

2021 Joint Comprehensive Plan Update For Ware County And the City of Waycross

Prepared by:
Ware County
City of Waycross



Photos courtesy of SGRC staff

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

1. Introduction

The 2021 Comprehensive Plan for Ware County and the City of Waycross was prepared in accordance with the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Chapter 110-12-1, Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, effective October 1, 2018.

As required by the Local Comprehensive Planning Standards, this Plan consists of the following elements:

- Community Goals
- Needs and Opportunities
- Community Work Program
- Broadband Services Element
- Land Use Element (as a community with zoning or land development regulations subject to the Zoning Procedures Law).

2. 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:
 - The local governments' elected officials and staff
 - Local educational institutions (Ware County Board of Education, South Georgia State College)
 - The Waycross-Ware County Chamber of Commerce
 - Waycross-Ware County Development Authority
 - Public safety departments, including police, fire, and the Ware County Emergency Management Agency
 - The Satilla Riverkeeper
 - Waycross-Ware County Airport
 - Waycross-Ware County Public Library
 - Local businesses and industries
 - 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. A virtual option was provided for attending the first three workshops. The final (4th) workshop was held in person, with social distancing measures and mask wearing encouraged in light of the pandemic.
- 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 26, 2020 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. 6 people attended the kick-off meeting.

First workshop

The first workshop was held on September 23, 2020. 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. 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.

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 results of the SWOT analysis are included in the Appendix.

11 people were present in person at the first workshop, and 14 attended virtually.

Second workshop

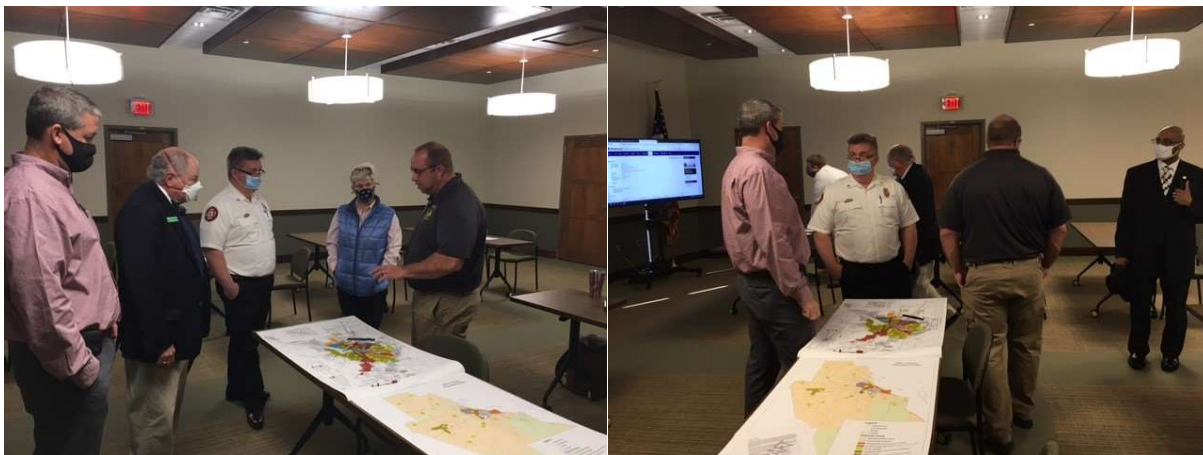
The second workshop was held on October 28, 2020. The purpose of the workshop was to continue and finish updating the needs and opportunities. 10 people attended in person and 7 attended virtually.

Third workshop

The third workshop was held on Dec. 2, 2020. 4 people attended in person and 4 attended virtually. The purpose of the workshop was to update the policies in the comprehensive plan, develop the Report of Accomplishments, and develop the initial draft of the Community Work Program. This was done through open discussion, using the newly revised goals, needs, and opportunities and the policies 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. 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 Jan. 20, 2021. The purpose of the workshop was the review the Land Use Element and future land use maps. This was done through open discussion and viewing of the maps in a setting where all attendees had the opportunity to make notes on the maps for suggested changes to the character areas. Notes from the discussion made by SGRC staff, and notes made on the maps, were then used by SGRC GIS staff to update the character area maps and incorporate the input from the workshop.



Final public hearing

A final public hearing was held on **[insert date]** 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.

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 and the City of Waycross are within the area of the Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan, which was adopted in September 2017.



Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan Area Map
Source: Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan

<https://waterplanning.georgia.gov/suwannee-satilla-water-planning-region>

Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan Goals:

- 1) Manage and develop water resources to sustainably and reliably meet domestic, commercial, industrial, and agricultural water needs, including all agricultural sectors (this includes the agro-forestry 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.

In addition, the Regional Water Plan has adopted several Short-Term Water Quantity and Water Quality Management Practices, which the local comprehensive plan should include in order to manage water resources in a sustainable manner through the planning period and beyond. The most significant issues in the Suwannee-Satilla Region are surface water availability gaps driven by agricultural usage. As such, the majority of water supply management practices are intended to address agricultural surface water use.

Short Term Water Quantity Management Practices (0-10 Years)

- 1) Utilize surface water and groundwater sources within the available resource capacities
- 2) Water conservation.
- 3) Data collection and research to confirm the frequency, duration, severity, and drivers of surface water gaps (forecast methodology assumptions and Resource Assessment modeling).
- 4) Evaluate and ensure that current and future surface water permit conditions do not contribute to 7Q10 low flow concerns.
- 5) Encourage sustainable groundwater use as a preferred supply in regions with surface water 7Q10 low flow concerns and adequate groundwater supply.
- 6) Identify incentives and a process to sustainably replace a portion of existing agricultural surface water use with groundwater use to address 7Q10 low flow concerns.
- 7) Evaluate the potential to use existing storage to address 7Q10 low flow concerns.
- 8) Education to reduce surficial aquifer groundwater use impacts to 7Q10 low flow Concerns.

Short-Term Water Quality Management Practices (0 – 10 Years):

- e) Point Sources:
 - a. Support and fund current permitting and waste load allocation process to improve the treatment of wastewater and increase treatment capacity.
 - b. Data collection and research to confirm discharge volumes and waste concentrations as well as receiving stream flows and chemistry
- f) Non-Point Sources:
 - a. Data collection to confirm the source of pollutants and causes; encourage stormwater ordinances, septic system maintenance, and coordinated planning
 - b. Ensure funding and support for local and state Best Management Practices programs, including urban/suburban, rural, forestry, and agricultural Best Management Practices
- g) Non-point Source Existing Impairments:
 - a. Total maximum daily load listed streams: Improve data on the source of pollutant and length of impairment; identify opportunities to leverage funds, and implement non-point source Best Management Practices

Longer-term (20- to 40-year) water quantity and quality management practices include:

- Improve the infiltration and management of wetlands
- Evaluate incentive-based programs to manage, increase, and restore wastewater and stormwater returns
- Identify potential/feasibility of a multi-purpose reservoir

- Identify the feasibility of regional inter-basin transfer
- Continue wastewater and stormwater master planning

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.

II. Plan Elements

1. 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 originally developed during the 2011 Comprehensive Plan Update. They were reviewed during the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update and adopted without any changes. They were again reviewed during the present (2021) Comprehensive Plan Update and updated based on input from the stakeholders.

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.

2. Needs and Opportunities

The Needs and Opportunities listed in this section were developed by stakeholders and residents as part of the 2021 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, 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.

1. 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.

2. Economic Development

Needs:

- 2.1. 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.
- 2.2. A more centralized vision is needed for the area by the City, County and the business community.

- 2.3. 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.
- 2.4. There needs to be more awareness of the Downtown Visitor's Center located inside City Hall and the resources it provides.
- 2.5. Downtown needs more evening events and businesses that stay open after 5:00.
- 2.6. A Downtown Business Resource Center is needed.
- 2.7. 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.
- 2.8. A comprehensive listing of economic development and community websites and information resources is needed.
- 2.9. 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.
- 2.10. 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 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. Consult labor trends in order to inform decisions as to which courses are taught at the colleges.
- 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.
- 2.16. The Georgia Department of Economic Development's Tourism Product Development Team will be visiting Waycross in 2021 for the Explore Georgia program. This is a major opportunity to showcase everything that the community has to offer.
- 2.17. A campaign is underway to make improvements at Okefenokee Swamp Park, and a billboard campaign for the park will be launched on I-95 (with 5 billboards).

3. Housing

Needs:

- 3.1. Revitalization is needed for blighted neighborhoods and large areas of blighted homes in Waycross/Ware County.
- 3.2. There are too many vacant houses in the community.
- 3.3. The quality of the housing stock in Waycross/Ware County needs to be improved.
- 3.4. There is an overall need for more affordable housing, especially good-quality, low-cost rental housing.
- 3.5. Zoning restrictions on affordable urban infill development need to be reduced so that more households can find suitable housing in walkable urban neighborhoods.
- 3.6. 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. Explore the feasibility of constructing housing for students (and non-students) near the college campuses, through public/private partnerships.
- 3.7. Encourage innovative techniques for developing affordable housing.
- 3.8. Ensure that zoning is not a barrier to affordable housing.
- 3.9. On-site recreation facilities can make new housing developments more attractive to potential buyers and renters.
- 3.10. 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.
- 3.11. Identify existing regulations and zoning regulations that prevent these land bank lot locations from being repurposed or utilized to provide affordable housing units.
- 3.12. The Okefenokee Alliance for the Homeless advocates for people experiencing homelessness.
- 3.13. 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.
- 3.14. New subdivisions and spec houses are being built and can be promoted as higher-end housing.
- 3.15. Conservation subdivisions could be an opportunity to provide higher-end housing integrated with the natural environment.

4. Natural Resources

Needs:

- 4.1. 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.
- 4.2. 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. New 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 at all three entrances.
- 4.12. A large RV park is now under development near the Okefenokee Swamp.
- 4.13. Consider becoming a Tree City USA.

5. Cultural Resources:

Needs:

- 5.1. The historic character of Downtown Waycross needs to be utilized and promoted to its full potential.
- 5.2. Downtown Waycross needs to be promoted more to people traveling on the major roads that bypass Downtown.
- 5.3. The Historical Society needs to be reinstated in order to increase the potential of getting grant funding for historic preservation.
- 5.4. 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. The Historic Preservation Commission is in place and preparing to be active again.
- 5.3. Pursue expansion of the Historic Preservation Commission to include all eligible areas of the City.
- 5.4. Encourage more community events Downtown and increase promotion of those events, such as art shows.
- 5.5. Consider providing incentives for revitalization of historic areas through overlay zoning districts.
- 5.6. Encourage continued support of the Community Theater.
- 5.7. The Historic Passenger Railway Depot is an asset and tourism opportunities there could be expanded.
- 5.8. 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.)

