neighborhoods from encroachment of non- residential uses.        | Staff time    | City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants                      | X     | X     |       |       |       | City of Waycross, Ware County | 3            |
| Develop, improve, and enforce zoning standards for property upkeep and screening.  | Staff time    | City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants                      | X     | X     |       |       |       | City of Waycross, Ware County | 3            |

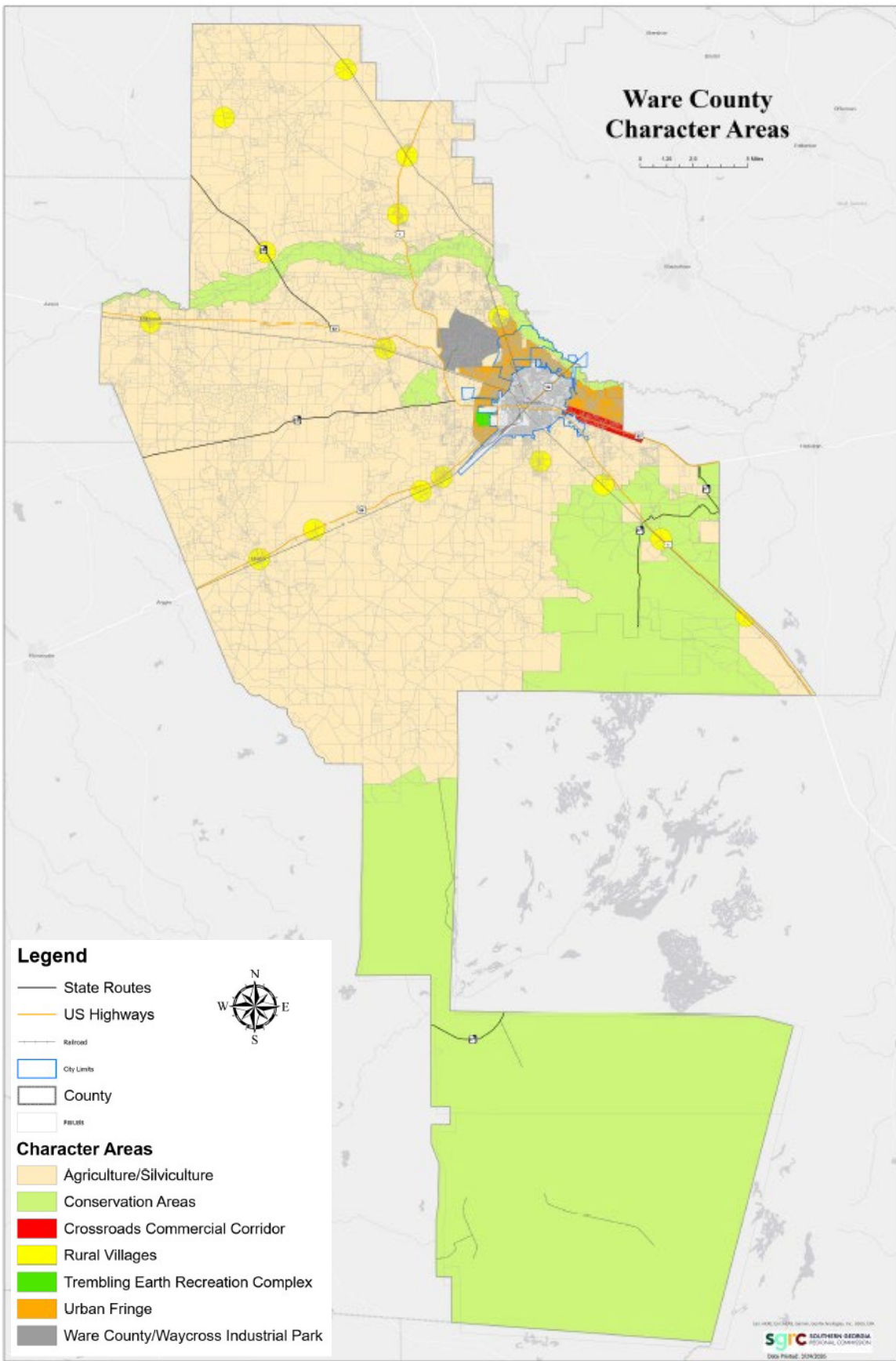
## **8. Character Areas**

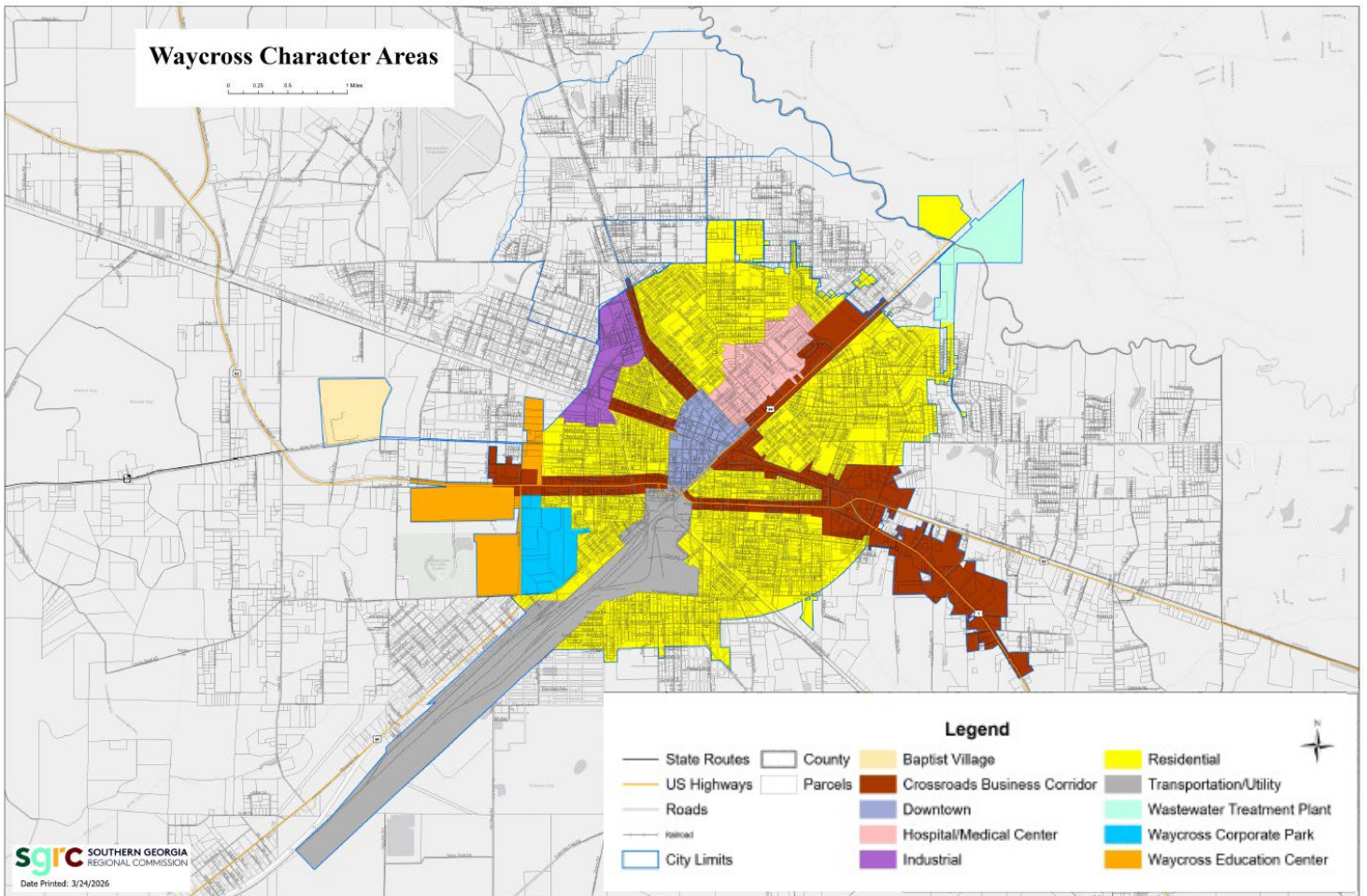
*The Land Use Element of this comprehensive plan describes and implements very important tools that will be used to guide future land development and capital investment decisions in Ware County and the City of Waycross via Character Area Maps.*

