

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT
BRYAN COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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BRYAN COUNTY, GEORGIA COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

This document is the “Community Assessment” portion of the Comprehensive Plan for Bryan County, Georgia. It consists mostly of data inventory and analysis. The rules for local comprehensive planning established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (Effective May 1, 2005) suggest that only summaries of data focused on “issues and opportunities” be presented to policy makers, and that the main presentation of data and inventory occur in an appendix of the community assessment.

Key required components of the community assessment (this document) include the following:

- Analysis of Existing Development Patterns Including Existing Land Use Map
- Areas Requiring Special Attention
- Analysis of Consistency with Quality Community Objectives
- Recommended Character Areas
- Identification of Potential Issues and Opportunities

A “Supporting Analysis of Data and Information” also accompanies this Community Assessment document as a technical appendix. Prior to discussing the key required components as shown above, some additional background information is needed on prior planning efforts, overview of the jurisdiction, and purposes and uses of the comprehensive plan.

PREVIOUS COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING EFFORTS

Bryan County prepared and adopted a comprehensive plan for its unincorporated area in the early 1990s for the year 2010. The plan was prepared by the Institute of Community and Area Development (ICAD), a service unit of the University of Georgia. The plan also included selected statistical data for the two cities in Bryan County – Pembroke and Richmond Hill. The 1990s comprehensive plan is so outdated now (in 2006) that it is of relatively little value in terms of data and policy recommendations. However, the 1990s comprehensive plan was consulted and, where applicable, taken into account in preparing this new comprehensive plan.

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Bryan County is part of the nine-county Coastal Georgia planning region, the second fastest growing region in Georgia, after the Atlanta region. Bryan County is approximately 50 miles from the north to the south, constituting 443 square miles (291,538 acres). Bryan County includes a part of the Fort Stewart Army Reservation which splits Bryan County into distinct north and south parts. Bryan County is unique in the United States of America. While many counties encompass military reservations, and some (like Bryan County) are even bisected by military reservations, Bryan County is the only county in the United States bisected by a military reservation through which there are no roads or other transportation. Bryan County has two

municipalities – The City of Pembroke in north Bryan County and the City of Richmond Hill in south Bryan County.

The northern part of Bryan County is largely rural in nature, except for the City of Pembroke, which had a population in 2000 of 2,379 persons. The unincorporated population in north Bryan County was 6,530 persons in the year 2000, while the total north Bryan County population including Pembroke in 2000 was 8,909 persons (Census Tract 9201). Hence, Pembroke constituted 26.7 percent of north Bryan County’s population in the year 2000.

The southern part of Bryan County is rapidly urbanizing and suburbanizing, particularly within the City of Richmond Hill, which had a year-2000 population of 6,959 persons. Richmond Hill is considered to be a bedroom community for Savannah, but it also has its share of highway commercial uses along I-95. The total population in south Bryan County was 14,508 persons in the year 2000 (Census Tract 9203), almost half (48 percent) of which was located in the city limits of Richmond Hill in 2000. The unincorporated population in south Bryan County in 2000 was 7,549.

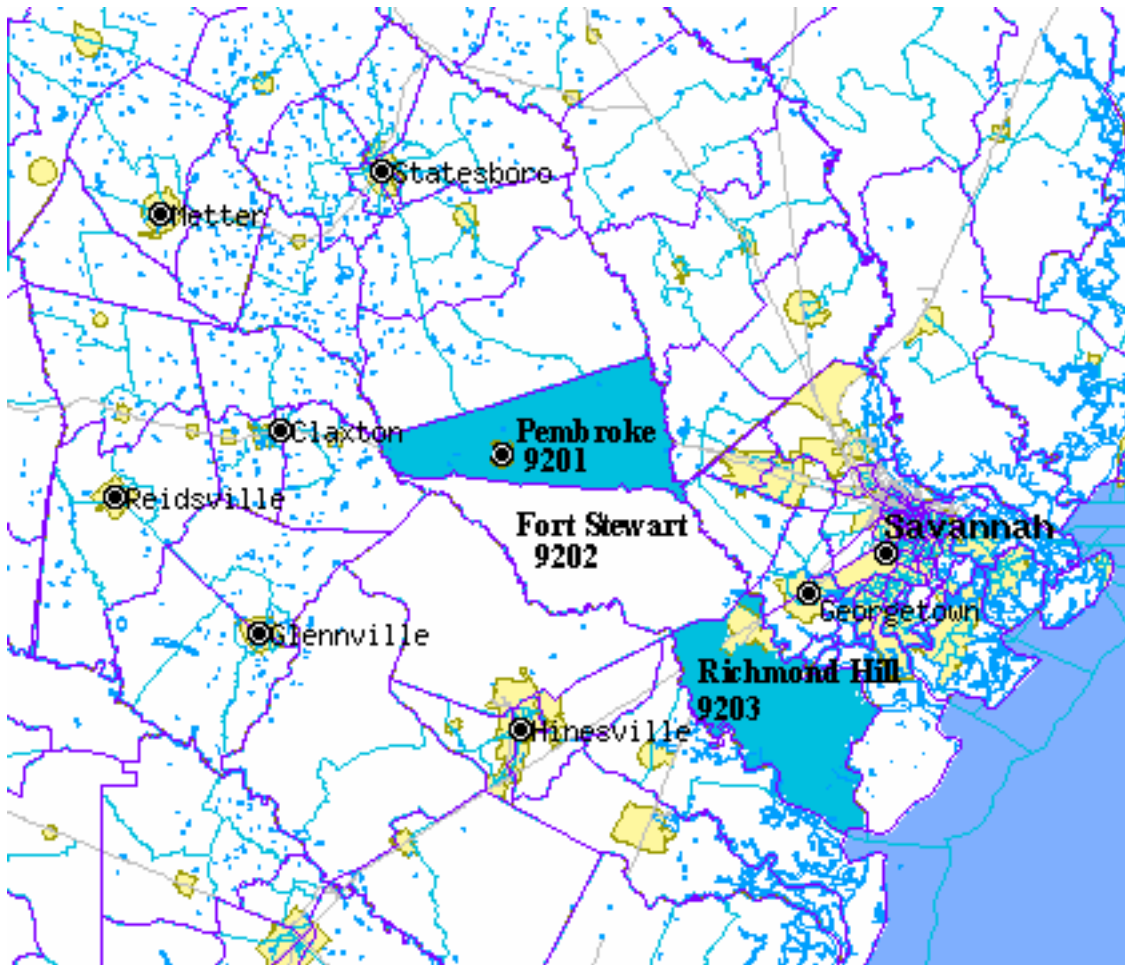


Figure 1. Census Tracts in Bryan County, 2000

Separating the north and south parts of Bryan County is the Fort Stewart Military Reservation (Census Tract 9202). In 1990, that census tract contained a small amount of population and housing, but as of the year 2000, no population or housing was within the Census Tract. The populated portion of the Fort Stewart Army Reservation is within Liberty County. The reservation covers 108,780 acres in Bryan County, or 37.3 percent of the total county land area.

When the Fort Stewart U.S. Army base was first created as Camp Stewart in 1939, the Hwy. 67 “Clyde Road” between Pembroke and Richmond Hill was an open highway. However, after a series of accidents and near-accidents in the 1960s involving civilians traveling on Hwy. 67 and traversing the tank firing ranges (called the “Red Cloud Ranges”), the decision was made to close this road, and since that time, there has been no direct connection between South Bryan County (the “Richmond Hill” area which is described by Census Tract 9203) and North Bryan County (the “Pembroke/Ellabell” area which is described by Census Tract 9201). (see Figure 1)



Entrance to Fort Stewart

The Fort Stewart Military Reservation (the Bryan County portion of which is coterminous with Census Tract 9202) is not governed by Bryan County government, pays no taxes to Bryan County, has no houses for Bryan County residents, or economic entities participating in Bryan County. Census Tract 9202 (military reservation) cannot be traversed by Bryan County residents, and, since 9-11-01, has been an area about which detailed information is restricted. For this reason, in this Community Assessment, the Fort Stewart Military Reservation is indicated where it borders north Bryan County and south Bryan County, but it is not included on maps, as such. The area of Fort Stewart which lies in Bryan County is uninhabited by any human beings and is used by the Army as a tank, cannon and helicopter gunnery practice area. Access is restricted, information about the post is restricted, and the use of this middle third of Bryan County may be described as “mostly impact area.”

Neither the City of Pembroke nor the City of Richmond Hill is a part of the county’s comprehensive planning effort at this time. However, Bryan County’s plan addresses countywide issues and opportunities which have a major bearing on the plans of the two municipalities. Specific assessments of development trends and consistency with quality community objectives, however, address only the unincorporated parts of Bryan County.

Bryan County is accessible via two Interstate Highways. I-16 cuts across the northeastern tip of Bryan County (north Bryan County), and I-95 traverses south Bryan County. South Bryan County is witnessing substantial development pressures due to its proximity to Chatham County and Savannah, as well as the draw of living in Coastal Georgia. Ports and military facilities are two of the Coastal Georgia region's greatest economic engines. Forest resources and manufacturing are also very important regionally, although in Bryan County only the forest resources are significant.

PURPOSES AND USES OF THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is sometimes called by other names such as a general plan, development plan, master plan, policy plan, and growth management plan. Regardless of what it is called, there are many major characteristics of a Comprehensive Plan. First, it is a physical plan intended to guide the physical development (and redevelopment) of the county by describing how, why, when, and where to build, rebuild, or preserve aspects of the community. Second, the Comprehensive Plan covers a long-range planning horizon of 20 years. Third, the Comprehensive Plan is "comprehensive" in that it covers the entire county limits (except for the two cities of Pembroke and Richmond Hill), plus it encompasses all the functions that make a community work and considers the interrelatedness of functions. The Comprehensive Plan is based on the foundation that if the County knows where it wants to go, it possesses better prospects of getting there.

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to serve numerous purposes. It provides a primary basis for evaluating all significant future development proposals, whether they are requests for rezoning, applications for subdivision plat approval, and others. The Comprehensive Plan is also intended to provide guidance for preparing capital improvement programs and budgets. Business persons, investors, and developers can learn from the plan what the future vision of the community is, as well as the overall direction and intensity of new growth and redevelopment. Market analysts and researchers can draw on the wealth of data provided in this Community Assessment Appendix for their own specific needs.

The ultimate client, however, for the Comprehensive Plan is the Bryan County Board of Commissioners. By adopting the plan (see Community Agenda), the Board has made an extremely important expression of their consent and support for the vision, quality community objectives, goals, policies, and strategies contained in the Community Agenda.

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES LOCAL ASSESSMENT

In 1999 the Board of the Department of Community Affairs adopted the Quality Community Objectives (QCOs) as a statement of the development patterns and options that will help Georgia preserve her unique cultural, natural and historic resources while looking to the future and developing to her fullest potential. The QCOs were then slightly modified when the Board of Community Affairs adopted revised minimum planning standards in May 2005.

The QCO Assessment (required under the state planning rules) is intended to assist local governments in evaluating their progress towards sustainable and livable communities. This

assessment is meant to give Bryan County an idea of how it is progressing toward reaching these objectives set by the Department, but no community will be judged on progress. The assessment is a tool for use at the beginning of the comprehensive planning process, much like a demographic analysis or a land use map, showing a community “you are here.” Assessments include local ordinances, policies, and organizational strategies intended to create and expand quality growth principles. The assessment of QCOs helps provide guidance on how to focus planning and implementation efforts for those governments that embrace the QCOs.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Drawing from the list of “Issues and Opportunities” from the Department of Community Affairs’ State Planning Recommendations, as well as the Regional Plan of the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center, this Community Assessment identifies important potential issues and opportunities in Bryan County. The discussion is organized by traditional plan element (population, housing, economic development, etc.)

ORGANIZATION

In terms of the organization of this report, the QCO assessment is not presented as a single section. Rather, the assessment of individual QCOs is included along with other material in the respective chapters on such population, housing, economic development, natural resources, historic and cultural resources, land use, community facilities and services, transportation, and intergovernmental coordination. Similarly, the identification and descriptions of “issues and opportunities” are also organized into substantive groups and discussed in the chapters that follow.

REFERENCE TO MAP SERIES

Various maps integral to this Community Assessment are most conveniently provided as a map series attachment to this text.

A NOTE ON EXTRAPOLATIONS AND PROJECTIONS IN THIS REPORT

It is important to note that the “assessment” of twenty years of growth cannot realistically take place without considering future trends. The projections and extrapolation of population, households, housing units, and employment are provided only as a basis for beginning to assess the needs for policies and programs to respond to that growth. The projections and extrapolations provide some indication of what is likely to happen in Bryan County over the next two decades, if past and current trends continue. The projections and extrapolations should not be interpreted as influenced by land use, growth management, or economic development policies. Some would believe, given the extensive development occurring in recent years in the county and significant new development announcements, that Bryan County will quickly exceed these baseline projections. The visioning process will determine if growth trends are desirable. Later in the planning process, Bryan County will address the specific population, housing unit, and employment projections after a land use plan is prepared and include them in the Community Agenda.

CHAPTER 1 POPULATION

POPULATION GROWTH

Rapid population growth is a driving force behind the major issues and opportunities facing Bryan County during the upcoming 20-year planning horizon. Table 1 summarizes recent population growth trends. Population increase has been most significant within the City of Richmond Hill, but as of 2004 unincorporated Bryan County still constitutes more than one-half (59 percent) of the total county population. Table 2 shows population projections which have been derived from the prior estimates (see Table 1) and the projected percentage increases for Bryan County's population, as determined by the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center in its regional plan (Table p. 3, p. 5). Those percentage increases in the region, prepared by the RDC, indicate that Bryan County will by far witness the highest rates of population increase for counties in the region during the next four five-year periods.

**Table 1
 Population Estimates, Bryan County, 2000-2004**

Area	2000 (Census)	2001	2002	2003	2004	% Change, 2000 to 2004
Pembroke	2,379	2,354	2,350	2,398	2,452	3.1%
Richmond Hill	6,959	7,079	7,488	8,078	8,798	26.4%
Incorporated	9,338	9,433	9,838	10,476	11,250	20.5%
Unincorporated	14,079	14,815	15,249	15,689	16,285	15.7%
Bryan County	23,417	24,248	25,087	26,165	27,535	17.6%

Source: Table 1: Annual Estimates of the Population for Counties of Georgia: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2004 (CO-EST2004-01-13). Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau. Release Date: April 14, 2005; Table 4: Annual Estimates of the Population for Incorporated Places in Georgia, Listed Alphabetically: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2004 (SUB-EST2004-04-13). Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau. Release Date: June 30, 2005.

**Table 2
 Projected Population Increases, Bryan County, 2005-2025
 (Growth Rate, Absolute Increase, and Total County Population)**

	2000-2005	2005-2010	2010-2015	2015-2020	2020-2025
Projected Population Growth Rate	17.6%	14.8%	13.0%	11.8%	10.7%
Absolute Increase in Population	5,330	4,255	4,290	4,400	4,461
	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total Population (RDC)	28,747	33,002	37,292	41,692	46,153
Total Population (State Office Planning & Budget)	n/a	33,135	38,746	n/a	n/a

It should be noted that these projections appear to generally extrapolate past trends, and that Bryan County's population increase could be higher. One reason in particular for that precaution is the recently announced (June 2005) decision by the U.S. Army to relocate an additional brigade of the Third Infantry Division at Fort Stewart. This action, made by the military for military reasons, will undoubtedly have a major impact on the civilian community and civilian leadership. The relocation, scheduled to take place in 2006-2007, is expected to bring an additional 21,000 to 24,000 military personnel and their dependants to the region. How much of this additional population will locate off-post, and how much of that off-post population increase locate in Bryan County, cannot be predicted with any accuracy. It will therefore be important to revisit these population projections by 2007.

GROWTH PREPAREDNESS QCO

“Growth Preparedness Objective: Each community should identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.”

1. We have population projections for the next 20 years that we refer to when making infrastructure decisions.
2. Our local governments, the local school board and other decision-making entities use different population projections.
3. We have a Capital Improvements Program, funded by a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax and other funding sources, intended to support current and future growth needs.
4. We have designated areas of our county where we would like to see growth. These areas are based primarily on the available transportation infrastructure.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES QCO

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

1. Our community does not provide workforce training, although there are several colleges and technical institutions in the region which serve Bryan County residents.
2. We have too few jobs available within our community at present to warrant the establishment of in-county training programs.
3. Our community is close to Savannah, Statesboro and Hinesville, each of which has several institutions of higher education.

4. Our community has few job opportunities for college graduates, so that our children must find work elsewhere, and frequently relocate to be closer to their work.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES: POPULATION

Location of future population growth. An important issue is the location of future population growth. The lion's share of new population growth is anticipated to be in south Bryan County. One should not underestimate, however, the appeal of rural residence in north Bryan County, either, and recent residential subdivision activity and building substantiates the attractiveness of north Bryan County for rural residence. In south Bryan County, concentrating most residential development within an urban service area (served by public water and sanitary sewer may be possible, although the larger pull is marsh front property and larger, master-planned residential developments in unincorporated south Bryan County.

Growth in relation to service availability. A second issue is the amount of growth in relation to availability of public facilities and services. In this regard, Bryan County Government is hamstrung by having to essentially duplicate services, again because the Fort Stewart Military Reservation divides Bryan County into north and south parts. Given the drive time differential between Pembroke and Richmond Hill, many county offices have to be split or duplicated at both ends of the county. A dispersed development pattern can lead to higher costs of public facilities to serve the dispersed development pattern, which may ultimately lead to higher property taxes.

Density of future residential growth. Low-density (one unit per acre or less) does not require investment in public water and sanitary sewer services, and it is usually considered by elected officials as a growth management strategy in and of itself. A scattered, or decentralized, future residential growth pattern could be significantly more costly in the long run, however, considering that schools still have to be expanded or new ones built, and school buses run longer routes when serving rural residential patterns. Some consideration should be given in the plan to maintaining low or lower densities in the more remote, rural portions of north Bryan County and within environmentally sensitive areas. In addition, leaders, stakeholders, and visioning participants should consider prospects for densification – or providing for more dense residential subdivisions (3-4 units per acre or more) in areas served by sanitary sewer (i.e., in the Richmond Hill urban service area).

Military in addition to civilian population. A fourth issue, one less clearly predictable, is the movement of troops in or out of Fort Stewart. The role of the military in Bryan County's economy and land use is less significant than in Hinesville and neighboring Liberty County, however, U.S. Department of Defense decisions about troop levels stationed at Fort Stewart, such as the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure decisions, still can have a significant impact on residential and employment growth in north Bryan County.

CHAPTER 2 HOUSING

HOUSING TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

Table 3 shows recent housing unit estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. Housing units have increased significantly in the first part of this decade, and the rate of growth (percent change) is slightly above the rate of population growth from 2000 to 2004. Estimates for the municipalities are not currently available.

**Table 3
Housing Unit Estimates, Bryan County, 2000-2004**

Area	2000 (Census)	2001	2002	2003	2004	% Change, 2000 to 2004
Bryan County	8,675	9,142	9,502	9,869	10,278	18.5%

Source: Table 4: Annual Estimates of Housing Units for Counties in Georgia: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2004 (HU-EST2004-04-13). Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau. Release Date: July 21, 2005.

Table 4 provides projections of households and housing units based on the population projections shown in Table 2. Bryan County's population is almost entirely comprised of household population (i.e., the group quarters population is negligible. In the year 2005, the estimated overall household size was 2.693 persons (not accounting for the negligible group quarters population). The data in Table 4 assume no change in that household size. The housing unit projection assumes a relatively low 2.5 percent vacancy rate. Rates of growth and absolute increases for housing units in Bryan County are shown in Table 5.

**Table 4
Household and Housing Unit Projections, Bryan County, 2005-2025**

	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total Population (consultant)	28,747	33,002	37,292	41,692	46,153
Total Households (consultant)	10,675	12,254	13,848	15,482	17,138
Total Households (RDC)	9,599	11,108	12,618	14,127	n/a
Total Housing Units (consultant)	10,942	12,561	14,194	15,869	17,566
Total Housing Units (RDC)	10,238	11,801	13,364	14,927	n/a

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. based on RDC projected rates of growth of population in Bryan County. Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center, Coastal Georgia Regional Plan, Housing Element, Table h.12.

As noted in the introduction, projections provided in this report will be refined based on more information on desired land use policies and the future land use plan map.

**Table 5
 Housing Unit Growth Rates and Absolute Increases in Housing Units
 Bryan County, 2000-2025**

	2000-2005	2005-2010	2010-2015	2015-2020	2020-2025
Projected Housing Unit Growth Rate	25.8%	14.8%	13.0%	11.8%	10.7%
Absolute Increase in Housing Units During 5-Year Period	2,247	1,619	1,633	1,675	1,697

Bryan County’s housing stock is limited in type largely to single-family homes. Although these homes are of a vast range of style, cost and amenities, they are grouped into largely homogeneous neighborhoods, with little diversity. As shown in the Community Opinion Poll conducted in October of 2004 (see attachment to the public participation strategy), this is precisely what the majority of residents in Bryan County desire.

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES OCO

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

1. Our community allows accessory living units in some cases, including garage apartments, mother-in-law extensions and separate units that are clearly subordinate to the primary residence.
2. People who work in our community can generally afford to live here.
3. North Bryan County has an over-abundance of low-income housing opportunities and a relative lack of higher-cost housing, South Bryan County has an over-abundance of higher-cost housing and a relative lack – particularly among newer construction – of low-income housing.
4. Our development pattern has been and continues to be suburban, abandoning the small-town patterns of Richmond Hill and Pembroke in favor of homogenous housing-only subdivisions.
5. We have had little if any “neo-traditional” or traditional neighborhood development, although several planned unit development projects are being completed.
6. We have plenty of land available that could be developed as “multi-family.” However, there is a strong resistance among current residents to the creation of additional multi-family housing and the market is believed to be limited in some instances.
7. We allow multifamily housing to be built in the appropriate zone; however, as noted above, community acceptance and market opportunities are limited.

8. We have not had any requests from community development corporations seeking to build housing for low-income households.
9. We have no housing programs focusing on households with special needs.
10. We do not allow the creation of, or building on, small lots (under 5,000 square feet).

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES: HOUSING

Over-reliance on manufactured housing. As data in the appendix of this Community Assessment show, more than one-quarter of the housing units in Bryan County in 2000 were manufactured homes. In north Bryan County, almost 31 percent of the housing stock was manufactured housing in 2000. Given the extensive residential developments proposed, as a percentage share of total housing units, manufactured housing will decline. There will still be considerable additions of manufactured homes to the county's housing stock in future years, however, and as noted in the community facilities and services chapter, a continuation of reliance on manufactured housing raises considerations for property taxation and demands for facilities and services. Furthermore, there is also some concern for the existing character and quality of manufactured housing development in Bryan County. Where these places have deteriorated into substandard environments, attention might be given to upgrading or eliminating them using methods including, but not limited to, code enforcement, urban renewal, relocation assistance, utility extensions, and condemnation with appropriate compensation.

Neighborhood revitalization. Some neighborhoods are in need of revitalization or upgrade. While comparatively few in number and isolated geographically, some neighborhoods and many individual dwellings are substandard, dilapidated and decaying (mostly manufactured housing) with inadequate water and sewer services.

Not in My Back Yard (NIMBY) syndrome. There is neighborhood opposition to higher density and affordable housing. Most areas of Bryan County are highly resistant to any form of housing other than single-family homes on individual lots. A recent development project to bring relatively upscale condominiums to Bryan County faced political and legal opposition. Although higher density housing has advantages for the local government, it has received little support from local leadership.

Rising costs of housing for military. The Regional Plan identifies the need to address inflated housing costs in areas where there is high demand for rental housing, such as military installations. While this issue is more acute in the Hinesville-Liberty County side of Fort Stewart, it may become an issue in Bryan County in short order if it is not an issue already.

Low to moderate-income housing needs. The Coastal Georgia Regional Plan identifies that there is a need for low to moderate income-level housing opportunities in parts of the region, specifically including the City of Richmond Hill.

CHAPTER 3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Prior to and during the American Civil War, South Bryan County was a major rice producing region. North Bryan County has always been a forestry products and food producing region. Agriculture and agribusiness, particularly silviculture (tree-farming), were at one time a vital part of the economic base of the county. Related businesses for the processing and transportation of agricultural products have been instrumental in shaping the economic and social character of Bryan County. Manufacturing was not a leading source of employment or payroll until recently. In recent years, as rapid population growth has ensued in the region, the economic base of Bryan County has diversified somewhat, although the county remains primarily a “bedroom community” for surrounding job markets.

Bryan County had a total civilian labor force in 2004 of 13,601, of which only 3.3 percent were unemployed (an unemployment rate lower than the average county unemployment rate that year of 4.9 percent and the state’s overall unemployment rate that year of 4.6 percent). With an average monthly employment in Bryan County of 4,617 in 2004, this means substantial numbers of Bryan County’s labor force are employed outside the county. In fact, almost three-quarters (74.8 percent) of were employed outside Bryan County in 2004; that figure is substantially higher than the average county in Georgia (45.5 percent) and Georgia (41.5 percent) as a whole in 2004 (Source: *The Georgia County Guide*, 2005-2006, Demographic Profile, Bryan County).

Presently, government is Bryan County’s largest employment sector. The economic development inventory indicates that the Bryan County Board of Education employed 797 persons and Bryan County employed 460 persons in 2005. Hobart, with 150 employees, is the county’s largest manufacturing establishment and the only manufacturer in Bryan County with more than 100 employees (Source: Bryan County Development Authority). Bryan County also is home to hotels and motels totaling 560 rooms and employing 160 persons, although these are all concentrated within the City of Richmond Hill at Interstate 95.

Generally, economic development in Bryan County is proceeding along ambitious and aggressive lines, with the establishment of the Interstate Centre Industrial Park (272 acres) and the active recruitment of businesses to the county. Within the past two years, Bryan County has re-activated its development authority and is taking steps to attract and encourage business development. The industrial park recently became home to Orafol, a Germany-based international plastic film manufacturer expected to eventually employ up to 200 workers. There are significant opportunities for recruitment of industry in Pembroke as well. The J. Dixie Harn Industrial Park (63 acres) within the city limits of Pembroke is approximately 40 percent occupied. Both industrial parks are served by railroad facilities.

Fort Stewart is the largest military installation east of the Mississippi River, with 280,000 acres. At the time of Coastal Georgia regional plan was prepared it was south Georgia’s most important payroll provider, with a military and civilian population of 19,000. Since the post is located in Liberty County, however, Bryan County has mostly received the negative externalities (military training and maneuvers including gunneries) but not the economic stimulus of jobs.

Table 6 provides recent (2001-2005) employment trends, and Table 7 provides extrapolations of recent employment trends. Current (June 2005) employment in Bryan County was 5,206 persons. Employment within Bryan County has increased by an annual average of 225 employees or 5.2 percent annually, from 2001 to 2005 (June figures from the U.S. Department of Labor). The extrapolated data in Table 7 show that Bryan County's employment could reasonably be expected to attain a total of from 9,706 to 13,122 persons in the year 2025, depending on whether absolute increases or percentage increases more accurately reflect future trends.

**Table 6
 Total Employment Trends
 Bryan County, 2001-2005
 (Month of June Shown)**

Total Employment	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	% Change 2001-2005
Bryan County	4,307	4,261	4,479	4,633	5,206	20.87%

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages. Series, Catalog: Series ID: ENU1302910010 (Bryan County, GA). Total all industries, all employees, all establishment sizes.

**Table 7
 Total Employment Trend Extrapolations
 Bryan County, 2005-2025**

Total Employment, Bryan County	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	% Change 2005-2025
Linear, absolute (225 per year)	5,206	6,331	7,456	8,581	9,706	86%
Percentage increase over five years approximated from 2001-2005 data (26% compounded)	5,206	6,560	8,266	10,415	13,122	152%

Source: Extrapolations based on data from: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages. Series, Catalog: Series ID: ENU1302910010 (Bryan County, GA). Total all industries, all employees, all establishment sizes.

As noted in the introduction, trend extrapolations have many limitations and may not accurately reflect future conditions. Factors such as development of the Daimler-Chrysler megasite in Pooler, the development of the Effingham Industrial Park at Old River Road and I-16 (DRI #989) and other factors are likely to make huge differences in job growth

EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS QCO

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

1. Our economic development program does not yet have an entrepreneur support program, however such programs are available through the state government and regional institutions of higher learning, and local entrepreneurs are encouraged to participate in them.
2. Our community does not yet have many jobs for skilled labor, although our economic development organization is working to bring them here.
3. Our community has few jobs for unskilled labor.
4. Our community has a number of professional and managerial jobs in the small business (fewer than 100 employees) category.

APPROPRIATE BUSINESSES QCO

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

1. Our economic development organization, the Bryan County Development Authority, has considered our community’s strengths, assets and weaknesses and has created a business development strategy based on them.
2. Our economic development organization has considered the types of businesses already in our community. The number and scope of the businesses already in our community is minimal and has little impact on the nature of businesses and industries that may arrive.
3. We recruit businesses that provide or create sustainable products.
4. We are striving to develop a diverse jobs base, but have not yet achieved a point where the departure of a major employer would not cause disruption in the local economy.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Insufficient job base. We lack sufficient jobs or economic opportunities for local residents. While there are enough jobs in the region for Bryan County to maintain a very low unemployment rate (one lower than the state and nation), the majority of these job opportunities lie outside of Bryan County, requiring residents to commute.

Lack of diversity in the economic base. Our community’s economy is too dependent upon one or two industries or economic sectors. The lack of in-county jobs also results in a lack of in-county diversity of our economy. Within Bryan County, the vast majority of jobs is in the service sector, and these are among those that pay the lowest wages.

Competition with neighboring counties. Bryan County’s potential for economic development is based largely on its location. Other nearby counties and cities share similar, or even superior,

advantages of location. Liberty County, Effingham County, Bulloch County, and, of course, the established economic force of Chatham County, will compete with Bryan County for potential commercial and industrial employers. As noted in the chapter on intergovernmental cooperation, however, the potential may exist to turn competition into cooperative ventures in some cases.

Development of workforce skills to compete for new jobs. Bryan County largely lacks a workforce that is skilled in the professions needed to attract new businesses in some employment sectors. For that reason, prospective employers may choose other locations with workforces they consider more suitable for their business or industry. Bryan County needs to continue to pursue efforts to create a highly skilled workforce that will help bring new, high paying, jobs to the area.

Capturing a greater share of the region's tourism dollars. Tourism is a very important economic sector in the Coastal Georgia region. The distribution of benefits, however, are currently highly skewed in favor of Chatham and Glynn Counties. At issue is the extent to which Bryan County can and should develop further its tourism potential. As noted in the regional plan, there may be good prospects for both African-American tourism and eco-tourism, two opportunities that should be further explored in the Community Agenda.

Preservation and revitalization of downtowns. While this comprehensive plan does not specifically include the City of Pembroke, it is acknowledged here that the preservation and revitalization of downtown Pembroke has potential to become an important component of Bryan County's economic development strategy. Richmond Hill has no traditional downtown but has made strides toward establishing a new town center/city government complex.

Linkages to port-related economic development. Port facilities are one of two major economic engines in Coastal Georgia (the other is the military). At issue is the extent to which Bryan County can and should capitalize on possible economic linkages to the region's port facilities, in developing further its economic base.

Telecommunications infrastructure. The Coastal Georgia Regional plan identifies the need for improved telecommunications infrastructure such as fiber optic lines and ISDN switching systems for business, industry, and educational purposes. At issue is the extent to which Bryan County competes well with other county's seeking economic development or the degree to which improvements will be required for Bryan County to attract a proper share of future business and industry.

CHAPTER 4 NATURAL RESOURCES

Bryan County is blessed with a wealth and diversity of natural resources, from the rivers and woods of north Bryan County to the coastal marshes and barrier islands of south Bryan County. The area has much to offer, and much to protect. Bryan County is bordered by two protected river corridors (the Ogeechee and Canoochee Rivers) and has vast areas of wetlands and environmentally sensitive salt-water marshes. The county's history as a productive agricultural area (rice in south Bryan County and "naval stores" – timber, turpentine and food – in north Bryan County) has resulted in an ingrained cultural view of natural resources as an economic resource to be exploited (rather than a resource to be conserved), which has led to a number of the current issues.

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION QCO

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

1. Our community has a greenspace plan. The plan was developed in the last year of the Georgia Greenspace Program's funding and has not been implemented, other than by requiring minimum open space in all new development.
2. Our community is actively preserving greenspace by requiring set-asides of public spaces and buffer zones in new development.
3. We have worked with state and local land conservation programs to preserve areas in our county, however the establishment of the federal "Fort Stewart Reservation," which occupies the middle third of Bryan County is entirely "open space".
4. We do not at this time have a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION QCO

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

1. Our community has maps in this community assessment (appendix) that together provide a natural resources inventory.
2. We use the wetlands inventory to protect the wetlands, where possible, although isolated wetlands are frequently removed.

3. We have identified our defining natural resources (marshes, wetlands and rivers) but have not yet taken steps, other than compliance with state and federal law, to protect them.



Wildlife

4. Our community was granted an indefinite extension on adopting the Part V Environmental Ordinances and, although the ordinances have been reviewed and approved by the state, they have not yet been adopted.

5. Our community is developing a tree preservation ordinance.

6. Our community is developing a tree-replanting ordinance for new development.

7. We are requiring stormwater best management practices for all new development.

8. We have land use measures that will protect some of the natural resources in our community.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES: NATURAL RESOURCES

Impacts of new land development. New development is locating in farmland and environmentally sensitive areas. With the press of rapid development, isolated wetlands are being lost, while the increasing population increases the demands on the natural systems of water control and purification.

Abandoned and contaminated properties. There are abandoned or contaminated properties in our community. A period of depressed local economy during the late 1960s through the mid-1970s resulted in the abandonment of many small businesses throughout the community, creating issues of eyesores and potential contamination from old and abandoned underground storage tanks. Current development practices are not sensitive to natural and cultural resources. While some of the developers working within Bryan County have made efforts to preserve and protect natural resources – particularly specimen trees – the current county ordinances do not require, and the majority of development does not accommodate, such preservation and protection.

River corridors: protection from pollution. We have environmental pollution problems. Both the Ogeechee and the Canoochee rivers are identified as threatened water bodies, and the Department of Natural Resource recommends consuming fish from these rivers no more than once a month.

Local natural resource protection is inadequate. Except in egregious cases, where state agencies become involved in an issue, there is little manpower and less legislative backing for local enforcement of resource protection. At present, Bryan County has a single staffer dedicated to enforcing the environmental codes within the Bryan County Code of Ordinances, and that staffer's cases are seldom supported by the court system, which has at time considered the Code of Ordinances as non-binding.

Protection of the Floridan Aquifer. The region's primary water supply is the Floridan Aquifer System, which is a water source for parts of South Carolina and Florida in addition to Coastal Georgia. The aquifer needs to be protected by all local governments in the region and elsewhere.

Participation in the Coastal Zone Management Program. The state of Georgia entered the Congressionally-funded Coastal Zone Management Program in 1998, and all coastal counties in the Georgia Coast region are included in the program.