6. Land Use and Development

Needs:

- 6.1. Countywide zoning is needed. The corridors are zoned, but the remainder of the county is not, which may result in incompatible uses locating next to each other, specifically the encroachment of incompatible uses on agriculture and silviculture uses. The airport and industrial park as well as agricultural operations are not protected from the encroachment of incompatible uses.
- 6.2. Many blighted areas are located along the main thoroughfares, which influences the perception of the community by tourists and other visitors.
- 6.3. There is a need for better architectural design guidelines for Downtown Waycross and the historic districts.
- 6.4. Unmaintained and blighted properties need to be addressed.

Opportunities:

- 6.1. Consider enacting county-wide development regulations protecting existing agriculture/silviculture industry from encroachment by incompatible 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. Encourage the creation of a strategic Downtown Master Plan.
- 6.5. Brownfield grants offer an opportunity to revitalize some properties (such as the old newspaper building and Andrew's Café building/old fashion shop).

7. Community Facilities and Services

Needs:

- 7.1. Recycling services are needed. Innovative and cost-effective recycling solutions are needed for the community.
- 7.2. Mandatory garbage pickup is needed in Ware County. Bags of household garbage are being dumped by the river and brought into the City of Waycross.
- 7.3. The number of paid fire stations in Ware County needs to be increased from the current 2 up to 5.
- 7.4. Ware County needs to increase the number of EMS stations from the current 3.75 up to 5.
- 7.5. There is a lack of covered school bus shelters in the County.
- 7.6. At certain times of the year, some children have to walk long distances in the dark to get to their school bus stop.
- 7.7. 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.
- 7.8. Additional library facilities are needed to support community growth, e.g., a library annex.
- 7.9. Locations for community evacuation shelters with generators, other than schools, need to be identified. This is especially important during the pandemic.
- 7.10. Parking and lighting are needed at Monroe Street Park.
- 7.11. A system is needed that enables volunteer firefighters and other public safety to be notified of events via text message to their cell phones.
- 7.12. The public safety training center needs to be expanded with classroom space and training facilities.
- 7.13. The radio component of the 911 system needs to be upgraded.
- 7.14. Improved broadband is needed for virtual schooling.
- 7.15. Better broadband coverage is needed for public safety.

Opportunities:

- 7.1. The City of Waycross has bulk trash pickup services that are advertised on Channel 10 and Facebook.
- 7.2. Encourage utilization and promotion of the existing water & sewer system capacity. The system is older, but any problems are very manageable.
- 7.3. Grant funding could enable paid Fire and EMS services for Ware County.

- 7.4. Encourage promotion of the area's Tele-Medicine center.
- 7.5. 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.
- 7.6. Encourage the construction of more multi-use trails for bicycling and walking.
- 7.7. A partnership with Ware County Transit could potentially be used to transport students to their school bus stops in cases where the distances are long.
- 7.8. The Action Pact has a new location at the former Harvey's, allowing them to better serve the community.
- 7.9. The Public Library has programs and activities for people of all ages. Since the library's \$1 million renovation, there is space to expand and add even more opportunities.
- 7.10. The South Georgia Social Services Database (<https://www.socialservicesdatabase.com/>) has information about services available in the area.
- 7.11. 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.
- 7.12. The Education SPLOST would help to upgrade the Ware County School System equipment needs.
- 7.13. Public-private partnerships can be used to expand broadband access.
- 7.14. Encourage providing public wireless internet access (Wi-Fi) in public parks and Downtown.

8. Transportation

Needs

- 8.1. Improved access to Downtown is needed through traffic pattern improvements and better signage.
- 8.2. An updated long-range transportation plan is needed. (The last one was done in 2010.)
- 8.3. Continuous and safe bicycle trails are needed, both for the recreational and utilitarian bicyclist.
- 8.4. A truck traffic study needs to be conducted in order to determine a truck route to reduce truck traffic in Downtown.
- 8.5. 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.
- 8.6. Traffic congestion on Memorial Drive is problematic.
- 8.7. Electric vehicle charging locations are needed.

- 8.8. The boat ramp at the US-84 landing on the Satilla River needs to be replaced. This could be accomplished as part of the upcoming bridge replacement.
- 8.9. A rental car/truck facility is needed at the airport for utilization by fly-in visitors and the Industrial Park.
- 8.10. A food services facility is needed for guests and workers at the Airport and the Industrial Park.
- 8.11. Road signs are needed identifying the route to the Airport.
- 8.12. 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.
- 8.13. A new project list will need to be submitted if a second regional TSPLOST is proposed.
- 8.14. The possibility of a Waycross East bypass needs to be revisited in order to address pass-through truck traffic, enable access to industrial park facilities (and associated rail and air transport), improve emergency response times, and reduce congestion and crashes.
- 8.15. US-84/Plant Avenue in Downtown needs pedestrian safety improvements due to heavy truck traffic and faded crosswalks.

Opportunities

- 8.1. Ware County Transit can be used to reach many destinations within the county and beyond, including the Amtrak station in Jesup.
- 8.2. Encourage promotion and increased utilization of the airport in Waycross. The airport now has a 6,000-foot runway.
- 8.3. Promote the option to have a single-county local TSPLOST. (This would require state legislative action.)
- 8.4. 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.
- 8.5. Explore possibilities for boat ramps in other locations. DNR has offered to install a boat ramp at State Route 158 on the Satilla River.

9. Intergovernmental Coordination

Issues

- 9.1. A central marketing committee is needed that would structure and centralize the promotion for Ware County and City of Waycross.
- 9.2. An annual review of the Waycross/Ware Comprehensive Plan is needed.

Opportunities

- 9.1. Possible consolidation of some services between Ware County and City of Waycross to improve the delivery of services.
- 9.2. Encourage development of a common vision for the County and City to tie all the opportunities together.
- 9.3. Encourage development of joint public relations tools for use by the County and City.
- 9.4. Maintain existing good coordination between agencies and local governments.
- 9.5. Encourage and promote public/private partnerships.
- 9.6. Hold annual intergovernmental meetings.

3. Analysis of Data and Information

Ware County (including the City of Waycross)

According to the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, the 2019 estimated population of Ware County (including the City of Waycross) is 35,734, a decrease of 1.6% 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. 24.3% of the population is under age 18, and 17.6% is over age 65. There are 13,901 households. 65% of housing units are owner-occupied. The median home value is \$82,000 and the median gross rent is \$652.

66.3% of the population is White, 30.2% Black or African American, 1.0% Asian, 0.5% American Indian and Alaska Native, 0.1% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and 1.9% two or more races. Hispanic or Latino (of any race) are 4.4% of the population.

48.9% of the population aged 16 years and older is in the labor force. The median annual household income is \$39,887. 26.3% of people live in households with income below the federal poverty level.

City of Waycross

According to the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, the 2019 estimated population of the City of Waycross is 13,480, a decrease of 7.98% since the 2010 census. The population is 55.8% female and 44.2% male. 28.2% of the population is under age 18, and 18.4% is over age 65. There are 5,760 households. 49.3% of housing units are owner-occupied. The median home value is \$72,700 and the median gross rent is \$611.

56.7% of the population is Black or African American, 36.4% White, 0.1% Asian, 0.1% American Indian and Alaska Native, and 0.7% two or more races. Hispanic or Latino (of any race) are 6.6% of the population.

47.9% of the population aged 16 years and older is in the labor force. The median annual household income is \$29,465. 30.5% of people live in households with income below the federal poverty level.

4. Broadband Element

Existing Conditions

Due to Ware County's strategic location at the nexus of several major transportation corridors and rail lines, the community is in a position to play a vital role in the deployment of broadband across the state. During the past few decades, broadband services have become essential for education, employment, economic development, and overall quality of life. Therefore, broadband should be considered a necessary utility and should be regarded as having equal importance to other necessary utilities.

According to the Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative, there are 3,879 locations in Ware County and the City of Waycross that are not served by broadband. The percentage unserved is 20%.

Figure 1 below shows the served and unserved areas of the community. County statistics are based on a fixed, terrestrial broadband definition of 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up, and where the broadband service is available to more than 80% of locations in a census block. Census blocks that did not meet this definition are delineated as "Unserved." The map depicts access to broadband, not subscription to broadband. The source of the map is the Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative (<https://broadband.georgia.gov/maps/gbdi-unserved-county>). Broadband data are provided by the various Internet Service Providers of Georgia. Location data are from commercially available sources.