*The Character Area maps for Ware County and the City of Waycross are based on the County's and City's vision for the future, and have been developed in coordination with the citizens, the stakeholders, and elected officials. The Character Area Maps are a required component of the Comprehensive Plan under Chapter 110-12-1.03 of the DCA Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, most recently updated October 1, 2018.*

*The Character Area descriptions define a specific vision for each Character Area, and the maps outline the boundaries on a local scale. Each Character Area is defined with its own vision, description, goals and policies, and implementation strategies. In addition, the policies associated with each Character Area describe which land uses, zoning, and development patterns should be present within that area. Also included are Quality Community Objectives to be pursued and identification of implementation measures to achieve the desired development patterns. The development strategy developed for each character area should serve as a guide for all development and redevelopment taking place in that character area. Adherence to these development strategies will ensure consistent and complementary development, which promotes a greater sense of place and overall improved quality of life.*

*Character areas were defined by looking at the size and type of lots, site design features, and availability of infrastructure, density and intensity of development, type of development, environmental features and vision for future development. Some character areas are more generic and cover several geographic areas which show similar characteristics, issues and goals for their future. Other character areas are more specific and defined as such in their name, and act more as an overlay zone than a future land development designation.*





## **AGRICULTURAL/SILVICULTURE CHARACTER AREA**



### **Description**

The Agriculture/Silviculture character area designation is intended for those areas outside of the downtown and suburban areas, which are associated with agricultural and silviculture operations and related activities, natural resource conservation, groundwater recharge areas, and low-density rural residential development accessory to agricultural or farm operations of varying sizes. Many of these agriculturally utilized lands are under the 10-year/15-year conservation designation through the Tax Assessor and therefore will not be available for development for those years. The majority of this area does not have any zoning regulations with the exception of two areas designated as A-1 and one area designated as A and R-75MH. T

### **Predominant Land Use**

Agricultural/silvicultural operations and related activities, forestry, natural resources conservation, groundwater recharge areas and low-density residential development accessory to agricultural or farm operations of varying sizes.

### **Vision for the Future:**

Preserve farming and conservation options as a viable and important part of Ware County by maintaining low-density rural residential development, primarily accessory to farm operations, and right-to-farm principles. 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. Location of sustainable, clean commercial and industrial uses closely related to agriculture/silviculture should be encouraged as long as infrastructure is available and the uses are compatible with the surroundings.

### **Quality Community Objectives:**

**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.

**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.

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.

### **BAPTIST VILLAGE CHARACTER AREA**



#### **Description:**

This character area consists of the Baptist Village Retirement Planned Community, which was founded in 1957 to provide housing to senior citizens. Baptist Village is a full-service retirement community, featuring villas, apartments, assisted living suites, a health care center, a chapel, a kitchen center, a resident center, and an administrative annex. In addition, a gift shop and a new patient service area are located on-site. Recreation opportunities are provided on-site, and transportation is available to access shopping, recreation, and medical services off-site.

#### **Predominant Land Use:**

The predominant use is housing for senior citizens with associated uses. The current zoning district is designated as Zone M – Medical within the City of Waycross city limits.

#### **Vision for the Future:**

Provide a holistic living environment including housing, recreation, social community, transportation, and shopping.

#### **Quality Community Objectives:**

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.

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.

### **CONSERVATION CHARACTER AREA**



#### **Description:**

The Conservation Character Area is intended to identify those areas in the County and the City which contain environmentally sensitive wetland areas, upland areas, areas important to water resource protection, or which are home to endangered species or habitat. Conservation Character Areas in Ware County and the City of Waycross include the Satilla River Corridor, several groundwater recharge areas, Musket Bay Wetlands Bank, Dixon Memorial Forest, Laura S. Walker State Park, the Okefenokee Wildlife Refuge, and Scout Lake Park.

#### **Predominant Land Use:**

Conservation areas contain significant natural resources, watersheds, 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 of any kind.

#### **Vision for the Future:**

Protect water quality and groundwater recharge areas. Protect significant natural resources such as pristine wetland and upland habitat areas to preserve natural habitat.

#### **Quality Community Objectives:**

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.

## CROSSROADS COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR CHARACTER AREA



### **Description:**

The areas identified as the Crossroads Commercial Corridor include typical office, retail and service commercial uses that are clustered around the major commercial corridors traversing Ware County and the City of Waycross. These include US 1, US 82, and US 84. These commercial corridors are characterized by heavy traffic volumes traveling on four- to six-lane highways, including a large amount of interstate and intrastate commercial traffic.

### **Predominant Land Use:**

These areas include a wide variety of both established and newer commercial uses, big box uses, large lots and parking areas, and a minimum of landscaping or other attractive features. Present also are a variety of fast food and chain restaurants catering to the traveling public, as well as gas stations and some hospitality uses. Current predominant zoning districts in this character area are C-2, Highway Commercial, Mixed Use, and R-75.

### **Vision for the Future:**

The vision is to maintain highway-oriented commercial uses, but to provide more interconnectivity between properties and to develop visual and maintenance standards. The goal is to develop attractive gateways through town which will attract visitors and businesses and protect adjacent landowners and residents from adverse traffic impacts. Compatible zoning districts should be encouraged.

### **Quality Community Objectives:**

**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.

## HOSPITAL/MEDICAL CENTER CHARACTER AREA



### **Description:**

This is an established area with its activity centered on a substantial land use that has regional reach beyond the neighborhood: the Satilla Regional Medical Center. Other uses in the area include medical offices and other allied professional, retail, and service uses that are associated with the delivery of medical care to the community and beyond. Satilla Regional Medical Center is licensed for 231 beds and is the major medical referral center for the 9-county region it serves in Southeast Georgia.

### **Predominant Land Use:**

The predominant use in this area is the Satilla Medical Center, with surrounding related uses. Zoning districts within this area consist of C-2 (Highway Commercial) and M (Medical).

### **Vision for the Future:**

Encourage and enhance a mixed-use community which will provide opportunities for the day-to-day needs of the residents as well as expand the role of the medical service and business sector in Waycross. Encourage the continued development and co-location of medical services and allied services. Encourage housing and a living environment for medical professionals to live in the area and in the adjacent downtown.

### **Quality Community Objectives:**

**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.

**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.

**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.

## **INDUSTRIAL CHARACTER AREA**



### **Description:**

These areas are intended to provide an environment suitable for light and heavy manufacturing, wholesale, and warehousing activities that may impose undesirable noise, vibration, odor, dust, or other offensive effects on the surrounding areas, together with other non-residential uses that may be necessary with industrial surroundings. Suitable industrial areas exist within the industrial park and on land around the airport.

### **Predominant Land Use:**

Industry related to silviculture including millwork, construction services, manufacturing, motor freight transportation and warehousing, wholesale trades, and similar uses. Zoning districts within this character area include IP (Industrial Park District), GI (General Industrial), and LI (Light Industrial).