Potential for septic system failure. The Coastal Georgia Regional Plan identifies the need to address problems relating to existing septic systems that are failing or otherwise threatening the natural environment. Issues of placement, inspection, and monitoring of new systems in areas that have development restrictions therefore need to be addressed in the Community Agenda.

Scenic views, vistas, and corridors. At issue is the extent to which Bryan County has scenic views, vistas, and potential scenic road or highway corridors that should be identified and protected from degradation by incompatible land uses. The Coastal Georgia Regional Plan notes that many of the region's rural landscapes are in immediate danger due to surrounding development and continued growth.

Forest land. The Regional Plan indicates that in southeastern Bryan County, there is a need to consider and manage the effects of converting forested land to developed areas. This is especially true since the real estate arm of Rayonier is actively planning the conversion of some of its forest land in south Bryan County for residential and commercial development. However, concerted efforts to retain forest lands given the economics and market pressures, as well as the need to grow the county's employment base, may be difficult to justify.

Protection of prime farmland. Because Bryan County is already so limited in terms of development potential (because of the Fort Stewart Military Reservation and environmentally sensitive areas such as coastal marshes and freshwater wetlands), a concerted effort to retain prime farmland may be difficult to justify. However, protection of prime farmland has been identified as a regional natural resource issue that should be addressed in the Community Agenda.

CHAPTER 5 CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Bryan County had 33 historic resources inventoried in a 1982 regionwide inventory by the Coastal Georgia APDC (now RDC).

SENSE OF PLACE QCO

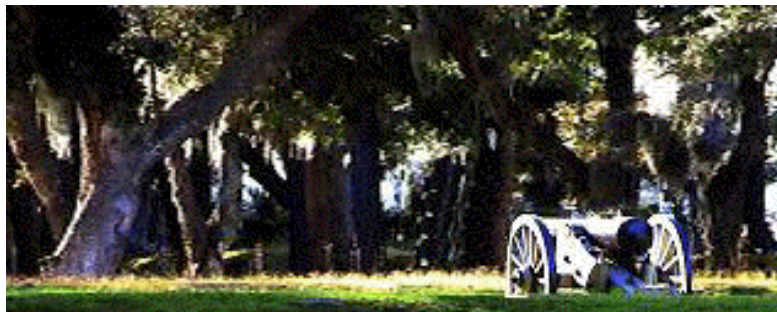
“Sense of Place Objective: Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive,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

1. If someone “dropped from the sky” into our community, they might or might not be able to identify where they were based on the distinct characteristics of our community. While the incorporated cities of Bryan County (Pembroke and Richmond Hill) have fairly distinct characteristics in places – a one-sided commercial strip of connected structures in Pembroke and the “Ford-era” construction in Richmond Hill – the unincorporated areas of the county have developed mostly in the past 20 years in a fairly non-descript suburban style.



Henry Ford (pictured left) has a Legacy in South Bryan County

2. We have delineated some areas of our county that are important to our history and heritage and have taken steps to protect those areas. Primarily, outside the incorporated cities, the Wildlife Management Areas along the coast and the Fort McAllister State Park encompass the majority of publicly held significant properties.



Fort McAllister State Park

3. We do not have ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas, other than a requirement for the establishment of buffers along all existing public roads to screen the development from view.
4. We have ordinances to regulate the size, type and location of signage in our community.
5. Our community's farmers make use of state "conservation use" and similar programs to preserve their farmlands. Farmlands are presently zoned for "open space and agriculture," and in order for development to occur, a change in zoning must be approved by the Board of Commissioners.

HERITAGE PRESERVATION OCO

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

1. We have no designated historic districts in our county, other than the single "Pembroke Historic Downtown" within the Pembroke's city limits.
2. We have an active historic preservation society in South Bryan County/Richmond Hill, but no similar organization in North Bryan County.
3. We have no regulations requiring that new development complement our "historic development (see discussion of "Regional Identity" above).



Historic Commercial Block in Pembroke



Historic Home in Pembroke

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES: CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Archaeological sites. The 2010 comprehensive plan for Bryan County noted several significant archaeological sites. Many of them are connected with the Yamacraw and Guale Native American Indian tribes, as well as early European colonization. At issue is the extent to which

these are properly identified and protected. Further, there is an issue of whether archaeological sites can help to stimulate tourism potential in Bryan County.

Preservation program for unincorporated areas. Bryan County has important historic resources in its unincorporated areas which have no concerted program of local protection. At issue is whether more proactive programs of historic preservation are needed and should be implemented in unincorporated Bryan County.

CHAPTER 6 LAND USE AND CHARACTER AREAS

Since the adoption of zoning in 1976, land use regulation in Bryan County has suffered from a variety of woes: haphazard application and enforcement, personnel changes, and ordinance deficiencies, to name just three. While improvements have been made during the past three decades, the historical abuse of land and the lack of consistency in application of the ordinances have had long-term effects. Further, the division of the county by Fort Stewart into North and South, each with differing character, culture and economy, calls into question the feasibility of governing both under the same development rules.

ANALYSIS OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

The minimum standards of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs require that local comprehensive plans (community assessments) include an existing land use map. Bryan County hired a consultant to prepare existing land use and other maps using GIS tax assessment data. As a result, the categories required some slight differences and certain combinations of the land use categories specified in the state's administrative rules. Other maps of existing land use are also available, including the map of Coastal Georgia Land Use prepared by the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center.

Overview of Development in Bryan County

Bryan County is dominated by one land use – forest land (both public and private). The county had an estimated 218,320 acres of forestland in 2004, comprising 77.2 percent of the county's total land area (Source: Georgia County Guide, 2005-2006, Demographic Profile, Bryan County). As already noted, the splitting up of Bryan County into north and south parts by Fort Stewart Military Reservation has had substantial implications for growth trends, the first of which is that an extensive amount of its property base is non-taxable. Because of Fort Stewart, north Bryan County has been insulated from development pressures in south Bryan County, at least until recent years. In 2001, north Bryan County reportedly (see Greenspace Plan 2002) had more than 25,000 acres of farmland, including row crops and pine forests harvested for lumber. A federal source, the U.S. Census of Agriculture, provides a lower estimate of farm lands in 2002: 17,155 acres countywide.

North Bryan County has continued as a rural area, and population growth (including within the City of Pembroke) has been limited by infrastructure and distance to urban centers of Coastal Georgia. That rural lifestyle began to change quickly in north Bryan County, as subdivision activity accelerated in the 1990s, especially along State Highway 280. Areas of residential development as of 2001 were expanding north and west of the City of Pembroke. Development immediately east of Pembroke has been constrained by wetlands, but the vast majority of development in north Bryan County has taken place east of Pembroke in the Ellabell area close to I-16.

South Bryan County and the City of Richmond Hill serve as bedroom communities for Savannah. Because of the much higher traffic on I-95 than on I-16, south Bryan County has attracted more highway commercial uses (hotels, restaurants, auto repair facilities, etc.) than north Bryan County. The lure of living on marsh fronts also has attracted new residents to south Bryan County. Much subdivision activity has already occurred in south Bryan County – as of 2001 south Bryan County had an estimated 2,746 vacant lots (130 houses under construction). Building out those vacant subdivision lots would yield an estimated population increase of approximately 10,000 persons (some of which has occurred since that prediction was made in 2001). Lands along State Routes 144 and 17 in south Bryan County have become developed with residential subdivisions.

Residential building activity in Bryan County went through an extensive boom from 1992 to 1996, when a total of from 586 to 862 building permits (all uses) were issued annually in Bryan County. From 1997 to 2000, total building permit activity resumed to averages of 200-300 annually (Source: Coastal Georgia Regional Plan, Housing Element, Table h.2). The most significant land use change in Bryan County during the 1990s (a trend that has continued) has been to change from the A-5 Agricultural Zoning District, which requires five acres per dwelling, to the R-1 Zoning District, which allows residential lots as small as 15,000 square feet (about one-third of an acre) with water and sewer, 21,780 square feet (1/2 acre) with water and septic tank, and 30,000 square feet (about ¾ acre) when neither water nor sewer are present (though the Bryan County Health Department requires a full acre for development on well and on-site septic tank).

Existing Land Use Categories

The categories used in the existing land use inventory are as follows:

- Residential
- Commercial and Industrial (combined since unincorporated Bryan County has so few industrial properties)
- Government/Institutional (Tax Exempt Properties)
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities
- Conservation
- Agriculture/Forestry (Conservation Use Assessment)
- Undeveloped/Vacant

Residential: Mostly Single-family dwelling units and manufactured homes on individual lots. Also includes residential buildings containing two or more dwelling units, such as duplexes, triplexes, townhouses and apartments (though few exist in unincorporated areas), and mobile home parks.

Commercial and industrial: Land dedicated to business uses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities, and land (very small amounts in unincorporated Bryan County used for industry, including manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction activities, and other similar uses.

Government/Institutional (tax exempt): State, federal or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Note that the Fort Stewart Military Reservation is a huge public-institutional use not shown on the existing land use map (since it divides north and south Bryan County). Government uses can include city halls, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, etc. This category also includes churches and other private, tax-exempt properties. County and other parks are included within this category, since they could not be easily separated out of the “tax exempt” category, but such parks and recreation areas are specifically noted in other maps produced for this community assessment.

Transportation, Communication and Utilities: This category can include major transportation routes, public transit stations, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, airports, port facilities or other similar uses. In Bryan County, this category applies predominantly to utility facilities.

Conservation (Conservation Use Assessment): These areas include lands that are in the conservation use assessment program with the Bryan County Tax Assessor. They include land devoted to farming (fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock production, etc.), agriculture, and commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting.

Vacant/Undeveloped: Lots or tracts of land that have not been developed for a specific use or where developed for a specific use that has since then been abandoned.

Summary of Existing Land Use

As shown on Figures 2 and 3 (existing land use maps for north and south Bryan County, respectively), Bryan County’s land use patterns and trends are not concentrated in any one geographical area, or set of geographical areas. Development has occurred where land has become available for sale and developers have determined that development is economically feasible. The conversion of land designated “agricultural” to residential and commercial uses has not followed any overall plan or pattern.

In addition to the existing land use maps presented here, maps of generalized land use appear in the *Fort Stewart Joint Land Use Study* published in September 2005 (see Figure 8, “Existing Land Use, Pembroke” which also shows much of unincorporated north Bryan County).

AREAS REQUIRING SPECIAL ATTENTION

This section of the community assessment addresses areas that have been specifically identified in the State’s Minimum Planning Standards for further consideration.

Areas of Significant Natural or Cultural Resources

There are areas of significant environmental sensitivity (e.g. wetlands, river corridors, tidal marshes and aquifer recharge areas) that could be impacted by development. Approximately 6.2 percent (18,239 acres) of Bryan County's land area is coastal marshlands. Another estimated 93,270 acres (32 percent of Bryan County's total land area) are fresh water wetlands.



Marsh in Bryan County

There are few "cultural resources" in Bryan County that are expected to be impacted by development. Current regulations already in place provide significant and effective protection for wetlands, river corridors and marsh areas. Aquifer recharge areas will need additional attention to preserve, as current Bryan County regulations (although in compliance with state mandates) do not specifically identify or address these areas.

Areas of Rapid Development

Future development is anticipated in the vicinity of I-16 in north Bryan County, and throughout South Bryan County, with the possibility of extensive development in the vicinity of the Belfast Siding Road and I-95 (where a new interchange has been proposed).

Interstate 16 is a major commuter route between north Bryan County and the City of Savannah and this area, where extensive tracts are available for development as both residential and industrial/commercial properties, is expected to be the site of the majority of new development in north Bryan County during the next decade.

The Interstate Centre Industrial Park at Hwy. 280 is attracting industrial/commercial development, and residential developers are showing an increased interest in the currently agricultural areas of Black Creek west of Hwy. 280.



Interstate Center Industrial Park

Belfast Siding Road in South Bryan County is being proposed to the federal and state transportation authorities for a new interchange with Interstate 95. This interchange, if approved, would open up substantial properties under the control of a single entity – Terrapoint, the land-development corporate arm of the Rayonier Corporation. Current plans call for extensive commercial development of the immediate vicinity of the interchange, with residential land use surrounding it.



**Interstate 95, A Major Growth Artery
In Bryan County**

Also, in south Bryan County, the Genesis Point project on Oak Level Road east of Hwy. 144 is expected to be a center of extensive development, with the creation of over 2,000 homes within the next decade, along with extensive commercial and public facilities to serve the new development.

While the Belfast Siding proposal and the Genesis Point project each represent potential concentrations of development in south Bryan County, virtually the whole of south Bryan County, with the exception of properties already developed or protected from development by law, can be expected to develop as residential and/or commercial land uses. These areas, in both ends of Bryan County, will require careful attention to ensure that transportation, education, utility and public safety facilities keep pace with the anticipated rate of growth.

Areas of Disinvestment and Poverty in Need of Redevelopment

Although comparatively few in number and isolated, there are significant areas of persistent poverty within Bryan County that are in need of redevelopment and/or improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness. Those areas are: The Groover Hill community on Grooverhill Road in Ellabell, the old Ellabell community in the vicinity of Hwy. 204, Black Creek Church Road, Wade Carter Road and Clarence Smith Road, an isolated area off Eldora Road in the Blitchton area, and the Dixie Daniel area on Dixie Road off of Cartertown Road in south Bryan County.



**Dwelling Representative of Poverty Areas
In Bryan County**

These areas constitute pockets of substandard housing and poor living conditions in Bryan County.

Large Abandoned Structures or Sites

While there are no large abandoned sites or structures in Bryan County, there are numerous smaller, scattered formerly commercial structures (mostly gasoline sales and service stations) scattered around Bryan County, mostly adjacent to the older highways: Hwy. 80, Hwy. 280, Hwy. 204 and US Hwy.17. There are also some former filling stations located on connector roads like Black Creek Church Road. Ensuring that these scattered, abandoned commercial sites, most of which at one time held underground storage tanks, are not contaminated has proven to be a problem in recent years and should be addressed.

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD QCO

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

1. Bryan County has a zoning code that does “not” separate commercial, residential and retail uses in every zone. The Neighborhood Commercial (BN and B-1) zones are designed specifically to blend appropriate commercial uses with residential uses. Further, several of the commercial zones allow associated residential units (multiuse).

2. Bryan County has ordinances that allow neo-traditional development “by right,” once the appropriate zoning is in place. The Planned Unit Development ordinance allows developers to establish development design elements in any consistent pattern, including neo-traditional.



New House In Bryan County

3. Bryan County is currently developing a “street tree ordinance” to require new development to include shade-bearing trees.

4. Bryan County does not yet have an organized “tree-planting campaign” for public areas. Most of the existing public areas are already landscaped appropriately to their use.

5. Bryan County has a program to keep public areas clean and safe, including “Adopt-a-Highway” and “Adopt-a-Stream” programs.



Large Oak Tree in Bryan County

6. Our community maintains its sidewalks and vegetation. Bryan County’s practice for the past several years has been to require development to include sidewalks internal to the project and cross the project along the existing public right-of-way. Long-range plans are to provide sidewalks and trails linking populous areas of the county to encourage walking/bike riding.

7. There are currently few areas of the county where errands can be made on foot.

8. Some of Bryan County’s children can and do walk to school, although they represent a small percentage of the overall student population.

9. All schools are currently located either within the incorporated cities or in isolated locations far from the “neighborhoods” of the majority of the unincorporated county.

INFILL DEVELOPMENT QCO

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

1. Bryan County, through the Bryan County Development Authority, has an inventory of vacant sites and buildings available for redevelopment. However it should be noted that the county has no developed “urban core” or “downtown,” other than the small towns of Richmond Hill and Pembroke.

2. Our community is actively working to promote “Brownfield” redevelopment, particularly the reactivation of currently vacant commercial structures.

3. Our community does not have any designated greyfield properties.

4. We are working to develop a nodal development area in the proposed Belfast Siding Road interchange area and in the Interstate Centre area of the Hwy. 280/Interstate 16 interchange area.
5. Our community does not presently allow small lot (5000 square feet or less) development.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES: LAND USE

Reliance on manufactured homes. While providing a low-cost alternative to conventional site-built or modular homes, manufactured housing has a more limited lifespan than other housing options. Also, the classification of many permanently installed manufactured homes as personal (rather than real) property for the purposes of taxation results in a depreciation of the value of the homes, and little if any contribution to the property tax base.

Lack of mixed uses. There is an inadequate mix of uses (like corner groceries or drug stores) within neighborhoods. As with the desire for homogeneous neighborhoods evinced in the October, 2004 Community Opinion Poll, the citizens of Bryan County expressly desire the separation of commercial uses from residential uses. The convenience and efficiency (in terms of fuel economy) of a neighborhood store are not in keeping with the suburban character of development in Bryan County.

Lack of neighborhood recreation. There are not enough neighborhood recreation centers to serve adjacent neighborhoods. The current reliance on developers to create recreational elements for their own development, supplemented by a few county mega-parks, has led to a widely varied scope of recreational availability. In more expensive and larger-scale developments, the amenities are frequently excellent, with extensive community recreational elements and meeting places. However, in smaller scale projects and projects directed at less expensive housing, the neighborhood recreational amenities may not be availability at all.

Lack of opportunities for innovation in land developments. Innovation in land development is limited to large-scale, multi-use projects. Developers have complained about the local development approval process, especially when trying to complete small to medium scale innovative projects. The current land use regulations do not allow for sufficient innovation.

Not In My Backyard (NIMBY) Syndrome. As noted above under housing issues, there is typically neighborhood opposition to new/innovative or higher density developments. Since most development is taking place on previously agricultural or silvicultural properties, adjoining property owners/neighbors often resist the alteration of their traditional lifestyle and in some cases, consider land use change a threat to their livelihood.

Opposition to regulations that constrain property rights. There is general opposition to zoning or other regulation of land development. Education and self-interest have strengthened support for zoning and other regulations among the population, who see regulation as the only protection for their existing land use investments and lifestyles. Professional developers resent the time and expense involved in the approval process, but most agree that the process is necessary to protect their own projects from encroachment by inappropriate or substandard development nearby.

CHARACTER AREAS

The Character Area Delineation Process

Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) require that a map of “recommended character areas” be developed based on an objective and professional assessment of data and information about the community, as an integral part of the Community Assessment. This means that Bryan County’s planners take the first “shot” at drawing and describing Character Areas.

DCA’s local planning standards emphasize that the initial delineation of character areas must be considered in the context of the supporting analysis of data and information, which is also a part of this Community Assessment (see the Community Assessment Appendix). Planners delineating character areas must look beyond just the design aspects of various areas, neighborhoods, centers, and corridors. All the data and analysis within the Community Assessment, including maps of environmentally sensitive areas, are to be looked at holistically in order to avoid conflicts among various objectives of the comprehensive plan.

As a part of the public participation process (i.e., in public forums called for in the approved Community Participation Program), the preliminary Character Areas and a vision for each (provided later in this chapter) will be presented, and the issues and opportunities associated with each Character Area will be discussed. During the community visioning process which takes place before the Community Agenda is prepared, the recommended Character Areas will be considered by the public and confirmed, refined, and modified as appropriate. One of the key objectives of the Public Participation Program is to “adjust boundaries, modify, add, or subtract character areas based on stakeholder perspectives about future development patterns.”

The public during the public participation/visioning process, will determine the appropriate land uses, development (or preservation) objectives and strategies, and implementation techniques for each Character Area. Discussion will be focused during the participation process on which land uses are appropriate and should be permitted in each Character Area. It may be possible to move toward consensus on Character Areas and also arrive at acceptable implementation strategies, particularly if the character area recommendations are developed with some degree of detail and with an eye toward specific implementation issues.

Preliminary Character Areas, Unincorporated Bryan County

Consistent with the specified process, this section of the Community Assessment articulates preliminary recommendations for the establishment of Character Areas. Each of these initial proposals is listed and described in the following paragraphs. It is important to note here that the character areas must correspond with all unincorporated areas of Bryan County (that is, they must be drawn to include all areas outside City Limits).

The Preliminary Character Areas maps (Figures 4 and 5) delineate areas of north Bryan County and south Bryan County which will be considered during the Community Visioning process. The

Ft. Stewart Military Reservation, approximately one-third of the county, is left out of the maps for two reasons – first, as noted above, it is a federal government institution with no access and no ability of Bryan County to influence, and second, the map presentation format is optimized in terms of scale without its inclusion. Character areas include the following:

- Areas of particularly rapid development
- Areas of poverty and/or disinvestment, and
- A “remainder” area representing Bryan County’s agricultural and residential areas outside of the incorporated cities of Pembroke and Richmond Hill.

Areas of Particularly Rapid Development

Areas of particularly rapid development including the I-16/Hwy. 280 Interchange, where the Interstate Centre industrial park is prompting interest in commercial, industrial and residential development, and around the Belfast Siding Road/I-95 crossover, where an Interstate Interchange Justification Report is being compiled. If approved by state and federal transportation authorities, a new interchange with I-95 would be Bryan County’s third access onto the important north-south I-95 interstate corridor and would open up vast tracts of developable land for both commercial and residential growth.

Areas of Poverty and/or Disinvestment

Isolated areas of poverty and/or disinvestment are also noted on the character area map. Bryan County’s economic burgeoning as a bedroom community for Savannah/Chatham County has meant a rapid increase in the statistical wealth (income) of the community as a whole. Yet the number of less advantaged residents and their level of poverty has remained fairly constant over the past two decades, indicating that the wealth associated with the arrival of new residents is not filtering down.

Agricultural/Residential

The remainder agricultural and residential areas includes some land that will be conserved and preserved due to sensitive environmental characteristics.



Rural North Bryan County Scene

CHAPTER 7 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Bryan County is keeping pace with most of the demands placed upon it to provide adequate facilities and services to its population. Because of the division of Bryan County by the Fort Stewart Military Reservation into two disparate ends, Bryan County must create duplicate, often redundant facilities. New construction now under way is creating additional public facilities in south Bryan County to meet the demands of rapid growth.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES: COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Cost of providing facilities and services. The cost of providing public services and facilities for new development typically exceeds the revenue from this development. Since the majority of the new development has been (and is projected to continue to be) residential in character, the costs of providing new facilities exceeded the revenues generated by development. This has been some offset in recent years of that cost differential by the imposition of additional taxes, primarily in the form of special sales taxes, and by the increasing value of new development.

Gaps in service provision. Some parts of our community are not adequately served by public facilities. As the population continues to grow in isolated areas of the county, new residents must travel further to reach the public and commercial services they need. New developments are frequently created with no commercial or public elements associated with them, leading to longer response times for emergency services and longer travel times for shoppers, parents and students.

Facility adequacy is not a criteria for land development approval. Provision of public facilities is not used to guide development to desired locations. Because the pace of development has outstripped the creation of public facilities, because the requirements to make use of public facilities is limited in Bryan County development regulations, and because the identification of “desired locations” in the 1991 Bryan County Comprehensive Plan has become a matter of great debate, development is taking place in locations determined by economic and commercial factors. Hence, the impact of proposed development projects on public facilities is not considered.

Lack of cultural amenities. There are not enough places for arts activities and performances. Other than some multi-purpose rooms, elevated platforms and portable outdoor stages, there are no performance venues in Bryan County worthy of the name. There are no art galleries or studios, public or private. Bryan County also lacks (other than some ball parks) attractive public spaces designed for gathering and social interaction. This is especially the perception among young people, who have no place to gather other than parking lots and private property.

Limited groundwater supply. Coastal Georgia has a limited supply of potable water. Protection of the Floridan Aquifer is an important issue, as well as the quantity of future water supply needed to serve Bryan County’s projected growth. Bryan County has been under a cap on permitted withdrawals from the Floridan Aquifer (the primary source of drinking water in Bryan

County) since 1997, and current state regulatory plans indicate that this cap will remain in place for the foreseeable future, making water a limiting factor in future development.

Need to reduce solid waste. The Coastal Georgia RDC's regional plan indicates that continued efforts are needed to reduce the region's generation of solid waste. At issue is the extent to which Bryan County's comprehensive solid waste management plan provides for appropriate facilities and encourages recycling and other programs designed to reduce the volume of the solid waste stream. This is also an intergovernmental issue, to the extent that the two municipalities are covered under one comprehensive solid waste management plan.

Installation of public water and sewer systems. There is a need to install public water and sewer systems in areas of high growth instead of relying on individual wells and on-site sewage management systems (i.e., septic tanks). Bryan County is currently in the process of completing a water and sewer master plan. The Community Agenda should incorporate that master plan and specifically consider the extent to which water and sewer systems of the municipalities can be extended to serve new development in unincorporated fringe areas, and/or the extent to which Bryan County will provide such services during the planning horizon.

Implement 911. There is a need to develop and maintain Bryan County's 911 system in order to ensure regionally consistent emergency responses, according to the Coastal Georgia Regional Plan.

CHAPTER 8 TRANSPORTATION

Bryan County is in close proximity to the Port of Savannah and it is served by the Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport, which is located eight miles west of Savannah's downtown. The Statesboro Airport is also accessible to Bryan County's residents. The county is crossed by railroad tracks of the CSX line (north to south) and the Georgia Central line (east to west). Both are primarily freight lines, although the CSX rail lines through south Bryan County do carry passenger trains.

Interstate 95 crosses south Bryan County through the City of Richmond Hill, providing convenient access to ports and markets in metro Savannah, Jacksonville, and South Carolina. North Bryan County is bisected east-to-west by I-16, which provides quick access to both the I-95 corridor and the City of Savannah. I-16 is also the main east-west rout between Savannah and Macon. U.S. Highway 17 and U.S. Highway 280 are two other important federal/ state highways.

Transportation in Bryan County is almost exclusively by privately owned vehicle. Roadways are currently adequate to meet current demands, with some localized traffic problems on Hwy. 144 that are being addressed. The only public transportation is a local van "bus" system operated for low-income and elderly residents by the Bryan County Recreation Department. Although there are rail lines available, no use is made either originating in or arriving in Bryan County. Other than several small private airstrips, there are no Bryan County air transportation facilities, and river traffic is purely recreational. The exclusive reliance on individual automobiles raises several issues:

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES QCO

“Transportation Alternatives Objective: Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available. Greater use of alternative transportation should be encouraged.”

1. We do not have public transportation in our community, other than a senior citizens/special needs van operated by our Recreation Department for limited intra-county transportation.
2. We do not require that new development connect with existing development through a street network, other than requiring access to an approved road at at-least a single point. Development patterns currently are “strung” along the public roadways one-parcel deep.
3. We do not yet have a good network of sidewalks, although developers have recently been required to provide at least the right-of-way for connective sidewalks across the width of their projects.
4. We have a sidewalk ordinance that requires all new development above 10 lots to provide user-friendly sidewalks within the development, at least along one side of the road.

5. We do not yet require that new sidewalks connect to existing sidewalk systems.
6. A plan for bicycle routes through much of south Bryan County is currently under development as part of a regional plan. We have no plans at present for bicycle routes in north Bryan County.
7. We have not yet been asked for common parking areas among several commercial or retail developments.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES: TRANSPORTATION

No public transportation. People lack transportation choices for access to housing, jobs, services, goods, health care and recreation. There are no high concentrations of use or population to facilitate public transportation. Although the number of vehicles commuting from the Richmond Hill/ and south Bryan County area into Savannah each day is substantial, the intra-Savannah transportation network is inadequate to make commuting by bus or rail practical.

Increasing congestion. Some transportation corridors are congested. Hwy. 144 (as mentioned above) and US-17 become highly congested during the morning and evening travel times. Traffic to the schools in the City of Richmond Hill further exacerbate this road's congestion.

Lack of opportunities for alternative forms of transportation. Our community lacks a local trail network. The local trails that do exist are not linked with community trails and regional trails. All local governments in the Coastal Georgia region are encouraged to support the Georgia Department of Transportation's proposed Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, and the county's Community Agenda should in particular emphasize prospects for bicycle paths and trails in south Bryan County connecting to systems in Richmond Hill.

Lack of context-sensitive design. Local street designs are not sensitive to location and context (e.g., neighborhood streets are too wide in some cases, streets in all neighborhoods are held to a single standard, etc.).

Detailed transportation planning for south Bryan County. The Coastal Georgia Regional Plan identifies southeastern Bryan County and Richmond Hill as an area in which transportation planning is needed. The Community Agenda should specify the extent to which arrangements for transportation planning in that target area can be completed regionally, or in conjunction with Richmond Hill.

New I-95 Interchange. Bryan County and Terapoint, the land development branch of the Rayonier Corporation, have been working with the U.S. Department of Transportation to conduct an Interchange Feasibility Study to look at establish an I-95 interchange at Belfast Siding Road. Terapoint, which owns virtually all of the property surrounding the intersection, has been an active partner in this effort, providing the majority of the funding for the study. The new interchange would open the remaining undeveloped (but developable) land in South Bryan County to commercial and residential development property and would provide residents of south Bryan County with a much-needed alternative access to I-95 – an important consideration

to the many who commute to work in Savannah and now must traverse the City of Richmond Hill each morning and evening on a single state route – Georgia Highway 144.

CHAPTER 9 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

While the coordination and concord between the governments of the two incorporated cities (Pembroke and Richmond Hill) and the government of Bryan County have improved over the past several years, there remain a number of areas that could be improved, including intergovernmental communication and the transmission of information, particularly information that may affect the other governmental entity (e.g., taxes, parcel data, zoning data, incorporation plans, construction plans, etc.).

REGIONAL IDENTITY QCO

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

1. Our community is fairly unique in the region in terms of architectural style, with the south Bryan County region developing some “Ford-era” structures and the north Bryan County region having no discernable style beyond the tastes and economic needs of the individual property owners.
2. North Bryan County is loosely connected to the Statesboro area through businesses that process local agricultural products. South Bryan County has little or no agriculture, other than a few garden-scale producers.
3. Our community has no programs to encourage businesses that create products or services that draw on our regional heritage.
4. Our county has participated in the Georgia Department of Economic Development regional tourism partnership in the past.
5. Our community, particularly south Bryan County and the City of Richmond Hill, promotes some “Ford-era” tourism.
6. Our county participates in the regional economy as a bedroom community, with little or no local culture, commerce, entertainment or special educational facilities.

REGIONAL COOPERATION QCO

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

1. Bryan County does not plan jointly with its incorporated cities for Comprehensive Planning purposes, although the offer has been made by Bryan County for such cooperation.

2 Bryan County is satisfied with our Service Delivery Strategies.

3. We cooperate with at least one local government to provide or share services, including libraries, recreation, E911, Emergency Services, schools and others.

REGIONAL SOLUTIONS QCO

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

Bryan County has not fully capitalized on the various opportunities to pursue regional cooperation; however, this community assessment articulates numerous opportunities for regional cooperation, identified in Regional Plans of the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center, that will be further considered in the planning process.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Little current intergovernmental coordination. There is relatively little regional coordination and cooperation. The governments of adjoining counties seldom share information with each other, except through an external agency like the DCA (e.g., DRI review) and RDCs (e.g. the Coastal Comprehensive Plan project). We do not plan with adjacent counties for areas near mutual boundaries. The DRI process (Development of Regional Impact Review) is the first – and frequently the last – intergovernmental contact on such projects between governments. We do not share plans or planning information with neighboring communities. There is no mechanism or venue for the sharing of planning information, other than the published planning documents at the Department of Community Affairs.

Land use plan and development review coordination. There is a need to coordinate the land use plans and zoning regulations of Bryan County and the Cities of Pembroke and Richmond Hill. It is particularly important that the management of urban and suburban growth in the Richmond Hill urban service area be co-managed by the County and City. Strong consideration must be given to coordinating land use and community facilities plans in south Bryan County.

Coordination of efforts of economic development entities. Bryan County’s economic development organization needs to continue to cooperate with municipal downtown development authorities, Main Street programs, Georgia Better Hometown Programs, and private economic development efforts such as those by the local Chamber of Commerce. Furthermore, the regional plan identifies the need for counties to coordinate initiatives with adjacent counties. The regional plan notes that developing regional tourism is cited in nearly every local comprehensive plan in the region.

Regional Housing Policy Task Force. The Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center has suggested the formation of a regional Housing Policy Task Force, but this has yet to be adopted by the ten participating county governments and their cities.

Regional Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. This entity is operated out of the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center and includes 30-40 members. Participation by Bryan County is encouraged.

Coastal Area Council on Aging. This is another entity operated by the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center. Opportunities exist for Bryan County to make full use of the community-based programs and services provided by the Council.

Planning, zoning, code enforcement, and building inspections. This area of community services represents considerable opportunity for consolidation, especially since it is often not cost-effective for small cities such as Pembroke to establish their own building inspections programs.

Regional approaches to solid waste management. The comprehensive solid waste management planning process is the first line opportunity for Bryan County, Pembroke, and Richmond Hill to plan together. Landfills operated by other counties in the Coastal Georgia region also provide opportunities for Bryan County to avoid location of a sanitary landfill within its borders.

Statesboro Regional Library System. The Statesboro Regional Library System serves Bryan, Bulloch, Candler, Emanuel, and Evans Counties with six libraries. At issue is the continued adequacy of being served by a regional library system, as Bryan County's population continues to grow.

Regional jail facilities. The Coastal Georgia Regional Plan notes that Liberty and Chatham (as well as Camden) Counties operate regional jail facilities. Hence, other counties are able to house prisoners in these facilities when their jails reach capacity.

City-county facility sharing. As Bryan County responds to extensive residential development with new facilities, the opportunity exists to co-locate or share community facilities and services with the two municipalities, Pembroke and Richmond Hill. Sharing can include joint-use agreements and co-location of separate city and county facilities on the same site.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT APPENDIX

BRYAN COUNTY, GA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

February 13, 2006

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CHAPTER 1 POPULATION ELEMENT

The Population Element provides an inventory and assessment of trends in population growth and in the demographic characteristics of the population. This information will assist the County in determining community service and infrastructure needs, employment opportunities, and housing needed to support the existing and future population. The information gathered in this inventory is assessed to identify significant trends, issues, and opportunities with regard to the local population and its characteristics (age distribution, educational attainment, income levels, etc.).

The County can also use the information gathered in the Population Element to determine whether the growth trends identified are desirable for the community and whether alternatives for managing or redirecting these trends should be considered. Such an assessment can result in the development of population-specific needs and goals that specify an appropriate rate of growth, and an implementation strategy for managing the community's growth throughout the planning period.

It is important to note that the creation of the Fort Stewart Military Reservation in 1939 permanently separated Bryan County into two distinct communities that are, nevertheless, governed jointly by the Bryan County Board of Commissioners. "North Bryan County" encompasses Census Tract 9201, and includes the incorporated City of Pembroke and the unincorporated areas of Ellabell-Black Creek and Blitchton. "South Bryan County" encompasses Census Tract 9203, and includes the incorporated City of Richmond Hill and the unincorporated area known as Keller. The population trends in these two areas of Bryan County have been radically different and are therefore listed separately. Fort Stewart (Census Tract 9202) had only 94 residents in Bryan County in 1990, and no residents were reported in 2000.