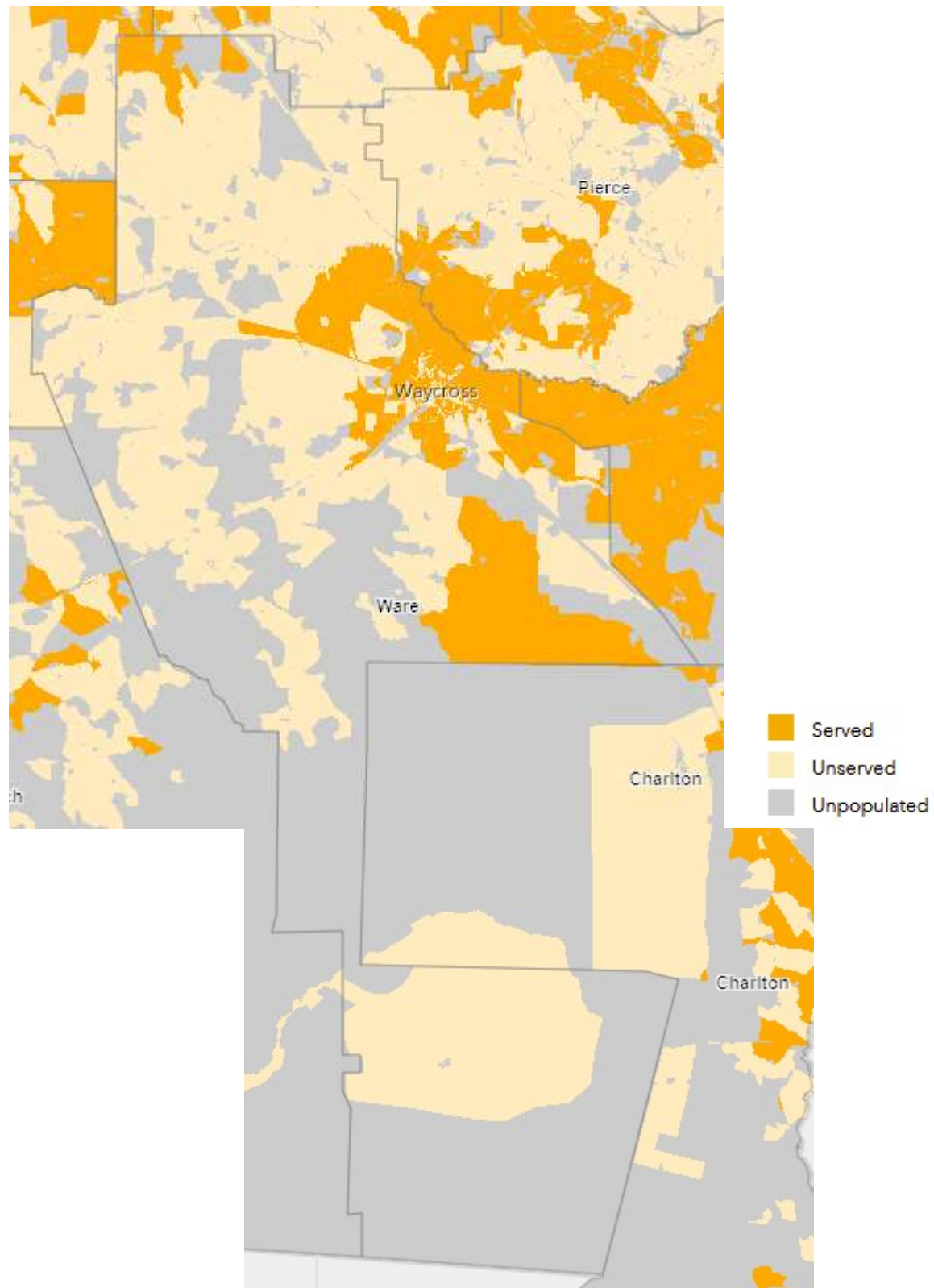


Figure 1. Broadband Served and Unserved Areas of Ware County (source: Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative, <https://broadband.georgia.gov/maps/gbdi-unserved-county>).

Having multiple providers to choose from is beneficial to community residents and businesses because it helps to keep prices competitive and ensures that a range of different options will be available for subscribers. Figure 2 below shows the number of fixed residential broadband providers for all service technologies for which data are available (ADSL, cable, fiber, fixed wireless, and satellite). The map shows that there are between 2 and 4 broadband providers covering Ware County. Figure 3 shows the number of providers for individual service types (ADSL, cable, fiber, and satellite). According to the available data, there is no fixed wireless service in Ware County.

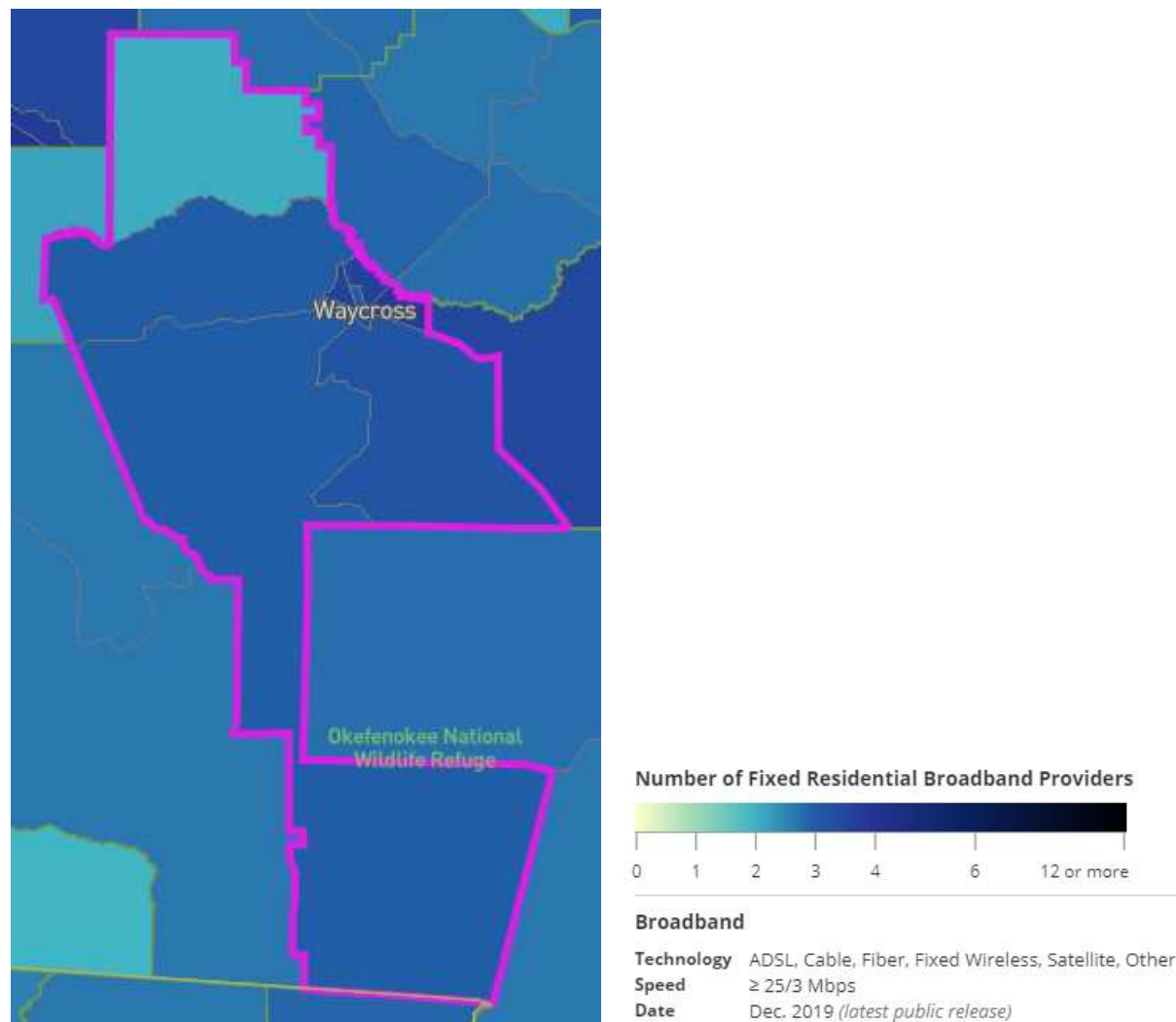


Figure 2. Number of fixed residential broadband providers in Ware County, with details of the cities. (Source: <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/>)

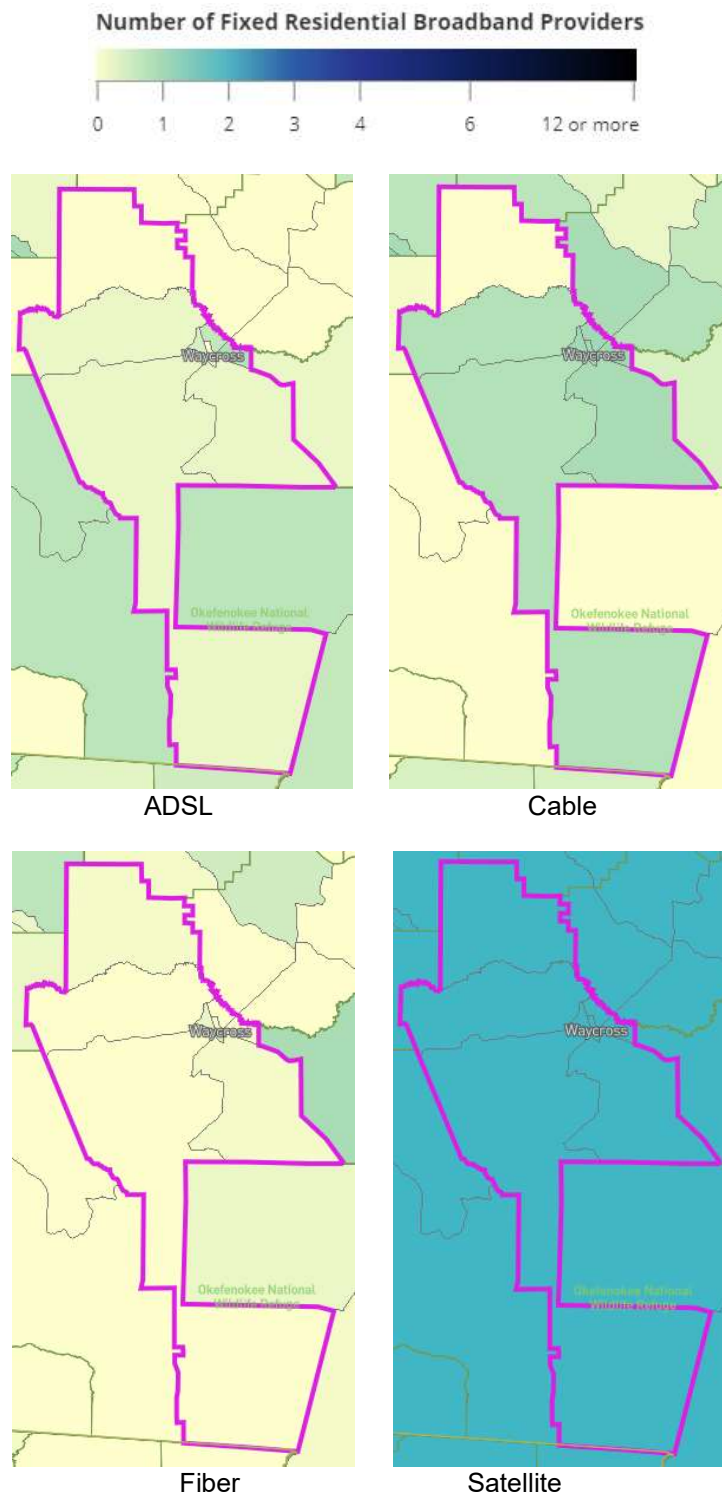


Figure 3. Number of broadband providers of ADSL, cable, fiber, and satellite residential broadband service (Source: <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/>)

Satellite broadband service is available throughout the entire county, but is typically more expensive than cable and ADSL service. Some of the more remote areas of the county have no option other than satellite or 4G for broadband service.

Although fiber broadband service is available only in very limited areas of the county, fiber infrastructure exists in the community and there is the potential to use it to expand service.

Broadband Action Plan

A key goal of this Comprehensive Plan is to ensure that adequate community facilities, including broadband, are provided consistent and concurrent with present demand and future growth (see Section 1 of this plan, Goal 7). Moreover, this plan lists the following Needs and Opportunities related to broadband in Section 2:

Needs

- 3.16. 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.
- 3.17. There is a fiber optic line running from the swamp to the highway, providing opportunities for broadband connectivity.
- 3.18. Improved broadband is needed for virtual schooling.
- 3.19. Better broadband coverage is needed for public safety.

Opportunities

- 7.15. Public-private partnerships can be used to expand broadband access.

Furthermore, the following community policies in this plan relate to broadband:

Policy 7.14a: Efforts will be made, including public-private partnerships and working with broadband providers, to improve broadband access, especially for students attending school virtually.