### **Vision for the Future:**

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.

### **Quality Community Objectives:**

**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.

**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.

## RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER AREA



### **Description:**

These areas are generally located within the City of Waycross surrounding the downtown and hospital character areas and split by commercial development corridors that radiate out from the center of Waycross. They typically include single family residential, and the density ranges from low to medium density with predominantly single-family homes and very few commercial uses.

### **Predominant Land Use:**

The predominant use is residential, with some mix of smaller schools and churches and some very limited neighborhood commercial. The residential character area includes the following zoning districts: RS (Residential), R50 (Residential), R50 Mobile Home (Residential), R50 Historic District, R75 (Residential), R75 Mobile Home (Residential), R75 Residential Manufactured Home (Residential), and R90 (Residential).

### **Vision for the Future:**

The focus for these areas is to reinforce the stability of the neighborhoods by encouraging more homeownership and maintenance or upgrade of existing structures. Provide for more safety and connectivity through continuous sidewalks and bike paths. Protect established neighborhoods from encroachment and deterioration and preserve historic buildings and character. Ensure that sufficient infrastructure is available in conjunction with development and minimize negative impacts through proactive planning.

### **Quality Community Objectives:**

**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.

**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.

**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.

### **RURAL VILLAGE CHARACTER AREA**



#### **Description:**

These include unincorporated communities in Ware County such as Astoria, Beach, Bickley, Braganza, Crawley, Dixie Union, Fort Mudge, Glenmore, Jamestown, Manor, Millwood, Ruskin, Telmore, Wahoma, and Waresboro. These areas have their main activities located at highway intersections, which serve the surrounding agricultural areas and rural residents.

#### **Predominant Land Use:**

The predominant land use is that of a village with some centralized commercial activity to serve the immediate needs of the surrounding area. In these areas, mixed neighborhood uses are appropriate, consisting of compatible uses such as residential, neighborhood commercial, churches, schools, and parks. Zoning districts currently are not applicable in these areas.

#### **Vision for the Future:**

To maintain the rural village character of these areas while providing crucial services such as EMS, limited employment opportunities, new residential opportunities, and affordable, good quality housing. To maintain the local character by improving the village main street area with some local businesses and industries that will serve passers-by and local residents and provide local jobs.

#### **Quality Community Objectives:**

**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.

**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.

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.

## **TRANSPORTATION/UTILITIES CHARACTER AREA**



### **Description:**

The purpose of this character area is to recognize the transportation or utility use of a property. This designation is applied when appropriate, subject to the existing or intended specific use of the property. Areas in Ware County and the City of Waycross with this designation include the Waycross-Ware County Airport and the Rice Yard for trains moving into, out of, and through Waycross.

### **Predominant Land Use:**

Airports, landfills, railroad switching yards and corridors. This character area encompasses the GI (General Industrial) and LI (Light Industrial) zoning districts.

### **Vision for the Future:**

To provide and protect an environment that is suitable for utilities, transportation and communication facilities, together with uses that can be compatible with utility, transportation, and communication facility surroundings and to provide an environment that will protect such uses from encroaching incompatible development.

### **Quality Community Objectives:**

**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.

**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.

**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.

### **TREMBLING EARTH RECREATION COMPLEX CHARACTER AREA**



**Description:**

This area consists of 123 acres of recreation land divided into three complexes within walking distance of each other. The recreation complex includes a walking track, pond, and fields for baseball, softball, football, and soccer.

**Predominant Land Use:**

Public Recreation Complex.

**Vision for the Future:**

Provide connectivity to other passive and active recreation areas and incorporate as part of a bicycle network system.

**Quality Community Objectives:**

**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.

**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.

### **URBAN FRINGE CHARACTER AREA**



#### **Description:**

This area lies in the unincorporated county and encircles the City of Waycross with suburban-type residential development from the west around to the north and east. The area is served with both water and sewer and is expected to see the majority of the residential development in the county.

#### **Predominant Land Use:**

The predominant land use here is low- to medium-density residential with scattered strip commercial development and scattered civic or institutional uses such as convenience stores, waste collection sites, and churches. Applicable zoning districts in this area include: A (Agriculture), A-1 (Agriculture), C2 (Highway Commercial), RS (Residential), R50 (Residential), R50 MH (Residential), R75 (Residential), R75MH (Residential), R90 (Residential), and Mixed Use.

#### **Vision for the Future:**

The suburban neighborhood areas should be encouraged to develop at lower densities as masterplanned developments, with an emphasis on connectivity and walkability. In addition, care should be taken to control growth and ensure that any development will occur concurrent with the provision of necessary infrastructure and to ensure equitable distribution of project-created infrastructure cost to the new developments. The areas should provide for interconnectivity between subdivisions and encourage alternate modes of transportation. These areas should also provide for open space within and outside of subdivisions in order to provide additional green space, as well as passive and active recreation areas that will serve the residents.

#### **Quality Community Objectives:**

**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.

**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.

### **WARE COUNTY/ WAYCROSS INDUSTRIAL PARK CHARACTER AREA**



#### **Description:**

This area is intended to provide an environment suitable for light manufacturing, wholesale, warehousing, and other non-residential uses that are compatible with industrial surroundings, including the airport.

#### **Predominant Land Use:**

Industry related to silviculture including millwork, construction services, manufacturing, motor freight transportation and warehousing, wholesale trades and similar uses. Applicable zoning districts in this character area are IP (Industrial Park), GI (General Industrial), M2 (Heavy Industrial), and A-1 (Airport). This character area also encompasses on three sides a residential (R90) area which may, in the future, lead to incompatibility issues.

#### **Vision for the Future:**

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.

#### **Quality Community Objectives:**

**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.

**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.

### **WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT CHARACTER AREA**



#### **Description:**

The property where the City of Waycross Wastewater Treatment Plant is located is owned by the municipality and stretches from south-west of the Satilla River, where the actual plant is located, to the north-east of the Satilla River where the plant's sludge fields are located. The property directly adjacent to the river is intended for conservation and any solubles intended for the fields are piped under the river. This property is designated as its own character area to protect the function of the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the natural habitat of the river.

#### **Predominant Land Use:**

Wastewater Treatment Plant operation and river corridor habitat conservation. The area is currently designated as residential zoning district.

#### **Vision for the Future:**

Maintain the viability of the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the viability of the river.

#### **Quality Community Objectives:**

**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.

**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.

## WAYCROSS CORPORATE PARK CHARACTER AREA



### **Description:**

This area includes the corporate/industrial park which is located adjacent to the Education Center Character Area.

### **Predominant Land Use:**

Predominant uses are offices, distribution, and light manufacturing within a corporate park setting. This area is covered under the IP (Industrial Park) zoning designation.

### **Vision for the Future:**

The focus for this area is to provide an environment conducive to maintaining and attracting businesses into the corporate park in order to create good jobs for the community. This includes providing appropriate infrastructure and public services as well as up-to-date technology.

### **Quality Community Objectives:**

**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.

**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.

## WAYCROSS DOWNTOWN CHARACTER AREA



### **Description:**

This area includes the traditional downtown in the City of Waycross and its historical buildings.

### **Predominant Land Use:**

Primary land uses within this area typically include city services, entertainment and commercial recreation, main street, mixed use businesses, business support services, urban neighborhoods, and traditional, older, but stable neighborhoods. Current zoning districts include C1 (Neighborhood Commercial), C2 (Highway Commercial), C3 (Downtown Business District), C4 (Central Business District), O (Office), and M (Medical).