HISTORIC POPULATION TRENDS

Table 1.1 shows 1980-2000 population totals for Bryan County. Data includes the county's two incorporated cities in the respective Census Tracts that correspond to the northern and southern ends of the county.

**Table 1.1
 Historic Population Trends, 1980-2002
 Bryan County and Census Tract Data**

Jurisdiction	1980	1990	2000	2002
Bryan County	10,300	15,438	23,417	25,256
North Bryan	n/a	7,889	8909	Unavailable
Fort Stewart	n/a	94	0	Unavailable
South Bryan	n/a	7,455	14,508	Unavailable

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1980, 1990 (STF1, P001), and 2000 (SF1, P1). 1980 figures reported in the DCA-approved Comprehensive Plan for Bryan County (1991). 1990 and 2000 Figures and municipal growth figures are reported in the 2003 Georgia County Guide (University of Georgia). Note: Small discrepancies exist in the reporting of decennial population counts; some sources report adjustments to decennial census figures approved by the U.S. Census Bureau.

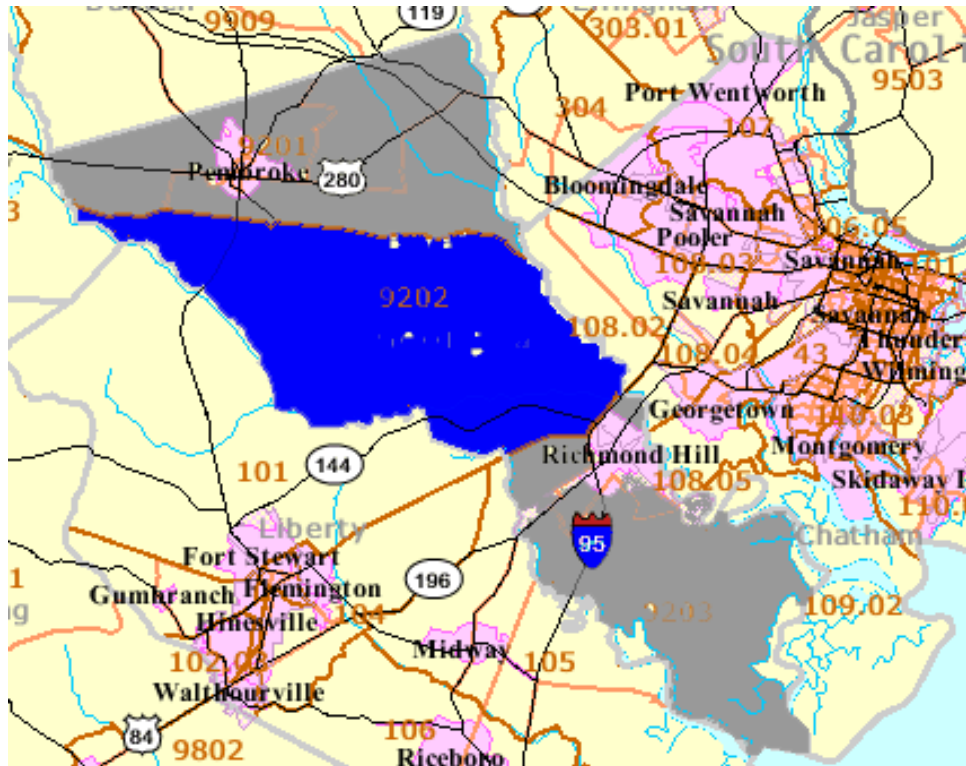
The population of Bryan County increased by 5,138 persons during the 1980s (49.9%) and then increased by nearly eight thousand persons, or 51.7 percent during the 1990s (see Table 1.2). The majority of this growth occurred in the 9203 Census Tract commonly referred to as South Bryan County. During the early 2000s, Bryan County's overall population has continued to increase at a similar rate, and although population estimate data for the census tracts is not available, evidence indicates that the trends in localized growth in South Bryan County have continued.

Table 1.2
Population Growth Rates, 1990-2002
Bryan County, North Bryan County and South Bryan County

Jurisdiction	1990-2000 % Change	2000-2002 % Change
Bryan County	51.7%	7.9%
North Bryan	12.9%	Unavailable
South Bryan	94.6%	Unavailable

Source: See Table 1.1.

The incorporated cities within Bryan County (Pembroke and Richmond Hill) have both shown strong growth in the 1990's. Pembroke, in North Bryan County, increased from 1503 in 1990 to 2379 in 2000, a 58.3 percent growth rate, and the City of Richmond Hill in South Bryan grew from 2,934 to 6,959 in the same period, a phenomenal 137.2 percent growth for the decade. According to data from the Georgia County Guide (2003 edition), between 2000 and 2002, Pembroke was estimated to have lost 0.8 percent population while Richmond Hill increased by 10.4 percent over that same two year period.



Bryan County, Georgia, 2000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Bryan County's borders and those of its two cities are shown in the map above. The county is bordered on the west by the Canoochee River and Medway River and on the east by the Ogeechee River. Census Tract 9202 (shown in blue) represents the Fort Stewart military reservation, bisecting Bryan County.

Components of Population Change

Population changes occur due to two main components -- natural increase or decrease (births minus deaths), and net-migration (in-migration minus out-migration). Migration data and vital statistics are generally not available for small cities like Pembroke and Richmond Hill. In recent years, both Pembroke and Richmond Hill have actively annexed unincorporated areas of the county adjacent to their borders. For the City of Pembroke, the annexation of existing development has provided most of the city's population growth since 1990. The City of Richmond Hill's annexations have provided land for new development, which is continuing at a rapid rate. Bryan County's "Natural Increase" over the decade from 1990 to 2000 was 2,193 persons or 27.5% of the net increase in population (*Georgia County Guide 2003*, p. 114). This is based on 3,406 births and 1,213 deaths during that ten-year period. Over the same ten years, Bryan County experienced a net influx of 5,786 persons, representing 72.5% of the county's population growth.

HOUSEHOLD AND GROUP QUARTERS POPULATION

The distribution of population into household population (those living in housing units) and group quarter's population (institutional settings like nursing homes, correctional institutions, and the like) is important in terms of projecting future populations and also with regard to future

community facility needs. In both 1990 and 2000, Bryan County's population continued to be comprised primarily of household population. (See Table 1.3). While insignificant in terms of absolute numbers, the countywide population housed in group quarters doubled its representation in the county from 1990 to 2000.

Table 1.3
Historic Household and Group Quarters Populations, 1990-2000
Bryan County, Georgia

Type of Population	1990	%	2000	%
Household Population	15,395	99.7%	23,287	99.4%
Group Quarters Population	43	0.3%	130	0.6%
Total Population	15,438	100%	23,417	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1990 (STF1, Table P015) and 2000 (SF1, Table P26).

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

A household includes all the persons who occupy a housing unit. Households are further classified as "family" households (i.e., related by blood or marriage) and "non-family" households (i.e., unrelated persons). The U.S. Census Bureau defines a family as "a householder and one or more other persons living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption." The numbers and types of households are important because they reflect the needs for housing units and have implications for the appropriate types of housing to provide in the future (Table 1.4). The number of family households dropped by 3.4 percent in the 1990's, reflecting a national trend in the increase in non-family households.

Table 1.4
Households by Type of Household, 1990-2000
Bryan County, Georgia

Households By Type	1990	%	2000	%
Family Households	4,226	83.4%	6,510	80.8%
Non-family Households	844	16.6%	1,579	19.2%
Total Households	5070	100%	8,089	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1990 (STF1, P027) and 2000 (SF1, P26).

Table 1.4 further shows that Bryan County increased its number of households by 3,019 (59.5 percent) during the 1990s. Of that total, 2,284 households added during that time were "family" households and 735 households added were "non-family." This resulted in a modest increase (2.6 percent) in non-family households in Bryan County. Table 1.5 below shows the percentage of family households by census tract.

Table 1.5
Percentage Comparison of Households
Bryan County, North Bryan County and South Bryan County

Jurisdiction	1990		2000	
	Family Households	Non-Family Households	Family Households	Non-Family Households
North Bryan	80.6%	19.4%	77.7%	12.3%
South Bryan	86.2%	13.8%	82.3%	17.7%
Bryan County	83.4%	16.6%	80.5%	19.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1990 (STF1, P027) and 2000 (SF1, P26).

A detailed classification for county households is provided in Table 1.6, which details the number of households by the number of persons living in the household in 1990 and 2000. Of the 3,019 new households added to Bryan County during the 1990s, 1,007 were two-person households. In both 1990 and 2000, Bryan County's largest household segment was two-person households, with that segment increasing to 30 percent during the decade. The segment which increased fastest was one-person households, which increased by 80.1 percent.

Table 1.6
Households by Number of Persons per Household, 1990 and 2000
Bryan County, Georgia

Household by Number of Persons	1990	%	2000	%
1-person household	735	14.5%	1,324	16.4%
2-person household	1,419	28.0%	2,426	30.0%
3-person household	1,044	20.6%	1,742	21.5%
4-person household	1,135	22.4%	1,608	19.9%
5-person household	504	10.0%	669	8.3%
6-person household	145	2.9%	214	2.6%
7-or-more person household	88	1.7%	106	1.3%
Total households	5,070	100%	8,089	100%

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census. 1990 Census of Population and Housing. Summary Tape File 1A, P27. U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF1, P26).

HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Table 1.7 shows Bryan County's persons per household in 1990 and 2000 for both family households and total households and compares them to statewide trends. Persons per family are the number of persons in families divided by the total number of families. Persons per household are the number of persons in households divided by the total number of households.

Regarding the average household size, there has been a historic decline in the United States over time. "Between 1950 and 1980, the persons per household ratio declined by an average of 8.4 percent," and "during the 1970s the ratio declined 11.6 percent." The steadily decreasing average household size has been attributed primarily to an increasing number of one- and two-person households, for various reasons, including: postponement of marriage and a resulting increase in the number of never-married persons over thirty years of age; more adults who have

been divorced, separated, or widowed and who have been able to live by themselves apart from families and relatives; the “undoubling” of unmarried or previously married adults who have split off from families headed by a married couple or other relative; increases in income that enable many single persons to establish their own households, a drop in female fertility, and increased rate of participation in the work force by women. The decline of the “nuclear” family has also caused the historic average household size to drop over time (Gellen 1985).

Table 1.7
Household Size, 1990-2000
Bryan County and State of Georgia
(Persons per Household)

Type of Household	Bryan County		State of Georgia	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Average Household Size, All Units	3.02	2.88	2.66	2.65
Average Household Size, Owner-Occupied Units	3.07	2.95	2.76	2.71
Average Household Size, Renter-Occupied Units	2.86	2.64	2.49	2.51
Average Family Size	3.18	3.22	3.16	3.14

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1990 (Summary Population and Housing Characteristics, Georgia. Issued August 1991) and 2000 (SF1, P17, P33, H12).

In Bryan County in 1990, average household sizes were larger than the Georgia average by almost four tenths persons per household. In Georgia, household sizes remained almost identical from 1990 to 2000. In Bryan County, however, while family size increased, average household size decreased during the decade. The decrease in family size was attributed partly to the increase in the number of renter households. It can be generally deduced that the number of non-related individuals living together has increased. That trend is probably explained in major part by the fact that household incomes have not increased proportionally with increases in the costs of occupying housing (whether for purchase or rent). This may represent a “redoubling” effect in the 1990s, reversing the former “undoubling” effect described earlier.

AGE

Age is the single most important dimension of the population. There can be vast differences in the needs of children versus the needs of the elderly. Age has a relationship to the labor force – workers include the population ages 16 years through retirement age and sometimes beyond. Age has important relationships to housing and can help predict likely first-time homebuyers, renters, owners of second homes, etc. Age can also affect the political situation: for instance, in communities where there is a large percentage of elderly, voters sometimes vote down bond referendums for schools.

The relationship between the age of population and the needs for community facilities and services is also very important. For instance, a high elderly population often translates into a need for health care facilities and nursing and personal care homes. On the other hand, a community with a population heavily weighted towards children will have a greater need for schools, day care centers and playgrounds. More information on the implications of age is provided by looking at characteristics of various age groups.

Table 1.8 provides age details for the county's population by five-year age cohort in 1990 and 2000. Since the population of Bryan County has increased significantly from 1990 to 2000, it is reasonable to expect that most age cohorts would also increase during the decade. That expectation is generally borne out in the age figures, as the age cohorts between ages 30 and 69 all increased significantly from 1990 to 2000. It is also important to note that the age cohorts representing school-age children (5-19) and their parents (30-49) are unusually large in Bryan County, due in large part to the aggressive marketing of the local public school system as superior.

Table 1.8
Historic Population by Age Cohort, 1990-2000
Bryan County, Georgia

Age Group	1990	%	2000	%
0-4	1,306	8.5	1,800	7.7
5-9	1,455	9.4	1,960	8.4
10-14	1,454	9.4	2,213	9.5
15-19	1,243	8.1	1,407	6.0
20-24	1,024	6.6	1,235	5.3
25-29	1,236	8.1	1,441	6.2
30-34	1,386	9.0	1,691	7.2
35-39	1,461	9.5	2,170	9.2
40-44	1,223	7.9	2,179	9.3
45-49	867	5.6	1,831	7.8
50-54	636	4.1	1,484	6.3
55-59	510	3.3	1,033	4.4
60-64	528	3.4	714	3.0
65-69	431	2.8	537	2.3
70-74	287	1.9	460	2.0
75-79	211	1.4	326	1.4
80-84	119	0.8	200	0.9
85+	61	0.4	180	0.8
TOTAL	15,438	100%	23,417	100%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1990 (STF1, P011) and 2000 (SF1, P12).

Persons 20 to 44 Years Old

This age group is the younger segment of the prime working-age population. This demographic group includes first-time home buyers, as well as, households that are upgrading housing for the first or second time. This demographic group also provides the bulk of the labor force. In 1990, this collection of age cohorts comprised a large percentage (41.1%) of Bryan County's population. It is diluted somewhat because of the unusually large percentage of school-age children. As of 2000, the share of total county population in those 20-44 year cohorts declined to 37.2 percent, though the number of persons increased in absolute terms during the 1990s.

The number of persons in every age cohort increased from 1990 to 2000, however the percentage of young children (ages 0-9) declined from 17.9 percent in 1990 to just 16.1 in 2000. In percentage terms, this is a significant finding since it indicates a shift of county growth trends from parents seeking improved schooling for their children to a more generalized community appeal.

Persons 45 to 64 Years Old

This age group is the older segment of the labor force. Some persons in this category will retire early. Persons in this age category typically have the greatest amount of disposable income when compared with younger labor force groups. They are not as likely to change residences, although the more affluent households may look for and purchase second homes. This group is probably less demanding on public facilities and services such as schools and parks.

In 1990, this collection of age cohorts comprised 16.4 percent of Bryan County's population. As of 2000, the percentage share of the total population was 21.5 percent. In terms of absolute numbers, the increase is even more significant. The shift represents an increasingly up-scale new housing stock drawing more affluent (and hence older) segment of the population to Bryan County.

Persons 65 Years and Over

This age group is commonly referred to as the "elderly" and the "retirement age" population. Most of the people in this age group are no longer in the work force. While some elderly households may have more disposable income than ever before in their lifetimes, many elderly households will have limited incomes because they are no longer earning wages and salaries. Persons who own residences in this age group are likely to eventually seek alternative housing, because they may own large homes that provide more living space than needed. They (typically) have little desire to maintain residential grounds and structures. They also experience a need for closer societal relationships with others as family relationships evolve, and because they are more likely than other age groups to need assisted care or medical attention. Because of differences in life expectancy between men and women, a high proportion of older persons is and will continue to be women. The differences in life expectancy also contribute to the number of elderly women living alone, many of whom are likely to have inadequate income (Howe, Chapman and Baggett, 1994).

The number of persons ages 65 or more in Bryan County increased by nearly 70 percent from 1990 to 2000, from 1009 in 1990 to 1703 in 2000. This is not surprising, in that Bryan County has an established retirement home, opened a nursing home in the mid-1990s and has many of the outdoor recreational features that attract the senior population, including hunting, fishing and boating.

Median Age

Women have a higher median age than men in Bryan County and the State as of 2000. This difference is not surprising given the longer life expectancies of females. The median age (Table 1.9) of Bryan County's population in 2000 was slightly lower overall than the State as a whole, as this is attributed to the large numbers of school-age children arriving in the South Bryan census tract.

Table 1.9
Median Age of the Population, 2000
Bryan County, North and South Bryan County, and State

Jurisdiction	Median Age, 2000, Both Sexes	Median Age, 2000, Males	Median Age, 2000, Females
North Bryan	33.9	33.1	34.7
South Bryan	33.0	32.4	33.5
Bryan County	33.3	32.6	33.9
State of Georgia	33.4	32.1	34.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF1, P13).

HISPANIC ORIGIN AND RACIAL COMPOSITION

Hispanic origin is not a race, and thus it is noted separately in Census statistics. From 1990 to 2000, the share of Bryan County’s total population that is Hispanic or Latino roughly doubled from just less than one percent to about two percent of the population (see Table 1.10). That finding is consistent with trends statewide.

Table 1.10
Hispanic or Latino Population, 1990 and 2000
Bryan County, Georgia

Origin	1990	%	2000	%
Not Hispanic	15,302	99.1%	23,417	98.0%
Hispanic or Latino	136	0.9%	465	2.0%
Total Population	15,438	100%	1,806	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1990 Summary Population and Housing Characteristics, Georgia. Issued August 1991, and 2000 (SF1, P4).

During the 1990s, Bryan County’s population remained stable in terms of race. In absolute terms, the white population remained at roughly 82 percent of the population while the Black or African American population dropped slightly to around 14 percent of the population (3,272 persons), while Bryan County’s Asian or Pacific Islander population increased from 73 to 174 persons in the decade. The addition of the category “Two or More Races” in the 2000 Census may also have had an effect on the percentages (Table 1.11).

Table 1.12 provides a comparison of racial composition. Bryan County’s population is slightly less homogeneous than the state averages. It has fewer persons (4.3 percent of the total population) of other races (or more than one race) than is the norm for Georgia.

Table 1.11
Racial Composition of the Population, 1990-2000
Bryan County, Georgia

Race	1990	%	2000	%
White	13,018	84.4%	19,138	81.7%
Black or African American	2,293	14.9%	3,272	14.0%
American Indian and Alaska Native	27	0.2%	69	0.3%
Asian	73	0.5%	174	0.7%
Other race	27	0.2%	38	0.2%
Two or more races	nc	--	261	1.1%
Total	15,438	100%	23417	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1990 Summary Population and Housing. Characteristics, Georgia. Issued August 1991, and 2000 (SF1, P3). nc = not classified

Table 1.12
Comparison of Racial Composition, 2000
Bryan County, North and South Bryan County and State

Jurisdiction	White Alone	Black or African American Alone	Other Races Or More Than One Race	Total
North Bryan	77.7%	19.6%	2.7%	100%
South Bryan	84.2%	10.5%	5.3%	100%
Bryan County	81.7%	14.0%	4.3%	100%
Georgia	65.1%	28.7%	6.2%	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF1, P12).

SEX

Table 1.13 compares the year 2000 population by sex for the County, its two inhabited census tract subdistricts and the State. Typically, females outnumber males due to longer lifespans. That was true for Bryan County and both subdistricts. The variations in distribution between the county and the state are insignificant.

Table 1.13
Population by Sex, 2000
Bryan County, North and South Bryan County and State

Jurisdiction	Male	Percent of Total	Female	Percent of Total
North Bryan	4,401	49.4%	4,508	50.6%
South Bryan	7,202	49.6%	7,306	50.4%
Bryan County	11,603	49.5%	11,814	50.5%
State of Georgia	4,027,113	49.2%	4,159,340	50.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF1, P12).

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Knowing the educational levels of the population helps to determine the types of economic development strategies needed for a community. Table 1.14 provides a comparison of selected educational attainment levels of the adult population in 2000. It shows the lower end (non-completion of high school) and the upper end of the educational attainment scale (bachelor's degree or higher).

**Table 1.14
 Comparison of Educational Attainment, 2000
 Persons 25 Years and Over
 Bryan County, North and South Bryan County and State**

Jurisdiction	% Not Completing High School	% With Bachelor's Degree or Higher
North Bryan County	35.5%	7.7%
South Bryan County	12.0%	26.6%
Bryan County	21.0%	19.4%
State of Georgia	21.4%	24.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, P37).

The figures in Table 1.14 reveal that Bryan County has a major educational attainment disparity between the two census tracts. A significant percentage of its population of North Bryan County (over one-third) in 2000 had not completed high school. That finding is a direct contrast to the 12 percent in South Bryan who had not completed high school, and is significantly higher than the state as a whole. On the upper end of the educational spectrum, the same pattern is repeated, with North Bryan County having a low percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher, and at 7.7 percent that number is substantially lower than the state as a whole (24.3 percent). South Bryan County, at 26.6 percent of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher, is somewhat above the comparable percentage for the state.

This disparity is a function of many factors, and strongly compares with the economic disparity between the two census tracts. On average, the educational attainment of Bryan County's citizenry is well below that of the state as a whole and therefore deserves further attention. Because of the larger percentage of adults without a high school education, many adults in North Bryan County may find it difficult to find employment other than menial, minimum-wage positions.

Table 1.15 provides a closer look at Bryan County's adult educational attainment by sex (of persons age 25 and over) in 2000. These figures, in particular the nearly 20 percent of adults with no high school degree, underscore the need for adult education programs if the county is to develop a viable workforce. A concerted effort to initiate a high-school equivalency program in Bryan County could boost approximately one-fifth of the county's 2000 population to the attainment level of at least a high school diploma.

Table 1.15
Educational Attainment by Sex, 2000
Persons 25 Years and Over
Bryan County, Georgia

Educational Attainment	Males	%	Females	%	Total	%
No schooling completed	67	1.0	61	0.8	128	0.9
Less than 9 th grade	356	5.4	353	4.7	709	4.9
9 th to 12 th grade (No Diploma)	1,018	14.9	1,095	14.7	2,113	14.8
High School Graduate (or Equiv.)	2,334	33.9	2,370	31.8	4,704	32.9
Some College (No Degree)	1,211	17.7	1,564	21.0	2,775	19.5
Associate Degree	458	6.8	612	8.2	1,070	7.6
Bachelor's Degree	937	13.7	954	12.8	1,891	13.3
Master's Degree	287	4.3	334	4.5	621	4.3
Professional School Degree	85	1.4	94	1.3	179	1.2
Doctorate Degree	64	0.9	16	0.2	80	0.6
Total Adult Population 25+ Years	6,880	100%	7,453	100%	14,333	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, P37).

INCOME

Per Capita Income

Table 1.16 provides a comparison of per capita income in 1989 and 1999 for the Census Tracts, Bryan County, the State, and the Nation. Georgia's per capita income in both years was comparable with (slightly less than) the U.S. as a whole. For residents of Bryan County, per capita incomes in 1989 and 1999 were well below state and national averages. The educational attainment disparity of North Bryan and South Bryan, noted in Table 1.14 is strongly reflected in per capita income.

Table 1.16
Comparison of Per Capita Income 1989 and 1999
Bryan County, North and South Bryan County, State and Nation

Jurisdiction	1989	1999
North Bryan County	\$8,594	\$15,239
South Bryan County	\$13,693	\$22,591
Bryan County	\$11,083	\$19,794
State of Georgia	\$13,631	\$21,154
United States	\$14,420	\$21,587

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1990 (STF3, P114A) and 2000 (SF3, P82). In The 2002 Georgia County Guide (21st Ed.). University of Georgia.

Median Household Income

Household income is further classified as "family" income and "non-family" income. The median household income takes into account both family and non-family incomes. A median rather than "mean" is used as the reported average, since median numbers are not skewed by a few very large household incomes. See Table 1.17.

Bryan County's total median household incomes and median family incomes in 1999 were somewhat above those of the State. The incomes of all types in North Bryan County were significantly lower (between forty and fifty percent lower) than those in South Bryan County. For non-family households, income was comparable to the State as a whole. Income levels often correlate highly with education – as education increases, income tends to increase.

Table 1.17
Comparison of Median Household Income in 1999
Bryan County, North and South Bryan County and State

Income	North Bryan	South Bryan	Bryan County	Georgia
Median Family	\$36,385	\$63,302	\$53,560	\$49,280
Non-family Household	\$17,063	\$27,708	\$22,727	\$26,509
Median Household	\$33,566	\$59,190	\$48,345	\$42,433

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, P53, P77, P80).

Household Distribution by Income Groupings

Table 1.18 provides greater insight on the distribution of income by income groupings. Bryan County and each of its subdistricts are shown in the table, and income is for the year 1999.

Table 1.18
Number of Households by Income Grouping, 1999
Bryan County, North Bryan County and South Bryan County

Income Grouping in 1999	North Bryan		South Bryan		Bryan County	
	Households	% of Total	Households	% of Total	Households	% of Total
Less than \$10,000	443	14.2	299	6.0	742	9.2
\$10,000 to \$14,999	261	7.6	237	4.8	498	6.2
\$15,000 to \$19,999	210	6.7	199	4.0	409	5.0
\$20,000 to \$24,999	235	7.5	213	4.3	448	5.5
\$25,000 to \$29,999	246	7.9	217	4.4	463	5.7
\$30,000 to \$34,999	235	7.5	216	4.4	451	5.6
\$35,000 to \$39,999	193	6.2	253	5.1	446	5.5
\$40,000 to \$44,999	209	6.7	231	4.7	440	5.4
\$45,000 to \$49,999	80	2.6	137	2.8	217	2.7
\$50,000 to \$59,999	192	6.2	507	10.1	699	8.6
\$60,000 to \$74,999	348	11.1	767	15.5	1,115	13.8
\$75,000 to \$99,999	276	8.8	866	17.5	1,142	14.1
\$100,000 to \$124,999	116	3.7	355	7.2	471	5.8
\$125,000 to \$149,999	58	1.8	187	3.8	245	3.0
\$150,000 to \$199,999	28	1.0	171	3.5	199	2.5
\$200,000 or more	11	0.5	93	1.9	104	1.4
Total Households	3,141	100%	4,948	100%	8,089	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, P52)

As already alluded to in the discussion of median and per capita incomes, households of South Bryan County on average are more affluent than households of North Bryan County. In the 1980 Census data, when the populations of the two ends of Bryan County were nearly identical, the household incomes were very similar in all income brackets. However, in the past two decades, new housing construction in South Bryan County has tended to create larger, more expensive housing, attracting more affluent residents. Thus, while the household incomes in the lower brackets still reflect the parity of two decades ago, the upper end of the household income brackets reflects this growing population segment of more affluent residents in South Bryan. More than half (51.4 percent) of North Bryan County households in 1999 had household incomes of less than \$35,000, and nearly half (49.2 percent) of South Bryan County residents had a household income of \$50,000 a year or more in 1999.

Poverty Status by Age Group

Table 1.19 provides the age distribution of persons with income in 1999 below poverty level. Persons in the Under 5 years (infants), 6 to 11 years, and 12 to 17 years are legally too young to care for themselves. Persons over 65 (retirement age and often not working), are mostly without opportunities to earn a wage or salary.

Then there is the 18-64 age group (see Table 1.19), which is the working age population. In Bryan County in 1999, over half (52.6 percent) of the persons with incomes below poverty level in 1999 were of working age. South Bryan, the majority (56.3 percent) of persons with incomes below the poverty line in 1999 were working age. This does not imply that all of this age group can work their way out of poverty, however, since some of them may suffer from disabilities, homelessness, medical conditions, etc., as contrasted with persons of able body and mind.

Poverty-stricken children are evident in Bryan County – 9.8 percent of persons in poverty in 1999 were 0-5 years old. Bryan County’s poverty-stricken population (11.7% of the population) is somewhat less than the state average (12.3%). Bryan County’s elderly poor (3.2% of the county’s poor) are somewhat below the state averages (5.1 percent).

**Table 1.19
 Persons Below Poverty Level by Age Group In 1999
 Bryan County, North Bryan County and South Bryan County**

Age Group	North Bryan		South Bryan		Bryan County	
	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%
Under 5 years	156	10.1	109	9.4	265	9.8
5 years	67	4.3	24	2.1	91	3.4
6 to 11 years	196	12.6	193	16.5	389	14.3
12 to 17 years	231	14.9	106	9.1	337	12.4
18 to 64 years	772	49.8	655	56.3	1,427	52.6
65 to 74 years	60	3.9	59	5.1	119	4.4
75 years and over	69	4.4	18	1.5	87	3.1
Total with 1999 income Below poverty level	1,551	100%	1,164	100%	2,715	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Table P87).

FORECASTS AND PROJECTIONS

Bryan County Population Projections

The Georgia Office of Planning and Budget estimates that Bryan County's population will reach 31,337 by 2010, while the Department of Labor estimates that figure at 31,404. Office of Planning and Budget figures project a continued growth in excess of 65 percent for the next decade, with population reaching 38,603 by 2015. The U.S. Bureau of the Census (in dataset SF1) predicts that Bryan County population will reach 40,000 by the year 2025. The projections are countywide and include both Richmond Hill and Pembroke. Municipal-level projections are not provided in that population projection..

These population projections assume that past trends will continue, that no unforeseen elements impact development, and that the rate of growth is acceptable to policymakers. These assumptions make population projections highly suspect in the long term, and of questionable value in the intermediate and short term.

The recently announced (June, 2005) decision by the U.S. Army to relocate an additional brigade of the Third Infantry Division at Fort Stewart is such an element. This action, made by the military for military reasons, will nevertheless have a major impact on the civilian community and civilian leadership. The relocation, scheduled to take place in 2006-2007, is expected to bring an additional 21,000 to 24,000 military personnel and their dependants to the region. How much of this additional population will locate off-post, and how much of that off-post population increase will decide to locate in Bryan County, is an incalculable impact.

Similarly, the Pooler, Georgia industrial "Megasite" was developed by the Georgia Ports Authority and the Georgia Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism for the anticipated location of a Daimler-Chrysler assembly plant. The scope of the anticipated impact of that site was such that local governments (with federal assistance) commissioned a 2003-2004 study by Hammer, Siler, George and Associates to quantify the impact. That study predicted (among other impacts) that the development of the site would be solely responsible for an additional 36 percent household population growth before 2019 (increasing that 36,000 projected Bryan County population to nearly 49,000). This site, which is still being actively marketed to potential customers, was expected to bring an additional 1,660 homes to Bryan County alone over the 15-year study period. Again, this is (or at any rate, may be) an incalculable impact.

To be useful, population projections must be at least somewhat reliable. While all projections indicate that Bryan County will continue to grow at a rapid pace, the rate of that pace is not only an unknown quantity, it is a factor that is largely outside the control of Bryan County.

Recent and Anticipated Residential Developments

Recent and anticipated developments include "Magnolia Creek Plantation" and "Hidden Creek" in North Bryan County – two subdivision projects comprising over 250 homes. These projects are the first of any substantial size in this sub-district in decades. In South Bryan County, dozens of moderate- to large-scale subdivisions are being developed, including Dunham Marsh, the on-going Buckhead communities, Brigham Lakes, and the Genesis Point project, which alone encompasses nearly 3,000 residential units. The total number of residential units either planned in the near future or now under development exceeds 4,000 units, which is almost a 50 percent increase in the number of units in the county.

Anticipated Future Trends of the Population

The racial composition of the population in Bryan County is not anticipated to change substantially between 2005 and 2010. The residential development anticipated in the county will consist largely of detached, single-family housing, with the greater portion continuing to be built in South Bryan County. These homes will probably be occupied by predominantly white, working-age (29-49 year old) households. The influx of middle-class suburban families will increase the educational and income characteristics of county's overall population. That influx of middle-class families will bring with them children, of course.

Many of the county's longer-term residents will "age in place" in existing neighborhoods and rural communities. The county may witness some increases in the number of elderly residents in the future, particularly if retirement communities are developed.

The development of higher density housing will be a major policy debate in the coming years. A recent condominium project on the Ogeechee River drew vocal, if not necessarily general, objections from residents opposed to the "urbanization" of South Bryan County. For similar reasons, rural residents in North Bryan County have voiced objections to the development of comparatively high density, suburban neighborhoods, citing a perceived loss of the "rural character" of their surroundings.

Bryan County will grow over the coming years. The quantity, quality, and nature of that growth are yet to be determined.

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**CHAPTER 2
 HOUSING ELEMENT**

The Housing Element provides an inventory of the existing housing stock and an assessment of its adequacy and suitability for serving current and future population and economic development needs. The assessment considers whether existing housing is appropriate to the needs and desires of residents in terms of quantity, affordability, type and location, and, if not, what might be done to improve the situation.

HOUSING TYPES AND MIX

Bryan County had a housing stock in 1990 that was about one-third manufactured housing (“mobile homes”), with a small proportion of multi-family. The only type of housing that was under-represented was townhouses (attached, single-family residences). The percentage (62.2 percent) of total units that were single-family, detached in 1990 reflects the increasing trend towards suburban development.

**Table 2.1
 Types of Housing Units, 1990-2000
 Bryan County, Georgia**

Type of Unit	Number of Units in 1990	% of Units in 1990	Number of Units in 2000	% of Units in 2000	Change in Number (% of total) of Units, 1990-2000
One family, detached	3,452	62.2%	5,629	64.9%	+2,177 (+2.7%)
One family, attached	42	0.8%	42	0.5%	0 (-0.3%)
Multiple family	291	5.2%	812	8.3%	+521 (+3.1)
Mfg/Mobile Home, Other	1,764	31.8%	2,192	25.3%	+428 (-6.5%)
Total	5,549	100%	8,675	100%	+3,126

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census. 1990 Census of Population and Housing. Summary Population and Housing Characteristics, Georgia. Issued August 1991. U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Table H30).

The County’s housing stock increased by 3,126 units during the 1990s. The majority of that increase occurred in South Bryan County, and (as indicated by the percentage reduction in manufactured housing) the majority of the increase was site-built, detached, single-family homes. Manufactured homes did increase by 428 units during the 1990s, but as a percentage share of total housing stock, this form of housing decreased by 6.5 percent from 1990 to 2000. The 1990s resulted in little change with regard to the number of townhouse residences, although there has been some activity in this class of housing in the early 2000s. Since the 2000 Census, the most significant residential development activity in Bryan County has continued in South Bryan County, although in 2004 and 2005, some residential development has begun to take place in North Bryan County.

As noted in the Population Element of the Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 1, Table 1.21), residential development is continuing to explode in Bryan County. An estimated 4,000 units/households are planned in the short- to moderate- term (2006-2012). As noted in the discussion of population forecasts in Bryan County, there is a discernable division among the

county population in regards to continued development along current (or accelerated) lines. Existing property zoned for higher-density residential uses is approaching build-out. Since at present the vast majority of the remaining developable property is zoned “agricultural,” the authorization of additional property for development will require zoning changes, which must be authorized by the Board of Commissioners. Thus, the trend in future development (whether or not to allow continued rapid development) in Bryan County will be a policy decision.