Policy 7.15a: The local governments will work with broadband providers to encourage expanded coverage, with a focus on improving public safety.

The above needs, opportunities, and policies have been used to inform an action plan for the promotion of the deployment of broadband services into unserved and underserved areas of Ware County and the City of Waycross. The specific action items in the action plan are listed below, and are cross-listed in the Community Work Programs (see Section 7).

Broadband Action Steps

Project	Cost	Funding Source	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	Responsibility
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

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 the City of Waycross
<p>1. Economic Prosperity Encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community. Factors to consider when determining suitability include: job skills required; long-term sustainability; linkages to other economic activities in the region; impact on the resources of the area; and prospects for creating job opportunities that meet the needs of a diverse local workforce.</p>	<p>Community activities, including economic development efforts, are consistent with this objective. Recommended best practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown Business Resource Center • Corridor study • Downtown program
<p>2. Resource Management Promote the efficient use of natural resources and identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the community. This may be achieved by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy generation; encouraging green building construction and renovation; utilizing appropriate waste management techniques; fostering water conservation and reuse; or setting environmentally sensitive areas aside as green space or conservation reserves.</p>	<p>Land use element and goals and policies related to natural resources are consistent with this objective. Recommended best practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pervious paving • Riparian buffers • Water resource protection
<p>3. Efficient Land Use Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the periphery of the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the traditional core of the community; designing new development to minimize the amount of land consumed; carefully planning expansion of public infrastructure; or maintaining open space in agricultural, forestry, or conservation uses.</p>	<p>The land use element and infrastructure-related goals and policies of this plan are consistent with this objective. Recommended best practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptive reuse • Brownfield redevelopment • Infill development program • Preserve agriculture land use • Urban redevelopment plan
<p>4. Local Preparedness Identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve. These prerequisites might include infrastructure (roads, water, and sewer) to support or direct new growth; ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired; leadership and staff capable of responding to opportunities and managing new challenges; or undertaking an all-hazards approach to disaster preparedness and response.</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. Recommended best practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All-hazards strategy • Comprehensive planning • Professional development-planning staff

Quality Community Objective	Notes on consistency with Comprehensive Plan for Ware County and the City of Waycross
<p>5. Sense of Place Protect and enhance the community's unique qualities. This may be achieved by maintaining the downtown as focal point of the community; fostering compact, walkable, mixed-use development; protecting and revitalizing historic areas of the community; encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community; or protecting scenic and natural features that are important to defining the community's character.</p>	<p>Projects and policies in this plan, and local ordinances, are consistent with this objective. Recommended best practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code enforcement • Design guidelines
<p>6. Regional Cooperation Cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions to address shared needs. This may be achieved by actively participating in regional organizations; identifying joint projects that will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer; or developing collaborative solutions for regional issues such as protection of shared natural resources, development of the transportation network, or creation of a tourism plan.</p>	<p>There is a high level of cooperation and collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions. Recommended best practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional roundtable • Shared service agreements
<p>7. Housing Options Promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource-efficient housing in the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development of a variety of housing types, sizes, costs, and densities in each neighborhood; promoting programs to provide housing for residents of all socioeconomic backgrounds, including affordable mortgage finance options; instituting programs to address homelessness issues in the community; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure availability of adequate workforce housing in the community.</p>	<p>Projects and policies in this plan, and local ordinances, are consistent with this objective. Recommended best practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georgia Initiative for Community Housing • Housing for the disadvantaged • Housing for the elderly • Inclusionary zoning • Land bank • Mixed-income housing
<p>8. Transportation Options Address the transportation needs, challenges, and opportunities of all community residents. This may be achieved by fostering alternatives to transportation by automobile, including walking, cycling, and transit; employing traffic calming measures throughout the community; requiring adequate connectivity between adjoining developments; or coordinating transportation and land use decision-making within the community.</p>	<p>Transportation goals, policies, and projects are consistent with this objective. Recommended best practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete streets • Sidewalk/trail network • Improving street connectivity • Maximize use of on-street parking • Safe Routes to School

Quality Community Objective	Notes on consistency with Comprehensive Plan for Ware County and the City of Waycross
<p>9. Educational Opportunities Make educational and training opportunities readily available to enable all community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, manage their finances, or pursue life ambitions. This can be achieved by expanding and improving local educational institutions or programs; providing access to other institutions in the region; instituting programs to improve local graduation rates; expanding vocational education programs; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure an adequately trained and skilled workforce.</p>	<p>Goals, policies, and projects in this plan are consistent with this objective. Recommended best practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public internet access • Transportation to educational facilities • Work ready program
<p>10. Community Health Ensure that all community residents, regardless of age, ability, or income, have access to critical goods and services, safe and clean neighborhoods, and good work opportunities. This may be achieved by providing services to support the basic needs of disadvantaged residents, including the disabled; instituting programs to improve public safety; promoting programs that foster better health and fitness; or otherwise providing all residents the opportunity to improve their circumstances in life and to fully participate in the community.</p>	<p>Goals, policies, and projects in this plan are consistent with this objective. Recommended best practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation to services

6. Community Policies

The following policies, organized by the community's needs (see Section 2), were developed in conjunction with all stakeholders and are intended to provide guidance to address the Needs and Opportunities identified in this Plan, and to provide a framework for the development of the Community Work Program. The Community Work Program (see Section 7) then addresses the Needs and Opportunities through specific projects, for each of which the participants, anticipated cost, and time frame are identified.

1. Population

Needs	Policies
<p>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.</p>	<p>Policy 1.1a: Efforts will be made to retain younger people in the area through job opportunities and available activities, including increasing mobility.</p> <p>Policy 1.1b: Efforts will be made to reach out to the younger population and increase the community's appeal.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Policy 1.2a: Efforts will be made to involve the younger population in the community's leadership.</p>
<p>1.3. Ware County/Waycross needs incentives for workers to live in the community rather than commuting in from elsewhere.</p>	<p>Policy 1.3a: Incentives to retain workers in the community will be identified and utilized.</p> <p>Policy 1.3b: Promote appropriate and affordable living accommodations for the working population including affordable rental housing in the form of single-family homes and loft/apartment living downtown.</p>
<p>1.4. Population needs to be stabilized and continued growth encouraged.</p>	<p>Policy 1.4a: Pursue the development of a quality "active adult/senior community" through a marketing and incentive program for potential developers, as well as through development standards.</p> <p>Policy 1.4b: Encourage and support efforts to expand degree programs at South Georgia State College and Wiregrass Georgia Technical College.</p> <p>Policy 1.4c: Pursue better job opportunities that will encourage younger people to stay or move back into the area.</p>

2. Economic Development

Needs	Policies
<p>2.1. Better job opportunities are needed for people who graduate from the local colleges. Waycross has two excellent colleges (Coastal Pines Technical College and South Georgia State College); however, insufficient jobs are available locally to retain the educated workforce.</p>	<p>Policy 2.1a: Encourage and assist local entrepreneurs to increase homegrown small businesses, e.g. with an incubator program.</p> <p>Policy 2.1b: Continuously recruit new businesses and industries that bring more jobs and diversity of jobs to the job market.</p> <p>Policy 2.1c: Support the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) for businesses.</p> <p>Policy 2.1d: Promote Ware County as a certified “work ready community.”</p> <p>Policy 2.1e: Develop strategies to increase workforce education and skill level, including for the rural workforce.</p> <p>Policy 2.1f: Develop incentives to attract sustainable and green industry, including agriculture and silviculture.</p> <p>Policy 2.1g: Take advantage of the Rural Zone.</p>
<p>2.2. A more centralized vision is needed for the area by the City, County and the business community.</p>	<p>Policy 2.2a: Develop a strategy/business plan to pursue increased attraction of new population to the area, including the development of a quality “active adult/senior community” with diverse services, entertainment, housing and retail.</p> <p>Policy 2.2b: Encourage the development of joint tourism and business marketing initiatives to market the area more efficiently and effectively and promote existing opportunities.</p> <p>Policy 2.2c: Capitalize on the timber industry to attract more alternative energy industry and increase Ware County’s reputation as a “green county.”</p> <p>Policy 2.2d: Encourage development of a plan to attract new businesses to the City and County.</p> <p>Policy 2.2e: Continue to market use of Trembling Earth Recreation Complex, e.g. for hosting regional, state, and national tournaments.</p>

Needs	Policies
<p>2.3. 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.</p>	<p>Policy 2.3a: Encourage transportation-driven growth, capitalizing on the convergence of US Highways 1, 82, and 84 in Waycross and Ware County's proximity to the coast, I-95, Jacksonville Airport, and the Ports of Brunswick, Jacksonville, and Savannah.</p> <p>Policy 2.3b: Capitalize on the area's comparatively low risk of hurricane impact compared to nearby coastal areas.</p> <p>Policy 2.3c: Encourage development of an inventory of large tracts of land suitable for larger businesses.</p> <p>Policy 2.3d: Encourage increased marketing efforts for the City's Technology and Professional Office Park.</p> <p>Policy 2.3e: Encourage increased marketing and promotion of tourist attractions such as Obediah's Okefenok, Wilde's Massacre Site, the Heritage Center, Okefenokee Swamp Park, Laura Walker State Park, and the Satilla River Water Trail for paddling, fishing, and boating.</p> <p>Policy 2.3f: Encourage development of a joint promotion program with the area's hospitality industry.</p> <p>Policy 2.3g: Encourage the development of training opportunities for local retail and restaurant workers to improve the ability of providing tourist information to visitors of Waycross-Ware County.</p> <p>Policy 2.3h: Take advantage of redevelopment and infill opportunities.</p> <p>Policy 2.3i: Promote the future availability of the City Auditorium for meeting and conference space.</p> <p>Policy 2.3j: Increase awareness of the Industrial Park's proximity to the local airport.</p> <p>Policy 2.3k: Promote the local airport and adjacent parcels of land to attract aviation-related industry and promote the airport's proximity to downtown hotels.</p> <p>Policy 2.3l: Utilize the Rural Center at ABAC for public relations and marketing.</p> <p>Policy 2.3m: Market the Downtown train viewing platform.</p> <p>Policy 2.3n: Consider establishing an additional visitor's center, similar to the one in City Hall, at Okefenokee Swamp Park due to the large numbers of tourists who go there.</p>

Needs	Policies
2.4. There needs to be more awareness of the Downtown Visitor's Center located inside City Hall and the resources it provides.	Policy 2.4a: A marketing campaign will be conducted to publicize the Visitor's Center.
2.5. Downtown needs more evening events and businesses that stay open after 5:00.	Policy 2.5a: Possible themes for new Downtown events will be explored and new events will be launched.
2.6. A Downtown Business Resource Center is needed.	Policy 2.6a: A Downtown Business Resource Center will be created.
2.7. 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 2.7a: The City will work with Downtown business owners to encourage active use of properties.
2.8. A comprehensive listing of economic development and community websites and information resources is needed.	2.8a: A comprehensive listing of economic development and community websites and information resources will be created.
2.9. 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.	<p>Policy 2.9a: Develop strategies to increase awareness of the fact that Waycross/Ware County has 5 direct rail lines, including rail lines in the Industrial Park.</p> <p>Policy 2.9b: Pursue attraction of industries that can utilize rail and research funds and opportunities to develop additional properties along rail lines.</p> <p>Policy 2.9c: Pursue the development of an inventory of additional developable property close to rail lines.</p> <p>Policy 2.9d: Encourage the creation of standards and guidelines for development in the corporate office park, identifying a common interest and shared vision to ensure a common standard of development.</p>
2.10. Southern Georgia as a whole needs more adequate representation and consideration by the State Legislature.	Policy 2.10a: Encourage lobbying the State Legislature to better promote Southern Georgia's interests.