### **Vision for the Future:**

Continue renovation and rehabilitation of historic buildings. Continue to develop mixed use to include residential, commercial, and cultural uses in the area to encourage a vibrant, livable, and walkable downtown.

### **Quality Community Objectives:**

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

#### **WAYCROSS EDUCATION CENTER CHARACTER AREA**



#### **Description:**

This area includes the high school, Waycross College, and Coastal Pines Technical College, and has developed into the education center for the area through co-location of these learning institutions.

#### **Predominant Land Use:**

The predominant use consists of educational institutions, with some associated commercial uses.

#### **Vision for the Future:**

The focus for these areas is to continue developing the community's educational assets by encouraging growth and development of the educational institutions and encouraging the provision of nearby amenities to facilitate that growth and development.

#### **Quality Community Objectives:**

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**RURAL RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER AREA**



**Description**

These rural land areas are likely to face development pressure for large-lot, low-density residential subdivisions. Such developments typically consist of sizeable residential lot subdivisions and open space. The majority of the Rural Residential areas can be found on the City of Fitzgerald's outer periphery, along major collector roads leading into the city. The density ranges from low to medium, with primarily single-family homes and very few commercial uses mixed in.

**Development Strategy**

Provide connecting green space and recreational areas to maintain the area's low-density rural character, emphasizing rural residential rather than agricultural activities. Encourage development closer to the city limits as oppose to further out in the county where water services are more difficult and costly to provide. Ensure all new RR developments include high-speed fiber or robust satellite-link infrastructure for internet service.

**Predominant Land Use**

Primarily made up of low-density, single-family homes on large lots, often interspersed with agricultural uses like small farms, pastureland, and timber. Development is limited to preserve open space and the natural landscape, with minimal commercial activity and only occasional community-oriented uses such as churches or small civic buildings. Overall, the area is intended to maintain a rural atmosphere while accommodating scattered residential growth.

**Vision for the Future:** The Rural Residential Character Area will remain a quiet, low-density community that preserves its natural landscapes, open spaces, and agricultural heritage. Future growth will be carefully managed to maintain the area’s rural character, with well-spaced homes, limited commercial activity, and development that respects the land. The community will continue to offer a peaceful, high-quality living environment while accommodating modest residential growth in a way that protects its sense of place and long-term sustainability.

**Quality Community Objectives**

**Sense of Place:** The community will preserve and enhance its unique rural identity by protecting natural landscapes, maintaining low-density development patterns, and encouraging context-sensitive design. Development should reflect the area’s character through the use of open space, tree preservation, and architectural styles that complement the rural setting, while supporting small-scale community gathering spaces that foster local identity.

**Efficient Land Use:** The community will promote efficient land use by directing growth to appropriate areas, minimizing sprawl, and preserving agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands. New development should be planned to make effective use of existing infrastructure where available, while maintaining large lot patterns and clustering techniques that protect open space and reduce land fragmentation.

**Housing Options:** The community will support a limited range of housing options that are compatible with the rural character, primarily focusing on single-family homes on larger lots. Opportunities for accessory dwellings, family subdivisions, and aging-in-place options should be considered where appropriate, ensuring that housing diversity does not compromise the area’s low-density, rural nature.

## CITY OF WAYCROSS ZONING

**RESIDENTIAL MANUFACTURED HOUSING RM-75** is established to provide suitable locations for dwellings which satisfy the minimum standards of 314.1 of the Waycross Zoning Ordinance and for any other dwelling suitable for R-S, R-90, R-75 and R-50 Residential Districts.

**RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS R-S, R-90, R-75 AND R-50** Residential Districts are established to provide suitable locations for all types of dwellings with appropriate standards for each district.

**R-45 RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT** is established to promote stable, quality residential developments of slightly increased densities of at least eight (8) dwelling units located on a developed site having a minimum of one (1) acre or more. This district may include an entire neighborhood or may be a “buffer” district between residential districts and non-residential districts.

**R-75MH AND R-50MH RESIDENTIAL MOBILE HOME** R-75MH and R50-MH Residential Mobile Home districts are established to accomplish the following purposes: The same purposes as the R-75 and R-50 District to provide locations for factory built or manufactured housing such as mobile homes; and to provide an alternate type of structure within the single-family housing market

**R-50HD RESIDENTIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT** the purposes of this district are to: Safeguard the architectural and historic heritage of the City of Waycross by preserving parts of the City which reflect elements of its cultural, economic and architectural history; Promote the use of historic district for education, pleasure and welfare of both the citizens of the City and its visitors; Stabilize and improve property values.

**M MEDICAL DISTRICT** The M Medical District is established to contain as principal uses the Memorial Hospital, the medical offices associated therewith, and certain types of retail and service establishments which should be in the vicinity of the hospital for the convenience of patients and visitors.

**O OFFICE DISTRICT** The O Office District is intended to permit those office uses which will provide opportunities for local employment close to residential areas, thus reducing travel to and from work and which will provide clean, modern office buildings in landscaped setting; uses which do not generate large volumes of traffic, traffic congestion and parking problems; and which will promote the most desirable use of land in accordance with the Waycross Future Land Use Plan.

**C-1 NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL** the C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District is to established as a district to contain as principal uses those commercial and service activities which are for the convenience of the surrounding residential districts.

**C-2 HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL** The C-2 Highway Commercial District is established as a district to contain as principal uses those commercial and service activities which will serve the tourist and automobile drive-in trade.

**C-4 CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT** The C-4 Central Business District is established to preserve and protect land to be used for those commercial and service uses serving the City of Waycross and its regional market area.

**LI LIMITED INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT** The LI Limited Industrial District is established to

develop and reserve land for non-nuisance industrial uses which are not significantly objectionable in terms of noise, odor, fumes, etc. to surrounding properties.

**GI GENERAL INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT** The GI General Industrial District is established for all types of industrial uses, including those which may be objectionable in terms of noise, odor, fumes, etc. to surrounding properties.

**CN CONSERVATION DISTRICT** The CN Conservation Districts are established to limit the development of certain land, swamp and/or water areas with poor drainage which serves as a wildlife refuge; possess great natural beauty; are utilized for outdoor recreational purposes and are subject to periodic flooding. These areas have such a small amount of developable land that with the best interests of the governing body, to encourage residential, commercial and industrial development.

**FDP - FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION DISTRICT** It is the purpose of this district to promote the public health, safety and general welfare and to minimize public and private losses due to flood conditions in specific areas by provisions.

**SDD - SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (OVERLAY)** The Special Development District is an overlay zoning district that provides standards in addition to those required in the underlying zone(s). The district allows the granting of special building permits for developments that modify their bulk, height and setbacks as defined in the Bonus section.

**PUD - PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS** The purpose of the PUD Planned Unit Development Districts is to encourage the best possible site plans and building arrangements under a unified plan of development rather than under lot-by-lot regulation. The developer benefits from better land utilization, economy in the provision of roads and utilities and flexibility in design. Review of the development plan by the Planning Commission and approval by the Waycross City Commission provides an opportunity to assure that the development will be in harmony with the character of the neighborhood in which the development is located.

**IP INDUSTRIAL PARK DISTRICT** The IP Industrial Park District is established to provide high standards of design, land use intensity and open spaces of reselected, non-nuisance and compatible industrial uses on land which is reserved and improved for unified and harmonious industrial development.

**WRD WATER RESOURCE DISTRICTS** The intent of this section is to establish minimum development standards and criteria which will afford reasonable protection of environmentally sensitive natural resources found throughout the City of Waycross. Based on the findings of the Waycross-Ware County Comprehensive Plan, it has been determined the wise management of these resources as defined in this Section is essential to maintaining the health, safety, general welfare and economic well-being of the public.