Table 2.2
Short-term Forecast of Housing Mix
Bryan County, 2006 and 2010

	2006 (2.8 pph)	Percent of Total	2010 (2.7 pph)	Percent of Total
Households	9,545	100%	11,125	100%
One family, detached	6,300	66%	7,565	68%
One family, attached	48	0.5%	167	1.5%
Multiple family	955	10%	1,335	12%
Mfg/Mobile Home, Other	2,242	23.5%	2,058	18.5%

Source: Bryan County Planning and Zoning, based on general trends in housing.

It is important to note that the short-term forecast is not necessarily a statement of desirable housing mixes – rather, it reflects the substantial residential developments approved already. More development can be approved in any given month, so these numbers should be considered minimums. The housing unit forecasts and percentages could be increased upward with each new residential development approval, and the county can also continue to track its residential permits by type of housing unit. Comparing the 2000 housing mix (Census) with 2010 forecasts, one can see that the current housing mix will continue the shift in favor of detached, single-family dwellings in the 2000s. Furthermore, it can be expected that the aging and retirement of manufactured housing will lead to an overall reduction in the number of these structures in Bryan County.

Table 2.3
Types of Housing Units by Tenure, 2000
Bryan County, North Bryan County and South Bryan County

Type of Unit	Owner-Occupied		Renter-Occupied	
	Units	%	Units	%
One family, detached	4,568	72.4	795	44.7
One family, attached	27	0.4	13	0.7
Multiple family	29	0.5	696	39.2
Mfg/Mobile Home	1,688	26.7	273	15.4
Total	6,312	100%	1,777	100%
North Bryan County				
Type of Unit	Units	%	Units	%
One family, detached	1,214	47.3	319	54.8
One family, attached	8	0.3	5	0.9
Multiple family	2	0.1	78	13.4
Mfg/Mobile Home	1,341	52.3	180	30.9
Total	2,565	100%	582	100%

South Bryan County				
Type of Unit	Units	%	Units	%
One family, detached	3,354	89.5	476	39.8
One family, attached	19	0.5	8	0.7
Multiple family	27	.7	618	51.7
Mfg/Mobile Home	347	9.3	93	7.8
Total	3,747	100%	1,195	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Table H32).

Table 2.3 provides a cross-tabulation of the type of housing unit with tenure (owner versus renter occupied). Generally, detached, single-family homes are mostly owner occupied but can be renter occupied. Townhouses (one-family attached) are still a rarity in Bryan County, but while often owner occupied, are more frequently rented than detached, single-family dwellings. Multi-family residential units are most frequently apartments, and therefore renter occupied, although if they are condominiums (and some of them appear to be according to the census statistics) owner occupancy is possible. Similarly, manufactured homes can be owner or renter occupied.

Manufactured homes made up more than half (52.3%) of the total housing stock in North Bryan County in 2000, but only 24.2% of the housing stock county-wide (constituting only one-tenth of the housing stock in South Bryan County). Around ninety percent of manufactured homes in the county in 2000 were owner-occupied, while the other tenth was renter occupied. Owner-occupied manufactured homes in North Bryan County are likely to remain a long-term source of affordable housing – once established, manufactured homes are infrequently relocated or demolished.

Around 45 percent of the rental housing stock was detached, single-family dwellings in Bryan County in the year 2000. Rental properties made up 21.9% of the total housing stock in Bryan County.

OCCUPANCY AND VACANCY

Two measures of the health of the housing market and housing stock generally in the county is to look at overall occupancy characteristics and vacancy rates in comparison with the county and state. Table 2.4 provides those data.

Table 2.4
Housing Occupancy and Vacancy, 2000
Bryan County, North Bryan County, South Bryan County and Georgia

Jurisdiction	Occupied Units	% of Total Units	Vacant Units	% of Total Units	Total Units
North Bryan County	582	68.6%	266	31.4%	848
South Bryan County	1,195	78.9%	320	21.1%	1,515
Bryan County	1,777	75.2%	586	24.8%	2,363
State of Georgia	3,006,369	91.6%	275,368	8.4%	3,281,737

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000(SF3, Table H7). (SF3, Table H6).

Typically, housing occupancies for cities and counties in Georgia are expected to be above 90 percent. In tight housing markets, vacancy rates can be as low as 2.5 percent (some vacancy rate is desirable in that if all housing units were occupied there would be little opportunity to move into the county).

In Bryan County, the overall vacancy rate of 24.8 percent is three times the state average. Even in the comparatively affluent South Bryan County district's 21.1% vacancy rate is more than double the state average. One might think that Bryan County, with a large number of waterfront homes, might have a higher vacancy rate because of seasonally occupied housing (and therefore, counted as vacant during the 2000 census). However, Census statistics show that Bryan County only had 91 housing units classified as "for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use" in 2000 (Census 2000, SF3, Table H8).

The higher-than-average vacancy rate for Bryan County's housing stock in 2000 deserves additional consideration. In 2000, of the 586 total vacant housing units in the county, 191 were for rent and 115 were for sale (representing a fairly even distribution of rental and owner opportunities in Bryan County in 2000). Almost all of the other vacant units were classified as "other vacant" by the Census Bureau in 2000 (Census 2000, SF3, Table H8). Looking at vacancy rates by type of housing unit may reveal additional insight into that issue. Table 2.5 provides average household sizes data for owner versus renter households in Bryan County and comparison jurisdictions.

Table 2.5
Average Household Size by Tenure, 2000
Bryan County, North Bryan County, South Bryan County and Georgia
(Persons Per Unit, Occupied Housing Units)

Jurisdiction	Persons Per Unit Owner-Occupied Housing Units	Persons Per Unit Renter-Occupied Housing Units
North Bryan County	2.79	2.88
South Bryan County	3.12	2.32
Bryan County	2.98	2.50
State of Georgia	2.76	2.49

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Table H18).

Bryan County's household size for renter-occupied units, at 2.50 persons per unit in 2000, is comparable with Georgia as a whole. The average household size for owner-occupied units in Bryan County was somewhat higher than the state average shown in Table 2.5. The high occupancy number for South Bryan County is perhaps a factor of the attraction of Bryan County schools for new residents. The higher number of occupants in rental units in North Bryan County may be explained by the comparative poverty of the area, leading to some overcrowding in rental units.

OVERCROWDING

Overcrowding provides an occupancy measure of inadequate housing conditions. An overcrowded housing unit is one that has 1.01 or more persons per room. Severe overcrowding is considered to be occupancy by 1.51 or more persons per room.

Overcrowding of housing units in Bryan County is not a substantial problem but the statistics in Table 2.6 reveal that Bryan County had a total of 273 overcrowded or severely overcrowded housing units in 2000, constituting 2.7 percent of all occupied housing units. Of the overcrowded 273 units, 137 were in North Bryan County and constituted 4.4% of the housing units.

Table 2.6
Overcrowded Housing Units by Tenure, 2000
Bryan County

Occupants per Room	Owner-Occupied Units	Renter-Occupied Units	Total	Percent of Total Occupied Units
1.01 to 1.5 occupants per room (overcrowded)	161	52	213	2.6%
1.51 or more occupants per room (severely overcrowded)	50	10	60	0.1%
Total	211	62	273	2.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Table H20).

Table 2.7 provides data on vacancies by type of housing unit in 2000. For Bryan County in 2000, it is not surprising to learn that manufactured housing (mobile homes) had significantly higher vacancy rates than one-family detached dwellings. In Bryan County in 2000, manufactured homes had a 10.5% vacancy rate in the county overall, and an 18.7% vacancy rate in South Bryan County. One can only speculate, but it may be that the vacant single-family dwellings may be obsolete in terms of market preferences if vacated by a household. That issue is further explored in the analysis of additional statistics below on size (bedrooms) of units.

Table 2.7
Vacancy by Type of Unit, 2000
Bryan County

Type of Unit	North Bryan Co.		South Bryan Co.		Bryan County	
	Total Units	Vacant	Total Units	Vacant	Total Units	Vacant
One family, detached	1,651	118	3,978	148	5,629	266
One family, attached	15	2	27	0	42	2
Multiple family	96	16	716	71	812	87
Mfg/Mobile Home	1,651	120	541	101	2,192	231
Total Housing Units	3,413	266	5,262	320	8,675	586

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Tables H30 and H 31). Note: In Bryan County, 10 boats, RV's, or vans were tallied under the "mobile home" category.

One does not know from the data in Table 2.7 whether the 231 vacant manufactured homes are safe and habitable, or whether they (or some percentage of them) are dilapidated or abandoned and therefore unfit for habitation. The fact that nearly 19 percent of the manufactured housing units in South Bryan County (versus only 7.3 percent in North Bryan County) were recorded

vacant is a factor that needs additional examination. Based on further study, this situation could require additional private sector or county action such as codes enforcement or redevelopment.

TENURE

Tenure, as already alluded to, refers to length or duration of occupancy and in the context of housing units refers to whether such units are owner occupied or renter occupied. Table 2.8 provides renter versus owner occupancy statistics of the county in comparison with the State of Georgia.

**Table 2.8
 Housing Units by Tenure, 2000
 Bryan County, North Bryan County, South Bryan County and Georgia**

Jurisdiction	Owner-Occupied Units	% of Total Occupied Units	Renter-Occupied Units	% of Total Occupied Units	Total Occupied Units
North Bryan County	2,565	81.5%	582	18.5%	3,147
South Bryan County	3,747	75.8%	1,195	24.2%	4,942
Bryan County	6,312	78.0%	1,777	22.0%	8,089
State of Georgia	2,029,293	67.5%	977,076	32.5%	3,006,369

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Table H7).

There are substantial variations in the comparison jurisdictions in terms of the owner to renter ratios (or percentages) as shown in Table 2.8. Whereas Georgia’s housing stock has a ratio of more than 2:1 owner-to-renter ratio, Bryan County’s owner-to-renter ratio is greater than 3:1, with only a slightly higher owner-renter ratio in North Bryan County (where there is a general shortage of rental units). Both subdistricts of Bryan County have a higher owner-to-renter ratio than the state. To the extent home-ownership is the “American Dream,” Bryan County’s existing housing stock exceeds the state with regard to attaining that standard.

**Table 2.9
 Tenure by Number of Persons per Household, 2000
 Bryan County
 (Number of Occupied Housing Units)**

Number of Persons in Unit (household)	Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied	
	Number of Units	%	Number of Units	%
1 person	844	13.4	475	26.7%
2 persons	1,985	31.4	439	24.7%
3 persons	1,275	20.2	459	25.8%
4 persons	1,407	22.3	216	12.2%
5 persons	522	8.3	152	8.6%
6 persons	164	2.6	24	1.3%
7 or more	115	1.8	12	0.7%
Total	6,312	100%	1,777	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Table H17).

Table 2.9 below shows the distribution of renter and owner-occupied households by the number of persons in the household. These are similar numbers already presented in the discussion of households in the Population Element, but cross-tabulated by renter versus owner status in 2000. The data in Table 2.9 tend to show that, in Bryan County, there is an even distribution or similarities among renters and homeowners regardless of the size of household, with the exception of single person households, where the individual is more likely to rent (occupying nearly 28 percent of the rental stock, as opposed to just 13.4 percent of the owner-occupied housing stock).

ROOMS AND BEDROOMS

The Decennial Census provides data on the number of rooms and bedrooms in housing units. Those data are provided Bryan County's housing stock in 2000 in Tables 2.10 and 2.11.

Table 2.10
Housing Units by Number of Rooms, 2000
Bryan County, North Bryan County, South Bryan County and Georgia

Number of Rooms in Unit	North Bryan		South Bryan		Bryan County		Georgia	
	Units	Percent of Total	Units	Percent of Total	Units	Percent of Total	Units	Percent of Total
1 Room	10	0.3	24	0.5	34	0.4	35,912	1.1
2 Rooms	50	1.5	118	2.2	168	1.9	117,344	3.6
3 Rooms	105	3.1	383	7.3	488	5.6	261,022	8.0
4 Rooms	542	15.9	586	11.1	1,128	13.0	493,235	15.0
5 Rooms	1,104	32.3	1,019	19.4	2,123	24.5	705,868	21.5
6 Rooms	797	23.4	1,246	23.7	2,043	23.6	663,551	20.2
7 Rooms	530	15.5	945	17.9	1,475	17.0	414,712	12.6
8 Rooms	169	4.9	452	8.6	621	7.2	285,280	8.7
9 or More Rooms	106	3.1	489	9.3	595	6.8	304,813	9.3
Total Units	3,413	100%	5,262	100%	8,675	100%	3,281,737	100%
Median Number of Rooms	5.4	--	6.0	--	5.8	--	5.6	--

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Table H23 and H27).

Bryan County's housing stock in 2000, when compared with the housing stocks for the state as a whole, appear to be larger in terms of average number of rooms. Bryan County's housing stock in 2000 had higher percentages of houses with five to seven rooms, although lower percentages in the categories of larger houses (eight and nine rooms) when compared with the rest of Georgia. As might be expected from the comparative wealth, South Bryan County has a higher percentage of larger houses, and a larger median number of rooms than both North Bryan County and the rest of the state. Overall, the median number of rooms of Bryan County's housing stock in 2000, at 5.8, was higher than that of the rest of the state.

An analysis of the number of bedrooms yields similar findings. Whereas one-quarter of the total housing stock in North Bryan County and Georgia in 2000 was comprised of two-bedroom housing units, South Bryan County had only 14.3 percent in two-bedroom houses (see Table 2.11). North Bryan County's housing stock in 2000 was lower in terms of homes with four and five or more bedrooms, while South Bryan exceeded or equaled the state average for homes with three or more bedrooms. These findings of smaller house sizes, both in terms of the

number of rooms and number of bedrooms further demonstrate the observations of comparisons between the two census tracts of Bryan County. Smaller houses are more obsolete in today's housing market, and fewer of them are likely to be purchased and upgraded (with additions).

Table 2.11
Housing Units by Number of Bedrooms, 2000
Bryan County, North Bryan County, South Bryan County and Georgia

Number of Bedrooms in Unit	North Bryan County	%	South Bryan County	%	Bryan County	%	State of Georgia	%
No Bedroom	20	0.6	24	0.5	44	0.5	51,732	1.6
1 Bedroom	162	4.7	517	9.8	679	7.8	320,616	9.8
2 Bedrooms	841	24.6	753	14.3	1,594	18.4	860,625	26.2
3 Bedrooms	1,990	58.4	2,845	54.0	4,835	55.7	1,443,663	44.0
4 Bedrooms	355	10.4	931	17.7	1,286	14.9	486,888	14.8
5+ Bedrooms	45	1.3	192	3.5	237	2.7	118,213	3.6
Total Units	3,413	100%	5,262	100%	8,675	100%	3,281,737	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Table H41).

AGE

Another issue is the age of housing – if the homes are too old, then it may not make good economic sense to upgrade them. Table 2.12 provides data on the age of housing units (i.e., range of years that housing structures were built). A comparison with the State assists the analyst in determining unique characteristics of the local housing stock.

Table 2.12
Age of Housing Units, 2000
Bryan County, North Bryan County, South Bryan County and Georgia
(Housing Units By Range of Years Structure Was Built)

Year Structure Built	North Bryan County	%	South Bryan County	%	Bryan County	%	Georgia	%
Built 1999 to 2000	235	6.9	355	6.7	590	6.8	130,695	4.0
Built 1995 to 1998	451	13.2	1,018	19.3	1,469	16.9	413,557	12.5
Built 1990 to 1994	380	11.1	1,342	25.5	1,722	19.9	370,878	11.3
Built 1980 to 1989	794	23.3	1,402	2.7	2,196	25.3	721,174	22.0
Built 1970 to 1979	637	18.7	551	10.5	1,188	13.7	608,926	18.6
Built 1960 to 1969	357	10.5	179	3.4	536	6.2	416,047	12.7
Built 1950 to 1959	185	5.4	91	1.7	276	3.1	283,424	8.6
Built 1940 to 1949	144	4.2	192	3.6	336	3.9	144,064	4.4
Built 1939 or earlier	230	6.7	132	2.5	362	4.2	192,972	5.9
Total	3,413	100%	5,262	100%	8,675	100%	3,281,737	100%
Median Year Structure Built	1982		1990		1987		1980	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Table H34, H35).

Bryan County witnessed greater percentages of housing units constructed during the 1990s than in the State as a whole. Approximately forty-four percent of Bryan County's total housing stock was built in the 1990s (see Table 2.12). This construction rate is significantly higher than the state average of twenty-seven percent.

Homes built in the 1960s and 1970s tend to be substantially smaller than those constructed in later decades. Bryan County's housing stock as of 2000, however, had smaller percentages of total homes built in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s when compared with the State.

As one of the fastest growing counties in Georgia, it is not surprising that Bryan County's housing stock is demonstrably newer than state average. The figures in Table 2.12 indicate that nearly 69 percent of the total housing stock in Bryan County in 2000 was built after 1980 (when the current housing boom began), and just 8.1 percent was built prior to 1950.

These housing age statistics are relevant to the extreme diversity engendered by the complete separation of the "two ends" of Bryan County by Fort Stewart. Starting in 1980, at which time the two ends of Bryan County were demographically similar, a divergence occurs in economics due to the rapid influx of new residents, almost entirely within the South Bryan (Census Tract 9203) area.

Further, around half of the structures built in North Bryan in any given year are manufactured housing (table 2.3 above), which has a much shorter usable life than most site-built housing. The age of homes is not in itself an indicator of poor condition; older homes are sometimes better constructed than newer ones, and the overall condition of homes depends on the amount of upkeep and maintenance by the owners. As homes age, however, more upkeep is needed, and if occupancy goes to renter rather than owner-occupied status, or if the homes are located in an economically depressed area, maintenance tends to get deferred. It is therefore important to note the physical condition of Bryan County's older homes, and consider programs that may preserve, restore and maintain them, whether for owner or renter status.

CONDITION

Two typical measures of substandard housing conditions are the number of housing units lacking complete plumbing facilities and the number of units lacking complete kitchen facilities. Table 2.13 provides data on the structural and plumbing characteristics of the county's housing stock in 2000, as well as comparisons with the State.

In 2000, Bryan County had only 118 houses lacking complete plumbing facilities and 107 that lacked complete kitchen facilities. These numbers of substandard homes, while disturbing, generate percentages that are in keeping with state averages. However, when the substandard housing characteristics are broken down by Census tract, it is clear that the majority, both in raw numbers and percentage of housing stock, are in the North Bryan County area.

Table 2.13
Structural and Plumbing Characteristics of Housing Units, 2000
Bryan County, North Bryan County, South Bryan County and Georgia
(Percent of Total Housing Units)

Housing Unit Characteristic	North Bryan	South Bryan	Bryan County	Georgia
Lacking complete plumbing facilities	2.9%	0.4%	1.4%	1.0%
Lacking complete kitchen facilities	2.9%	0.2%	1.2%	1.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (STF3, Tables H47 and H50).

COST

Value of Owner-Occupied Units

Table 2.14 provides data on specified owner-occupied housing units in 2000. More than half (68.4 percent) of North Bryan County's specified owner-occupied housing stock in 2000 was valued at less than \$100,000, and the median housing value for such units was \$82,100. The median is even lower when one considers all owner-occupied units in the Census Tract. These figures are well below the state median, although the county's median housing values as a whole for specified and total owner-occupied units are considerably higher than state averages.

Table 2.14
Value of Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units in 2000
Bryan County, North Bryan County, South Bryan County and Georgia

Range of Value (\$)	North Bryan		South Bryan		Bryan County		Georgia %
	Units	%	Units	%	Units	%	
Less than \$50,000	192	19.2	53	1.6	245	5.8	9.5%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	493	49.2	933	28.9	1,426	33.7	34.2%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	211	21.0	1,094	33.9	1,305	30.9	25.8%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	58	5.8	603	18.7	661	15.6	13.3%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	46	4.6	411	12.7	457	10.8	10.2%
\$300,000 or more	2	0.2	131	4.2	133	3.2	7.0%
Total	1,002	100%	3,225	100%	4,227	100%	100%
Median (specified owner-occupied units) (\$)	\$82,100		\$128,000		\$115,600		\$111,200
Median (all owner-occupied units) (\$)	\$60,500		\$121,600		\$94,900		\$100,600

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Tables H74, H76 and H85).

In terms of affordability, this means that North Bryan County's owner-occupied housing stock is comparably more affordable than in South Bryan County or the State as a whole, though it has also been noted previously that the housing stock is also smaller in comparison with the 9203 Census Tract and State. At the higher end of the owner-occupied housing value scale, Bryan County had 590 owner-occupied homes valued at \$200,000 or more in 2000. .

Cost Burden of Homeowner Households

It is useful to analyze and determine the extent to which owner and renter households are cost burdened or severely cost burdened with regard to housing. “Cost burdened” is defined as paying more than 30 percent of a household’s income for housing, and “severely cost burdened” is defined as paying more than 50 percent of a household’s income for housing. Table 2.15 provides such data for specified owner-occupied housing units in Bryan County in 1999. The numbers indicate both households with mortgages and those without mortgages.

Table 2.15
Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income in 1999
Bryan County, North Bryan County, South Bryan County and Georgia
(Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units)

Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income	North Bryan		South Bryan		Bryan County	
	Units	%	Units	%	Units	%
Less than 30% (not cost burdened)	1,182	83.5	2609	80.9	3,378	79.9
30% to 49% (cost burdened)	132	9.3	466	14.4	597	14.2
50% or more (severely cost burdened)	102	7.2	150	4.7	252	5.9
Total Housing Units	1,416	100%	3,225	100%	4,227	100%
Median Monthly Owner Cost as a Percentage of Household Income	17.2		19.5		19.1	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Tables H94 and H95).

The figures in Table 2.15 show that of the total selected owner-occupied households in Bryan County in 1999, 849 households were cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened, representing 20.1 percent of the county population. Interestingly, and perhaps a factor in the rapid increases in property value in South Bryan County, the percentage of “cost burdened” households in South Bryan County is higher than in North Bryan County. Note also that the county median monthly owner cost, at 19.1 percent of household income in 1999, is well below the cost-burden range of 30 percent and above.

Renter-Occupied Households

Table 2.16 provides data on housing cost burden for specified renter-occupied housing units in Bryan County in 2000.

Bryan County had 267 homes that rented for more than \$1,000 in the 2000 Census. The majority of specified renter-occupied units in the sample (58.7%) fell within the range of \$250 to \$749 for monthly rents. The median for specified renter-occupied units in Bryan County was significantly below the state’s median. This shows that rents were affordable in Bryan County.

Table 2.16
Gross Rent, Specified Renter-Occupied Housing Units, 2000
Bryan County and Georgia

Gross Rent (\$)	Bryan County		Georgia %
	Units	%	
Less than \$250	79	4.9	9.3
\$250 to \$499	615	37.9	25.5
\$500 to \$749	468	28.8	33.2
\$750 to \$999	195	12.0	22.1
\$1000 or more	267	16.4	9.9
Total Units With Cash Rent	1,624	100%	100%
Median Gross Rent (\$)	\$541		\$613

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Tables H62 and H63).

Cost Burden of Renter Households

Table 2.17 provides data on the cost burden of specified renter-occupied households in 1999.

Table 2.17
Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income in 1999
Bryan County
(Specified Renter-Occupied Housing Units)

Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income in 1999	Specified Renter-Occupied Housing Units	% of Units Computed
Less than 30 percent (not cost burdened)	1002	56.9
30 to 49 percent (cost burdened)	325	18.5
50 percent or more (severely cost burdened)	248	14.1
Units not computed	186	10.5
Total Specified Renter-Occupied Housing Units	1,761	100%
Median Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income in 1999	24.2	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF3, Tables H69 and H70).

Unlike owner-occupied households, cost burden and severe cost burden is much more of an issue for renter-occupied households in Bryan County. A third (32.6%) of renter households were cost burdened or severely cost burdened in 1999. More than one in ten (14.1 percent) were severely cost burdened. Hence, even though rents were comparatively low in Bryan County, some renter households are still overburdened with the price they must pay, given their household incomes.

HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

“Housing is affordable if a low- or moderate income family can afford to rent or buy a decent quality dwelling without spending more than 30 percent of its income on shelter....The increased availability of such housing would enable hard-working and dedicated people—including public servants such as police

officers, firefighters, schoolteachers and nurses—to live in the communities they serve....Removing affordable housing barriers could reduce development costs by up to 35 percent; then, millions of hard-working American families would be able to buy or rent suitable housing that they otherwise could not afford.” (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2005).¹

Usually, a housing needs assessment would begin with a forecast of households, followed by a prediction of the income levels and preferences of those future households. At the present time, good data for that type of analysis is lacking, and besides, the type of future housing anticipated in Bryan County in the short-term will dictate the types of households moving into the county. In other words, supply for new households will drive housing opportunities in the county. The market generally will not respond to the needs of existing lower-income households already present.

Bryan County Assessment

One simple way to get a picture of the needs of existing households with regard to the cost of owner-occupied housing is to multiply median household income by 2.5 times (which is a figure often accepted by lenders as the maximum amount they are likely to provide a loan for). Using that rule of thumb, the median household income in Bryan County in 1999 was \$53,560 (see Table 1.17 in the Population Element). An affordable home for purchase for the median household in Bryan County in 1999 would be \$120,862.

As noted in Table 2.14 of this chapter, the medians for owner-occupied units in Bryan County in 2000 were \$94,900 for all owner-occupied units and \$115,600 for specified owner occupied units. Therefore, approximately half of the specified owner-occupied housing stock was affordable to residents of Bryan County (see figures in Table 2.14).

Because of low incomes, some of Bryan County’s residents will find it difficult to secure affordable housing, even if some of the housing stock is lower than average in value overall. In the year 1999, 2,715 Bryan County residents (11.6 percent) were classified as poverty level (see Population Element). Poverty-stricken households will find it difficult at any price range to secure adequate housing they can afford.

As noted in Table 2.16, the median gross rent for renter-occupied households in Bryan County in 1999 was \$541, and the median gross rent accounted for 24.2 percent of renter incomes, on average. The median non-family household incomes (which represents mostly renter households) in Bryan County in 1999 was \$22,727, or \$1,894 a month (Table 1.17). Using the rule of thumb that the household should not pay more than 30 percent of its income on housing, Bryan County’s renter households would not be able to afford, on average, rents of more than \$568 a month. That figure is a good estimate of what an affordable rental unit was for non-family households in Bryan County in 1999.

Though housing costs have gone up considerably, salaries and wages have not been keeping up with housing inflation. At the estimated affordable rental of \$568, the need can only be met with relatively small apartment units and/or manufactured homes. All other types of housing are likely to be out of reach in terms of the ability of renter-occupied households to pay. This finding

¹ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research. February 2005. *“Why Not in Our Community?” Removing Barriers to Affordable Housing. An Update to the Report of the Advisory Commission on Regulatory Barriers to Affordable Housing.*

implies that Bryan County, in order to meet the needs of lower-income households, will need to provide some opportunities for additional manufactured home subdivisions or parks, as well as relatively low-end multi-family development opportunities.

In terms of housing mix, Bryan County's housing stock is comparatively diverse as of the year 2000, but the North Bryan Census Tract area is overly dependent on manufactured housing, with little high-end housing. Recent trends in development may change that, however, as new housing developments are being initiated in the 9201 Census Tract.

The housing needs of retail workers, who are in the situation described above, need to be considered. National data on occupations and wages reveal that one of the biggest occupations in the U.S. is retail sales, half of whom made less than \$8.98 an hour in May 2004. The second largest group of workers is cashiers, half of whom were paid less than \$7.81 per hour nationally. Hourly wages for other heavily populated occupations ranged from \$7.40 to \$14.01.² For more information on wages by industry, see the Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 3 of this report).

Jobs-Housing Balance

According to 2000 Census Data (SF3) Bryan County has a total labor force of 11,505 (military and civilian), with 335 (2.9%) unemployed and actively seeking jobs. The vast majority of these workers (over 70%) commute to work outside of Bryan County. There are another 5,407 adults who are "not in the labor force" either through retirement, disability or extended unemployment. The economic development element provides data on the types of occupations that are most frequent for Bryan County's residents. Generally, Bryan County has a high proportion of "blue collar" workers. Housing, as this chapter has described, is generally affordable to Bryan County residents.

Assuming that employment in the county can be estimated (and there are currently no good sources for such data), the desirable jobs-housing ratio is usually considered to be 1.5 jobs for each housing unit.³ Bryan County is currently nowhere near such a ratio, with most residents commuting to work in adjoining counties. The concept of jobs-housing balance is important, however, and the Community Agenda will address that issue.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This section identifies and discusses a range of housing issues important in Bryan County's Comprehensive Planning process. Earlier parts of this chapter focus on factual data and conclusions. Later sections of this chapter identify alternatives for meeting affordable housing needs and address the policy questions that will be further consideration by community stakeholders and leaders in the development of a Community Agenda.

² *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. June 1, 2005. "Bush still has a job ahead of him." P. A-12 (editorial).

³ Weitz, Jerry. 2003. Jobs-Housing Balance. Planning Advisory Report No. 516. Chicago: American Planning Association.

The Housing Crisis

Average wages have not kept up with inflation, while housing prices have been soaring. According to national housing expert Peter Marcuse, “prices are escalating and unaffordability is rising, with people paying more and more of their incomes for housing.” This is evident even in the comparatively affluent 9203 (South Bryan) Census Tract, where more than 19.1 percent of the households are paying more than 30 percent of their incomes on housing costs alone. What is more, “in the United States, public housing (direct provision) has been stopped completely, and new programs reduce what already has been built.”⁴ What are the causes of this situation? One of them, according to Professor Marcuse, is the economic system which “results in a very uneven distribution of wealth, leaving many with inadequate incomes to pay for the necessities of life at their actual costs of production.” The middle class jobs of the industrial economy are fading. Nowhere in the country can a family with one full-time minimum-wage worker (earning \$5.15 per hour) afford the cost of a two-bedroom apartment at the ‘fair-market’ rent (Dreier, Mollenkopf and Swanstrom 2001).⁵

Local Fair Share of Regional Housing Needs

There is no regional data base or established regional policy to determine what is a fair share of low income housing for each local government in the Coastal Georgia Region. The CGRDC has suggested the formation of a regional Housing Policy Task Force, but this has yet to be adopted by the ten participating county governments and their cities. Based on the foregoing data analysis in this chapter, it appears that North Bryan County has a disproportionate (greater than average) share of the county’s lower-income housing, as well as a greater share of the county’s low-income individuals.

Local Regulations

It is important to recognize that housing costs can be influenced by local land use regulations, building rules, and other local policies.

- **Housing and Building Codes.** One of the primary objectives of a housing code is to ensure minimum standards for habitable dwellings and to prevent the deterioration of housing quality. A housing code requires certain facilities (sanitary, water supply, heating, cooking, etc.) to be in every dwelling unit. Such codes also usually establish minimum dwelling space requirements (e.g., 150 square feet for the first occupant and 100 square feet for each additional occupant) and provisions for the upkeep of home exteriors (walls, doors, windows, etc.). Under such a code, the housing official can designate dwellings as dangerous or unfit for human occupancy, and, if necessary, condemn dangerous or unfit dwellings. Building codes specify minimum standards for construction materials and construction practices when building dwellings, which can also affect cost. While Bryan County does, in fact, have such provisions within its code of ordinances, the enforcement of these ordinances has been negligible. The potential

⁴ Marcuse, Peter. 2004. “Housing on the Defensive.” *Practicing Planner*, Vol. 2, No. 4.

⁵ Dreier, Peter, John Mollenkopf, and Todd Swanstrom. 2001. *Place Matters: Metropolitcs for the Twenty-first Century*. University Press of Kansas. Cited in Weitz, Jerry. 2003. “Income Disparities, Economic Segregation, and the Role of Planners,” *Practicing Planner*, Vol. 2, No. 3.

repercussions of “evicting” the residents of substandard, even hazardous, housing have precluded strict enforcement; the question always becomes, “Where else would they go?”

- **Zoning Ordinance.** The location of residential development is governed by use restrictions established by zoning districts. The definition of “family” in the zoning ordinance usually addresses the maximum number of unrelated persons living together in a single-family unit. The permitted uses sections of the zoning ordinance either allow or do not allow certain types of housing units, particularly “group housing”, which is specifically allowed in only a few zones in Bryan County. The minimum size of individual housing units is sometimes specified by minimum floor area requirements in the zoning code. Minimum lot sizes and maximum densities establish how many housing units can be built on a given piece of property. Density restrictions influence both the supply of housing as well as the cost per unit of land (White 1992).⁶ Minimum lot widths require certain amounts of street frontage for detached dwellings on individual lots.
- **Subdivision Regulations.** Subdivision ordinances establish standards for streets, drainage, utilities, and other improvements within subdivisions. The layout of blocks and lots is also guided by standards in the subdivision ordinance. Subdivision standards affect the cost of land for development and therefore, indirectly, affect the total costs of housing built on individual lots subject to that ordinance. Approximately 25 percent of housing costs are attributable to land costs in most real estate markets (White 1992).
- **Development Impact Fees.** The county does not currently charge development impact fees for roads, recreation and parks, public safety and fire, and/or other eligible facilities; although some individual cases have seen developers paying “per lot” payments to avoid having to provide some amenities otherwise required in the ordinances. To the extent that developers and builders can pass on to consumers the extra costs of development impact fees, impact fees (even informally levied fees) increase the costs of housing. There is not a consensus among economists that impact fee burdens are shifted forward to the consumer in the form of increased housing costs. Impact fees can create unintended disincentives for the production of affordable housing (White 1992). Georgia’s development impact fee law allows local governments to exempt affordable housing from impact fees, provided that the money that would be collected as an impact fee is made up through some other funding source. Such exemptions must be tied to the county’s goals and objectives for producing low- and moderate-income housing.

Deinstitutionalization

People with mental illnesses and other disabilities are often released from institutions with nowhere to go. Land use regulations and neighborhood resistance can pose barriers to the development of congregate living facilities and other arrangements to house such persons. Currently, there are no such institutions in Bryan County, and the county has relied on neighboring jurisdictions and regional institutions to handle the needs of these people. As alluded to previously, however, during the twenty-year planning horizon (if not sooner) Bryan County will probably experience proposals to develop congregate care housing facilities.

⁶ White, S. Mark. 1992. *Affordable Housing: Proactive & Reactive Strategies*. Planning Advisory Service Report No. 441. Chicago: American Planning Association.

Manufactured Housing

The county has had a long history of permitting manufactured and mobile homes. Exclusion of manufactured homes has been questioned before in Georgia, but is considered acceptable. In a case decided March 10, 2003, by the Georgia Supreme Court (*King v City of Bainbridge*), the City of Bainbridge prevailed against a challenge that its zoning regulations were unconstitutional. The *King v. Bainbridge* decision overruled the longstanding legal precedent established in *Cannon v Coweta County* (a 1990 Georgia Supreme Court decision) that posed more restrictive legal boundaries for local zoning ordinances. The court found that the City could prevent or apparently restrict altogether the placement of manufactured homes in the City. However, that is not a recommended policy by the consultant for several reasons, but most importantly, manufactured homes are often less expensive than traditional site-built homes of comparable size.