3. Housing

Needs	Policies
<p>3.1. Revitalization is needed for blighted neighborhoods and large areas of blighted homes in Waycross/Ware County.</p>	<p>Policy 3.1a: Protect residential neighborhoods from encroachment of non-residential uses.</p> <p>Policy 3.1b: Encourage development, improvement, and enforcement of zoning standards for property upkeep and screening.</p> <p>Policy 3.1c: Promote limited mixed-use areas of compatible uses to serve neighborhood needs and create focal community points.</p> <p>Policy 3.1d: Encourage the preservation of historic properties and discourage demolition.</p> <p>Policy 3.1e: Develop an aggressive program to pursue grants for housing rehabilitation /renewal for targeted areas of the City of Waycross and Ware County.</p> <p>Policy 3.1f: Establish public/private partnerships to create a more comprehensive approach to housing rehab.</p> <p>Policy 3.1g: Seek grant programs for development/ improvement of housing and neighborhood facilities suitable for assisting residents in receiving multifunctional services provided to the public.</p> <p>Policy 3.1h: Continue implementation of the City's urban redevelopment plans and consider expanding the urban redevelopment area.</p>
<p>3.2. There are too many vacant houses in the community.</p>	<p>Policy 3.2a: Identify the prevalent reasons why houses are vacant in various areas and identify ways to address the problem.</p> <p>Policy 3.2b: Take advantage of the urban redevelopment plan to address dilapidated vacant housing in the applicable areas.</p>
<p>3.3. The quality of the housing stock in Waycross/Ware County needs to be improved.</p>	<p>Policy 3.3a: Pursue grant programs such as CHIP that can fund housing revitalization.</p> <p>Policy 3.3b: Incorporate development standards into the zoning ordinance to allow for a variety of home types, to encourage existing small (cottage) lots, and to provide affordable, high-quality housing.</p> <p>Policy 3.3c: Pursue public-private partnerships to develop new high-quality housing.</p>

Needs	Policies
3.4. There is an overall need for more affordable housing, especially good-quality, low-cost rental housing	Policy 3.4a: Pursue public-private partnerships to develop high-quality affordable housing for rent and purchase.
3.5. Zoning restrictions on affordable urban infill development need to be reduced so that more households can find suitable housing in walkable urban neighborhoods.	Policy 3.5a: Zoning restrictions that discourage affordable infill development will be remedied.
3.6. There are insufficient funds and programs to address the homeless population. Homeless shelters and housing for people experiencing homelessness are needed.	<p>Policy 3.6a: Funding and solutions will be sought to address the problem of homelessness.</p> <p>Policy 3.6b: A homeless shelter will be established.</p>

4. Natural Resources

Needs	Policies
<p>4.1. 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.</p>	<p>Policy 4.1a: Encourage increased marketing and promotion of tourist attractions such as Obediah’s Okefenok, Wilde’s Massacre Site, the Heritage Center, Okefenokee Swamp Park, Laura Walker State Park, and the Satilla River Water Trail for paddling, fishing, and boating.</p> <p>Policy 4.1b: Encourage promotion of the Cherokee Heights neighborhood as a tourist attraction in the form of a driving or walking tour, highlighting the neighborhood’s great diversity of plant life, including longleaf pine stands.</p> <p>Policy 4.1c: Pursue grant funding for trail heads.</p> <p>Policy 4.1d: Enhance and support existing efforts and groups working to clean and protect waterways.</p> <p>Policy 4.1e: Maintain the canoe route on the Satilla River from Jamestown Landing to Waycross Blackshear Bridge.</p>
<p>4.2. Wetlands in Ware County need to be protected from development.</p>	<p>Policy 4.2a: Research and consider the establishment of a wetlands mitigation bank or other wetlands mitigation standards to encourage development while minimizing impact on the natural environment.</p> <p>Policy 4.2b: Encourage voluntary conservation easements from private property owners to preserve valuable natural resources.</p> <p>Policy 4.2c: Research and pursue funding to purchase the most sensitive lands for public protection.</p> <p>Policy 4.2d: Encourage development of standards to limit the intensity and density of development permitted in sensitive areas.</p> <p>Policy 4.2e: Explore the concepts of conservation overlay districts for sensitive areas.</p> <p>Policy 4.2f: Pursue 319 grants for watersheds.</p>

5. Cultural Resources

Needs	Policies
<p>5.1. The historic character of Downtown Waycross needs to be utilized and promoted to its full potential.</p>	<p>Policy 5.1a: Promote the development of a multi-functional downtown that is home to a wide range of housing, work, shopping, culture, entertainment, government, and tourist events.</p> <p>Policy 5.1:b Create and maintain partnerships for events downtown by encouraging cooperation between the local government, the Chamber of Commerce, the private sector, and civic organizations.</p> <p>Policy 5.1c: Pursue art shows and other cultural events organized by the Heritage Center for the historic downtown.</p> <p>Policy 5.1d: Seek funding for rehabilitation of historic buildings.</p> <p>Policy 5.1e: Promote downtown living in Waycross and create more housing choices there.</p>
<p>5.2. Downtown Waycross needs to be promoted more to people traveling on the major roads that bypass Downtown.</p>	<p>Policy 5.2a: Promote the information that Waycross is a National Register Historic City.</p> <p>Policy 5.2b: Utilize GDOT resources and the County-wide transportation plan to address traffic issues in the downtown area.</p> <p>Policy 5.2c: Consider developing a downtown master plan that includes solutions for transportation issues.</p> <p>Policy 5.2d: Create signage to direct traffic towards downtown as it flows from the Hwy 84 overpass.</p>
<p>5.3. The Historical Society needs to be reinstated in order to increase the potential of getting grant funding for historic preservation.</p>	<p>Policy 5.3a: Encourage reactivation of the Historical Society.</p>
<p>5.4. More publicity is needed for the Airport Terminal Museum.</p>	<p>Policy 5.4a: A marketing campaign will be conducted to raise awareness of the Airport Terminal Museum</p>

6. Land Use and Development

Needs	Policies
<p>6.1. Countywide zoning is needed. The corridors are zoned, but the remainder of the county is not, which may result in incompatible uses locating next to each other, specifically the encroachment of incompatible uses on agriculture and silviculture uses. The airport and industrial park as well as agricultural operations are not protected from the encroachment of incompatible uses.</p>	<p>Policy 6.1a: Encourage development of countywide development standards to regulate the distribution of land uses and prevent the encroachment of incompatible land uses on each other.</p> <p>Policy 6.1b: Encourage development of zoning districts appropriate to the character areas in the Comprehensive Plan.</p> <p>Policy 6.1c: Provide for buffer areas between agricultural and non-agricultural uses.</p> <p>Policy 6.1d: Include standards for active adult/senior communities in countywide development standards.</p>
<p>6.2. Many blighted areas are located along the main thoroughfares, which influences the perception of the community by tourists and other visitors.</p>	<p>Policy 6.2a: Encourage re-use of blighted development.</p> <p>Policy 6.2b: Encourage infill development and redevelopment of declining and revitalizing areas.</p> <p>Policy 6.2c: Provide sufficient flexibility in the approval process to encourage creative design, infill, rehabilitation, green space and open space.</p> <p>Policy 6.2d: Establish and define specific roles for each corridor in order to encourage revitalization.</p> <p>Policy 6.2e: Continue the regular maintenance/beautification of highway corridors and gateways.</p> <p>Policy 6.2f: Promote gateway treatment at crucial intersections.</p> <p>Policy 6.2g: Provide for flexibility in land uses to allow for compatible mix of uses, including boulevard housing.</p> <p>Policy 6.2h: Develop guidelines and encourage improving the visual appearance of corridors through private-public cooperation.</p> <p>Policy 6.2i: Redevelop or re-designate key parcels within the corridors for public-private partnerships in revitalization.</p> <p>Policy 6.2j: Encourage underground utilities for new developments and encourage burying existing above-ground utilities.</p>

Needs	Policies
<p>6.3. There is a need for better architectural design guidelines for Downtown Waycross and the historic districts.</p>	<p>Policy 6.3a: Encourage development of design standards for the downtown area in Waycross and encourage continued support of downtown revitalization projects.</p> <p>Policy 6.3b: Encourage development of design guidelines for the Crossroads gateways and corridors, including signage and landscaping to instill a sense of community and welcome visitors.</p>
<p>6.4. Unmaintained and blighted properties need to be addressed.</p>	<p>Policy 6.4a: Utilize the powers conveyed by the urban redevelopment plan to address blight in the urban redevelopment areas.</p> <p>Policy 6.4b: Consider expanding the urban redevelopment area.</p> <p>Policy 6.4c: Use code enforcement to address blight and unmaintained properties.</p>

7. Community Facilities and Services

Needs	Policies
7.1. Recycling services are needed. Innovative and cost-effective recycling solutions are needed for the community.	<p>Policy 7.1a: Develop incentives and opportunities for the community to encourage recycling services and utilize a regional recycling hub, thereby keeping the costs down.</p> <p>Policy 7.1b: Encourage volunteer recycling, waste reduction, and anti-littering efforts.</p>
7.2. Mandatory garbage pickup is needed in Ware County. Bags of household garbage are being dumped by the river and brought into the City of Waycross.	<p>Policy 7.2a: Mandatory garbage pick-up will be implemented in Ware County.</p> <p>Policy 7.2b: Encourage public awareness and enforcement of littering laws and illegal dumping laws.</p>
7.3. The number of paid fire stations in Ware County needs to be increased from the current 2 up to 5.	Policy 7.3a: Research and apply for funding and grants to provide expanded paid Fire services for Ware County and the City of Waycross.
7.4. Ware County needs to increase the number of EMS stations from the current 3.75 up to 5.	Policy 7.4a: Research and apply for funding and grants to provide expanded paid EMS services for Ware County and the City of Waycross.
7.5. There is a lack of covered school bus shelters in the County.	Policy 7.5a: Research funding opportunities to provide covered school bus shelters., including volunteers and public-private partnerships (for example, advertising on shelters).
7.6. At certain times of the year, some children have to walk long distances in the dark to get to their school bus stop.	<p>Policy 7.6a: Encourage a review of the safety of bus stop shelter locations.</p> <p>Policy 7.6b: Identify areas where street lighting is inadequate.</p> <p>Policy 7.6c: Promote Ware County Transit as a possible way to make the connection between home and school bus stop.</p>
7.7. 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 7.7a: Investigate the potential for utility easements and other ways to improve access to utility lines.
7.8. Additional library facilities are needed to support community growth, e.g., a library annex.	Policy 7.8a: Expansion of the library will be supported and encouraged.