**MIXED USE DISTRICT** The intent of the Mixed Use District is to provide for the establishment of such districts at appropriate locations as may be identified on the Future Land Use Map of the Waycross-Ware County Comprehensive Plan. Permitted uses within Mixed Use Districts shall be integrated for convenience and encourage compatible uses of commercial, office and residential natures.

# Appendix

# Ware County, GA

County in: [Georgia, United States](#)

## 35,958

Population

899.2 square miles

40 people per square mile

Census data: ACS 2023 5-year unless noted

### Age

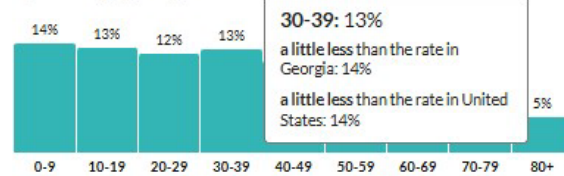
## 38

Median age

about the same as the figure in Georgia: 37.4

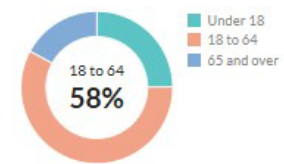
about the same as the figure in United States: 38.7

Population by age range



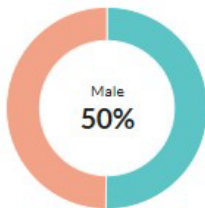
Show data / Embed

Population by age category



Show data / Embed

### Sex



Male  
Female

Show data / Embed

### Race & Ethnicity



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

Show data / Embed

Ware County – Demographics -

### Income

**\$23,550**

Per capita income

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

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

**\$44,833**

Median household income

about three-fifths of the amount in Georgia: \$74,664

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

### Household income



[Show data / Embed](#)

### Poverty

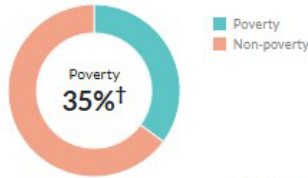
**22.8%**

Persons below poverty line

more than 1.5 times the rate in Georgia: 13.5%

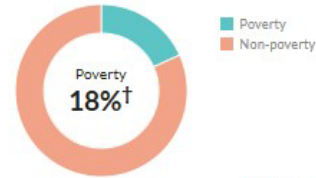
nearly double the rate in United States: 12.4%

#### Children (Under 18)



[Show data / Embed](#)

#### Seniors (65 and over)



[Show data / Embed](#)

### Transportation to work

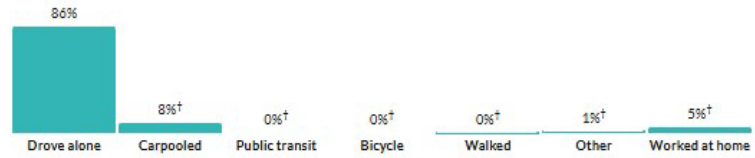
**20.3 minutes**

Mean travel time to work

about three-quarters of the figure in Georgia: 28.3

about three-quarters of the figure in United States: 26.6

#### Means of transportation to work



\* Universe: Workers 16 years and over

[Show data / Embed](#)

### Households

# 12,866

Number of households

Georgia: 4,008,013

United States: 127,482,864

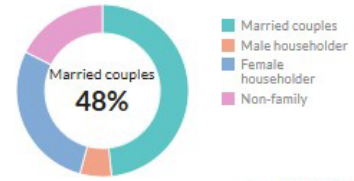
# 2.6

Persons per household

about the same as the figure in Georgia: 2.6

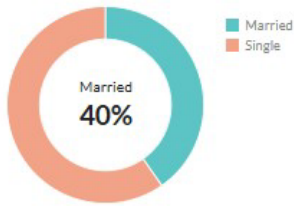
a little higher than the figure in United States: 2.5

### Population by household type



[Show data / Embed](#)

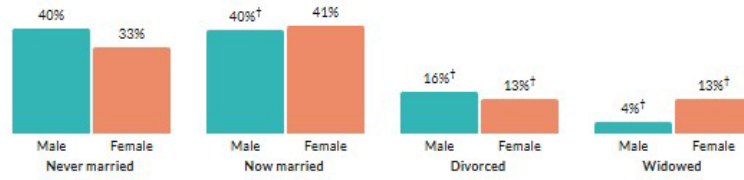
### Marital status



\* Universe: Population 15 years and over

[Show data / Embed](#)

### Marital status, by sex



[Show data / Embed](#)

### Fertility

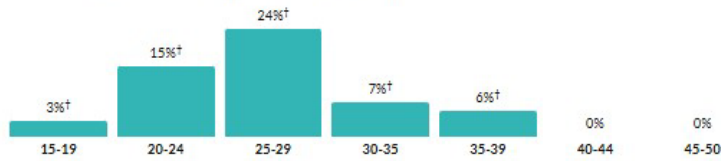
# 7.6%

Women 15-50 who gave birth during past year

about 1.5 times the rate in Georgia: 5.2%

about 1.5 times the rate in United States: 5.2%

### Women who gave birth during past year, by age group



\* Universe: Women 15 to 50 years

[Show data / Embed](#)

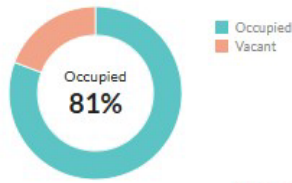
## Ware County - Households

### Units & Occupancy

**15,926**  
Number of housing units

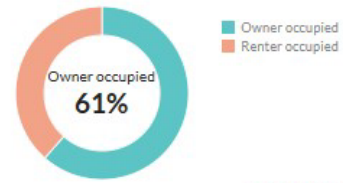
Georgia: 4,483,873  
United States: 142,332,880

#### Occupied vs. Vacant



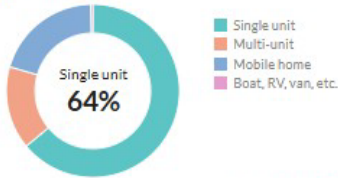
Show data / Embed

#### Ownership of occupied units



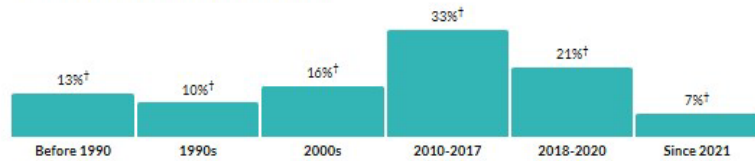
Show data / Embed

#### Types of structure



Show data / Embed

#### Year moved in, by percentage of population



Show data / Embed

### Value

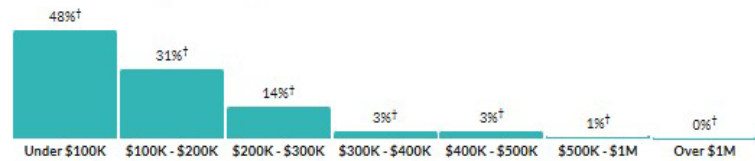
**\$106,500**

Median value of owner-occupied housing units

about two-fifths of the amount in Georgia:  
\$272,900

about one-third of the amount in United States:  
\$303,400

#### Value of owner-occupied housing units



Show data / Embed

### Geographical mobility

**8.5%**

Moved since previous year

about two-thirds of the rate in Georgia: 13.3%

about two-thirds of the rate in United States:  
12.7%

#### Population migration since previous year



Show data / Embed

## Ware County - Housing

### Educational attainment

**81.5%**

High school grad or higher

about 90 percent of the rate in Georgia: 89%

about 90 percent of the rate in United States: 89.4%

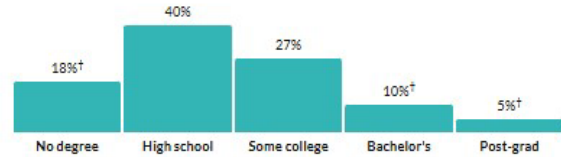
**15%**

Bachelor's degree or higher

about two-fifths of the rate in Georgia: 34.2%

about two-fifths of the rate in United States: 35%

### Population by highest level of education



\* Universe: Population 25 years and over

[Show data / Embed](#)