The Federal Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards went into effect June 15, 1976 (24 CFR 3280, Revised as of April 1, 2001). Manufactured homes have become safer and more durable since the enactment of the HUD Code in 1976, and their appearance has improved significantly (American Planning Association 2001). The HUD code preempts state and local building code approval by state and local governments, but it does not preempt local governments from adopting and enforcement placement and set-up restrictions (Weitz 2004).⁷

Local government officials sometimes adopt zoning regulations in response to concerns by the owners of site-built homes who fear that the installation of manufactured homes will lower their property values. There are also some widespread social biases against the less affluent householders who reside in manufactured homes, due to their possible status as renters, transients and minorities. Local officials are also sometimes concerned about the potential impacts of manufactured housing on public or social services in the community, or the fiscal impacts such developments create, due to the lower revenues to be obtained. In particular, manufactured housing that remains as “personal property” on the tax digest, depreciating annually, is a drag on the local government’s revenue stream. Policy makers need to recognize that allowing manufactured housing is one of the few existing policies that contribute to affordable housing objectives. Exclusion of factory-built housing prevents lower-income groups from obtaining housing and thus, such exclusion conflicts with the American Planning Association’s social equity policies (Weitz 2004).

There is also some concern for the existing character and quality of manufactured housing development in Bryan County. Where these places have deteriorated into substandard environments, attention might be given to upgrading or eliminating them using methods including, but not limited to, code enforcement, urban renewal, relocation assistance, utility extensions, and condemnation with appropriate compensation. One idea posed to improve manufactured home communities is for local nonprofit organizations and developers to partner to create new subdivisions with better amenities and qualities that will make them more attractive places to live (Beamish et al. 2001).⁸

⁷ Weitz, Jerry. 2004. “Manufactured Housing: Trends and Issues in the ‘Wheel Estate’ Industry.” *Practicing Planner*, Vol. 2, No. 4.

⁸ Beamish, Julia O., Rosemary C. Goss, Jorge H. Atilas, and Youngjoo Kim. 2001. “Not a Trailer Anymore: Perceptions of Manufactured Housing.” *Housing Policy Debate* 12, 2: 373-392.

As noted in the foregoing analysis, there is a significant number of manufactured homes in Bryan County, and manufactured homes constitute over half the residences in North Bryan County. The useful life of many manufactured homes in the county has diminished. If older manufactured homes cannot be replaced with new manufactured homes on the same site, then the county may lose affordable (but perhaps substandard) housing units. To meet affordable housing objectives, the county will need to carefully consider its land use policies and permissions for setting up new manufactured homes.

There are a number of “compatibility” standards available, such as provisions for roof pitch, size, skirting, and embellishment of the structure that can make manufactured homes more compatible with nearby stick-built homes. Technology is making manufactured homes better, and there are now two-story manufactured homes available.



**Two-story Manufactured Home on
Sales Lot in Dawson County, Georgia**

Modular or Industrialized Housing

Manufactured homes differ from modular or industrialized housing. Manufactured homes, and modular and industrial homes, are all factory-built housing, but modular and industrialized housing are certified as meeting the state building code. For purposes of building code approval, modular housing is equivalent to site-built housing, and some builders use factory-built modular units in constructing conventional homes (Weitz 2004).

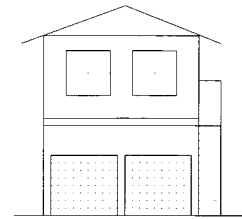
Housing Accessible to Persons with Disabilities

Many Americans are living in homes that are not designed for people with disabilities. Retrofitting ramps, kitchens and bathrooms can often cost more than the homes themselves. The increasing numbers of people with disabilities brought on by the increase in the number of seniors will likely worsen this situation. New homes continue to be built with basic barriers to use by the disabled, and this is unfortunate given how easy it is to build basic access in the great majority of new homes. One solution to the quandaries described above is a form of accessible housing design known as “visitability.” Visitability calls for all new homes (both single-family and multi-family) to be designed and built with basic level access. As the name suggests, a primary purpose of this design is to allow people with disabilities to independently access the homes of their non-disabled peers. The design also allows the non-disabled to continue residing in their homes should they develop a disability (Casselmann 2004).⁹

⁹ Casselman, Joel. 2004. Visitability: A New Direction for Changing Demographics. *Practicing Planner*, 2, 4.

Accessory Apartments

An accessory apartment is a second dwelling unit that is added to the structure of an existing site-built single family dwelling, or as a new freestanding accessory building (e.g., residential space above a detached garage), for use as a complete, independent living facility for a single household, with provision within the attached accessory apartment for cooking, eating, sanitation and sleeping. Such a dwelling, whether attached or detached, is considered an accessory use to the principal dwelling.



Accessory Apartment, Detached
(Above Garage Shown)

Accessory apartments are increasingly used for housing elderly persons who wish to remain close to their families. Seniors are often reluctant to move out of their own unit because the environment is familiar and they are emotionally attached to their homes (Howe, Chapman and Baggett 1994). For detached single-family units owned by single seniors, converting the unit to a principal dwelling with an accessory apartment would allow seniors to stay in their unit while another household occupies previously unused portions of the home. As the homeowner, the senior has the option of living in either the apartment or primary dwelling. The added income and security of having another person close by can be a deciding factor in enabling a homeowner to age in place. Accessory apartments for the elderly also would permit seniors to have some independence while maintaining close proximity to one or more family members (Howe, Chapman and Baggett 1994). Given the state of the housing stock in some areas of Bryan County, provisions in the Building Code for permitting additions to manufactured housing might be one solution.

Flexible Houses

A flexible house is a type of design that makes the single family home more affordable by facilitating its adaptation to more and different types of households. This concept is already used in cases where existing homes with surplus space are converted into separate units or accessory apartments. However, the flexible house is different from such situations because conversion potential is specifically designed into the home so that only minor conversions are required to create or remove an accessory apartment. Provisions for flexible housing can provide an alternative for meeting the housing needs of a changing population (Howe 1990).¹⁰

Flexible houses are “built to adapt to the ever-changing needs of their occupants, including the onset of aging and the development of disabilities.” In addition to visitable features, flexible housing calls for a bedroom on the entry-level floor (which can easily be converted into a home office or storage space) and closets on each floor stacked one above the other (which allows for easy conversion to an elevator shaft (Casselmann 2004).

HOUSING PROGRAMS

Public Housing Program

Bryan County does not have a public housing authority that owns and operates a public housing program.

¹⁰ Howe, Deborah A. 1990. The Flexible House: Designing for Changing Needs. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 56, 1: 69-77.

Community Development Block Grants

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program is a highly flexible financing source that can be used to rehabilitate housing, improve infrastructure, and finance other community-determined projects. The county has successfully used the CDBG program in several areas of the county and can apply for more community development block grants for various purposes. Evidence from practice indicates that CDBG funds are most effective when they are targeted in small areas and combined with other resources (Accordino 2005).¹¹

HOME Funds

Communities that receive these funds can help nonprofit agencies with the financing of affordable housing units. The HOME Investment Partnership Program provides block grants for rehabilitation, new construction, and tenant-based rental assistance. The HOME affordable housing block grant provides enough flexibility that local governments can design their own programs for responding to local housing needs. HOME is now a mainstay of local affordable housing production and rehabilitation for hundreds of communities.

Housing Trust Funds

A housing trust fund is an account established by a state or local government, financed from an alternative, non-general revenue source, targeted to provide funds for the provision of affordable housing. Housing trust funds are relatively new, and there were only several dozen operating in the U.S. in the early 1990s. Housing trust funds are often funded from real estate transfer taxes, public and private grants, and development linkage fees (see discussion below) (Connerly 1993).¹²

Community Development Corporations

Local governments can form community development corporations to gather resources from public and private sectors to build affordable housing.

Inclusionary Zoning

Inclusionary zoning or land use policies require or encourage developers to set aside a portion of residential projects for low- and moderate-income housing. There is evidence that inclusionary zoning programs have produced more affordable housing in areas where they are used than have federal housing programs. Mandatory set-asides of a portion of the total units for low- and moderate-income households is susceptible to challenge as a regulatory taking or an unlawful exaction, but optional, incentive-based inclusionary zoning has been upheld by certain courts. Density bonuses might be offered in exchange for the inclusion of affordable housing units in proposed developments. For example, an increase in density could be

¹¹ Accordino, John. 2005. "Planning for Impact: Richmond Takes an Aggressive Approach to Targeting Neighborhood Revitalization Resources." *Practicing Planner*, Vol. 3, No. 1.

¹² Connerly, Charles E. 1993. A Survey and Assessment of Housing Trust Funds in the United States. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 59, 3: 306-319.

permitted in exchange for making a certain percentage of the total approved units affordable (White 1992).

Development of even voluntary, inclusionary housing program will face a number of issues and challenges. These include but are not limited to the following:

Community opposition. Homeowners in areas adjacent to new developments containing more affordable units are likely to oppose the inclusion of moderate-income residents, due to the additional increment of density (i.e., a “bonus”) needed to make such developments work, as well as the external compatibility of less expensive homes with higher priced neighboring homes. Opposition might be mitigated some by: 1) keeping the amount of density bonus as small as practicable; 2) allowing developers to add exterior amenities to the affordable homes that will make them more compatible, while implementing cost-saving features on the interior of homes; 3) focusing on first-time homebuyers as the “target” population in the case of new subdivisions (as opposed to a rental assistance program); and 4) keeping the number of more affordable homes in very small clusters (i.e., approximately five units) to avoid concerns over the creation of mini-ghettos.

Avoiding market price increases. Affordable units are likely to cycle up to higher market rates. Other inclusionary housing programs establish a 10- to 15-year period during which below-market units are restricted under most instances from converting to market rate units. If constructed with fewer interior amenities and more cost-effective building features, the upward market increase might be avoided. That is, a less-valuable home should in theory not appreciate or inflate out of the below-market range of price intended.

Developer reactions. As a voluntary program, developers must be enticed to participate. There may be an inclination for developers to buy their way out of conforming with an inclusionary housing policy. That is, some might offer financing for a housing trust fund to construct below-market units elsewhere. While financial set-asides in exchange for relief from an inclusionary housing strategy may benefit below-market rate homeowner needs, the County adopting an inclusionary housing strategy would be reinforcing the notion that every community or neighborhood has a role in meeting affordable housing needs on some small, incremental scale.

Housing Linkage Policies

Housing linkage policies require that developers of new office, commercial, retail, and/or institutional developments that create a need for affordable housing must construct or rehabilitate an appropriate number of affordable housing units or pay a fee into a housing trust fund. The rationale for a linkage program is similar to the justification for development impact fees; additional low-income housing is necessitated by an influx of workers associated with new nonresidential development (White 1992). Local governments cannot require fees that will be used to fund affordable housing in Georgia, but developers might voluntarily agree to provide more low- and moderate-income housing if confronted with the effects large nonresidential developments have on the low- and moderate-income housing market.

Mixed-Income Housing

Most housing developments are currently built with a single type of “product” for a specific target market. This separates people not only by income and race, but also by age. Mixed-income housing refers to the provision of housing within the same development or immediate

neighborhood for households with a broad range of incomes. Mixed-income housing refers to a host of housing strategies that provide a broader range of housing types and price ranges.

There are challenges to implementing mixed-income housing. Because there are few existing mixed-income housing developments, there is little market experience. Developers may thus face financial risks and lending challenges. Zoning ordinances can present certain barriers to the densities and innovative site arrangements needed to achieve mixed-income housing and, therefore, may need to be changed in order to implement this tool.

Furthermore, the Bryan County Community Assessment Poll results indicated a strong resistance on the part of current county residents to the development of mixed-income housing. One of the factors attracting many of the more recent arrivals to Bryan County was the chance to leave the mixed-income urban environment of neighboring Chatham County.

CHAPTER 3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes an examination of Bryan County's economic base, labor force, and general economic trends. Considerable attention is given to the economic base and labor force characteristics of Bryan County as a whole, but also to the Census Tract divisions of North Bryan (9201) and South Bryan (9203), as well as to the State of Georgia. The intent of this chapter is to integrate economic development into the community's Comprehensive Planning process. Upon identification of economic needs, the land resources necessary to support economic development can be determined, and the community facilities and services needed to support economic development can be provided.

Based on the information gathered in the inventory, an assessment is made to determine which economic sectors are growing and which are declining locally and which sectors should be encouraged to develop in order to complement or diversify the existing economic base of the county. The assessment includes a determination of whether jobs available in the county are appropriate for the residents in terms of skill and education levels required, commuting patterns, and wages paid, and, if not, what options are available to improve the existing economic situation (i.e., programs of business development, attraction and diversification, or job training). In addition, this analysis determines what existing local economic development programs and tools or community attributes are available and what are needed to foster economic development.

The results of the assessment will lead to the development of needs and goals and an associated implementation strategy that help set forth a plan (in the Community Agenda) for economic development in terms of how much economic growth is desired, what can be done to support retention and expansion of existing businesses, what types of new businesses and industries will be encouraged to locate in the community, what incentives will be offered to encourage economic development, whether educational and/or job training programs will be initiated or expanded, and what infrastructure improvements will be made to support economic development goals during the planning period. Needs, goals, and implementation strategies are presented in the Community Agenda.

LABOR FORCE

Labor Force Participation in 1990

In 1990, the Bryan County had a total labor force of 7,229 persons, with 65.8 percent of the population ages 16 years and older in the labor force. The North Bryan labor force was 3,215 persons (57.6% of the working-age population), while the South Bryan labor force was 3,911 (73.8% of the working-age population). In 1990, male participation (76.1 percent) in the labor force was higher than that of females (56.0 percent). Table 3.1 presents information on labor force participation by sex in 1990.

Table 3.1
Labor Force Participation by Sex, 1990
Persons 16 Years and Over
Bryan County, Georgia

Labor Force Status	Male	Percent of Males 16+ Years	Female	Percent of Females 16+ Years	Total (Male + Female)	Percent of Total Persons 16+ Years
In Labor Force	4,087	76.1%	3,142	56.0%	7,229	65.8%
Not in Labor Force	1,283	23.9%	2,469	44.0%	3,752	34.2%
Total Population (16+ Years)	5,370	100%	5,611	100%	10,981	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990 Census, Summary Tape File 3; Table P70.

Comparison of Labor Force Participation in 1990

Table 3.2 shows unemployment and labor force participation rates of the comparative census tracts within Bryan County (9201 and 9203) and nearby counties in 1990. Bryan County had a labor force participation rate that was roughly in the middle of the comparison counties.

Table 3.2
Comparison of Labor Force Participation, 1990
Bryan County and Nearby Counties

County	Percent Labor Force Participation	County	Percent Labor Force Participation
North Bryan	57.6	Evans	60.2
South Bryan	73.8	Liberty	76.5
Bulloch	58.5	Long	64.6
Chatham	66.1	Macintosh	59.0
Effingham	65.9	Bryan County	65.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990 Census; Summary Tape File 3; Table P70.

When comparing Bryan County to the nearby coastal counties, it is apparent that Bryan fell roughly in the middle when it came to labor force participation in 1990. It is important to note that Bulloch County and Chatham County both have large college-age non-working populations, and Liberty County houses the bulk of the Fort Stewart population, which is 100% working, by definition. It is interesting to note that while North Bryan County has the lowest participation in the workforce in the region, South Bryan has the highest (with the exception of Liberty County). When comparing Bryan County to the State and Nation, Bryan's total labor force participation rate was somewhat lower than the State average (67.9 percent), and slightly higher than the Nation (65.3 percent).

Table 3.3 compares the labor force participation by sex for Bryan County, the State of Georgia and the U.S in 1990. Labor force participation in Bryan County was lower than the State and

higher than the Nation for males and overall labor force, and lower than both the State and the Nation for females in 1990.

Table 3.3
Comparison of Labor Force Participation by Sex, 1990
Persons 16 Years and Over
County, State, and Nation

Jurisdiction and Sex	In Labor Force	Percent	Not In Labor Force	Percent
Bryan County - Males	4,087	76.1%	1,283	23.9%
Bryan County - Females	3,142	56.0%	2,469	44.0%
Bryan County - Total	7,229	65.8%	3,752	34.2%
State of Georgia - Males	1,804,052	76.6%	549,607	23.4%
State of Georgia - Females	1,547,461	59.9%	1,037,261	40.1%
State of Georgia - Total	3,351,513	67.9%	1,586,868	32.1%
United States - Males	68,509,429	74.4%	23,516,484	25.6%
United States - Females	56,672,949	56.8%	43,130,409	43.2%
United States - Total	125,182,378	65.3%	66,646,893	34.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990 Census; Summary Tape File 3; Table P70.

Employment Status in 1990

Table 3.4 provides data on employment status by sex in 1990. Unemployment for females (5.4 percent) was significantly higher than for males (3.4 percent). Unemployment was not a significant problem or issue in 1990, with a total unemployment rate of 4.2 percent, since it was lower than the State (5.7 percent) and Nation (6.3 percent) in 1990 (Table 3.6).

Table 3.4
Employment Status of the Labor Force by Sex, 1990
Persons 16 Years and Over
Bryan County, Georgia

Labor Force Status	Male	Percent of Male Labor Force	Female	Percent of Female Labor Force	Total (Male + Female)	Percent of Total Labor Force
Employed (all civilian)	3,619	88.5%	2,963	94.3%	6,582	91.0%
Unemployed	137	3.4%	169	5.4%	306	4.2%
Armed Forces	331	8.1%	10	0.3%	341	4.8%
Total Labor Force	4,087	100%	3,142	100%	7,229	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990 Census; Summary Tape File 3; Table P70.

Comparison of Employment Status in 1990

Table 3.5 compares Bryan County's unemployment rate in 1990 with that of nearby counties, and includes the Census Tract information for comparison. Bryan County's 1990 unemployment rate was the lowest in the region at 4.2 percent.

**Table 3.5
 Comparison of Unemployment Rates, 1990
 Bryan County and Nearby Counties**

Jurisdiction	Percent Unemployment	Jurisdiction	Percent Unemployment
North Bryan	5.4	Evans	6.1
South Bryan	3.3	Liberty	6.0
Bulloch	6.3	Long	8.7
Chatham	6.7	Macintosh	6.5
Effingham	5.6	Bryan County	4.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990 Census, Summary Tape File 3; Table P70.

Table 3.6 provides comparisons among Bryan County, the State, and the nation for males, females, and the total labor force with regard to unemployment rates. In 1990, males and females in Bryan County had higher employment levels than the averages of the State and the Nation.

**Table 3.6
 Comparison of Employment Status by Sex, 1990
 Persons 16 Years and Over in the Civilian Labor Force
 County, State, and Nation**

Jurisdiction and Sex	In Civilian Labor Force, Employed	Percent	In Civilian Labor Force, Unemployed	Percent
Bryan County - Males	3,619	96.4%	137	3.6%
Bryan County - Females	2,963	94.6%	169	5.4%
Bryan County - Total	6,582	95.6%	306	4.4%
State of Georgia - Males	1,648,895	94.8%	89,593	5.2%
State of Georgia - Females	1,441,381	93.6%	98,509	6.4%
State of Georgia - Total	3,351,513	94.3%	188,102	5.7%
United States - Males	62,704,579	93.6%	4,281,622	6.4%
United States - Females	52,976,623	93.8%	3,510,626	6.2%
United States - Total	115,681,202	93.7%	7,792,248	6.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990 Census; Summary Tape File 3; Table P70.

Trends During the Last Decade

Table 3.7 provides annual average data for the labor force, employment, and unemployment in Bryan County from 1995 to 2004. The labor force in Bryan County has grown steadily during the last several years for which annual data are available. The data in Table 3.3 show that Bryan County's labor force has been able to find employment. Table 3.7 shows that

unemployment has not been a major issue in Bryan County. The number of persons unemployed, and the unemployment rate (which was already low as of 1995) dropped overall from 1995 to 2000. Unemployment increased in terms of both absolute numbers and percentage-wise in 2002 and 2003, corresponding to a national recession, and remained slightly high in 2004. Interestingly, the absolute number of persons unemployed remained very steady from 1998 to 2001.

Table 3.7
Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment, 1995 to 2003
Bryan County, Georgia

Year	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
1995	9,472	9,092	380	4.0
1996	10,023	9,646	377	3.8
1997	10,569	10,198	371	3.5
1998	10,796	10,477	349	3.2
1999	11,252	10,903	349	3.1
2000	11,641	11,282	359	3.1
2001	11,975	11,618	357	3.0
2002	12,539	12,114	425	3.4
2003	13,092	12,652	440	3.4
2004	13,601	13,147	454	3.3

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, www.stats.bls.gov. Accessed 12/28/05.

Labor Force Participation in 2000

Table 3.8 presents the labor force participation by sex in Bryan County in 2000. Comparing this to 1990 data (Table 3.1), one can see there have been certain changes in labor force participation by sex. There was a small drop in the level of men in the labor force, with 76.1 percent of men in the labor force in 1990 and 75.3 percent in 2000. But there was a substantial increase in the percentage of women in the labor force, with 56.0 percent participating in 1990 and 61.2 percent in 2000 (an increase of 5.2 percent). Overall, labor force participation increased from 65.8 percent in 1990 to 68.0 percent in 2000.

Table 3.8
Labor Force Participation by Sex, 2000
Persons 16 Years and Over
Bryan County, Georgia

Labor Force Status	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total (Male + Female)	Percent of Total
In Labor Force	6,147	75.3%	5,358	61.2%	11,505	68.0%
Not in Labor Force	2,013	24.7%	3,394	38.8%	5,407	32.0%
Total Population (16+ Years)	8,160	100%	8,752	100%	16,912	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census; Summary File 3, Table P43.

A majority (68.0 percent) of the county's residents ages 16 years and over were in the labor force in 2000. Males accounted for 53.4 percent of the labor force in 2000.

Comparison of Labor Force Participation in 2000

As of 2000, the labor force participation for Bryan's population (68.0 percent) was higher than that of the State (66.1 percent) and the Nation (63.9 percent). North Bryan labor force participation in 2000 was lower for males and females than the State and National averages, while South Bryan County's males and females had significantly higher participation levels than the averages for Georgia and the Nation. See Table 3.9, which compares labor force by sex for Bryan County, Georgia and the U.S. in 2000.

**Table 3.9
 Comparison of Labor Force Participation by Sex, 2000
 Persons 16 Years and Over
 County, Census Tract, State, and Nation**

Jurisdiction and Sex	In Labor Force	Percent	Not In Labor Force	Percent
Bryan County - Males	6,147	75.3%	2,013	24.7%
Bryan County - Females	5,358	61.2%	3,394	38.8%
Bryan County - Total	11,505	68.0%	5,407	32.0%
North Bryan - Males	2,157	68.3%	999	31.7%
North Bryan - Females	1,838	54.5%	1,532	45.5%
North Bryan - Total	3995	61.2%	2531	38.8%
South Bryan - Males	3,990	79.7%	1,014	20.3%
South Bryan - Females	3,520	65.4%	1,862	34.6%
South Bryan - Total	7,510	72.3%	2,876	27.7%
State of Georgia - Males	2,217,015	73.1%	815,427	26.9%
State of Georgia - Females	1,912,651	59.4%	1,305,594	40.6%
State of Georgia - Total	4,129,666	66.1%	2,121,021	33.9%
United States - Males	74,273,203	70.7%	30,709,079	29.3%
United States - Females	64,547,732	57.5%	47,638,063	42.5%
United States - Total	138,820,935	63.9%	78,347,142	36.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census; Summary File 3, Table P43.

Employment Status in 2000

For the year 2000, of the 11,505 persons in the county's labor force, 11,170 were employed or in the armed forces and 335 were unemployed. This represents an unemployment rate of 2.9 percent, significantly lower than that of the State's (5.5 percent) and the Nation (5.8 percent). There were 150 unemployed men in 2000, leading to an unemployment rate of 2.4 percent. There were 185 unemployed women in the County in 2000, leading to an unemployment rate of 3.4 percent.

Table 3.10
Employment Status of the Labor Force by Sex, 2000
Persons 16 Years and Over
Bryan County, Georgia

Labor Force Status	Male	Percent of Male Labor Force	Female	Percent of Female Labor Force	Total (Male + Female)	Percent of Total Labor Force
Employed (all Civilian)	5,524	89.9%	5,109	95.4%	10,633	92.4%
Unemployed	150	2.4%	185	3.4%	335	2.9%
Armed Forces	473	7.7%	64	1.2%	537	4.7%
Total Labor Force	6,147	100%	5,358	100%	11,505	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census; Summary File 3, Table P43.

Comparison of Employment Status in 2000

Table 3.11 compares employment and unemployment rates in Bryan County with those of the State of Georgia and the Nation in 2000, with a particular look at the Bryan County Census Tract data. The overall unemployment rate in Bryan County (2.9 percent) was lower than that of the State (5.5 percent) and the Nation (5.8 percent). The Bryan County unemployment rate among males was below the nationwide male unemployment rate (5.7 percent) and the statewide male unemployment rate (5.0 percent). The unemployment rate for Bryan County females was 3.5 percent, lower than that of the State (6.1 percent) and Nation (5.8 percent).

Table 3.11
Comparison of Employment Status by Sex, 2000
Persons 16 Years and Over in the Civilian Labor Force
County, Census Tract, State, and Nation

Jurisdiction and Sex	In Civilian Labor Force, Employed	Percent	In Civilian Labor Force, Unemployed	Percent
Bryan County - Males	5,524	97.4%	150	2.6%
Bryan County - Females	5,109	96.5%	185	3.5%
Bryan County - Total	10,633	97.1%	335	2.9%
North Bryan - Males	2,040	95.8%	89	4.2%
North Bryan - Females	1,743	95.2%	87	4.8%
North Bryan - Total	3,783	95.6%	176	4.4%
South Bryan - Males	3,484	98.3%	61	1.7%
South Bryan - Females	3,366	97.2%	98	2.8%
South Bryan - Total	6,850	97.7%	159	2.3%
State of Georgia - Males	2,051,523	95.0%	107,652	5.0%
State of Georgia - Females	1,788,233	93.9%	115,400	6.1%
State of Georgia - Total	3,839,756	94.5%	223,052	5.5%
United States - Males	69,091,443	94.3%	4,193,862	5.7%
United States - Females	60,630,069	94.2%	3,753,424	5.8%
United States - Total	129,721,512	94.2%	7,947,286	5.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census; Summary File 3, Table P43.

Table 3.12 presents historic unemployment rates for Bryan County and surrounding jurisdictions.

Unemployment rates in Bryan County were very stable over the preceding decade, varying between a high of 4.0 in 1995 to a low in 2001 of 3.0, and largely ignoring the nationwide recession underway during 2001 and 2002. The unemployment rate in 2004 was down slightly in Bryan County from the previous two years. With the economic recovery expected to continue, it is likely this rate will continue to edge downward, at least in the short term. In 2004 unemployment in Bryan County was substantially lower than the State and National levels, and the lowest when compared to surrounding jurisdictions.

Table 3.12
Comparison of Unemployment Rates, 1995-2004
Bryan County and Selected Jurisdictions

Jurisdiction	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Bryan County	4.0	3.8	3.5	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.4	3.4	3.3
Bulloch County	3.4	3.0	3.2	3.6	2.4	3.9	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.3
Chatham County	5.4	5.1	5.1	4.7	4.2	3.5	3.6	4.2	4.3	4.2
Effingham County	4.2	3.8	3.6	3.7	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.6	3.7	3.5
Evans County	5.5	4.8	3.8	3.9	3.7	4.2	4.0	4.4	4.1	3.8
Liberty County	8.6	7.6	7.3	7.1	6.0	5.4	5.2	5.9	5.5	5.8
Long County	4.2	3.5	3.7	3.3	2.8	3.7	3.3	4.1	3.7	4.1
McIntosh County	5.8	6.1	5.2	4.5	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.8	4.3	4.5
State of Georgia	4.8	4.6	4.5	4.2	3.8	3.5	4.0	4.8	4.7	4.6
United States	5.6	5.4	4.9	4.5	4.2	4.0	4.7	5.8	6.0	5.5

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, www.data.bls.gov. Accessed 05/11/05.

EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION

Table 3.13 presents the employment by occupation of the civilian labor force ages 16 years and over in Bryan County in 1990.

Table 3.13
Employment by Occupation, 1990
Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over
Bryan County, Georgia

Occupation	Bryan County	%	GA %	U.S. %
Managerial and professional specialty	1,322	20.1	24.6	26.4
Technical, sales and administrative support	2,010	30.4	31.9	31.7
Service	834	12.7	12.0	13.2
Farming, fishing, and forestry*	136	2.1	2.2	2.5
Precision production, craft, and repair	1,065	16.2	11.9	11.3
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	1,215	18.5	17.4	14.9
Total	6,582	100	100	100

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990 Census; Summary Tape File 3, Table P78.

Georgia and the U.S. are also presented to offer a comparison to the occupation of workers residing in Bryan County. Table 3.13 presents jobs of Bryan County residents, *not* just the jobs located within the county. Jobs of county residents, both those working inside the county and outside, are included.

Bryan County in 1990 had a preponderance (63.2 percent) of white-collar jobs. White-collar jobs are considered to be “managerial and professional specialty,” “technical, sales and administrative support,” and “service” occupations. Under this definition, 36.8 percent of Bryan County residents had blue-collar jobs in 1990. This represents a higher percentage of blue-collar jobs than found at the State (31.5%) and National (28.7%) levels. The major reason for this high level of blue-collar jobs is due to the number of persons employed in the precision production, craft and repair classification.

One of the implications of this finding relates to the education and training needs of Bryan County’s workforce. The high level of employment in the blue-collar occupations shows a need for technical trade schools and programs which offer the skills needed to have a workforce skilled for these jobs. This need will increase as the Bryan County industrial park – Interstate Centre – is developed to its full potential. The overall difference in employment by occupation when compared to the State shows the needs in Bryan County are not the same as the State as a whole. Examining the breakdown by occupation allows for the matching of new jobs with the occupations of county residents.

Table 3.14
Employment by Occupation by Sex
Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over, 2000
Bryan County, Georgia

Occupation	Bryan County				GA	U.S.
	Male	Female	Total	%	%	%
Managerial professional, and related	1,441	1,775	3,216	32.1%	32.7%	33.6%
Service	499	934	1,433	14.3%	13.4%	14.9%
Sales and office	867	1,965	2,832	28.2%	26.8%	26.7%
Farming, fishing, and forestry	60	4	64	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance	763	60	823	8.2%	10.8%	9.5%
Production, transportation, and material moving	1,299	371	1,670	16.6%	15.7%	14.6%
Total	4,929	5,109	10,038	100%	100%	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census; Summary File 3; Table P50.

Table 3.14 presents similar data as Table 3.13 but does so by sex and for the year 2000. The percentages of blue-collar and white-collar jobs in 2000, 25.4 and 74.6 percent respectively, show a continuing shift in the composition of the labor force from 1990 towards white-collar employment. Females were better represented among all white-collar occupations, while males were better represented in the blue-collar occupations. The largest variations between the sexes were within the sales and office work professions, in which women represented more than 66 percent(2 to 1) employed in these categories, and in the construction field, in which the male to female ratio was more than 12-to-one. It is important to note that direct comparisons

between 1990 and 2000 cannot be made due to the changes in industry classifications (SIC to NAICS)¹ between the two Censuses.

In 2000, Bryan County's employment closely resembled the employment patterns of the State and Nation. In virtually all occupational categories, Bryan County showed an employment pattern similar to the State and Nation.. The only variations were in sales and office work in which Bryan County employed nearly one and one-half percent more of its' labor force than the state and nation, and in construction, extraction and maintenance in which Bryan County was less than the state and national averages.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Table 3.15 presents the industrial classifications in which Bryan County's civilian labor force worked in 1990. The State and Nation are also presented to offer comparisons. Percentages for Bryan County, the State and Nation are comparable for most industry classifications, but differ substantially within a few categories.

Construction accounts for 6.9 percent of employment in Georgia and 6.2 percent in the U.S., but it accounts for 12.2 percent of employment in Bryan County – roughly double the state and national averages. This means Bryan's working residents are more reliant on construction jobs than is usual, and is probably a reflection of the rapid population growth in the South Bryan area, as more construction workers seek to live near their work. FIRE employment, however, was unexpectedly underrepresented in Bryan County, representing just 3.6 percent of the working positions, as opposed to 6.5 percent in Georgia and 6.9 percent in the U.S. in 1990.

**Table 3.15
 Employment by Industry, 1990
 Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over
 County, State and Nation**

Industry	Bryan County	%	GA %	U.S. %
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, hunting and mining	200	3.0%	2.4%	2.7%
Construction	802	12.2%	6.9%	6.2%
Manufacturing	1,154	17.5%	18.9%	17.7%
Transportation, communications, and other public utilities (TCU)	485	7.4%	8.5%	7.1%
Wholesale trade	323	4.9%	5.1%	4.4%
Retail trade	1,205	18.3%	16.5%	16.8%
Finance, insurance, and real estate (FIRE)	240	3.6%	6.5%	6.9%
Services	1,782	27.1%	29.5%	32.8%
Public administration	391	5.9%	5.4%	4.8%
Total	6,582	100%	100%	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990 Census; Summary Tape File 3; Table P077.

Table 3.16 presents data for employment by industry by sex according to the 2000 Census. Again, these data refer to residents of Bryan County, not employment within the County. One

¹ SIC stands for Standard Industrial Classification Code. NAICS stands for North American Industrial Classification System.

category showed a significantly higher percentage in the County than in the State and Nation: construction. It is logical that employment in construction is highly represented in Bryan County due to the rapid population and employment growth found in the Coastal Georgia Region. Professional scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services, as well as the Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing professions are somewhat under-represented in Bryan County. All of the other industries are similarly represented across all three jurisdictions.

When comparing employment by industry by sex in Bryan County to the State and Nation, a substantial variation is apparent. The most notable variation across the sexes was within the construction industry. In construction and manufacturing, 80.2 percent of the workforce was male in 2000 and construction and manufacturing represented 35.6 percent of all jobs for males. Females had a larger percentage of employees than men in the educational, health and social services industry, where 33.6 percent of females were employed compared to 6.5 percent of males.

Table 3.16
Employment by Industry by Sex
Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over, 2000
County, State and Nation

Industry	Bryan County				GA	U.S.
	Male	Female	Total	%	%	%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	68	18	86	0.8%	1.4%	1.9%
Construction	956	138	1,094	10.5%	7.9%	6.8%
Manufacturing	1,095	361	1,456	14.0%	14.8%	14.1%
Wholesale trade	417	177	594	5.8%	3.9%	3.6%
Retail trade	785	312	1,097	10.5%	12.0%	11.7%
Transportation and warehousing and utilities	667	180	847	8.1%	6.0%	5.2%
Information	76	72	148	1.4%	3.5%	3.1%
Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing	162	298	460	4.5%	6.5%	6.9%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	238	370	608	5.8%	9.4%	9.3%
Educational, health and social services	376	1,559	1,935	18.6%	17.6%	19.9%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	336	592	928	8.9%	7.1%	7.9%
Other services (except public administration)	238	309	547	5.3%	4.7%	4.9%
Public administration	354	250	604	5.8%	5.0%	4.8%
Total	5,768	4,636	10,404	100%	100%	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census. Summary File 3, Table P49.