7.9. Locations for community evacuation shelters with generators, other than schools, need to be identified. This is especially important during the pandemic.	Policy 7.9a: Locations for community evacuation shelters (other than schools) will be identified. Policy 7.9b: Generators will be acquired and installed for shelter locations.
7.10. Parking and lighting are needed at Monroe Street Park.	Policy 7.10a: Parking and lighting will be installed at Monroe Street Park, depending on availability of funds.
7.11. 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 7.11a: A text message system for public safety will be implemented.
7.12. The public safety training center needs to be expanded with classroom space and training facilities.	Policy 7.12a: Funds will be sought to expand the public safety training center with classroom space and training facilities.
7.13. The radio component of the 911 system needs to be upgraded.	Policy 7.13a: The radio component of the 911 system will be upgraded.
7.14. Improved broadband is needed for virtual schooling.	Policy 7.14a: Efforts will be made, including public-private partnerships and working with broadband providers, to improve broadband access, especially for students attending school virtually.
7.15. Better broadband coverage is needed for public safety.	Policy 7.15a: The local governments will work with broadband providers to encourage expanded coverage, with a focus on improving public safety.

8. Transportation

Needs	Policies
8.1. Improved access to Downtown is needed through traffic pattern improvements and better signage.	<p>Policy 8.1a: Provide interconnectivity and public transportation from other cultural, recreational and business locations.</p> <p>Policy 8.1b: Develop a sign campaign and themed landscaping for one or more gateways to downtown.</p>
8.2. An updated long-range transportation plan is needed. (The last one was done in 2010.)	<p>Policy 8.2a: Determine the best way to approach a long-range transportation planning effort for the community, possibly utilizing GDOT and the Southern Georgia Regional Commission as resources.</p> <p>Policy 8.2b: The Transportation Planning and Coordination Committee will resume meetings with the County, City, GDOT, and other stakeholders.</p>
8.3. Continuous and safe bicycle trails are needed, both for the recreational and utilitarian bicyclist.	<p>Policy 8.3a: Map the existing on-street bicycle network, trails, and bicycle-friendly roads in order to identify the most efficient improvements that can be made.</p> <p>Policy 8.3b: Research and pursue funding sources to implement additional bicycle facilities, including trails, bike parking, and trail heads.</p> <p>Policy 8.3c: Continue to implement Safe Routes to School Program between neighborhoods and schools.</p>
8.4. A truck traffic study needs to be conducted in order to determine a truck route to reduce truck traffic in Downtown.	Policy 8.4a: Determine the most cost-effective way to conduct a truck traffic study, possibly utilizing GDOT and the Southern Georgia Regional Commission as resources.
8.5. 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.	<p>Policy 8.5a: Pursue the development or identification of appropriate bypass routes for emergency vehicles.</p> <p>Policy 8.5b: Continue to pursue railroad overpasses where appropriate.</p>
8.6. Traffic congestion on Memorial Drive is problematic.	Policy 8.6a: Investigate solutions to address congestion, such as adjusting signal timing.

8.7. Electric vehicle charging locations are needed.	<p>Policy 8.7a: Pursue public-private partnerships for expanding the availability of electric vehicle charging locations.</p> <p>Policy 8.7b: Consider utilizing the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's "Model Ordinance for the Development of Electric Vehicle Infrastructure" to encourage and optimize the provision of electric vehicle charging locations.</p>
8.8. The boat ramp at the US-84 landing on the Satilla River needs to be replaced. This could be accomplished as part of the upcoming bridge replacement.	Policy 8.8a: Seek additional funds for boat ramp reconstruction and endeavor to integrate the boat ramp reconstruction into the US-84 bridge project.
8.9. A rental car/truck facility is needed at the airport for utilization by fly-in visitors and the Industrial Park.	Policy 8.9a: Pursue a public-private partnership to provide car/truck rentals at the airport.
8.10. A food services facility is needed for guests and workers at the Airport and the Industrial Park.	Policy 8.10a: Pursue a public-private partnership to provide food services at the airport.
8.11. Road signs are needed identifying the route to the Airport.	Policy 8.11a: Install road signage directing motorists to the airport.
8.12. 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 8.12a: Investigate options for upgrading and expanding the traffic signal control system.
8.13. A new project list will need to be submitted if a second regional TSPLOST is proposed.	Policy 8.13a: Preliminary efforts will be made to develop a new project list, contingent on a second TSPLOST.
8.14. The possibility of a Waycross East bypass needs to be revisited in order to address pass-through truck traffic, enable access to industrial park facilities (and associated rail and air transport), improve emergency response times, and reduce congestion and crashes.	Policy 8.14a: Efforts will be made to advocate for a Waycross East bypass.
8.15. US-84/Plant Avenue in Downtown needs pedestrian safety improvements due to heavy truck traffic and faded crosswalks.	Policy 8.15a: Pedestrian safety improvements will be implemented on Plant Avenue in Downtown, including repainting of crosswalks and investigating the possibility of enhanced crosswalk devices (such as flashing beacons). (This will need to be coordinated with GDOT.)

9. Intergovernmental Coordination

Needs	Policies
9.1. A central marketing committee is needed that would structure and centralize the promotion for Ware County and City of Waycross.	Policy 9.1a: Pursue development of a central marketing committee.
9.2. An annual review of the Waycross/Ware Comprehensive Plan is needed.	Policy 9.2a: Encourage annual review meetings for comprehensive planning.

7.1. Report of Accomplishments (2017-2021 Community Work Program)

Ware County

Project	Cost	Funding Source	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	Responsibility	Status
Transportation									
Construct Quad gate and quiet zone	\$500,000	GDOT, Ware County	X	X	X			GDOT, Ware County	Complete
Continue implementing Airport Capital Improvement Program as adopted by the County Commission	\$5 million	GDOT, Ware County, FAA, Federal Funds	X	X	X	X	X	GDOT, Ware County, FAA	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
Rehabilitate sidewalks and add bike lanes on Pinehurst and Tebeau Roads.	\$250,000	GDOT, Ware County	X	X				Ware County	Ongoing (expected completion FY2023)
Widen Hatcher Point Rd. from US 1 South to Knight Avenue	\$4 million	GDOT, Ware County, City of Waycross, Federal Funds	X	X	X			GDOT, Ware County, City of Waycross	Complete
Pave approximately 5 miles of dirt roads, including Driggers Lane, Wooddell Ridge Rd., and Merritt Drive	\$10 Million	SPLOST, Ware County	X	X	X	X	X	Ware County	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
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			X	X	X	GDOT, Ware County	Postponed (long-term post-FY2026)
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	X	X	X	GDOT, CSX, Ware County, City of Waycross	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
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	X	X	GDOT, Ware County, City of Waycross	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)

Project	Cost	Funding Source	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	Responsibility	Status
Extend ABC Ave. or Red Oak Dr. across Kettle Creek to create additional access to the Jamestown area. (This project's focus has changed to complement the proposed RR rerouting project and is contingent on the routing of the proposed Perimeter Road as to whether it would be in conjunction with the Perimeter or a stand-alone in terms of funding.)	\$6 Million	GDOT, Ware County, Federal Funds			X	X	X	GDOT, Ware County	Cancelled (a different road will be extended)
Natural and Cultural/Historic Resources									
Construct a raised boat ramp at the Waycross-Blackshear bridge area on the Satilla River.	\$100,000	Grants (LWCF, TEA 21), DNR			X	X	X	Ware County	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
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	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
Install signage, kiosk, and make maps available along the Satilla River Water Trail	\$3,000	Satilla Riverkeeper, Grants	X					Ware County, Satilla Riverkeeper	Complete
Land Use									
Develop a countywide Zoning Ordinance that includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning districts appropriate to the character areas in the Comprehensive Plan. • Development standards to regulate the distribution of land uses and prevent the encroachment of incompatible land uses on each other. • Buffer areas between agricultural and non-agricultural uses. • Flexibility in land uses to allow for a compatible mix of uses, including boulevard housing. • Development standards to avoid 	Staff time	State & Federal Grants, Ware County	X	X	X	X	X	Ware County	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)

Project	Cost	Funding Source	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	Responsibility	Status
<p>undue concentration of population.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards for senior/adult living. Standards and flexibility to encourage infill development, re-use of blighted development, and redevelopment of declining and revitalizing areas. Sufficient flexibility to encourage creative design, green space, and open space. Specific roles for each corridor to encourage revitalization. Standards to support additional growth in rural areas only where such growth is planned for and can be supported by appropriate services. Standards for property upkeep and screening. Limited mixed-use districts of compatible uses to serve neighborhood needs and create focal community points. 									
Create a GPS database of bridges, box culverts, and infrastructure.	\$10,000	Ware County	X	X				Ware County	Ongoing (expected completion FY2023)
Protect land adjacent to or close to the airport from haphazard development by zoning for airport-related industries.	\$5,000	State & Federal Grants, Ware County				X	X	Ware County	Complete
Community Facilities and Services									
Replace fencing, construct batting cages, and expand maintenance facility at Trembling Earth Recreational Facility	\$200,000	SPLOST, State & Federal Grants, Ware County	X	X	X	X		Ware County	Complete
Construct a new South Side fire station	\$400,000	State & Federal Grants, Ware County			X	X	X	Ware County	Cancelled (no longer needed)