### Language

**N/A**

Persons with language other than English spoken at home

### Language at home, children 5-17

No data available

### Language at home, adults 18+

No data available

### Place of birth

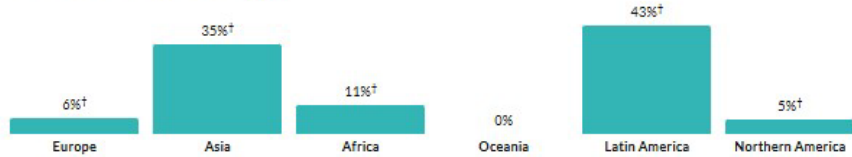
**2.8%**

Foreign-born population

about one-quarter of the rate in Georgia: 10.8%

about one-fifth of the rate in United States: 13.9%

### Place of birth for foreign-born population



[Show data / Embed](#)

### Veteran status

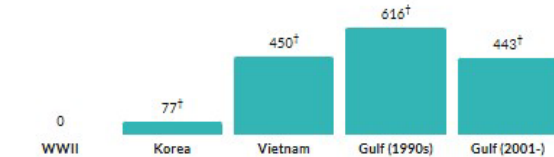
**6.2%**

Population with veteran status

about 80 percent of the rate in Georgia: 7.4%

a little less than the rate in United States: 6.4%

### Veterans by wartime service



\* Civilian veterans who served during wartime only

[Show data / Embed](#)

**1,659** Total veterans

**1,488** Male

**171** Female

# Waycross, GA

Place in: [2 counties](#), [Waycross, GA Micro Area](#), [Georgia](#), [United States](#)

## 13,813

Population

11.9 square miles

1,163.9 people per square mile

### Age

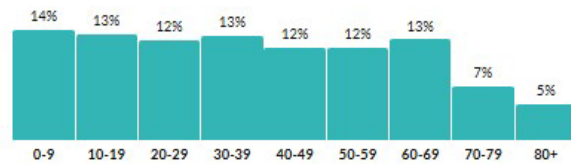
## 38

Median age

about the same as the figure in Georgia: 37.4

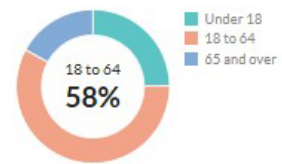
about the same as the figure in United States: 38.7

Population by age range



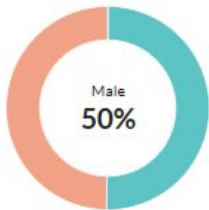
[Show data / Embed](#)

Population by age category



[Show data / Embed](#)

### Sex



Male  
Female

[Show data / Embed](#)

### Race & Ethnicity



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

[Show data / Embed](#)

### Income

**\$23,550**

Per capita income

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

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

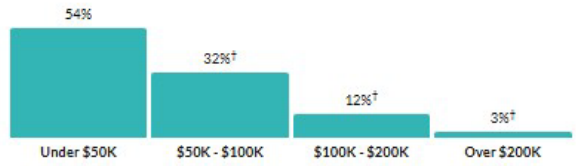
**\$44,833**

Median household income

about three-fifths of the amount in Georgia: \$74,664

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

### Household income



[Show data / Embed](#)

### Poverty

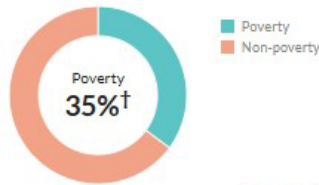
**22.8%**

Persons below poverty line

more than 1.5 times the rate in Georgia: 13.5%

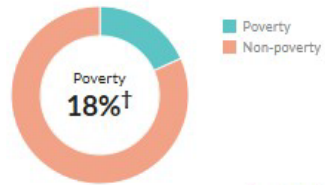
nearly double the rate in United States: 12.4%

#### Children (Under 18)



[Show data / Embed](#)

#### Seniors (65 and over)



[Show data / Embed](#)

### Transportation to work

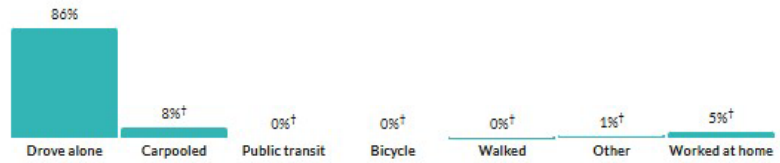
**20.3 minutes**

Mean travel time to work

about three-quarters of the figure in Georgia: 28.3

about three-quarters of the figure in United States: 26.6

#### Means of transportation to work



\* Universe: Workers 16 years and over

[Show data / Embed](#)

### Educational attainment

**81.5%** ±4.2%

(19,781 ±1,024.3)

#### High school grad or higher

about 90 percent of the rate in Georgia: 89% 6,451,736 (±0.3% / ±23,526)

about 90 percent of the rate in United States: 89.4% 204,204,445 (±0.1% / ±279,113.6)

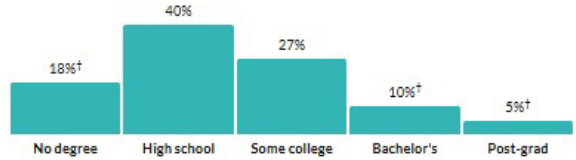
**15%**

#### Bachelor's degree or higher

about two-fifths of the rate in Georgia: 34.2%

about two-fifths of the rate in United States: 35%

#### Population by highest level of education



\* Universe: Population 25 years and over

[Show data / Embed](#)

### Language

**N/A**

Persons with language other than English spoken at home

#### Language at home, children 5-17

No data available

#### Language at home, adults 18+

No data available

### Place of birth

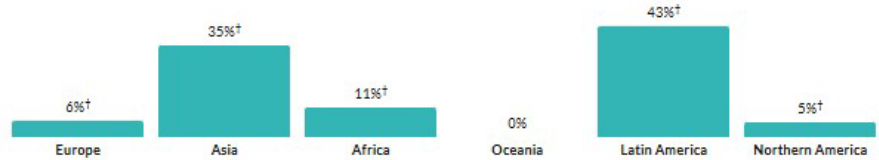
**2.8%**

#### Foreign-born population

about one-quarter of the rate in Georgia: 10.8%

about one-fifth of the rate in United States: 13.9%

#### Place of birth for foreign-born population



[Show data / Embed](#)

### Veteran status

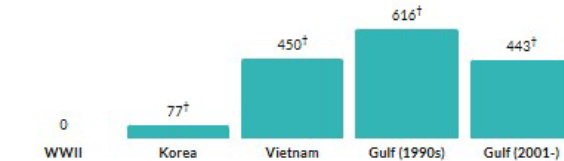
**6.2%**

#### Population with veteran status

about 80 percent of the rate in Georgia: 7.4%

a little less than the rate in United States: 6.4%

#### Veterans by wartime service



\* Civilian veterans who served during wartime only

[Show data / Embed](#)