Service industry employment increased in the workforce of Bryan County between 1990 and 2000. In 1990, services accounted for 27.1 percent of employment for Bryan County's workforce but in 2000 it totaled 38.5 percent. The classification of industries differs between 1990 and 2000 due to the use of SIC classifications in 1990 and NAICS in 2000. General trends can still be noted, such as the decrease in share of employment held by construction and manufacturing and the substantial increase in the share of employment within the services industry. The decline in the percentage share of manufacturing employment in Bryan County is consistent with changes in the national economy, which continues to transform from a manufacturing-based to a service-based economy.

PLACE OF WORK OF BRYAN COUNTY'S LABOR FORCE

Table 3.17 presents the locations of employment for Bryan County's labor force in 1990 and 2000. The key shift in the decade is shown in the "worked in MSA but not in central City" showing a large increase in the percentage of Bryan County's workforce that is finding employment outside the city limits of Savannah. While 28.8 percent of the workforce worked inside Bryan County in 1990, only 25.2 percent worked inside the county line in 2000.

The apparent shift in place of employment, other than the near doubling of the labor force recorded, came from the change in the definition of the MSA boundaries from 1990 to 2000. However, if the figures for working outside the county and the city of Savannah are combined, we find that the 1990 workforce working neither outside of Bryan County and not working in Savannah (62.5 percent) is very close to the 2000 workforce figure (61.8). When evaluated, the shift of the workforce has been out of Bryan County, with a percentage of the shift going to the city, and a larger shift going to the unincorporated areas of Chatham County. This is consistent with the growth of suburban Savannah, generally.

**Table 3.17
 Employment of Labor Force by Place of Work,
 1990 and 2000, Workers 16 Years and Over
 Bryan County, Georgia**

Place of Work	1990		2000	
	Number of Residents Working	% of Total Employed	Number of Residents Working	% of Total Employed
Worked in county of residence (Bryan County)	1,948	28.8%	2,766	25.2%
Worked in central City of MSA (Savannah)	2,535	37.5%	4,208	38.3%
Worked in Savannah MSA but not in central City (includes Bryan Co)	1,472	21.8%	5,011	45.6%
Worked outside Savannah MSA but in Georgia	2,754	40.7%	1,777	16.2%
Worked Outside Georgia	151	2.2%	322	2.9%
Total	6,761	100%	10,996	100%

Source: US Census Bureau, 1990, and 2000 Census. Summary File 3, Tables P26, P27, and P28.

Each employment location classification increased in absolute numbers between 1990 and 2000, except for those who worked elsewhere in the state but lived in Bryan County. That classification dropped from 2,754 people in 1990 to 1,777 people in 2000. That decrease is more significant when it is considered that during the time period the overall labor force of Bryan County increased by 4,235 people, or 62.6 percent.

Table 3.18 presents the commuting patterns, by travel time, of the Bryan County labor force in 1990 and 2000. Overall, the data show that Bryan County residents are spending about the same amount of time, overall, commuting to work in 2000 as they did in 1990, although the percentage of Bryan Countians with very long commutes increased. Those commuting 60 to 89 minutes increased from 3.1 percent of the labor force in 1990 to 4.3 percent of the labor force in 2000. Those commuting 90 or more minutes increased from 0.4 percent in 1990 to 2.1 percent in 2000. The travel time categories representing less than 5 minutes, 5 to 9 minutes, 15 to 19 minutes, and 20 to 24 minutes all had similar percentages in the labor force in 2000 as in 1990. The percentage of workers with 10 to 14 minute commutes, however, dropped by a full third, while those commuting 20-30 minutes increased by a similar percentage overall, indicating that traffic congestion may be worsening. The overall patten of commuting times is likely due, in part, to the higher share of Bryan County residents who commute to work in the unincorporated areas of Chatham County.

Table 3.18
Employment of Labor Force by Travel Time,
1990 and 2000, Workers 16 Years and Over
Bryan County, Georgia

Travel Time	1990		2000	
	Number of Residents	% of Total	Number of Residents	% of Total
Did not work at home:	6,615	97.8%	10,706	97.4%
Less than 5 minutes	148	2.2%	260	2.4%
5 to 9 minutes	437	6.5%	729	6.6%
10 to 14 minutes	683	10.1%	818	7.5%
15 to 19 minutes	550	8.1%	559	5.1%
20 to 24 minutes	531	7.9%	941	8.6%
25 to 29 minutes	498	7.4%	878	8.0%
30 to 34 minutes	1723	25.5%	2,802	25.5%
35 to 39 minutes	332	4.8%	813	7.4%
40 to 44 minutes	520	7.7%	797	7.2%
45 to 59 minutes	954	14.1%	1,397	12.7%
60 to 89 minutes	211	3.1%	476	4.3%
90 or more minutes	28	0.4%	236	2.1%
Worked at home:	146	2.2%	290	2.6%
Total:	6,761	100%	10,996	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990 and 2000 Census; Table P050 and P31.

Table 3.19 shows the county of employment for Bryan County's working residents in 2000. Of the 10,966 residents of Bryan County employed, only a quarter (25.2 percent) worked inside Bryan County. Neighboring Chatham County represented the largest share with 56.5 percent. Chatham County had a high proportion of Bryan County's residents working there because of its close proximity and its large employment base. It is likely that south Bryan County (Census

Tract 9203) has an even higher proportion of workers commuting to Chatham County for employment.

Table 3.19
Employment of Bryan County Residents
By County of Work, 2000

County of Work	Number of Bryan County Residents Working	% of Total Bryan County Residents Working
Bryan County	2,766	25.2%
Chatham County	6,215	56.5%
Liberty County	907	8.2%
Effingham County	238	2.2%
Bulloch County	236	2.1%
Beaufort County	109	1.0%
Evans County	87	0.8%
Glynn County	66	0.6%
Other Counties	372	3.4%
Total Working	10,996	100%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor. 2004. Bryan County, Georgia, Area Labor Profile.

EMPLOYMENT IN BRYAN COUNTY BY COUNTY OF RESIDENCE

Table 3.20 presents the location of residency for individuals employed within Bryan County in 2000. A slim majority of workers employed in Bryan County (58.9 percent) also reside in Bryan County. Liberty County accounts for the second largest share of Bryan County's workforce with 13.9 percent, with Chatham County accounting for the next highest group at 11.9 percent. The other counties surrounding Bryan County each account for 4 percent or less of the total Bryan County workforce.

Table 3.20
Employment in Bryan County
By County of Residence, 2000

County of Residence	Persons Working in Bryan County, 2000	%
Bryan County	2,766	58.9%
Liberty County	655	13.9%
Chatham County	557	11.9%
Bulloch County	188	4.0%
Effingham County	162	3.4%
Long County	150	3.2%
Evans County	40	0.9%
Tattnall County	32	0.7%
Other Counties	150	3.2%
Total Working	4,700	100.0%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor. 2001. Bryan County, Georgia, Area Labor Profile.

ECONOMIC BASE

Prior to and during the American Civil War, South Bryan County was a major rice producing region. North Bryan County has always been a forestry products and food producing region. Agriculture and agribusiness, particularly silviculture (tree-farming), were at one time a vital part of the economic base of the county. Related businesses for the processing and transportation of agricultural products have been instrumental in shaping the economic and social character of Bryan County. Manufacturing was not a leading source of employment or payroll until recently. In recent years, as rapid population growth has ensued in the region, the economic base of Bryan County has diversified somewhat, although the county remains primarily a “bedroom community” for surrounding job markets. The establishment of the county industrial park (“Interstate Centre”) and the reaching of sufficient size to attract retail chains have led to an increase, albeit modest, in the strength and diversity of the Bryan County economy.

This section explores the economic base of Bryan County. Limited data is available for county business patterns by Census Tracts. Data for individual sectors of the economy are also restricted. The small number of businesses within Bryan County (under 200 polled by the U.S. Economic Census) means that detailed payroll and revenue figures are withheld to protect the privacy rights of individual businesses.

Table 3.21 shows the number of establishments and the sales/receipts of those establishments in 1997. In terms of the number of establishments, Bryan County had a majority of services establishments, including real estate, rental, leasing, profession and scientific services, administrative and support services, health care, arts and entertainment services and other services (not including public administration).

Table 3.21
Number of Establishments and Sales/Receipts, 2002
Bryan County, Georgia

Type of Industry	Bryan County			
	Number of Businesses	% of Total	Sales (in \$1,000s)	Payroll (in \$1,000s)
Retail	61	33.3%	85,344	7,390
Wholesale	14	7.7%	Withheld**	Withheld**
Services*	108	59.0%	17,551**	7,169**

* Includes educational services, health care and social assistance, arts, entertainment and recreation, accommodation and food service, and other services (except public administration)

** Economic figures for several sectors (Wholesale, Arts and entertainment, accommodation, real estate, etc.) are withheld because given the small number of business within Bryan County, the data could be tied to individual companies.

Source: US Census Bureau. 2002 Economic Census.

MAJOR, SPECIAL, OR UNIQUE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Major Employers

Table 3.22 presents the 10 largest employers in Bryan County. Local government agencies (schools and county commission) are by far the largest employers in the county.

**Table 3.22
 Major Employers in Bryan County, 2005**

Name of Firm	Number of Employees	Type of Business
Bryan County Board of Education	797	School
Bryan County Government	460	Local Government
Hobart Corporation	150	Manufacturer
Dillon Transport	60	Trucking
Pembroke Telephone Co.	58	Communications
Express Packaging	50	Manufacturer
Harvey's	45	Grocery
Black Creek Golf Club	27	Golf
Mega Cast	17	Manufacturer
Global Commodities	15	Shipping/Packaging

Source: Bryan County Development Authority, 2005.

Business Parks and Office Spaces

Interstate Centre is a master-planned business park located at the intersection of Interstate 16 between U.S. highways 280 and 80 in the 31308 zip code. Interstate Centre is a mixed-use business park situated on over 200 acres. The business park has frontage on I-16 and access from Hwy. 280, with a planned access directly to Hwy. 80. Office sites in the business park range from 1 to 20 acres and several industrial sites are available. The park recently became home to Orafol, a Germany-based international plastic film manufacturer expected to eventually employ up to 200 workers. Orafol is the first tenant in the Interstate Centre park, with numerous other prospects being actively recruited. Interstate Centre is located within 15 minutes of I-95, within 20 minutes of the Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport and within 22 minutes of the Port of Savannah.

Job Growth Industries

The Coastal Economic Development Region is defined by the Georgia Department of Labor as including the Atlantic Coastal Counties, with Bryan, Bulloch and Long counties included. The industries in the Coastal Economic Development Region expected to see the fastest increases between 2002 and 2012 are service-related, with Warehousing and Storage jobs expected to increase by 4.7 percent or 850 jobs between 2002 and 2012. The Amusement, Gambling and Recreation Industries is expected to increase rapidly with an anticipated 4.2 percent growth (1,050 jobs) over that decade. Other leading industry sectors are expected to be Health Care Services (3.7 percent growth), Repair and Maintenance (3.5 percent), and Administrative and Support Services (3.4 percent). (Georgia Department of Labor- Employers: Industry Outlook).

Declining Industries

The industries in the Coastal Economic Development Region that are expected to witness the fastest annual declines from 2002 to 2012 include the following: Wood Product Manufacturing is expected to lose 57.5 percent of its workforce over the decade (a -8.2 percent annual decline from 2002 to 2012); Paper Manufacturing is projected to lose 45.3 percent of its workforce (a 5.8 percent annual decline); Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing (5.4 percent annual decline); Wholesale Electronics Markets (3.1 percent loss annually); and Electronics and Appliance Stores (2.7 percent annual loss). (Georgia Department of Labor- Employers: Industry Outlook).

AVERAGE WAGES

Wage level data are available from the Georgia Department of Labor for the county level. Table 3.23 presents the average weekly wages by industry for Bryan County and the State of Georgia in 2004. The statewide wages are higher than Bryan County's for every industry sector except retail sales, where Bryan County's average wage is 24% higher than the state average.

Table 3.23
Weekly Wages by Industry, 2004
Bryan County and State of Georgia
(Weekly Wages in Dollars)

Industry	Bryan County 2004		Georgia 2004	
	Avg. Weekly Wage	# of Businesses	Avg. Weekly Wage	# of Businesses
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	\$508	7	\$432	2,294
Mining	n/d	n/d	\$993	224
Construction	\$653	82	\$739	25,217
Manufacturing	\$702	11	\$797	9,952
Transportation and warehousing	\$578	18	\$870	6,227
Wholesale Trade	\$651	21	\$1,085	22,522
Retail Trade	\$577	64	\$464	32,450
Utilities	n/d	n/d	\$1,315	455
Information	\$784	3	\$1,181	4,284
Finance and Insurance	\$614	24	\$1,174	14,490
Real estate/rental/leasing	\$502	24	\$770	10,585
Professional and technical services	\$620	41	\$1,136	28,664
Education Services	n/d	n/d	\$706	2,048
Health care and social assistance	\$455	28	\$723	17,807
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	\$218	6	\$525	2,585
Accommodation and food services	\$188	43	\$270	16,006
Other services (exc. public adm.)	\$356	38	\$498	19,369
Public administration	\$561	37	\$691	8,160
Unclassified	\$443	7	\$765	7,008
Total All Industries	\$501	476	\$728	246,245

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics n/d: Not Disclosable

The industry with the highest average weekly wages in Bryan County was the information sector with an average weekly wage of \$784 in 2004. The average across all industries in 2004 was \$501 for Bryan County and \$728 for the State of Georgia.

Table 3.24 presents the average annual wage per capita across various jurisdictions. Bryan County, the surrounding counties and the State of Georgia are shown. Bryan County had a higher average wage per capita than every county in the area with the exception of urbanized Chatham County. Regionally, wages are somewhat lower than the state average.

Table 3.24
Average Annual Wage per Capita, 2003
Bryan County and Selected Jurisdictions

Jurisdiction	Average Wage Per Capita (Dollars)
Bryan County	\$26,871
Bulloch County	\$19,872
Chatham County	\$30,022
Effingham County	\$23,533
Evans County	\$20,075
Liberty County	\$19,064
Long County	\$16,831
McIntosh County	\$19,873
State of Georgia	\$29,000

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System. Table CA34. December 2003.

SOURCES OF INCOME

This section examines the sources of income for Bryan County residents and compares them to the State. Bryan County residents, in general, receive a lesser percentage of their income from Social Security and Public Assistance than is the norm for the state. Like so many of the statistics for Bryan County, however, when considered by Census Tract, it becomes evident that the economics of the “ends” of Bryan County are very different, with only 75.6% of North Bryan residents earning wage or salary income in 1989, and 76.2% in 1999, as opposed to 86.5% of South Bryan residents earning wages or salaries in 1989 and 84.7% in 1999.

Table 3.25 presents the sources of income for Bryan County households in 1989. Outside of wage or salary income, which 80.9 percent of Bryan County households received (close to the state average), interest, dividends or net rental income and social security income were the two most common sources of income. A fairly high 10.3 percent of total Bryan County households (15.8 percent in North Bryan and 4.5 percent in South Bryan) received public assistance income in 1989, which was above the State average of 8.2 percent.

Table 3.25
Sources of Household Income, 1989
Bryan County, Census Tracts and State of Georgia

Source of Household Income in 1989	Number/Percent of Households in North Bryan	Number/Percent of Households in South Bryan	Number/Percent of Households in Bryan County	Percentage of Total Households, State of Georgia
Retirement income	280/10.9%	290/11.8%	570/11.3%	12.9%
With wage or salary income	1,947/75.6%	2,120/86.5%	4,067/80.9%	80.6%
Interest, dividends, or net rental income	466/18.1%	772/31.5%	1,238/24.6%	31.5%
Self-employment income (includes farm income)	268/10.4%	280/11.4%	548/10.9%	12.5%
Social security income	771/29.9%	406/16.6%	1,177/23.4%	22.9%
Public assistance income	406/15.8%	111/4.5%	517/10.3%	8.2%
Other Income	343/13.3%	269/11.0%	612/12.2%	10.3%
Total households	2,574	2,450	5,024	--

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990 Census; Summary Tape File 3; Tables P90-P96.

Table 3.34 presents the sources of income for households in Bryan County in 1999. Households receiving self-employment income dropped slightly, from 10.9 percent in 1989 to 9.8 percent in 1999.

Table 3.26
Sources of Household Income, 1999
Bryan County, Census Tracts and State of Georgia

Source of Household Income in 1999	Number/Percent of Households in North Bryan	Number/Percent of Households in South Bryan	Number/Percent of Households in Bryan County	Percentage of Total Households, State of Georgia
With earnings	2,460/78.3%	4,309/87.1%	6,769/83.7%	83.8%
With wage or salary income	2,395/76.2%	4,189/84.7%	6,584/81.4%	81.3%
With self-employment income	243/7.7%	549/11.1%	792/9.8%	10.9%
Interest, dividends, or net rental income	516/16.4%	1,731/35.0%	2,247/27.8%	28.8%
Social security income	812/25.6%	787/15.9%	1,599/19.8%	21.9%
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	198/6.3%	93/1.9%	291/3.6%	4.5%
Public assistance income	71/2.3%	74/1.5%	145/1.8%	2.9%
Retirement income	494/15.7%	842/17.0%	1,336/16.5%	14.4%
Total households	3,141	4,948	8,089	--

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census; Summary File 3; Tables P56-P65.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

Development Authority

Bryan County recently reconstituted a county-wide development authority, having experimented with two development authorities (one for each inhabited Census Tract) from 1998 until 2005. The new Bryan County Development Authority subsumes the personnel and controls the assets of both of the old authorities, most particularly the Interstate Centre industrial park and other industrial properties scattered around the county. The Bryan County Development Authority is funded by a regular millage commitment from the Board of Commissioners.

Bryan County Chamber of Commerce

The Bryan County Chamber of Commerce works to promote economic development in Bryan County and its cities by supporting an aggressive and sophisticated business environment and makes a positive contribution to the greater community. The Chamber serves as a resource for information, a voice for business, and a link to government-related issues. Membership in the Chamber is the norm for businesses in the Richmond Hill/South Bryan area, but is rare for businesses in the Pembroke/North Bryan area.

Georgia Department of Economic Development

The Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) is responsible for administering many of the state incentive programs as well as providing technical assistance to local governments, development authorities, and private for-profit entities in the area of economic development. GDEcD's primary purpose is to assist potential businesses considering locating in the State of Georgia in identifying an optimal location for their operational needs. GDEcD also assists the movie industry in locating appropriate movie sets throughout the State of Georgia. The identification of international markets for the export of Georgia goods and services is another duty of GDEcD.

The Redevelopment Fund Project, Employment Incentive Program, and the Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund are a few of the resources available through the department. GDEcD is a statewide agency, therefore its programs are not tailored directly toward Bryan County or any other community, although Bryan County has benefited greatly from its efforts. GDEcD will work with local governments and chambers of commerce to assist businesses when dealing with specific localities.

Infrastructure and Amenities

Bryan County is in close proximity to the Port of Savannah and the Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport, as well as the Statesboro Airport. The county is crossed by tracks of the CSX line (north to south) and the Georgia Central line (east to west), as well as by I-95 (north-south) and I-16 (east west), as well as US-17 and US-280. Bryan County's proximity to Savannah has already resulted in rapid population growth and an influx of wealth in the South Bryan area, and a similar expansion is starting to take place in the North Bryan area. The county is also in the process of enhancing its water and sewer infrastructure for future growth.

Georgia Power Company

Georgia Power operates a full-service Community and Economic Development organization that serves the entire State of Georgia. There are 130 local offices Statewide with a primary concern of job development. The purpose of Georgia Power's economic development program is to facilitate the expansion of new and existing companies in Georgia. Experienced leadership, leading edge technology, and targeted research and management tools have all led to the success of the community and economic efforts.

Georgia Business Expansion Support Act

In 1994, the State passed legislation for tax credits against State income taxes to encourage economic development in Georgia. Some of the programs are targeted to specific industry groups, including manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, processing, telecommunications, tourism, or research and development, but does not include retail business.

Job tax credits and investment tax credits are available to the targeted industry groups at different levels, depending on the relative need of the area for economic development. Some credits are available to specific industry groups, while others apply to all employers. Recently, North Bryan County (Census Tract 9201) was designated a "Tier 1" community, gaining access to numerous development incentive tools through the state.

Tax Increment Financing

A Tax Allocation District can be established to enhance the value of a substantial portion of real property in a given district. (For a simplified overview of tax allocation districts, see summary in the box below). It is the unit of geography for tax increment financing. Within a Tax Allocation District, a redevelopment agency can make improvements or construct redevelopment projects that will create a positive climate for additional development. As development occurs and property values rise, the additional increment of property taxes is used to finance the improvements or redevelopment projects that are installed or constructed for purposes of enhancing property value in the Tax Allocation District.

HOW TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (A TAX ALLOCATION DISTRICT) WORKS UNDER GEORGIA LAW

- The local government designates a redevelopment agency and prepares a redevelopment plan. That plan designates a Redevelopment Area and indicates the improvements and redevelopment projects needed to revitalize the Redevelopment Area.
- A Tax Allocation District is defined and named. It may be all or only a part of the Redevelopment Area.
- At the appropriate time, the local Governing Body holds a special election to get voter approval to establish the Tax Allocation District.
- The Tax Increment Base for real property within the Tax Allocation District is determined and, in essence, "frozen."
- The redevelopment agency installs improvements or constructs redevelopment projects that will revitalize the area. It finances the improvements or projects by issuing Tax Allocation Bonds. The agency pledges Positive Tax Increments to pay for the long-term bonds.

- If the redevelopment plan works as intended, new projects will locate in the Tax Allocation District and will gradually produce Positive Tax Increments. The Positive Tax Increments are placed in a special Tax Allocation Fund and used to retire the debt (Tax Allocation Bonds).
- When Positive Tax Increments aggregate to the point that all debt is retired, the Tax Allocation District is terminated and all property taxes thereafter are returned to the taxing district (local government) as they would have without establishing the Tax Allocation District.

Once a Tax Allocation District is created and given a formal name, the redevelopment agency must apply in writing to the state revenue commissioner for a determination of the Tax Allocation Increment Base of the Tax Allocation District (O.C.G.A. 36-44-10). The tax increment base is, in essence, frozen and cannot be increased until the Tax Allocation District is terminated (O.C.G.A. 36-44-15). Positive Tax Allocation Increments of a Tax Allocation District are allocated to the political subdivision which created the district (O.C.G.A. 36-44-11) and placed into a special fund for the Tax Allocation District (O.C.G.A. 36-44-12).

The money in the special fund can only be used to pay redevelopment costs of the district or to satisfy claims of holders of Tax Allocation Bonds issued for the district. All or part of the funds is irrevocably pledged to the payment of the Tax Allocation Bonds. If there is any money remaining after meeting these pledges, it is divided proportionally among the taxing jurisdictions that contributed to the fund. Tax Allocation Districts have no sunset provision, and they are not ended until the Governing Body by resolution terminates them. No district can be terminated until all redevelopment costs have been paid (O.C.G.A. 36-44-12). Property within a Tax Allocation District cannot exceed ten percent (10 percent) of total current taxable value of all taxable property within a political subdivision (O.C.G.A. 36-44-17).

EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

A key to successful economic conditions is having programs and training in place to create a strong local workforce. Bryan County is close to numerous institutions of higher education: Georgia Southern University, Armstrong-Atlantic State University, Savannah State University, the Savannah College of Art and Design, Ogeechee Technical Institute, and Savannah Technical Institute, to name some. These institutions should be viewed as community resources and improved relations with some or all should be encouraged.

Quick Start

Quick Start is a training program providing high quality training at no cost to qualifying new or expanding businesses in Georgia. Training is available for all types of companies including manufacturing operations, warehousing and distribution centers, national and international corporate headquarters, information technologies and customer service operations.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Rail Transportation

Bryan County has good transportation access via railroads. There are two major rail lines located in the County: CSX and Georgia Central(Norfolk Southern System). Both are primarily

freight lines, although the CSX lines through South Bryan do accommodate passenger trains of Amtrak.

Road Transportation

Interstate 95 cross South Bryan County through the City of Richmond Hill, providing convenient access to ports and markets in metro Savannah, Jacksonville and South Carolina. North Bryan County is bisected east-to-west by I-16, which provides quick access to both the I-95 corridor and the City of Savannah. I-16 is also the main east-west rout between Savannah and Columbus and intersects I-75 in Macon.

Air Transportation

Bryan County is in close proximity to the Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport, which is located eight miles west of Savannah downtown. Savannah-Hilton Head serves numerous airlines with connections to major hub airports including Atlanta, Jacksonville and Raleigh-Durham.

Water and Sewer

Bryan County is currently in the process of completing a water-sewer master plan to determine the infrastructure needs and costs to be undertaken over the next several years. The county has contracted with the Savannah engineering firm of Hussey, Gay, Bell and DeYoung to perform the study, which should provide the necessary data for the county to prudently plan and invest in its water and sewer system. The completion of this study should lead to amendments to the County's Short Term Work Program (STWP) and be reflected in its' Capital Budgeting process.

Bryan County has been under a cap on permitted withdrawals from the Floridan Aquifer (the primary source of drinking water in Bryan County) since 1997, and state regulatory plans as currently available indicate that this cap will remain in place for the foreseeable future, making water a limiting factor in future development. This limited availability of drinking water, and the demands of the sensitive marsh and wetlands environment so prevalent in Bryan County, make sound management of the community water and sewer resources essential. (See Community Facilities Element for system locations and capacities)

Industrial Parks

North Bryan County has two industrial parks: the Interstate Centre at I-16 and Hwy. 280 in Ellabell/Black Creek, and the J. Dixie Harn Industrial Park within the city limits of Pembroke. The J. Dixie Harn Industrial Park has approximately 40 percent occupancy, with a vacant industrial facility (currently occupied by the county Planning and Zoning Department) and numerous vacant lots. The Interstate Centre Industrial Park is still under development and to date has a single occupant, the German plastic film manufacturing company Orafol.

New I-95 Interchange

Bryan County and Terapoint, the land development branch of the Rayonier Corporation, have been working with the U.S. Department of Transportation to conduct an Interchange Feasibility Study to look at opening the Belfast Siding Road intersection with the interstate. Terapoint, which owns virtually all of the property surrounding the intersection, has been an active partner

in this effort, providing the majority of the funding for the study. The new interchange would open the remaining undeveloped (but developable) land in South Bryan County to development as both commercial and residential property, and would provide residents of South Bryan with an alternative access to I-95 – an important consideration to the many who commute to work in Savannah and now must traverse the City of Richmond Hill each morning and evening on the sole access corridor - Hwy. 144.

Small Businesses

Small businesses are the backbone of Bryan County's economy. As shown in table 3.30 above, none of the employers in Bryan County qualify as "large" businesses. Bryan County is not unusual in this: 85 percent of the business enterprises in the U.S. are small businesses. Small business issues are of great importance.

ISSUES AND LIMITATIONS

Competition from the Neighboring Counties

Bryan County's potential for economic development is based largely on its location; other communities nearby share similar or even superior, advantages of location. Competing for potential commercial and industrial clients will be Liberty County, Effingham County, Bulloch County, and, of course, the established economic force of Chatham County.

Workforce Issues

In Bryan County, a higher-skilled workforce is not as available as in the State as a whole. Lacking a higher skilled workforce typically leads new businesses in those sectors to choose other locations with workforces they consider more suitable for their business. Bryan County needs to continue to pursue efforts to create a highly skilled workforce that will help bring new, high paying, occupations to the area.

SELECTED REFERENCES

Bryan County Comprehensive Plan
Georgia County Guide
Georgia Department of Labor
Bryan County-Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce Website
Bryan County Homepage
Bryan County School System
U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis
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CHAPTER 4 NATURAL, HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

NATURAL RESOURCES

Bryan County is situated within the Coastal Plain physiographic province. Terrain is nearly level, and elevations range from zero (sea level) to about 150 feet. Much of the eastern area of the county is marshland, in a band parallel to the coast and extending inland along major rivers and streams. Tidal waterways provide access to the Atlantic Ocean. Ossabaw Island, a part of Chatham County, is the barrier island separating Bryan County from the Atlantic Ocean.

As various maps attached to this community assessment appendix indicate, Bryan County is an area of varied natural resources, with a variety of differing ecosystems, both coastal and inland, including coastal salt-water marshes, protected river corridors, extensive inland wetlands areas, pine forests and farmland.

Water Supply Watersheds and Protected River Corridors

Bryan County encompasses no water supply watersheds or rivers or water bodies supplying potable water. The county is bordered by the Ogeechee and Canoochee rivers in North Bryan County, and by the Ogeechee River and Medway/Jerico River in South Bryan County (this latter consisting of several conjoined and meandering creeks and changing names every few miles). However, while both the Ogeechee River and the Canoochee River are designated as protected rivers by the Department of Natural Resources (see natural resources maps of North and South Bryan County attached to this appendix), neither they, nor the Medway/Jerico stream network carry sufficient water to make them viable water supply streams, and none of them are used as such.

Groundwater

With the surface water streams in Bryan County unsuitable to providing potable water, both because of low and variable flow rates and because of water quality issues, Bryan County residents rely exclusively on groundwater wells for residential, commercial and industrial needs. Bryan County lies above the Floridan Aquifer, which is the most productive aquifer available in the region and is the source of potable water for all major public and private well-water systems in the county.

Additional permitted withdrawals from the Upper Floridan Aquifer (wells with a capacity of 100,000 gpd or greater) have been capped in Bryan County since 1997, due to a years-long state study of salt-water infiltration in the Hilton Head area. While this has not slowed or affected the establishment of new, smaller water systems (100,000 gpd or less), it has limited the expansion of the municipal water systems of Pembroke and Richmond Hill, both of which are at or near permitted capacity.

A state water plan for management of the Upper Floridan Aquifer is due to be approved in the near future, but indications are that the withdrawal cap for Bryan County will remain in place, forcing new development to seek withdrawal capacity from other sources, or else to develop alternative water sources (e.g., surface water treatment, desalinization, and/or withdrawals from less-productive or more saline aquifers such as the Myocene and Lower Floridan, etc.).

Bryan County does not encompass recharge areas of the Floridan Aquifer, the primary water source for the residents of the county, or of the Myocene Aquifer; however, there are isolated areas of Groveland, Ellabell and extreme South Bryan County that encompass recharge zones of the Claiborne Aquifer System, a low-yield, surficial aquifer used primarily for irrigation wells, although some residential wells do tap this aquifer for potable water (see Natural Resources Maps of North and South Bryan County).

Wetlands

Wetlands are shown on the natural resources maps attached to this appendix. Bryan County has extensive wetland areas (both wetlands under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and “isolated” wetlands under local jurisdiction). See the Natural Resources Maps of North and South Bryan County attached to this appendix. Jurisdictional wetlands are protected by state and federal regulations; however, isolated wetlands, while valuable for water flow and water quality control, are largely unprotected and are regarded as “developable,” although developers are encouraged to preserve them where possible.

In late 2005, Bryan County drafted aquifer recharge area, river corridor and wetlands protection ordinances that met or exceeded state requirements for these rules. The three proposed ordinances were reviewed and approved by the Department of Natural Resources as suitable for adoption. However, in December of 2005, the state Department of Natural Resources issued an “indefinite extension” for the adoption of these ordinances and they were tabled without formal adoption.

Flood Plains

As would be expected with major rivers and numerous wetlands, Bryan County has significant flood plain areas. Rivers and streams in Bryan County are wide and sluggish, and bays and swamps are common. Flood plains are mapped in the 2010 comprehensive plan. Low-lying coastal areas and river/stream floodplains have high potential for flooding.

Bryan County has participated in the National Flood Insurance Program since November 16, 1983, and its most recent flood insurance rate maps are dated October 16, 1992. The cities of Pembroke and Richmond Hill are also participating in the National Flood Insurance Program (Source: Coastal Georgia Regional Plan, Table nr 2, p. 3-24).

Barrier Island Complexes

The coastal counties of Georgia contain many marine terraces, several of which contain low, elongated ridges that parallel the coastline. The ridges formed as barrier islands and back-barrier complexes.

Soils

In Bryan County, the primary influences of soil characteristics are the flat topography, warm moist climate, and marine origin of parent materials. The characteristics of the soils may pose constraints on potential land uses. Soils and their characteristics are shown and described in the *Soil Survey of Bryan and Chatham Counties*, 1979. The 2010 comprehensive plan identified several soil types and their characteristics which are not reiterated here.

Areas of Bryan County above 70 feet mean sea level are moderately well drained sandy soils and pose only slight to moderate limitations for development. Seasonally wet soils exist along isolated ridges that are between 15 and 30 feet above sea level; these are found primarily in the northeastern part of Bryan County near Eldora. Areas of wet soils exist in many parts of Bryan County, some of which are occasionally flooded, while others are frequently flooded.

One of the most important considerations with regard to soil suitability is their potential use for septic tanks and drainfields. Only a few areas of soils in the north end of the county have few (slight to moderate) limitations for septic tanks. In the south portion of the county, like the majority of the north section, soils have moderate to severe or severe limitations on septic tank use.

Prime Farmlands

The 2010 comprehensive plan for Bryan County mapped the best farmlands in Bryan County, and such information can also be discerned from the soil survey described above. Lands previously found to be prime farmlands are located mainly in the north portion of the county surrounding Pembroke. According to the 2010 comprehensive plan, Bryan County had 21,685 acres classified as prime farmland, all within the northern portion of the county. Only a few, small, scattered soil units near Richmond Hill were considered to be prime farmlands.

Forest Land

As of 1996, Bryan County had 221,200 acres of timberland, constituting 78.2 percent of all land (Source: Coastal Georgia Regional Plan, Table nr 4, p. 3-39). Warm, humid climate and high water table promote rapid tree growth in Bryan County. Principal commercial tree species on the better drained soils on ridges include slash pine, loblolly pine, longleaf pine, red oak and hickory. In depressions, drainage ways, bays and swamps, the principal commercial species include cypress, blackgum, sweetgum, water oak, willow oak, sycamore, ash, and tupelo-gum.

Although forestry is an important natural resource, expectations that Bryan County will view forested lands as a resource are minimal, given that: (1) many of the forested acres are within the Fort Stewart Military Reservation; (2) because of substantial environmental limitations such as wetlands, timber lands can be some of the county's better development opportunities; (3) the county needs to develop its economic base given the large non-taxable military reservation; and (4) private timber companies are beginning to divest themselves of large land holdings for forestry use in favor of real estate development.

Plant and Animal Habitats

Rare species of plants and animals known to exist or have existed in Bryan County include: Georgia plume, striped newt, yellow-crowned night-heron, tidewater silverside, eastern mudminnow, golden topminnow, silky camellia, hooded pitcherplant, and the striped mud turtle (2010 comprehensive plan).

Significant areas that have been identified by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources as significant natural areas include: Belle Island, Jones Hammock, Holy Hill Bluff, Clifton Bluff, Ogeechee River, Canoochee River, and Black Creek (2010 comprehensive plan).

Richmond Hill Wildlife Management Area

The Richmond Hill Wildlife Management Area is located in Bryan, Liberty, and McIntosh Counties. It is a heritage trust preserve established under the State's Heritage Trust Act of 1975 and also a state Wildlife Management Area (Source: Coastal Georgia Regional Plan, p. 3-31).