Project	Cost	Funding Source	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	Responsibility	Status
Construct and maintain a comprehensive regional training facility/academy for police, fire, and emergency medical services. Complete tower, "burn" building, and paving/drainage.	\$500,000	State & Federal Grants, Ware County, City of Waycross, SPLOST		X	X	X	X	Ware County, City of Waycross	Complete
Construct Phases V and VI of multipurpose recreation center (Regional Park)	\$5 Million	State & Federal Grants, Ware County SPLOST					X	Ware County	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
Develop a recycling program in collaboration with federal, state, and local partners	\$100,000	Ware County, State & Federal Grants		X	X	X		Ware County	Ongoing (expected completion FY2025)
Economic Development									
Conduct an assessment of vacant buildings and other existing buildings available for industry.	\$5,000	Ware County, City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants, WWDA	X	X				Ware County, City of Waycross, WWDA, Ga. Dept. of Economic Development	Complete
Develop an inventory of large tracts of land suitable for larger businesses.	Staff time	Ware County, City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants, WWDA	X	X				Ware County, City of Waycross, WWDA, Ga. Dept. of Economic Development	Complete
Develop an inventory of additional developable property close to rail lines.	Staff time	Ware County, City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants, WWDA	X	X				Ware County, City of Waycross, WWDA, Ga. Dept. of Economic Development	Complete
Create a marketing plan to capitalize on Ware County's proximity to the three major ports of Brunswick, Jacksonville, and Savannah.	Staff time	Ware County, City of Waycross, Chamber of Commerce, DWDA, WWDA, State & Federal Grants	X	X	X			Ware County, City of Waycross, Chamber of Commerce, DWDA, WWDA	Ongoing (expected completion FY2024) Combined with 2 other projects in new WP

Project	Cost	Funding Source	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	Responsibility	Status
Create a marketing plan to raise awareness of the Industrial Park's proximity to the local airport.	Staff time	Ware County, City of Waycross, Chamber of Commerce, DWDA, WWDA, State & Federal Grants	X	X	X			Ware County, City of Waycross, Chamber of Commerce, DWDA, WWDA	Ongoing (expected completion FY2024) Combined with 2 other projects in new WP
Create a marketing plan to 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	X	X	X			Ware County, City of Waycross, Chamber of Commerce, DWDA, WWDA	Ongoing (expected completion FY2024) Combined with 2 other projects in new WP
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.)	\$200,000	Ware County, City of Waycross, Chamber of Commerce, State & Federal Grants	X	X	X	X	X	Ware County, City of Waycross	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
Extend water, sewer, gas, power, and telecommunication lines, 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	X	X	X	Ware County, City of Waycross,	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
Intergovernmental Coordination									
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	X	X	X			Ware County, City of Waycross, Chamber of Commerce, DWDA, WWDA	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)

City of Waycross

Project	Cost	Funding Source	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	Responsibility	Status
Transportation									
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	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
Pave, grade, and otherwise improve approximately 7 miles of dirt roads citywide	\$7 million	City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants, GDOT	X	X	X	X	X	City of Waycross	Complete
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	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
Upgrade traffic signals at 6 intersections	\$1.5 million	GDOT, State & Federal Grants	X	X	X	X	X	City of Waycross, GDOT	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
Conduct traffic studies to identify the most efficient traffic flows through Waycross	\$100,000	GDOT State & Federal Grants				X	X	City of Waycross, GDOT	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
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	Ongoing (expected completion FY2024)
Implement DOT Priorities - Traffic Lights and Paving	\$750,000	GDOT	X	X	X	X	X	City of Waycross, GDOT	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
Construct Phase 2 (1 mile) of the Multi-Use Trail	\$1 million	Grants (TEA, etc.)				X	X	City of Waycross	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
Natural and Cultural/Historic Resources									
Maintain and restore canals with stabilization, vegetation control, and cleanup.	\$200,000	State & Federal Grants, SPLOST				X	X	City of Waycross	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
Renovate/rehab 3 historic Downtown buildings (Bunn building, Bowen building, and Lyric theater)	\$15 million	State & Federal Grants			X	X	X	City of Waycross	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)

Project	Cost	Funding Source	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	Responsibility	Status
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	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
Land Use									
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	Ongoing (expected completion FY2023)
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	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
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	Ongoing (expected completion FY2023)
Community Facilities and Services									
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	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
Construct new Public Works facility	\$1,343,000	City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants, SPLOST	X	X				City of Waycross	Ongoing (expected completion FY2023)

Project	Cost	Funding Source	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	Responsibility	Status
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	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
Make aesthetic improvements to the trailhead area on the Multi-Use Trail, including improving the exteriors of buildings around the trailhead.	\$200,000	Grants	X	X	X			City of Waycross	Complete
Conduct a complete renovation/rehabilitation of the National Guard Armory	\$2,000,000	City of Waycross State & Federal Grants	X	X				City of Waycross	Ongoing (expected completion FY2023)
Build an additional Fire Station (Fire Station #4)	\$2,500,000	City of Waycross State & Federal Grants	X	X	X			City of Waycross	Complete
Renovate Fire Stations #1, #2, and #3, including new roofs, bedroom remodel in #2, and bedrooms in #3	\$1 million	City of Waycross State & Federal Grants, SPLOST	X	X	X	X		City of Waycross	Complete
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	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
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	Ongoing (expected completion FY2024)
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	Ongoing (expected completion FY2023)
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	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)

Project	Cost	Funding Source	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	Responsibility	Status
Develop and expand Reclaimed Water ("Purple-Pipe") System.	\$500,000	City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants					X	City of Waycross	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
Purchase 1 fire safety trailer	\$100,000	Grants	X	X				City of Waycross	Complete
Purchase 50 SCBA units for firefighters	\$200,000	Grants		X	X			City of Waycross	Complete
Purchase air fill station (cascade system) for firefighters' SCBA units	\$100,000	Grants	X	X				City of Waycross	Complete
Purchase 33 portable radios for firefighters	\$97,000	Grants	X					City of Waycross	Complete
Purchase 19 sets of turnout gear for firefighters	\$30,000	Grants	X			X		City of Waycross	Complete
Economic Development									
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	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
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	Ongoing (expected completion FY2024)
Implement a process for the revitalization of the Southside and Carswell Avenue neighborhoods, including sidewalks, curb & gutter, water and sewer infrastructure, street resurfacing, and drainage	\$1.2 million	City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants	X	X	X			City of Waycross	Complete
Housing									
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			X	X	X	City of Waycross, Ware County	Ongoing (expected completion FY2026)
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	Ongoing (expected completion FY2023)

Project	Cost	Funding Source	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	Responsibility	Status
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	Ongoing (expected completion FY2023)
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	Ongoing (expected completion FY2023)

7.2. 2021-2025 Community Work Program

Ware County

Project	Cost	Funding Source	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	Responsibility	Related Goal
Transportation									
Continue implementing Airport Capital Improvement Program as adopted by the County Commission	\$5 million	GDOT, Ware County, FAA, Federal Funds	X	X	X	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	X	X				Ware County	8
Pave approximately 5 miles of dirt roads, including Driggers Lane and T-SPLOST projects	\$10 Million	SPLOST, Ware County	X	X	X	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	X	X	X	GDOT, CSX, Ware County, City of Waycross	8
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	X	X	GDOT, Ware County, City of Waycross	8
Extend Tanner Lane to create additional access to the Jamestown area.	\$6 Million	GDOT, Ware County, Federal Funds			X	X	X	GDOT, Ware County	8

Project	Cost	Funding Source	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	Responsibility	Related Goal
Natural and Cultural/Historic Resources									
Construct a raised boat ramp at the Waycross-Blackshear bridge area on the Satilla River.	\$100,000	Grants (LWCF, TEA 21), DNR			X	X	X	Ware County	4
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
Land Use									
Develop a countywide Zoning Ordinance that includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning districts appropriate to the character areas in the Comprehensive Plan. • Development standards to regulate the distribution of land uses and prevent the encroachment of incompatible land uses on each other. • Buffer areas between agricultural and non-agricultural uses. • Flexibility in land uses to allow for a compatible mix of uses, including boulevard housing. • Development standards to avoid undue concentration of population. • Standards for senior/adult living. • Standards and flexibility to encourage infill development, re-use of blighted development, and redevelopment of declining and revitalizing areas. • Sufficient flexibility to encourage creative design, green space, and open space. • Specific roles for each corridor to encourage 	Staff time	State & Federal Grants, Ware County	X	X	X	X	X	Ware County	6

Project	Cost	Funding Source	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	Responsibility	Related Goal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> revitalization. Standards to support additional growth in rural areas only where such growth is planned for and can be supported by appropriate services. Standards for property upkeep and screening. Limited mixed-use districts of compatible uses to serve neighborhood needs and create focal community points. 									
Create a GPS database of bridges, box culverts, and infrastructure.	\$10,000	Ware County	X	X				Ware County	7
Housing									
Develop affordable housing in Ware County	\$1,000,000	General fund, private funds, grants		X	X	X	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, grants		X	X	X	X	Ware County	3
Community Facilities and Services									
Construct miracle field at Trembling Earth Recreational Facility	\$500,000	SPLOST, State & Federal Grants, Ware County	X	X	X	X		Ware County	7
Construct Phases V and VI of multipurpose recreation center (Regional Park)	\$5 Million	State & Federal Grants, Ware County SPLOST					X	Ware County	7
Develop a recycling program in collaboration with federal, state, and local partners	\$100,000	Ware County, State & Federal Grants		X	X	X		Ware County	7
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

Project	Cost	Funding Source	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	Responsibility	Related Goal
Expand the public safety training center with classroom space and training facilities.	\$500,000	SPLOST, State & Federal Grants, Ware County	X	X	X	X		Ware County	7
Economic Development									
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	X	X	X			Ware County, City of Waycross, Chamber of Commerce, DWDA, WWDA	2
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	X	X	X	X	Ware County, City of Waycross	2
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	X	X	X	Ware County, City of Waycross,	2, 7
Intergovernmental Coordination									
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	X	X	X			Ware County, City of Waycross, Chamber of Commerce, DWDA, WWDA	2

City of Waycross

Project	Cost	Funding Source	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	Responsibility	Related Goal
Transportation									
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
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
Upgrade traffic signals at 6 intersections	\$1.5 million	GDOT, State & Federal Grants	X	X	X	X	X	City of Waycross, GDOT	8
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
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
Implement DOT Priorities - Traffic Lights and Paving	\$750,000	GDOT	X	X	X	X	X	City of Waycross, GDOT	8
Construct Phase 2 (1 mile) of the Multi-Use Trail	\$1 million	Grants (TEA, etc.)				X	X	City of Waycross	8
Adopt a Complete Streets Policy that incorporates improved bicycle and pedestrian safety measures	\$500	GDOT	X	X	X	X	X	City of Waycross	8
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
Revise ordinances to include requirements of the Georgia Streetscapes and Pedestrian Design Guide	\$500	GDOT	X	X	X	X	X	City of Waycross	8

Project	Cost	Funding Source	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	Responsibility	Related Goal
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 Walk Friendly Community Status	\$5,000	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 SGRC to apply for Bicycle Friendly Community Status	\$5,000	GDOT	X	X	X	X	X	City of Waycross	8
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 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
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
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
Work with SGRC to distribute "See and Be Seen" safety materials	\$100	GDOT	X	X	X	X	X	City of Waycross	8

Project	Cost	Funding Source	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	Responsibility	Related Goal
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
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
Develop a local Bicycle and/or Pedestrian Safety Action Plan	\$10,000	GDOT	X	X	X	X	X	City of Waycross	8
Natural and Cultural/Historic Resources									
Maintain and restore canals with stabilization, vegetation control, and cleanup.	\$200,000	State & Federal Grants, SPLOST				X	X	City of Waycross	4, 7
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
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
Land Use									
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
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

Project	Cost	Funding Source	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	Responsibility	Related Goal
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
Community Facilities and Services									
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
Construct new Public Works facility	\$1,343,000	City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants, SPLOST	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)	\$1 million	State & Federal Grants	X	X	X	X	X	City of Waycross	7
Conduct a complete renovation/rehabilitation of the National Guard Armory	\$2,000,000	City of Waycross State & Federal Grants	X	X				City of Waycross	7
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
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
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

Project	Cost	Funding Source	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	Responsibility	Related Goal
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
Develop and expand Reclaimed Water ("Purple-Pipe") System.	\$500,000	City of Waycross, State & Federal Grants					X	City of Waycross	7
Economic Development									
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
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
Housing									
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			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. Economic Development Element

The 2018-2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), developed by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) under a grant from the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, is hereby incorporated by reference into this Comprehensive Plan to serve as the Economic Development Element for Ware County and the City of Waycross.