**1,659** Total veterans

**1,488** Male

**171** Female

### Households

# 12,866

Number of households

Georgia: 4,008,013

United States: 127,482,864

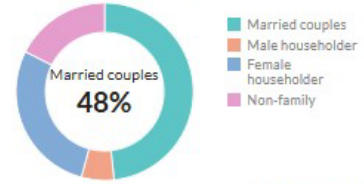
# 2.6

Persons per household

about the same as the figure in Georgia: 2.6

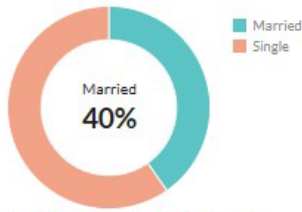
a little higher than the figure in United States: 2.5

### Population by household type



[Show data](#) / [Embed](#)

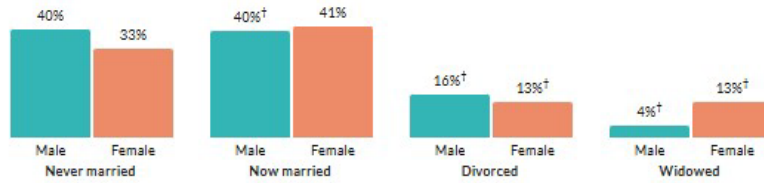
### Marital status



\* Universe: Population 15 years and over

[Show data](#) / [Embed](#)

### Marital status, by sex



[Show data](#) / [Embed](#)

### Fertility

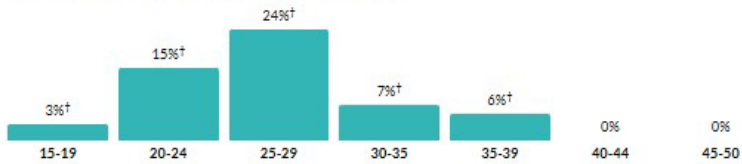
# 7.6%

Women 15-50 who gave birth during past year

about 1.5 times the rate in Georgia: 5.2%

about 1.5 times the rate in United States: 5.2%

### Women who gave birth during past year, by age group



\* Universe: Women 15 to 50 years

[Show data](#) / [Embed](#)

### Units & Occupancy

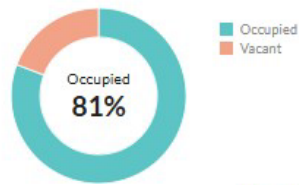
# 15,926

## Number of housing units

Georgia: 4,483,873

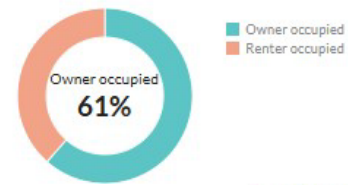
United States: 142,332,880

### Occupied vs. Vacant



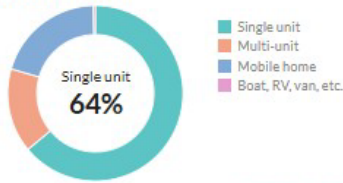
Show data / Embed

### Ownership of occupied units



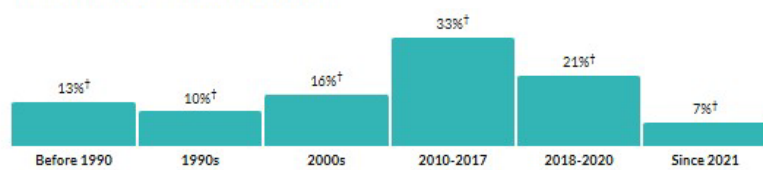
Show data / Embed

### Types of structure



Show data / Embed

### Year moved in, by percentage of population



Show data / Embed

### Value

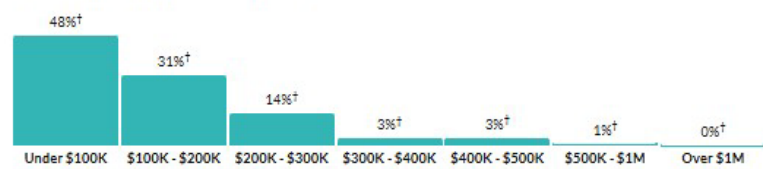
# \$106,500

## Median value of owner-occupied housing units

about two-fifths of the amount in Georgia:  
\$272,900

about one-third of the amount in United States:  
\$303,400

### Value of owner-occupied housing units



Show data / Embed

### Geographical mobility

# 8.5%

## Moved since previous year

about two-thirds of the rate in Georgia: 13.3%

about two-thirds of the rate in United States:  
12.7%

### Population migration since previous year



Show data / Embed

# Waycross, GA

Place in: [2 counties](#), [Waycross, GA Micro Area](#), [Georgia](#), [United States](#)

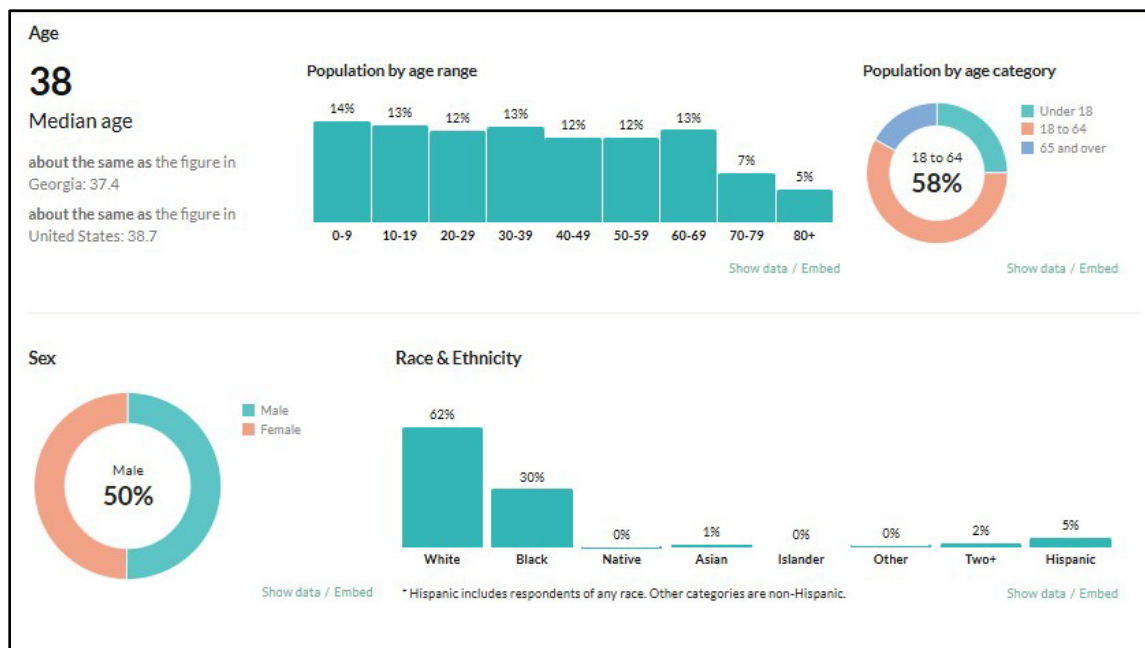
**13,813**

Population

**11.9** square miles

**1,163.9** people per square mile

## Waycross – Population



## Waycross - Demographics

### Income

# \$23,550

Per capita income

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

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

# \$44,833

Median household income

about three-fifths of the amount in Georgia: \$74,664

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

### Household income



Show data / Embed

### Poverty

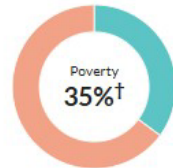
# 22.8%

Persons below poverty line

more than 1.5 times the rate in Georgia: 13.5%

nearly double the rate in United States: 12.4%

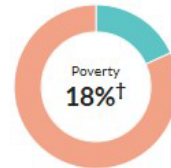
### Children (Under 18)