Scenic Views and Sites

Some of the most important scenic views in Bryan County are found along State Route 144 and State Route 144 Spur. Views across old rice fields on both sides of the Ogeechee River are available from SR 144 and the several dead-end roads in the Strathy Hall and Hardwicke areas. Views of water, with rice fields and marsh as background, exists in Fort McAllister State Park. Roads that parallel or extend to the edge of the salt marshes afford outstanding scenic views over rivers, creeks, and estuaries. Examples are at Kilkenny Bluff, Smith Road, Jones Swamp Road, Belfast, and any roads approaching the Jerico and Tivoli Rivers or Mount Hope Creek, where sunsets may be viewed across the salt marshes and inter-tidal creeks (Source: 2010 comprehensive plan).

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Narrative History

In 1793, Bryan County was formally established. The county was named for Jonathan Bryan, who was an aide and associated of General James Oglethorpe, the founder of the Savannah colony.

In the year 1999, the Bryan County Board of Commissioners contracted with noted historian Buddy Sullivan to write a comprehensive history of Bryan County. In 2000, that history was published under the title, "From Beautiful Zion to Red Bird Creek: A History of Bryan County." This is the definitive study of Bryan County's history, and it is a work of careful scholarship that has been praised by local history experts as highly accurate. The work encompasses the history of Bryan County from the native American occupation of the region roughly 5,000 years ago, to the earliest Spanish influence in the 16th Century, through the Colonial Era, the Plantation Era, the American Civil War and the tumultuous Reconstruction, through the 20th Century and into the modern era.

Native Americans from pre-Columbian Guale Indians on the coast to the late Colonial era, traveled through Bryan County on their way to the fisheries of the Atlantic, perhaps establishing fishing and oyster-digging camps in the eastern-most areas of the county. But there is little preserved evidence of their occupation.

In early Colonial America, attempts were made to establish settlements in the central portion of Bryan County (today's Fort Stewart Military Reservation), but those ended in failure due to disease and a lack of economic viability.

Colonial development of Bryan County was proposed in the Cape Hardwicke area of South Bryan County, where Jonathan Bryan and James Oglethorpe mapped out a new capital for Georgia, but the city was never built, and actual residency of Bryan County was limited to farms and plantations of varying size until the 19th Century.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, the introduction of rice production made the coastal marshes of South Bryan County among the most productive in the region, and rice plantations were established across South Bryan County and portions of the Fort Stewart Military Reservation, but little evidence remains of those plantations today, other than the occasional ditch, berm or pond.

Later, in the 19th Century, the area saw the spread of small farms across central and North Bryan County for the production of “naval stores,” including turpentine, timber, cattle, and some market produce. The production and transportation of naval stores led to the establishment of the Central of Georgia Railroad, and in the early 20th Century, led to the founding of the City of Pembroke as a market station on that line.

During the American Civil War, Bryan County’s Fort McAllister, an earth-works fort on the easternmost Ogeechee River, was the scene of several minor naval skirmishes, and one land battle, when an overwhelming land force (a detachment from General W.T. Sherman’s Army) captured the post. Occupation of Bryan County by Union troops was largely uneventful, although tales of guerilla action in the vicinity of the old County Seat of Clyde (now in the midst of Fort Stewart) are still recalled.

The wax and wane of railroads, small agriculture and national economics ruled the 20th Century history of Bryan County. In 1925, Industrialist Henry Ford purchased over 75,000 acres of South Bryan County as a winter home and agricultural research station. Over the next thirty years, Ford left an indelible mark in the character of South Bryan County – even to lending the name of his Bryan County homesite – “Richmond Hill” – to the town of Ways Station and (colloquially, at least) to all of South Bryan County.

A gradual growth of prosperity in Bryan County through the early 1900s peaked in the early pre-World War II era. This was followed by a decades-long decline, as the middle third of Bryan County was forcibly depopulated by the creation of Fort Stewart in 1939. This event saw the relocation of over half of the county’s population of that time, the destruction of the then-county seat of Clyde, and the much-contended decision to establish a new county seat in Pembroke in North Bryan County.

In the decades after World War II, Bryan County saw the closure of the Ford agricultural research facility in South Bryan County, the slipping of the naval stores industry, and the gradual loss of population as the increasingly mobile citizens moved away.

The 1970s saw little change in Bryan County, but in the 1980s and early 1990s, a series of dynamic leaders and the re-discovery of South Bryan County as a “country home/winter home” location meant a return of population. The latter half of the 1990s and the first years of the 21st century have seen major cultural, economic and organizational changes in Bryan County, with the expected controversy and contention that such changes will always entail.

Historic and Cultural Resources

While Bryan County has been the scene of much history from prehistoric times to modern times, as the attached maps indicate, there are few actual historic sites.

Bryan County has some sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places (Source: Coastal Georgia Regional Plan, p. 4-4):

- (1) Bryan County Courthouse
- (2) Fort McAllister
- (3) Glen Echo
- (4) Kilkenny
- (5) Richmond Hill Plantation
- (6) Seven Mile Bend
- (7) Strathy Hall
- (8) Old Fort Argyle Site

In addition, the Downtown Pembroke Historic District was established to recognize a typical “railroad community” of 20th Century Georgia. Numerous privately owned properties are identified by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources as having architectural, historic or archaeological significance, including: Keller-Jessup House, Williams-Meeks House, Bryan Neck Road House, Baker-Weed House, Bryan Neck Presbyterian Church, Massey House, Richmond Hill (the “Ford Mansion”), St. Ann’s Catholic Church, Ford Cottage, and Calvary Baptist Church.

Fort Argyle

This fort was built under orders of James Oglethorpe and was named for his friend, the Duke of Argyle. This fort was located on the main inland road to Spanish Florida near the confluence of the Ogeechee and Canoochee Rivers. It was established to protect Savannah from overland attack from the south. The site of the original fort is decayed. Though it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it is not accessible to the public since it lies within the Fort Stewart Military Reservation.

Fort McAllister

This fort was established in 1861 and was a significant defense post in the Civil War. It is now a state park covering 2.7 square miles.

Other Historic and Archaeological Sites

A 1982 inventory of Bryan County found 33 historic resources (Source: Coastal Georgia Regional Plan, Table hr 1, p. 4-2). The 2010 comprehensive plan also provides an inventory of historic and archaeological sites in Bryan County. Such resources include former (ghost) town sites such as Clyde (within the boundaries of the Fort Stewart Military Reservation), several historic sites, and General W.T. Sherman’s March-to-the-sea route. Many of the archaeological sites are connected with the Yamacraw and Guale Native American Indian tribes, as well as early European colonization.

Cultural Resources

Bryan County has little that might be described as cultural resources. There are no stages, other than an outdoor performance platform recently added at the Richmond Hill J.F. Gregory Park in the incorporated city. There are no galleries or studios, other than in private homes. There are no orchestras, although both Richmond Hill High School and Bryan County High School have

bands. There are no theaters in Bryan County, or organizations to support establishment of a theater.

With regard to museums, in Bryan County there are two: one is the Ford Kindergarten Building in Richmond Hill, and the other is a small museum within Fort McAllister State Park. In addition, there is the Fort Stewart Military Museum in Liberty County (Source: Coastal Georgia Regional Plan, p. 5-37).

The county-wide Opinion Poll circulated in late 2004 indicated some interest in the establishment of local cultural elements – stages, arts centers, galleries, performance spaces, etc.

CHAPTER 5 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Bryan County's chief issue and characteristic with regard to the provision of community facilities and services is its attempt to address the "two-counties" problem posed by the geographical division of the county by the Fort Stewart Military Reservation. As has been discussed elsewhere, it is impossible to traverse Fort Stewart within Bryan County. There is no direct connection between the South Bryan County/Richmond Hill area and the North Bryan County/Pembroke/Ellabell area. The most obvious result of this division is the need for Bryan County to establish duplicate community services for every service provided.

As the attached facilities maps indicate, Bryan County provides all essential services to its residents within a reasonable range of most.

ADMINISTRATIVE FACILITIES

Bryan County's governmental facilities are mostly centered in the incorporated cities of Pembroke and Richmond Hill. Courthouse facilities, offices of the tax commissioner and tax assessor, planning offices, the various courts, and other services are located in the Bryan County Courthouse in the county seat of Pembroke, in the Courthouse Annex in the City of Richmond Hill, and in the Jack Kingston Building adjacent to J.F. Gregory Park in Richmond Hill.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The Bryan County Public Safety Facility, which includes the county jail, is located in Pembroke near the county courthouse. Construction plans for a new Bryan County Sheriff's Complex on land west of US Highway 17, three miles outside of Richmond Hill, are under development, and construction is expected to begin within the next year. Together, the facilities provide cells for prisoners and administrative offices for the Bryan County Sheriff's Department.

Emergency Services (EMS and fire) are distributed in combined service stations throughout the county. There are three fire/EMS stations in the unincorporated area of North Bryan County (Bacontown, Mill Creek and Blitchton) as well as the City of Pembroke's fire station on North College Street. There are three fire/EMS stations in the unincorporated area of South Bryan County (Kilkenny, Daniel Siding and Belfast Keller) as well as the City of Richmond Hill's fire station on Timber Trail. Plans call for an additional/upgraded station in South Bryan prior to the development of the Genesis Point planned unit development at Oak Level Road.

WATER AND SEWER

Bryan County does not currently provide water or sewer services to properties in unincorporated areas. Under the current Service Delivery agreement, the cities of Pembroke and Richmond Hill have water and sewer service areas that extend beyond their city limits to some degree. However, the majority of the unincorporated area is served either by small community water and/or wastewater systems, or by individual on-site systems. A major water/sewer master planning study has been contracted by the Bryan County Board of Commissioners and is expected to be completed in late 2006, which is expected to provide recommendations for the establishment of a county-wide water and sewer network to serve the unincorporated areas.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Bryan County has prepared and adopted, and is implementing, a Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan. Within Bryan County, solid waste facilities include the Mill Creek sanitary landfill (see community facilities map, North Bryan County), an 18-acre site with no room for expansion. Bryan County also owns and previously operated a 5-acre site for the disposal of bulky waste in south Bryan County, off SR 144 Spur.

Currently, solid waste management is provided by contract with a private provider, Republic Waste Services. While Bryan County and the cities of Pembroke and Richmond Hill all contract with Republic Waste Services, each jurisdiction contracts separately with the contractor, and the level of services provided varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

Bryan County contracts for a combined once-a-week solid waste curbside collection of undifferentiated waste, with recycling offered at drop-off locations. The City of Pembroke also contracts for curbside collection, but operates a city-run curbside collection of recyclable materials and disposes of the recyclables itself. The City of Richmond Hill contracts with Republic for curbside collection of both waste and recyclables.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Bryan County does not own or operate any stormwater management facilities in unincorporated Bryan County.

LIBRARIES

Bryan County has two public libraries – one in Pembroke and one in Richmond Hill – both of which are operated under the Statesboro Regional Library System, with some local control. Both libraries were constructed in 1986.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Bryan County, with just over 5,000 students in its K-12 school system, maintains essentially two school systems – one for North Bryan County/Pembroke and one for South Bryan County/Richmond Hill.

In North Bryan County, there are facilities across the county: there is an alternative educational facility at Black Creek Church Road and U.S. Hwy. 280 in Ellabell; there is Lanier Primary School on U.S. Hwy. 280 just east of State Route 204; there is a Pre-K facility on Bacontown Road in Pembroke; Bryan County Elementary School is located on Ash Branch Church Road in Pembroke; and Bryan County Middle/High School is a combined 6-12 facility located on State Route. 119 at the eastern edge of Pembroke.

In South Bryan County, the educational facilities are concentrated on what is essentially a single campus in the center of Richmond Hill, between Harris Trail Road and State Route 144. The schools are Richmond Hill Primary School, Richmond Hill Elementary School, George Washington Carver Upper Elementary School, Richmond Hill Middle School and Richmond Hill High School. The middle and high schools are accessed from Harris Trail Road and are somewhat removed from the lower-grade institutions, which are clustered together off of State Route 144. Current plans call for the establishment of a new school near the junction of State Route 144 Spur and State Route 144.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Bryan County operates two large recreational facilities at Hendrix Park in Ellabell/Black Creek (approximately 103 acres, 20 developed as of 1991) and Richmond Hill Park located at Timber Trail in the City of Richmond Hill (55 acres, approximately 20 developed as of 1991). Each facility has multiple baseball/softball fields, football fields, tennis courts, and gymnasiums for use in basketball, roller skating, dancing and as public gathering locations (including their use as polling places). Public boat landings are also provided (see Community Facilities maps for north and south Bryan County).

An additional recreational park, designated the DeVaul Henderson Recreation Park, is being developed at the intersection of State Route 144 and State Route 144 Spur and will include, in addition to the amenities noted above, extensive passive recreational elements like walking trails and open fields.

In addition to the large centralized parks, Bryan County operates numerous “mini-parks” scattered throughout the county. The county also requires new development to include a recreational element as a percentage of overall acreage, with both active and passive recreational elements required. These smaller parks are generally maintained by community homeowners associations (where they exist) or by neighboring property owners.

Also as part of its recreational facilities, Bryan County operates two Senior Citizens Centers – one in the City of Pembroke and one in the City of Richmond Hill – with educational, social and instructional services for the elderly. The Senior Citizens Centers also serve as hubs for the Recreation Department’s intra-county van service.

Bryan County’s residents can access three National Parks and Monuments in the Coastal Georgia Region: Cumberland Island National Seashore in Camden County (19.8 square miles), Fort Frederica National Monument in Glynn County (0.3 square miles), and Fort Pulaski National Monument in Chatham County (8.4 square miles) (Source: Coastal Georgia Regional Plan, p. 5-28). Bryan County itself is the location of Fort McAllister State Park and the Richmond Hill Wildlife Management Area. The Richmond Hill Wildlife Management area covers 31.9 square miles in Bryan and Chatham Counties (Source: Coastal Georgia Regional Plan, p. 7-20).

CONSISTENCY WITH SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGY

At this time of drafting the community assessment, there are no known or anticipated conflicts between the comprehensive plan of Bryan County and the adopted Service Delivery Strategy Agreement. It is anticipated that the primary issues regarding service delivery to be confronted in the community agenda include the establishment or reconsideration of urban service areas for the Cities of Pembroke and Richmond Hill.

CHAPTER 6 TRANSPORTATION

OVERVIEW

The Transportation Element provides an inventory and assessment of existing conditions and trends covering several modes of transportation. In addition, it describes characteristics of the roadway network. This information will assist the county in determining transportation needs to support future population and employment growth.

An accessible, efficient and safe transportation network is a vital component of the county's general well being. The transportation network enables residents to travel to work, receive services, obtain goods, and interact with others. Transportation is especially crucial in the area of economic development where access to transportation facilities plays a major role in a prospective industry's decision to locate in a particular area. An assessment of the existing transportation network throughout Bryan County is provided to help determine future transportation needs. The examination of travel characteristics provided in this chapter offers insight and solutions in terms of addressing Bryan County's transportation issues and needs.

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS (MPOs)

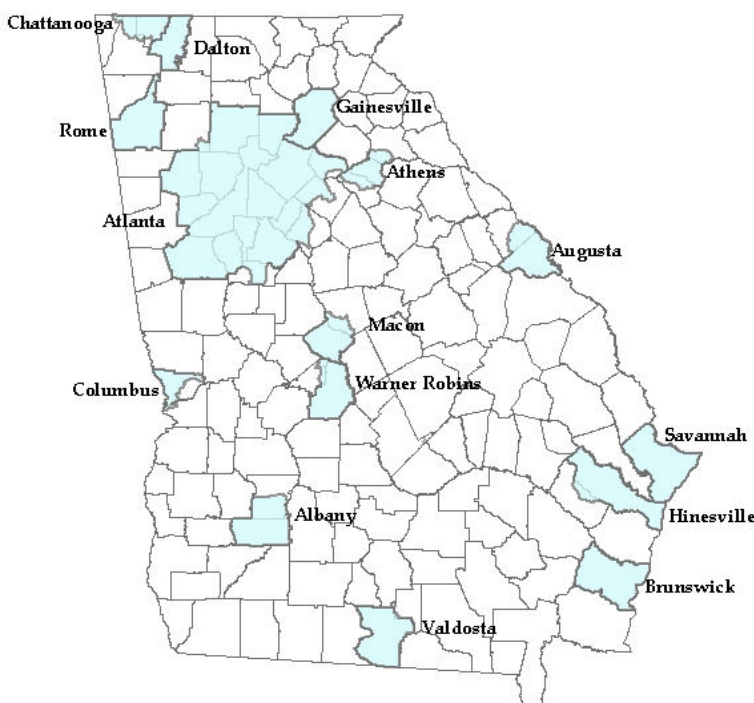


Figure 6.1
MPO Boundaries in Georgia

Bryan County is not currently within a Metropolitan Planning Organization boundary. However, that is likely to change relatively soon, given that Bryan County is sandwiched in between the newer Hinesville (Liberty County) MPO and the older Savannah (Chatham County) MPO. Upon

inclusion within an MPO, Bryan County's responsibilities for transportation planning will increase dramatically.

MAJOR ROAD SYSTEM

Bryan County's road system consists of interstate highways, U.S. and State highways, county roads, and city streets. The division of responsibility for public road mileage is shown in Table 6.1 below.

**Table 6.1
 Mileage of Public Roads
 Bryan County, 2002**

Type of Road	2002	% of Total
Interstate	20.79	2.7%
State Routes	117.04	15.0%
County Roads	603.90	77.3%
City Streets	39.06	5.0%
Total Mileage	780.79	100%

Source: The 2002 Georgia County Guide

Overview of the Major Road System – North Bryan County

The major road system in north Bryan County is summarized as follows:

- Interstate 16 cuts across north Bryan County, connecting Bullock County and Effingham County
- U.S. Highway 280 (SR 30) which runs from Evans County to Interstate 16 (SR 30 only continues north of I-16 to U.S. Highway 80)
- U.S. Highway 80 (SR 26), which runs from Bulloch County to Effingham County.
- SR 119 which runs from Liberty County north through the Fort Stewart Military Reservation through the City of Pembroke and then north to the Bulloch County line)
- SR 67 which runs from Bulloch County south through Pembroke, to the Fort Stewart Military Reservation
- SR 204 which runs from U.S. Highway 280/SR 30 to the Chatham County line.

In addition to these federal and state highways, some county roads are classified as collectors in north Bryan County. These include:

- William Edwards Road
- Black Creek Church Road
- Eldora Road
- I.G. Lanier Road
- Stubbs Road
- Unnamed Road
- Olive Branch Road
- Groveland Nevils Road

The functional classifications of major roads in north Bryan County are provided in Table 4.2. All roads not shown are local (county roads or city streets).

Interstates

This type of road is defined as significant highways that feature limited access and continuous, high-speed movements for a wide variety of traffic types. This type of roadway is intended to transport people and goods over long distances at high speeds with a minimum amount of friction from entering and exiting traffic.

Arterials

These roads connect activity centers and carry large volumes of traffic at moderate speeds. These roadways typically have a certain degree of access control.

Collectors

These roads usually connect residential areas to activity centers. Their purpose is to collect traffic from streets in residential and commercial areas and distribute it to the arterial system.

Local Streets

These roads feed the collector system from low volume residential and commercial areas.

The functional classifications of major roads in north Bryan County are provided in Table 6.2. All roads not shown are local (county roads or city streets).

**Table 6.2
 Functional Classification, Major Roads
 North Bryan County**

Highway Designation or Road Name	Segment (From/To)	Functional Classification
Interstate 16	Bulloch County to Effingham County	Rural Interstate Principal Arterial
US 280/SR 30	Evans County to I-16	Rural Principal Arterial
SR 30	I-16 to SR 26	Rural Minor Arterial
US 80/SR 26	Bulloch County to Effingham County	Rural Minor Arterial
SR 119	Liberty County to Bulloch County	Rural Minor Arterial
SR 67	Ft. Stewart to US 280/SR 30	Rural Major Collector
Wilma Edwards Road	SR 119 to US 280/SR 30	Rural Major Collector
Black Creek Church Road	US 280/SR 30 to Edward Smith Road	Rural Major Collector
SR 204 (Bill Futch Road)	US 280/SR 30 to Chatham County	Rural Major Collector
Eldora Road	Bulloch County to SR 119	Rural Major Collector
Groveland Nevils Road	Bulloch County to US 280/SR 30	Rural Major Collector
SR 67	US 280 to Bulloch County	Rural Minor Collector
I.G. Lanier Road	Bulloch County to SR 119	Rural Minor Collector
Stubbs Road	Wilma Edwards Road to US 280/SR 30	Rural Minor Collector
Unnamed Road	Bulloch County to Wilma Edwards Road	Rural Minor Collector
Olive Branch Road	US 80/SR 26 to US 280/SR 30	Rural Minor Collector

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation, Division of Planning, Data, and Intermodal Development. 2005. Functional Classification Map, Bryan County, Georgia.

Overview of the Major Road System – South Bryan County

The major road system in south Bryan County is summarized as follows:

- Interstate 95 runs from Liberty County through the City of Richmond Hill to Chatham County
- U.S. Highway 17 (SR 25) runs from Liberty County through Richmond Hill to Chatham County
- SR 144 runs from Liberty County through Fort Stewart and Richmond Hill and terminates in Bryan County near the Liberty County line
- SR 144 Spur runs from SR 144 to Fort McAllister State Park

In addition to these federal and state highways, some county roads are classified as collectors in south Bryan County. These include:

- Belfast Siding Road runs from US Highway 17 (SR 25), under I-95 and terminates at SR 144
- Belfast Keller Road runs from Belfast Siding Road to SR 144 just south of SR 144 Spur

The functional classifications of major roads in south Bryan County are provided in Table 6.3. All roads not shown are local (county roads or city streets).

**Table 6.3
 Functional Classification, Major Roads
 South Bryan County**

Highway Designation or Road Name	Segment (From/To)	Functional Classification
Interstate 95	Liberty County to City of Richmond Hill	Rural Interstate Principal Arterial
Interstate 95	Richmond Hill city limits to Urban Area Boundary north of Richmond Hill	Urban Interstate Principal Arterial
Interstate 95	Urban Area Boundary north of Richmond Hill to Chatham County	Rural Interstate Principal Arterial
US 17/SR 25	Liberty County line to Belfast Siding Road	Rural Principal Arterial
US 17/SR 25	Belfast Siding Road to Richmond Hill	Urban and Rural Principal Arterial
US 17/SR 25	Within City limits of Richmond Hill	Urban Principal Arterial
US 17/SR 25	North of Richmond Hill to Chatham County	Rural Principal Arterial
SR 144	Within Ft. Stewart Military Reservation	Rural Minor Arterial
SR 144	Within Richmond Hill Urban Area Boundary	Urban Minor Arterial
SR 144	East of Richmond Hill	Urban Major Collector
SR 144 Spur	SR 144 to Fort McAllister State Park	Rural Major Collector
Belfast Siding Road	US 17/SR 25 to SR 144	Rural Major Collector
Belfast Keller Road	Belfast Siding Road to SR 144	Rural Minor Collector

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation, Division of Planning, Data, and Intermodal Development. 2005. Functional Classification Map, Bryan County, Georgia.

Traffic Counts

Table 6.4 shows year-2004 annual average daily traffic for selected major roads in the county.

**Table 6.4
 2004 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)
 Selected Roads in Bryan County**

Road Name	Begin Intersection	End Intersection	AADT
SR 67	Beulah Ch Rd	Beulah Ch Rd	230
SR 119	Cainy Branch	Savage Creek	1,950
SR 119	Poplar St	S Railroad St	2,060
SR 119	College St	Smith St	3,200
SR 119	Ash Branch Rd	Circle Dr	2,340
SR 119	Patterson St	I.G. Lanier Rd	1,870
SR 119	Wilma Edwards Rd	Jeanette Coursey Rd	1,270
SR 144 Spur	Ford Ave	Grace Court Dr	2,060
SR 144	Oak Level Rd	Steeple Chase Ln	1,740
SR 144	Belfast Keller Rd	Buckhead Rd	4,330
SR 144	Timber Trl	No Name	12,660
SR 144	Cedar St	Cherokee St	18,300
SR 144	I-95 UPH	Ellis Dr	9,650
SR 144	Ft. Stewart Rd	Off	5,440
SR 204	J O Bacon Hwy	Pine Bark Dr	3,130
SR 204	Porterfield Rd	Rose Dr	3,640
SR 404 (I-16)	Olive Branch Rd	EB off ramp to SR 30	14,080
SR 404 (I-16)	J O Bacon Hwy	Guyler Rd	24,780
SR 405 (I-95)	Belfast Siding Rd	NB on ramp from Ocean Hwy	46,130
SR 405 (I-95)	Ocean Hwy	NB off ramp to Ford Ave	65,500
SR 405 (I-95)	Ford Ave	NB on ramp from Ford Ave	76,980

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation.

PROPOSED ROAD SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

The Georgia Department of Transportation's Fiscal Year (FY) 2005-2007 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) contains information on federally funded projects in the state of Georgia for FY 2005-2007. Information is provided on project cost, status, and funding source for the Preliminary engineering (PE), Right of Way (ROW) and Construction (CST) phases of a project. Because the STIP is a fiscally balanced document, only projects with federal funding available or having a reasonable expectation of obtaining funding are included.

In Bryan County, there are four projects in the 2005-2007 STIP. The first is lighting improvements at I-95 and SR 144 interchange at a total cost of \$205,000. A second project is the upgrade of traffic signals at various locations in Bryan and Chatham Counties at a total cost of \$420,000. A third project is a special study, an interchange justification report for the I-95 and Belfast Siding Road intersection at a total cost of \$100,000. A fourth project is interstate bridge rehabilitation projects at I-16 and CR 12, I-95 and CR 90, and I-95 at CSX Railroad.

TRAVEL TO WORK

The data in Table 6.5 reveal that Bryan County's workers use single-occupancy vehicles as the primary means of travel to work. Very few workers use alternative means to the automobile in traveling to work, as of the year 2000.

With regard to destinations, Bryan County residents in 2000 commuted mostly to Chatham County (56.5 percent). Only one-quarter (25.2 percent) of Bryan County residents in 2000 worked within Bryan County. Another 8.2 percent of the county's residents commuted to Liberty County for work in 2000 (Coastal Georgia Regional Plan, Table ed 15).

**Table 6.5
 Means of Transportation to Work, 2000
 Workers 16 Years and Over
 Bryan County, Census Tracts, and Municipalities**

	North Bryan County	South Bryan County	City of Pembroke	City of Richmond Hill	Bryan County	% Total Bryan County
Total	3,759	7,237	913	3,449	10,996	100%
Car, truck or van, drove alone	2,964	6,128	685	2,982	9,092	82.7%
Public transportation	23	8	11	0	31	0.3%
Worked at home	71	219	21	106	290	2.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 3; Table P30.

PARKING

There are no significant off-street parking or other parking facilities in unincorporated Bryan County worthy of note here.

ALTERNATIVE MODES

Pedestrian Facilities

Pedestrian facilities are virtually nonexistent in the unincorporated areas of Bryan County.

Bicycle Routes

The only designated bicycle route in Bryan County is Route 95 north to South. The Georgia Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, Statewide Route Network indicates that US. Highway 17/SR 25 is scheduled for inclusion of a bike route along SR 144 in Richmond Hill crossing under Interstate 95, and continuing to the Liberty County line (a total of approximately 10.1 miles in length) (Source: Georgia Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, Statewide Route Network, Coastal Corridor Description, Route 95 North to South).

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Public transportation is only available in the Chatham County-Savannah (Chatham Area Transit Authority).

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Bryan County has access to the Savannah International Airport. The Jacksonville International Airport is also only 40 miles south of the Coastal Region. Other airports are located in Brunswick (Glynco Jetport and Malcolm McKinnon) and Hinesville (Liberty County Airport).

Because the Fort Stewart Military Reservation is located partially within Bryan County, some attention needs to be given to the military aircraft (e.g., helicopter) maneuvers and how they may affect properties outside the reservation. A Joint Land Use Study was recently prepared which addresses land use compatibility considerations in the context of military operations on the reservation.

WATER TRANSPORTATION

The Georgia Ports Authority has major facilities in both Savannah and Brunswick. Billions of dollars worth of goods are imported and exported through Georgia's Ports.

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

The CSX Railroad serves the Richmond Hill Industrial Park, while the GA Central Railroad serves the J. Dixie Harn Industrial Park within the City of Pembroke. Bryan County therefore has access to freight rail.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Transportation and Land Use

There is a high reliance on vehicle use for mobility because of the separation of land uses and the lack of other viable modes of transportation. Single-family subdivisions are often located in areas distant from employment centers, leading to a reliance on vehicles for commute trips and increases in vehicle miles traveled. Similarly, housing is not often located within mixed-use developments or even in convenient walking distance to employment centers, thus requiring vehicle use when public transit is not available (as is the case in Bryan County). Working at home (i.e., home occupations) reduces vehicle travel. The opportunity to walk to destinations also reduces vehicle use. The density and pattern of land use has a major bearing on the modes and distances of travel.

In Bryan County, the large amount of relatively undeveloped land near I-16 and I-95 present opportunities for intense mixed-use development (assuming adequate facilities) in addition to highway-oriented commercial uses.

Access Management

Access management specifications need to be applied when existing development is modified or new buildings are added. It is desirable to limit access onto arterial roads to mostly from existing access points. For those parcels that do not currently have direct access to abutting arterials, it is desirable to provide connections to access roads as opposed to new curb cuts or access points directly onto the arterial. The necessary spacing of driveways (and roads) depends on speed limits and must account for driver perception and reaction time. On state

highways, driveways are subject to Georgia Department of Transportation Regulations for Driveway and Encroachment Control, dated March 2, 2004, updated 12/01/04, or any official revisions thereto, and other adopted local or state regulations.

Aligning access points on opposite sides of a road or highway is important in terms of vehicular safety and the economy of road construction. Aligning access points (curb cuts) on opposite sides of the roads is considered essential when the road is divided by a median and a median break occurs. The entire parcel, rather than simply a particular project, needs to be considered in formulating and approving access plans.

Railroad Crossings

In places, streets cross railroad rights-of-ways. Trains travel Bryan County on a regular basis, and safe passage across railroad tracks is essential. Warning systems including flashing lights and gate are critically important to reduce accident potential. The Georgia Department of Transportation is in part responsible for ensuring that local streets provide safe railroad crossings.

Context-Sensitive Street Design

Context-Sensitive Street Design (CCSD) is an approach to roadway planning, design, and operation that fits in appropriately with the context of adjacent uses of land. The concept respects traditional street design objectives for safety, efficiency, and capacity, but it also pays more attention to concepts of compatibility, livability, sense of place, urban design, and environmental impacts. CCSD considers access for alternative modes of transportation, such as bicycling, walking and transit, but it also takes stock of the environmental, scenic, aesthetic, historic, and community impacts of street projects.

Context-Sensitive Street Design is especially helpful in protecting environmentally sensitive areas, preserving historic resources, and respecting rural character. Because the street includes all users, including bicyclists and pedestrians, it increases transportation choices. Respecting the existing neighborhood street design in new road construction enhances the stability of neighborhoods.

Development regulations might accommodate variations in street design standards (width, construction materials, engineering geometry, etc.) and provide street standards appropriate for the various contexts found in the community (e.g., historic districts, environmentally sensitive areas, rural areas, skinny streets in the downtowns of cities, etc.).

Traffic Impact Studies

A traffic impact study, often required for developments generating 100 or more trips in a peak hour or 1,000 vehicle trips per day, can be used to determine the most appropriate road improvements, including driveway locations, and as a basis for determining improvements required to the road system. Prior to development approval, additional road right-of-way for a local road or frontage road may be needed at intersections or at other locations fronting the property where turning lanes, storage lanes, medians, or realignments are required for traffic safety, and where the existing right-of-way would be inadequate to accommodate the road, drainage, and utility, and other improvements necessitated by the development.

CHAPTER 7 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

ADJACENT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

The primary opportunities for intergovernmental coordination at the local government level is with the cities of Pembroke and Richmond Hill. To a lesser extent, Bryan County should be aware of opportunities to coordinate regional inter inter-county issues with surrounding counties, which include Bulloch, Chatham, Effingham, Evans, and Liberty Counties. As noted in the chapter on transportation, Bryan County is not currently within a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), but with adjacent Liberty and Chatham Counties within MPOs, Bryan County is expected to soon participate in metropolitan transportation planning efforts.

SPECIAL AUTHORITIES AND DISTRICTS

Bryan County has an Industrial Authority. The City of Pembroke has a Downtown Development Authority and Convention and Visitors Bureau. Richmond Hill has an economic development authority and a Convention and Visitors Bureau (Source: Coastal Georgia Regional Plan, Table ed.16).

SCHOOL BOARD

The Bryan County Board of Education administers the school system in North and South Bryan County.

PLANNING PROGRAMS

Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center

The Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center (formerly Coastal Georgia Area Planning and Development Commission), is the regional planning agency for the coastal Georgia region. It provides numerous programs of interest to Bryan County residents, including historic preservation and aging services. Coordination with the regional plan is important, and the community assessment identifies those opportunities throughout this document.

Coastal Zone Management

Bryan County is included within the Coastal Zone Management Program of the State of Georgia, a program that covers all tidally influenced waters. This program is implemented primarily by the Coastal Resources Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. It conducts several functions, including managing saltwater fisheries, monitoring water quality, administering Coastal Marshlands Permits and Shore Permits, providing technical assistance, and reviewing federal activities for consistency with state laws and program requirements (Source: Coastal Georgia Regional Plan, p. 3-19).

Joint Land Use Study (JLUS)

Fort Stewart Military Reservation covers 437.9 square miles in Bryan, Liberty, and Long Counties. The Department of Defense initiated a Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) program in 1985 in an effort to achieve greater application of various program recommendations. The JLUS

program utilizes data from three programs – the Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ), the Environmental Noise Management Program (ENMP), and the Range Air Installation Compatible Use Zone Study (RAICUZ) in a participatory, community planning context. The Department of Defense's Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) manages the JLUS program. Each year the Military Departments (Army, Navy, Air Force) nominate bases for a JLUS. Selection is based on the presence of existing encroachment, or the potential for encroachment to develop in the near future. The OEA then meets with the leadership of the base and community to explain the purpose and process for initiating a study. In addition, there must be an indication of strong support from the base leadership. The base must ensure its staff participation throughout the study process, and a current AICUZ/ENMP/RAICUZ report must be available or nearly completed.¹

In September 2005, a Joint Land Use Study for Fort Stewart was completed. The study serves as an ongoing guide to local government and military actions to enhance compatibility around Fort Stewart (as well as Hunter Army Airfield) and strengthen relationships between the military and civilian populations. There are 108,780 acres of land within the Fort Stewart Military Reservation in Bryan County; the reservation itself is almost 280,000 acres. The JLUS seeks to encourage cooperative land use planning between military installations and the surrounding communities, and to seek ways to reduce the operational impacts of military installations on adjacent land (Source: Fort Stewart JLUS, September 2005).