The SGRC's CEDS was designed to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen the regional economy. The CEDS contains an analysis of the regional economy and serves as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives, a regional plan of action, investment priorities, and funding sources.

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

The Southern Georgia CEDS gives an overview of the region, briefly describing the geography, population, economy, labor and workforce development and use, education, transportation access, environment, and regional resources. It reviews the state of the regional economy and provides a list of achievable goals and objectives for the region, a plan of action to ensure success, and performance measures used to evaluate the strategy's successful development and implementation.

Policies, needs, opportunities, and projects drawn from the current comprehensive plans for each jurisdiction in the 18-county SGRC region were used extensively to develop the CEDS Goals and Objectives, Vital Projects, Problems, and Opportunities. Conversely, the CEDS was also used to provide guidance for developing the goals, opportunities, policies, and projects in this local Comprehensive Plan.

Goals, needs and opportunities, policies, and community work program projects related to economic development can be found in the "Economic Development" subsections of the relevant sections of this Comprehensive Plan (goals in Section 1, needs and opportunities in Section 2, policies in Section 6, and work program projects in Section 7).

Furthermore, included below are goals, objectives, and strategies from the regional CEDS that are strongly aligned with the current economic development goals of Ware County and the City of Waycross.

Goal 1: Promote economic development strategies that encourage entrepreneurship, support existing industries, attract new employers, and stimulate tourism.

Objectives:

Promote regional collaboration for even stronger networks between 18 counties.

Strategies:

- Strengthen and expand existing entrepreneurial support networks in rural areas.
- Promote business and entrepreneur learning opportunities.
- Focus on ways to encourage and facilitate regional tourism.

Goal 2: Protect, expand, and enhance critical infrastructure and connectivity for existing and future community growth.

Objectives:

Improve broadband access in rural communities.

Strategies:

- Develop small cells in communities without reliable broadband access.
- Provide incentives for broadband.

Goal 3: Facilitate the growth and development of an educated, skilled, prepared workforce by utilizing available programs and resources.

Objectives:

Develop a well-trained professional, technical, and skilled workforce capable of accommodating new industry and maintaining existing industry.

Strategies:

- Market workforce development programs that enable youth and adults to pursue higher education opportunities.

Improve efforts to prepare workers for available jobs.

Strategies:

- Support educational institutions to provide learning/skill development opportunities.
- Work closely with business and industry to ensure that the system is not only producing workers to meet its immediate needs but making adjustments in anticipation of future needs and technological changes.

Goal 4: Create an inviting sense of place through rural renewal and other strategies in order to retain population and to attract new members to our community.

Objectives:

Revitalize downtowns throughout the region.

Strategies:

- Collaborate to develop county-wide historic preservation plans.
- Promote downtown areas for tourism and recreation.
- Increase code enforcement in communities surrounding downtown areas.

Facilitate vibrant, attractive communities.

Strategies:

- Rehabilitate dilapidated housing throughout the region.
- Encourage local governments to participate in CHIP, CDBG, and USDA housing programs.

Develop strategies for creating and sustaining a diverse population.

Strategies:

- Seek additional funding streams to address senior population program sustainability.
- Market unique aspects of communities to attract a younger population.

8. Land Use Element

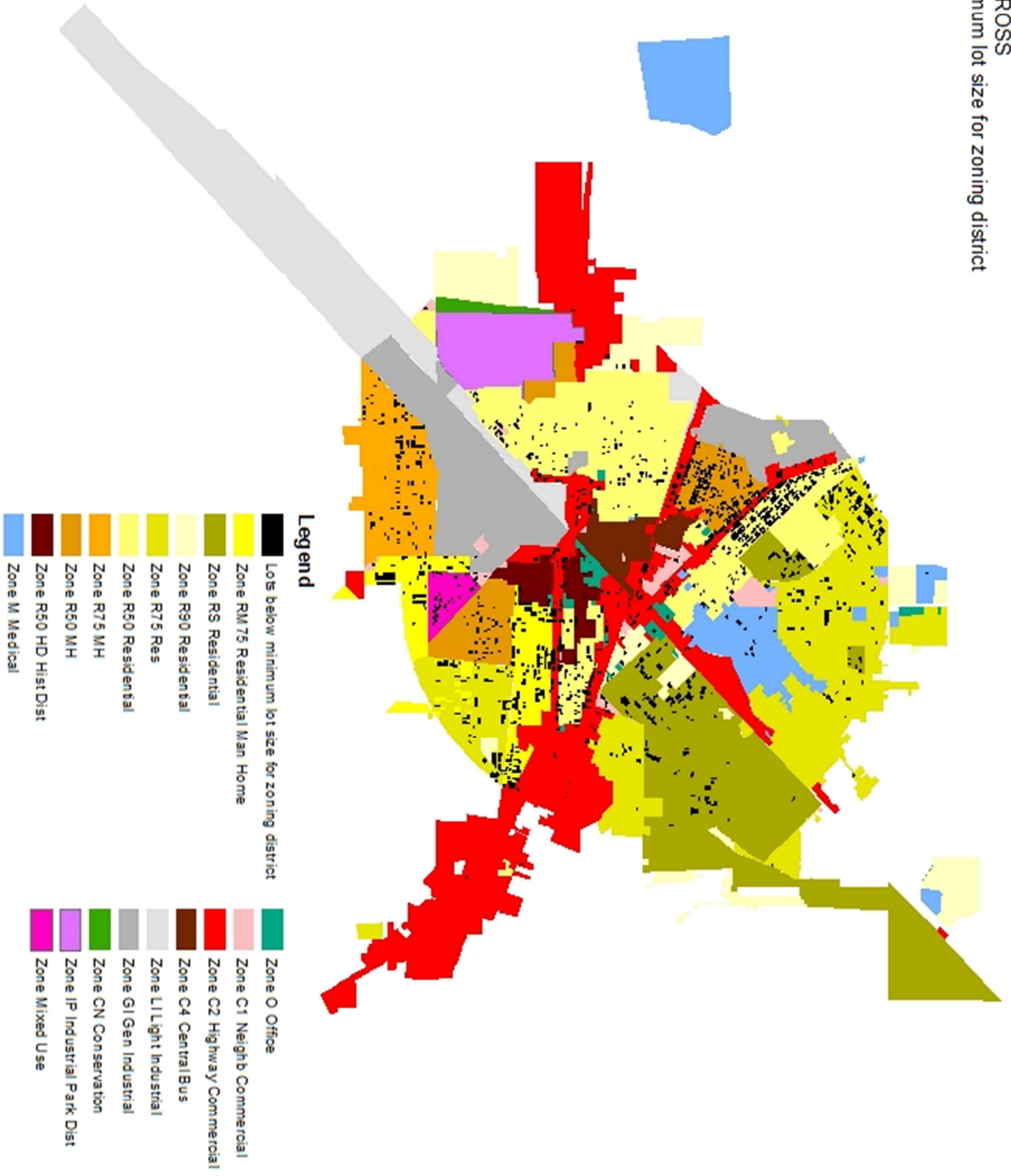
8.1. Minimum Lot Sizes

During the 2016 and 2021 Comprehensive Plan updates, it was noted by stakeholders that zoning, including minimum lot sizes, can be a barrier to development and redevelopment in some instances. In some areas in the City of Waycross, the minimum lot size required for development is larger than the existing size of a significant number of lots. Parcels below the required minimum lot size for their zoning district cannot be redeveloped without a variance, rezoning, change in the minimum lot size, or other remedy. The table below omits zoning districts that do not have a minimum lot size and districts that are not currently on the City of Waycross zoning map.

In all, according to the zoning and parcel data available, 2,415 parcels in the City of Waycross are below the minimum lot size for their zoning district (24% of land parcels in the city). Solutions to this problem could include amending the minimum lot sizes, rezoning certain parcels, combining parcels, or a combination of these and other measures. The map on the following page shows the locations of lots below minimum size.

City of Waycross Zoning District	Minimum lot area (square feet)	Number of lots below minimum lot area
RM-75 (Residential Manufactured Housing)	9,000	274 of 537 (51%)
R-S (Residential)	9,000	201 of 1162 (17%)
R-90 (Residential)	9,000	13 of 155 (8%)
R-75 (Residential)	7,500	341 of 1686 (20%)
R-50 (Residential)	5,000	600 of 2311 (26%)
R-75MH (Residential Mobile Home)	7,500	145 of 578 (25%)
R-50MH (Residential Mobile Home)	5,000	316 of 912 (35%)
R-50HD (Residential Historic District)	5,000	24 of 281 (9%)
M (Medical District)	7,500	27 of 265 (10%)
O (Office)	6,000	15 of 69 (22%)
C-1 (Neighborhood Commercial)	10,000	28 of 79 (35%)
C-2 (Highway Commercial)	10,000	377 of 892 (42%)
Mixed Use	5,000	54 of 199 (27%)

CITY OF WAYCROSS
 Lots below minimum lot size for zoning district



8.2. 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. The latter applies only to the Augusta Springs subdivision.

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. The zoning district for this area is A (Agriculture).

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 master-planned 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 Okefenokee 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.

Appendix

**Data Charts
Future Land Use Maps
Sign-In Sheets
Public Hearing Notices
Transmittal Letters
Adoption Resolutions**