Poverty  
Non-poverty

Show data / Embed

### Seniors (65 and over)



Poverty  
Non-poverty

Show data / Embed

### Transportation to work

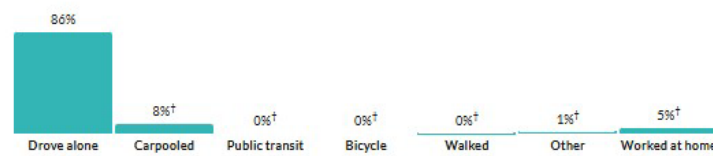
# 20.3 minutes

Mean travel time to work

about three-quarters of the figure in Georgia: 28.3

about three-quarters of the figure in United States: 26.6

### Means of transportation to work



\* Universe: Workers 16 years and over

Show data / Embed

## Waycross - Economics

**Educational attainment**

**81.5%** ±4.2%

(19,781 ±1,024.3)

**High school grad or higher**

about 90 percent of the rate in Georgia: 89% 6,451,736 (±0.3% / ±23,526)

about 90 percent of the rate in United States: 89.4% 204,204,445 (±0.1% / ±279,113.6)

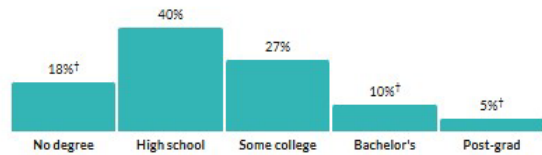
**15%**

**Bachelor's degree or higher**

about two-fifths of the rate in Georgia: 34.2%

about two-fifths of the rate in United States: 35%

Population by highest level of education



\* Universe: Population 25 years and over

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**Language**

**N/A**

Persons with language other than English spoken at home

Language at home, children 5-17

No data available

Language at home, adults 18+

No data available

**Place of birth**

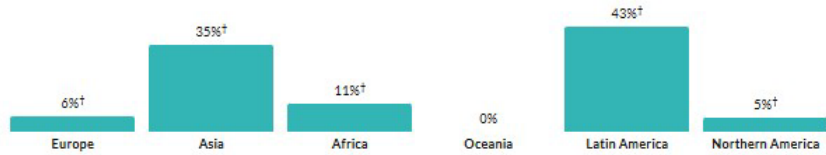
**2.8%**

**Foreign-born population**

about one-quarter of the rate in Georgia: 10.8%

about one-fifth of the rate in United States: 13.9%

Place of birth for foreign-born population



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**Veteran status**

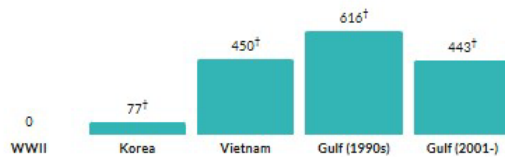
**6.2%**

**Population with veteran status**

about 80 percent of the rate in Georgia: 7.4%

a little less than the rate in United States: 6.4%

Veterans by wartime service



\* Civilian veterans who served during wartime only

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**1,659** Total veterans

**1,488** Male

**171** Female

### Households

# 12,866

Number of households

Georgia: 4,008,013

United States: 127,482,864

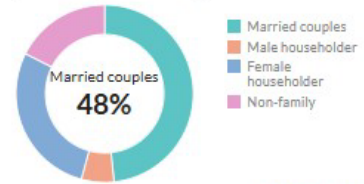
# 2.6

Persons per household

about the same as the figure in Georgia: 2.6

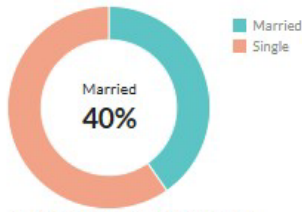
a little higher than the figure in United States: 2.5

### Population by household type



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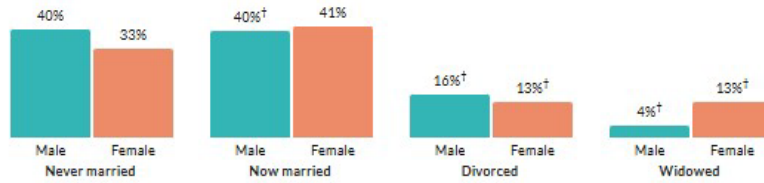
### Marital status



\* Universe: Population 15 years and over

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### Marital status, by sex



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### Fertility

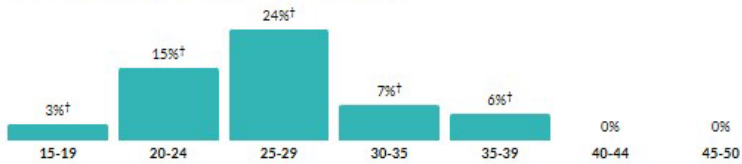
# 7.6%

Women 15-50 who gave birth during past year

about 1.5 times the rate in Georgia: 5.2%

about 1.5 times the rate in United States: 5.2%

### Women who gave birth during past year, by age group



\* Universe: Women 15 to 50 years

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## Waycross - Households

### Units & Occupancy

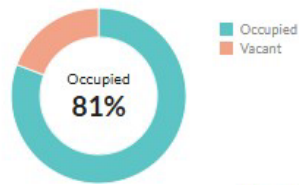
# 15,926

Number of housing units

Georgia: 4,483,873

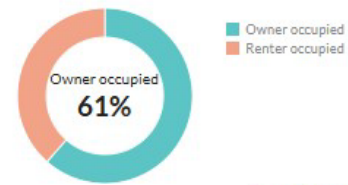
United States: 142,332,880

#### Occupied vs. Vacant



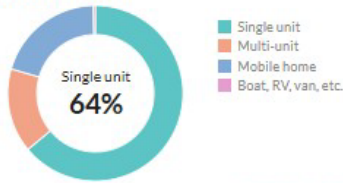
Show data / Embed

#### Ownership of occupied units



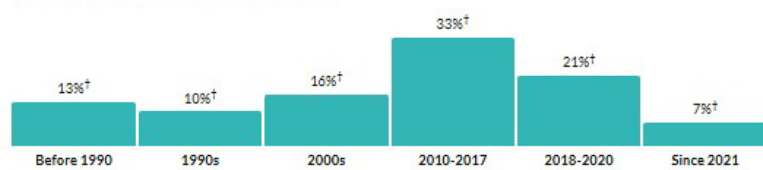
Show data / Embed

#### Types of structure



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#### Year moved in, by percentage of population



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### Value

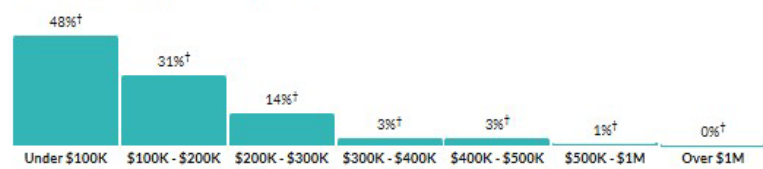
# \$106,500

Median value of owner-occupied housing units

about two-fifths of the amount in Georgia: \$272,900

about one-third of the amount in United States: \$303,400

#### Value of owner-occupied housing units



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### Geographical mobility

# 8.5%

Moved since previous year

about two-thirds of the rate in Georgia: 13.3%

about two-thirds of the rate in United States: 12.7%

#### Population migration since previous year



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## Waycross - Housing