KEY STATE AGENCIES

Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)

The need exists to continue relationships with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). GDOT was created in 1972 by former Governor Jimmy Carter. Bryan County is eligible to receive State and Federal transportation funds through GDOT. Road proposals and plans require approval of GDOT. The Georgia Department of Transportation is responsible for multiple forms of transit, not simply roadways. GDOT plans, constructs, maintains and improves the state's road and bridges; provides planning and financial support for other modes of transportation such as mass transit and airports.

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Interaction with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources is required in terms of historic preservation, statewide water planning, and the Coastal Zone Management program (described in this chapter), and issues with state parks, among other activities.

Georgia Department of Community Affairs

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) was created in 1977 to serve as an advocate for local governments. This State department has major review functions in terms of this Comprehensive Plan, amongst others. State policies are sometimes articulated by this agency. The Department of Community Affairs provides extensive resources in the areas of building codes, coordinated planning, and housing, among others. DCA's overriding purpose is to seek out ways to improve the quality of life for Georgians.

¹ Brown, Timothy W., "Planning in Cooperation with the Military: Increasing Safety and Reducing Incompatible Land Uses Adjacent to Military Bases," *Practicing Planner*, Vol. 2, No. 3.

EXISTING INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS

Bryan County's Service Delivery Strategy Agreement, approved in October of 1999 and amended in June of 2003, provides reference to all intergovernmental agreements to which the county is a party.

Briefly, Bryan County operates or contracts for most governmental services within its boundaries, with the incorporated cities participating in those county services and offering enhanced services within their corporate limits.

Bryan County operates the following services for the unincorporated and incorporated areas of the county:

- Animal Control
- Civil Defense (Emergency Management)
- Clean&Beautiful
- Coroner
- Clerk of Courts
- E-911
- Elections
- EMS
- Engineering (for the unincorporated area and the City of Pembroke only)
- Extension Service
- Family and Children Services
- Forrestry Commission
- Health Department
- Libraries (under contract with the Statesboro Regional Library System)
- Magistrate Court
- Probate Court
- Recreation
- Registrar
- Section 18 Transportation
- Senior Citizens
- State Court
- Summer Lunch Program
- Superior Court
- County Surveyor
- Tax Assessor
- Tax Commissioner
- Sheriff's Department
- County Jail

Other services, including wastewater and water services, police, recycling, roads, vehicle maintenance and facilities maintenance, are offered by the incorporated cities as enhancements over and above those same services offered by the county government.

Richmond Hill Comprehensive Plan

Community Assessment

Richmond Hill City Council

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Acknowledgements

The development of a Comprehensive Plan is a significant endeavor. The journey could not have come this far without the contributions of many individuals that are committed to the prosperous future of the City of Richmond Hill.

The Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center would like to thank the Richmond Hill City Council for engaging our organization in the project. The continued support and participation of these City leaders is important. The development of a Comprehensive Plan is both a burden and an accomplishment. Our sincere appreciation is expressed to these individuals. The CGRDC was pleased to have the opportunity to assist and support the community in their Comprehensive Plan. The partnership that has developed will benefit the City and the coastal Georgia region at-large.

In addition, the writers would like to acknowledge the significant contributions of Richmond Hill staff. The writers greatly appreciate the commitment of time and energy for the many contributions of their staff. The addition of their time, knowledge, and experience was a tremendous asset.

Thank you one and all.

Introduction

The State of Georgia requires that the City of Richmond Hill prepare a Comprehensive Plan once every ten years. Further, the City of Richmond Hill is directed by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to complete an Intermediate level plan. An Intermediate level Community Assessment must include recommended Issues and Opportunities, Analysis of Existing Development Patterns, Analysis of Consistency with the Quality Community Objectives, and supporting data, all of which is an environmental scan of the community that takes into consideration both physical and demographic data.

The Comprehensive Plan is a long-range (20-year) statement of the community's vision for future development. The purpose of the plan is to provide a guide for local government officials and other community leaders for making everyday decisions that are supportive of the community's stated vision for its future. The plan should serve as the local government's guide for assessing development proposals, including rezoning applications and redevelopment plans. For residents, business owners and members of the development community, the plan provides insight into what types of land uses and development are appropriate at various locations throughout the City. Finally, by evaluating various local government functions and services, the plan is a point of reference for government staff in preparing capital improvements programs and associated budgets.

A Comprehensive Plan, in the State of Georgia, consists of three components:

- Community Assessment
- Community Participation
- Community Agenda

This document represents the first component, the Community Assessment. The Community Assessment is a concise and informative report that presents a factual foundation upon which the rest of the Comprehensive Plan is built.

The Community Participation program is the second component of a Comprehensive Plan. It describes steps that are taken by the City of Richmond Hill to ensure adequate public and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the third component, the Community Agenda.

The Community Agenda, the third and most important part of the plan, is where the City of Richmond Hill is charged with creating a vision for the future of the City as well as a strategy for achieving this vision. The Community Agenda provides guidance for the future decision-making regarding the City.

The City of Richmond Hill completed its previous Comprehensive Plan in 1993. It contains a wealth of information about the City of Richmond Hill's status at the time, including its existing patterns, goals, and vision for the future.

As required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs's Rules for Local Planning, this Assessment was prepared without direct public participation. This document, along with the Community Participation Program (CPP), will be submitted to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for review following a public hearing and "resolution to submit" voted upon by the Richmond Hill Mayor and City Council.

Following DCA's review and acceptance of the Assessment and CPP, development of the Community Agenda will commence. This will be accompanied by extensive opportunities for the City of Richmond Hill to provide input into the plan. The Community Agenda is the most important component of the Comprehensive Plan and includes the statement of the community's vision, the issues and opportunities that will be addressed during the twenty-year time period of the plan, and the strategy for achieving the vision and addressing the identified issues and opportunities.

The complete Richmond Hill Comprehensive Plan Update will be submitted to DCA prior to the City's deadline for adopting the plan on October 31, 2008.

The Community Assessment has four key sections:

- Identification of Potential Issues and Opportunities;
- Analysis of Existing Development Patterns, which includes identifying Areas Requiring Special Attention and Identification of Character Areas;
- Analysis of Consistency with Quality Community Objectives; and
- Supporting Analysis of Data and Information.

The document is presented in an "executive summary" format as to be attractive and accessible to all community members and serve as a quick reference for government officials and staff.

The majority of the findings included in this report are supported by extensive data and analysis provided in the attached Technical Appendix.

Identification of Potential Issues and Opportunities

The Community Assessment is the first step in identifying potential issues and opportunities. It is an all-inclusive list of potential issues and opportunities for further study. The Community Participation process and the Community Agenda process will modify this list through additional analysis and review.

The process begins with a staff review of a published list of typical issues and opportunities provided in the State Planning Recommendations. It is the role of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, community participants, community leaders, and City of Richmond Hill officials to transform this list into a Community Agenda that reflects the vision of the City. In the Community Agenda is a final, locally agreed upon, list of issues and opportunities the City of Richmond Hill intends to address. The Short Term Work Program is the final document that adds specific descriptions and implementation actions during the first five-year period of the comprehensive planning period.

This list of typical issues and opportunities is intended to prompt thinking of what the community needs to address in the Community Agenda. As you read through the list of issues below, think about areas in which your community is not as effective as you would like, or has not advanced or progressed as anticipated. The issues are presented in a general manner and should be edited to address the specific issues or opportunities in the community. For example, the issue, "We lack sufficient jobs for local residents," should prompt questions such as what skills do residents have; how many residents need jobs; how many need training, etc. Also, note that many of these issues may easily be restated in a positive way—as an opportunity—if desired.

In addition to this list, the Quality Community Objectives Local Assessment will help further define the community's issues and opportunities.

Existing Development Patterns

Issues

- Richmond Hill's zoning code separates commercial, residential and retail uses in every district.
- The community is not actively working to promote brownfield or greyfield redevelopment.
- The City does not offer a development guidebook that illustrates the type of new development desired in the community.

Opportunities

- Richmond Hill has ordinances in place that allow neo-traditional development "by right," so that developers do not have to go through a long variance process.
- The City is preparing a street tree ordinance that will require new development to plant shade-bearing trees appropriate to our climate.
- Schools are located in or near neighborhoods in Richmond Hill.
- Areas of Richmond Hill are planned for nodal development (compacted near intersections rather than spread along a major road).
- The City allows small lot development (5,000 square feet or less) for some uses.
- The City has ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas.
- Regulations are in place to control the size and type of signage in the community.
- The elected officials understand the land-development process in the community.
- The City has reviewed their development regulations and/or zoning code recently; they are sure that the ordinance will help them achieve their QCO goals.
- Richmond Hill has a citizen-education campaign to allow all interested parties to learn about development processes in the community.
- Procedures are in place that make it easy for the public to stay informed about land use issues, zoning decisions, and proposed new developments.
- The City has clearly understandable guidelines for new development.

Population

Issues

- The other local governments, the local school board, and other decision-making entities do not necessarily use the same population projections that are used by the City.
- High rates of population growth anticipated for Richmond Hill.
- The City must consider infrastructure capacity as rapid growth continues.

Opportunities

- Areas have been designated where the City would like to see growth, and these areas are based on a natural resources inventory of the community.
- A public-awareness element is included in the City's comprehensive planning process.

Economic Development

Issues

- Diversification of the City's jobs base is needed for economic improvement; therefore, any loss of employers may impose significant adverse effects to the City's economy.
- Richmond Hill residents frequently commute outside of the City and County to work.
- Workforce training options are not provided for citizens.
- There are no training programs offered by the City that provide citizens with skills for jobs that are available in Richmond Hill.
- Richmond Hill is not connected to the surrounding region for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.

Opportunities

- The Economic Development Authority has considered the community's strengths, assets and weaknesses, and has created a business development strategy based on them.
- The Economic Development Authority has also considered the types of businesses already in the community and has a plan to recruit businesses and/or industries that will be compatible.
- Firms that provide or create sustainable products are recruited.
- The City's economy has jobs for skilled and unskilled labor.
- There are professional and managerial jobs available in the community.
- Higher education opportunities are accessible to the community.

- Job opportunities are available for college graduates, so that children may live and work in Richmond Hill if they choose.
- The City promotes tourism opportunities based on the unique characteristics of our region.
- Richmond Hill contributes to the region, and draws from the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment and education.
- Because of the proactive efforts of the Richmond Hill-Bryan County Chamber of Commerce and its Business Bryan initiative, Richmond Hill and Bryan County were recently designated as an Entrepreneur Friendly Community by the Georgia Department of Economic Development.
- By being designated as an Entrepreneur Friendly Community, Richmond Hill and Bryan County are now eligible for Entrepreneur Friendly Implementation Funds (EFIF), grant money specifically designated for long-term programs that support entrepreneur or small business development.

Housing

Issues

- Richmond Hill does not allow accessory units, such as garage apartments or mother-in-law units.
- There is opposition to higher density and affordable housing from segments of the community.
- Limited options available for affordable or workforce housing.

Opportunities

- People who work in Richmond Hill can also afford to live in the City.
- There is enough housing for each income level (low, moderate and above-average) in the City to meet the demand.
- New residential developments are encouraged by the City to follow the pattern of the original town, continuing the existing street design and maintaining small setbacks.
- Options are available in the City for loft living, downtown living, or “neo-traditional” development.
- There is vacant and developable land available for multi-family housing.
- The City allows multi-family housing to be developed.

- Richmond Hill supports community development corporations that build housing for lower-income households.
- Housing programs that focus on households with special needs are available.
- Small houses are allowed on small lots (less than 5,000 square feet) in appropriate areas.

Natural & Cultural Resources

Issues

- The City does not have a historic preservation ordinance.
- There is not a local land conservation program, nor does the City work with state or national land conservations programs to preserve environmentally important areas in the community.
- Richmond Hill needs to ensure that their tree preservation ordinance is finalized and actively enforced.

Opportunities

- There is an active historic preservation commission in the City.
- Richmond Hill is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage (agricultural, metropolitan, coastal, etc.).
- Richmond Hill is working on designated historic districts in the community.
- The City wants new development to complement its historic development.
- In 2004, Richmond Hill was designated a “Preserve America” community for its efforts to preserve and protect its natural and cultural resources.
- The City has a greenspace plan.
- Richmond Hill is actively preserving greenspace, either through direct purchase or by encouraging set-asides in new development.
- The City has a comprehensive natural resources inventory, which is used to steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas.
- Natural resources have been identified and defined, and the City has taken steps to protect them.
- The City has passed the necessary “Part V” environmental ordinances, and they enforce them.
- Richmond Hill has a tree-replanting ordinance under legal review for new development.

- The Bryan Tree Foundation, an organized tree-planting campaign in public areas that will make walking more comfortable in the summer, is active in the City of Richmond Hill.
- In 2006, the City of Richmond Hill received an Urban Forestry Grant from the Georgia Forestry Commission's Urban & Community Forestry Grant Program for its efforts in implementing the Community Tree Assessment project.
- Land use measures are in place that will protect the natural resources in the community (steep slope regulations, floodplain or marsh protection, etc.).
- Based on the City's distinct characteristics, a person would know that they were in Richmond Hill.
- Steps have been taken to identify and protect areas of importance to the City's history and heritage.

Community Facilities and Services

Issues

- Richmond Hill must consider the cost of providing facilities and services as the population continues to grow.
- The region has limited groundwater supply. However, the City has sufficient quantity available to provide for projected growth.
- There are not enough cultural facilities for performances, exhibits, etc. within the community.
- Richmond Hill needs to consider staff capacity as population grows and plan accordingly to meet service needs for fire, police, EMS, etc.

Opportunities

- Stormwater best management practices are being used for all new development.
- Richmond Hill has a program to keep public areas (commercial, retail districts, parks, etc.) clean and safe.
- Sidewalks and vegetation are well-kept so that walking is an option that some would choose in Richmond Hill.
- Richmond Hill has population projections for the next 20 years that are referred to when making infrastructure decisions.
- The City's Capital Improvements Program supports current and future growth.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Issues

- There is a North-South split within Bryan County.
- Richmond Hill should consider coordinating land use planning and development review with the County and the City of Pembroke.
- There is no mechanism or venue for sharing planning information.
- Growth in the Richmond Hill service area should be managed cooperatively between the County and the City.

Opportunities

- Richmond Hill thinks regionally, especially in terms of issues like land use, transportation and housing, understanding that these issues extend beyond local government borders.
- Richmond Hill participates in regional economic development organizations.
- The City participates in regional environmental organizations and initiatives, especially regarding water quality and quantity issues.
- The City works with other local governments to provide or share appropriate services, such as public transit, libraries, special education, tourism, parks and recreation, emergency response, E-911, homeland security, etc.
- Richmond Hill is currently planning jointly with the City of Pembroke and Bryan County on its Comprehensive Plan.
- The City is satisfied with its Service Delivery Strategy.
- The City cooperates with at least one local government to provide or share services (parks and recreation, E-911, EMS, Police or Sheriff's Offices, schools, water, sewer, other, etc.).

Transportation

Issues

- There is a lack of transportation choices for access to housing, jobs, services, good, health care and recreation.
- As the population continues to grow, Richmond Hill is experiencing increased traffic congestion.
- Bicycle and pedestrian access associated with new development typically does not connect to existing local multi-use trails.

- There is a need for increased transportation planning for newly developed and developing areas.

Opportunities

- Richmond Hill has been awarded a Transportation Enhancement Program through the Georgia Department of Transportation to enhance the main corridor and create a downtown area around the City Hall complex.
- The City requires that new development connect with existing development through a street network, not single entry/exit. However, opportunity exists to amend current subdivision regulations to require pedestrian/biker access connection to existing local multi-use trails as feasible.
- The community has a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.
- Richmond Hill has a sidewalk ordinance that requires all new development to provide user-friendly sidewalks.
- Newly built sidewalks are required to connect to existing sidewalks wherever possible.
- The City has a plan for bicycle routes throughout the community.
- Commercial and retail developments are allowed to share parking areas wherever possible.
- In some areas, several errands can be made on foot, if so desired.
- Some of the children in the community can and do walk and bicycle to school safely.

Analysis of Existing Development Patterns

The purpose of analyzing existing land use is to enhance our understanding of the geographic location of different land usage, and determine where and how the City of Richmond Hill is growing. The Analysis of Existing Development Patterns serves as a statement of the standards and targets for residential population density and building intensity. The process of developing the land use plan involves the analysis of existing land use patterns, as well as current and future available public services and facilities. The analysis will further explore physical environmental issues and opportunities that are related to physical land development and serve as the City's blueprint for long-range growth and development.

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) states in its Local Planning Requirements that a community's planning goals and objectives should be the assurance of land use planning coordination in support of efficient growth and development patterns that will promote sustainable economic development, protection of natural and cultural resources, and provision of adequate and affordable housing. Elements, explained in further detail in the Technical Appendix, with strong reliance upon the Analysis of Existing Development Patterns include Population, Housing, Community Facilities, Natural Resources, and Cultural Resources.

The following analysis presents three components of existing development patterns involving Land Use, Character Areas, and Areas Requiring Special Attention.

Methodology

The Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center's staff, in conjunction with the Bryan County Tax Assessor's office, reviewed the tax assessor's database and determined that "digest class" and the "year built" fields were useful in preparing the existing land use map. The "digest class" represents different uses of land in the tax assessor's database and "year built" represents whether a structure exists on the parcel.

The following methodology was used to prepare the existing land use map:

- Created a new text field of "landuse_description" in the parcel shapefile1
- Developed a query on the parcel shapefile and tax assessor's database and assigned those parcels as "undeveloped/unused" for which the "year built" field is equal to zero
- Overwrote the above query based on the codes listed in the "digest class" field. The digest class field has the following codes:
 - R = Residential
 - C = Commercial

"A shapefile stores nontopological geometry and attribute information for the spatial features in a data set. The geometry for a feature is stored as a shape comprising a set of vector coordinates." <http://www.esri.com>

- I = Industrial
- E = Exempt properties from taxes
- V = Conservation
- U = Utility
- A = Agriculture

These codes were then translated into the following standard land use classifications mentioned in the Rules of Georgia Department of Community Affairs Chapter 110-12-1 Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning Local Planning Requirements, effective May 1, 2005:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public/Institutional
- Parks/Recreation/Conservation
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities
- Agriculture/Forest
- Undeveloped/Unused

In addition, the community facilities point shapefile as a reference to augment the Public/Institutional category of the land use classification. The existing land use as shown on Map LU-1 is prepared based on the above methodology, verification in the field, and input provided by the City of Richmond Hill staff.

The land uses for Richmond Hill are classified into the following eight standard categories as defined by the DCA rules:

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

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

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

Public/Institutional: This category includes certain state, federal or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include city halls and government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc. Examples of institutional land uses include colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals, etc. This category does not include facilities that are publicly owned, but are classified more accurately in another land use category. For example, publicly owned parks and/or recreational facilities are included in the Park/Recreation/Conservation category, landfills are included in the Industrial category, and privately owned general office buildings containing government offices are included in the Commercial category.

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

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

Agriculture/Forestry: This category is for land dedicated to farming (fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock production, etc.), agriculture, or commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting.

Undeveloped/Vacant: This category is for lots or tracts of land that are served by typical urban public services (water, sewer, etc.) but have not been developed for a specific use or were developed for a specific use that has since been abandoned.

While the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) standard land use classifications provide for a category of mixed land use, such a category was determined to not be applicable in Richmond Hill.

Existing Land Use

Table LU-1 and Figure LU-1 show the amount of land allocated for each land use in Richmond Hill. Map LU-1 illustrates the geographical dispersion of land uses in the City. However, it should be noted that these figures are subject to change as the City acquires land through annexation.

**Table LU-1
 Existing Land Uses in Richmond Hill**

Land Use Categories	Acres	Percent
Residential	3,864	42.66
Commercial	749.00	8.27
Public/Institutional	667.00	7.36
Industrial	82.59	0.91
Parks/Recreation/Conservation	1,325.46	14.63
Agriculture/Forest	1,420.54	15.68
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	894.00	9.87
Undeveloped/Vacant	56.00	0.62
Total	9,058.59	100

Source: Existing Land Use Map, City of Richmond Hill

In order to promote quality community growth, the amount of each type of land use should be proportionately distributed rather than too little or too much of each use of land. A mixed balance of land use should be maintained to provide for cost effective delivery of services and infrastructure. Studies show that a high proportion of residential land use is the least cost effective in terms of services and infrastructure delivery.

Currently, the City of Richmond Hill is primarily residential, serving as home for citizens commuting outside of the City for employment. The City is completely developed except for 0.62 percent of the land, which is either undeveloped or unused as shown in the Figure LU-1. Most of this undeveloped/vacant land lies in the southern part of the City. The total residential area in the City encompasses 3,864 acres (42.66 percent). Commercial areas (8.27 percent)



*Commercial Corridor
 US Highway 17*

scattered along State Route 144, US Highway 17, and Interstate 95 (I-95) currently serve the community well. The industrial area, located near the intersection of US Highway 17 and State Route 144, primarily includes light industries.

Richmond Hill has an adequate amount of land (14.63 percent) reserved for Parks/Recreation/Conservation land use, which is sufficient for the life of this Comprehensive Plan. The high percentage of park land makes the City attractive as a residential community.

Recommended Character Areas

‘Character Areas’ are defined by DCA as specific geographic areas within the community that:

- Have unique or special characteristics to be preserved or enhanced (such as a downtown, a historic district, a neighborhood, or a transportation corridor);
- Have potential to evolve into a unique area with more intentional guidance of future development through adequate planning and implementation (such as a strip commercial corridor that could be revitalized into a more attractive village development pattern); or
- Require special attention due to unique development issues (rapid change of development patterns, economic decline, etc.).

Richmond Hill has distinct character areas throughout the City as shown on Map LU-3. Character areas possess their own unique characteristics that set them apart from each other. These areas include but are not limited to: areas of historical importance, unique neighborhoods, culturally significant areas or areas of a specific land use. As part of the planning process, it is critical and required to identify the characteristic of each of these areas, categorize their uniqueness and develop policies and implementation strategies specifically formulated for each. The following table lists character areas in Richmond Hill and their respective description, location, and development strategy.

Table LU-2 Character Areas in Richmond Hill

Character Area	Location/Description	Development Strategy
Richmond Hill Village	Centrally located near the downtown area with significant historical characteristics.	The earliest planned subdivision in Richmond Hill originally consisted of 61 homes built for the employees of the Henry Ford plantation system in the early 20th century. Today this traditional neighborhood consists of nearly 150 homes. The historic homes are intended to be preserved with historic designation and will be within the Historical Overlay District for future preservation. Local efforts will be made to encourage this neighborhood to maintain its original character.
Conservation/ Preservation	Variety of natural areas and open space consisting of wetlands, public parks, subdivision greenspace, and ecologically significant areas.	Preserve scenic vistas and natural ecological features. Develop passive and active public parks maximizing potential for walking, bicycling, and other recreational activities. Maintain and preserve open space with significant cultural or historical heritage such as old rice field dikes and canals. Promote these areas as tourism and recreational destinations.
Central Business District	Centrally located at the intersection of Highways 17 and 144	Create a downtown where there is none, and heighten a sense of identity. Include sidewalks, crosswalks, streetlights, benches, trees, landscaping to create a community square, and fencing along the sidewalks. Use urban design to create a pedestrian-friendly downtown unifying the area along Highway 144. Encourage bike trails, mixed-use development. Promote pedestrian friendly access to all new developments in the area.
Ford Plantation	Historically significant winter home of Henry Ford. Extensive Ogeechee riverfront property.	Private development as individual estate sites. Low or rural residential density development. Maintain intrinsic natural site beauty and plantation theme.
Main Street	Centrally located in Richmond Hill between the railroads. Within walking distance to all schools.	Subdivision consisting of nearly 500 homes. The basic design is pedestrian friendly with sidewalks and access to all county schools located in south Bryan County. Strict covenants and a homeowners association regulate this private community.

Character Area	Location/Description	Development Strategy
Stable Traditional Subdivisions	Various subdivisions with small regular lots, relatively well-maintained housing with lot and streetscape, and high rate of homeownership. (Cherokee, Melrose, Mulberry, Piercefield/Teal Lake/Sterling Creek, Ashton and Plantation Apartments Richmond Heights)	Medium density residential districts allowing greater density of single-family dwellings. Homes and multifamily complexes vary in size for a wide range of income levels. Encourage these neighborhoods to maintain their original character.
Richmond Hill Plantation, Brisbon Hall and Turtle Landing	Southern portion of Richmond Hill currently being developed.	Planned Unit Developments consisting of a variety of home sizes and price ranges for different income levels. Portions of the subdivision will be a gated private community. Should include a mix of retail, office, and services to serve the community. The municipal golf course will open to all residents. The three subdivisions will consist of a total 1,000 new homes.
The Oaks	Located just off Highway 17 south along the CSX railroad. This area consists of two residential areas, Live Oak and White Oak.	Planned Unit Development consisting of a variety of home sizes and price ranges for different income levels. Should include a mix of retail, office, and services to serve the community.
Undeveloped	Various parcels located throughout Richmond Hill.	
Richmond Place	Eastern portion of Richmond Hill located just off I-95.	Medium density residential district allowing a greater density of single-family dwellings consisting of nearly 400 homes. Commercial property adjacent to the subdivision will provide services to the residents as well as the entire north portion of Richmond Hill.
Blueberry Subdivision	Northern portion of Richmond Hill.	Originally built for workers on the Henry Ford plantation. The subdivision contains 36 original homes each with a garden plot, to encourage the residents to grow their own vegetables. Historically significant and will be encompassed within the

Character Area	Location/Description	Development Strategy
		Historical Overlay District for future preservation efforts.
Intown Corridor	Highway 17 and Highway 144	Streetscape enhancements will improve the scenic boulevard. Crepe Myrtles have been planted along Highway 17. The Highway 144 corridor will be dramatically changed by downtown enhancements with the inception of the scenic streetscape program. Pedestrian and bicycle traffic will provide access along main artery. Raised medians and crosswalks will slow traffic and increase safety for pedestrian and cyclists.
Major Highway Corridor	Interstate 95, exit 90 and exit 87	Consists of developed and undeveloped land along the interstate.

Criteria for Areas Requiring Special Attention

The Areas Requiring Special Attention are identified based on the following criteria as specified in the DCA rules:

- Areas of significant natural or cultural resources, particularly where these are likely to be intruded upon or otherwise impacted by development
- Areas where rapid development or change of land uses is likely to occur
- Areas where the pace of development has and/or may outpace the availability of community facilities and services, including transportation
- Areas in need of redevelopment and/or significant improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness (including strip commercial corridors)
- Large abandoned structures or sites, including those that may be environmentally contaminated
- Areas with significant infill development opportunities (scattered vacant sites)

Areas Requiring Special Attention (ARSA)

As the City of Richmond Hill grows, impacts on the existing infrastructure, natural and cultural resources, and community facilities will become evident. These conditions and areas should be planned for with special considerations to maintain the unique characteristics of each special area. The following criteria have been used in identifying the Areas Requiring Special Attention in Richmond Hill. These areas, as shown on Map LU-2, were identified by the City planning staff as being areas in need of special consideration.



Trail in J.F. Gregory Park

Areas of Significant Natural Resources

The significant natural resources such as wetlands and floodplains are located throughout and adjacent to the City. The Ogeechee River, which forms the City's northern boundary with Chatham County, provides a beautiful view of marshes from the Ford Plantation, and is a protected river (Protected Rivers and Coastal Marshland, Map NR-2).

Policies should continue to be developed, as necessary, to protect these areas as well as enforcement of current state and local regulations by the City.



Ogeechee River from the Ford Plantation

Areas of Significant Cultural Resources

Richmond Hill has a total of 31 historic places, most of which are located along both sides of State Route 144. Five historic sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The State Route 144 corridor has historic sites of the Henry Ford era (1936 to 1946), the most significant of which includes the Henry Ford Plantation.



J. F. Gregory House

Areas in Need of Redevelopment

As the City grows, older areas should be constantly revisited with an eye for redevelopment. Currently, there are few areas within the city limits that are in need of redevelopment. The areas of redevelopment are shown in magenta color on Map LU-2, which includes abandoned gas stations, old buildings, etc. The City should develop policies and strategies to address redevelopment of such areas.

Areas of Rapid Development/Change of Use

With the current rate of population growth in the City as well as in land area, constant rapid development and annexations will require diligent planning. The areas of rapid development, such as Richmond Hill Plantation and areas southwest of the City, are identified as areas currently being developed primarily for single family residential and commercial services development. As shown on the existing land use map, the City is bounded by the Ogeechee River and Chatham County on the northeast and Fort Stewart on the northwest, which limits the City's ability to expand in those directions.



The Ford Plantation

Development May Outpace Infrastructure

The areas along State Highway 144 and US Highway 17 may require special provision of infrastructure improvements in order to cope with the growing development pressure and traffic congestion. The recent widening of US Highway 17 has contributed favorably to ease traffic congestion. However, continued collaboration is needed between the City and the Georgia Department of Transportation and/or Bryan County to improve traffic access on State Highway 144. These corridors are major highways that bisect the heart of the City and intersect I-95.

Analysis of Consistency with Quality Community Objectives

In 1999, the Board of the Department of Community Affairs adopted the Quality Community Objectives (QCOs) as a statement of the development patterns and options that will help Georgia preserve her unique cultural, natural, and historic resources while looking to the future and developing to her fullest potential. The Office of Planning and Quality Growth has created the Quality Community Objectives Assessment to assist local governments in evaluating their progress towards sustainable and livable communities.

This assessment is meant to give a community an idea of how it is progressing toward reaching the objectives set by the Department, but no community will be judged on progress. The assessment is a tool for use at the beginning of the comprehensive planning process, much like a demographic analysis or a land use map, showing a community “you are here.” Each of the 15 QCOs has a set of yes/no questions, with additional space available for assessors’ comments. The questions focus on local ordinances, policies, and organizational strategies intended to create and expand quality growth principles.

A majority of “yes” answers for an objective may indicate that the community has in place many of the governmental options for managing development patterns. A number of “no” responses may provide guidance as to how to focus planning and implementation efforts for those governments seeking to achieve these Quality Community Objectives.

This initial assessment is meant to provide an overall view of the County’s and City’s policies, not an in-depth analysis. There are no right or wrong answers to this assessment. Its merit lies in completion of the document and the ensuing discussions regarding future development patterns as City of Richmond Hill undergoes the comprehensive planning process.

Development Patterns

Traditional Neighborhoods

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

Statement		Yes	No
1.	We have a zoning code that separates commercial, residential, and retail uses in every district.	X	
2.	Our community has ordinances in place that allow neo-traditional development “by right” so that developers do not have to go through a long variance process.	X	
3.	We have a street tree ordinance that requires new development to plant shade-bearing trees appropriate to our climate.	X	
4.	Our community has an organized tree-planting campaign in public areas that will make walking more comfortable in the summer.	X	
5.	We have a program to keep our public areas (commercial, retail districts, parks) clean and safe.	X	
6.	Our community maintains its sidewalks and vegetation well so that walking is an option some would choose.	X	
7.	In some areas, several errands can be made on foot, if so desired.	X	
8.	Some of our children can and do walk to school safely.	X	
9.	Some of our children can and do bike to school safely.	X	
10.	Schools are located in or near neighborhoods in our community.	X	

- Currently, Richmond Hill’s zoning code separates commercial, residential and retail uses in every district.
- The City does have a street tree ordinance that requires new development to plant shade-bearing trees appropriate to the climate; however, this ordinance remains under legal review.
- The Bryan Tree Foundation maintains Richmond Hill’s tree-planting campaign in public areas that make walking more comfortable in the summer, having planted 300 shade trees.

Infill Development

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

Statement		Yes	No
1.	Our community has an inventory of vacant sites and buildings that are available for redevelopment and/or infill development. (limited)	X	
2.	Our community is actively working to promote brownfield redevelopment.		X
3.	Our community is actively working to promote greyfield redevelopment.		X
4.	We have areas of our community that are planned for nodal development (compacted near intersections rather than spread along a major road).	X	
5.	Our community allows small lot development (5,000 square feet or less) for some uses.	X	

- While Richmond Hill has a limited inventory of vacant sites and buildings available for redevelopment and/or infill development, a list of such sites exists.

Sense of Place

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

Statement		Yes	No
1.	If someone dropped from the sky into our community, he or she would know immediately where he or she was, based on our distinct characteristics.	X	
2.	We have delineated the areas of our community that are important to our history and heritage, and have taken steps to protect those areas.	X	
3.	We have ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas.	X	
4.	We have ordinances to regulate the size and type of signage in our community.	X	
5.	We offer a development guidebook that illustrates the type of new development we want in our community.		X
6.	If applicable, our community has a plan to protect designated farmland.		X (NA)

- Richmond Hill is in the process of delineating areas of the community that are important to the City’s history and heritage. They are taking steps to protect these designated areas.

- The City does not have farmlands; therefore, there is not need to protect designated farmland.

Transportation Alternatives

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

Statement	Yes	No
1. We have public transportation in our community.		X
2. We require that new development connect with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit.	X	
3. We have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.	X	
4. We have a sidewalk ordinance in our community that requires all new development to provide user-friendly sidewalks.	X	
5. We require that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks wherever possible.	X	
6. We have a plan for bicycle routes through our community.	X	
7. We allow commercial and retail development to share parking areas wherever possible.	X	

Regional Identity

Each region should promote and preserve a regional "identity," or regional sense of place, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.

Statement		Yes	No
1.	Our community is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage.	X	
2.	Our community is connected to the surrounding region for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.		X (NA)
3.	Our community encourages businesses that create products that draw on our regional heritage (mountain, agricultural, metropolitan, coastal, etc.).	X	
4.	Our community participates in the Georgia Department of Economic Development's regional tourism partnership.		X
5.	Our community promotes tourism opportunities based on the unique characteristics of our region.	X	
6.	Our community contributes to the region, and draws from the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment, and education.	X	

- Participating in the Georgia Department of Economic Development's regional tourism partnership is not applicable for Richmond Hill.

Resource Conservation

Heritage Preservation

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

Statement		Yes	No
1.	We have designated historic districts in our community.		X
2.	We have an active historic preservation commission.		X
3.	We want new development to complement our historic development, and we have ordinances in place to ensure this.	X	

- Richmond Hill does not currently have designated historic districts in the community; however, they are in the process of designating these areas.

Open Space Preservation

New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation.

Statement		Yes	No
1.	Our community has a greenspace plan.	X	
2.	Our community is actively preserving greenspace, either through direct purchase or by encouraging set-asides in new development.	X	
3.	We have a local land conservation program, or we work with state or national land conservation programs, to preserve environmentally important areas in our community.	X	
4.	We have a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development that is widely used and protects open space in perpetuity.	X	

Environmental Protection

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

Statement		Yes	No
1.	Our community has a comprehensive natural resources inventory.	X	
2.	We use this resource inventory to steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas.	X	
3.	We have identified our defining natural resources and taken steps to protect them.	X	
4.	Our community has passed the necessary "Part V" environmental ordinances, and we enforce them.	X	
5.	Our community has a tree preservation ordinance that is actively enforced.		X
6.	Our community has a tree-replanting ordinance for new development.	X	
7.	We are using stormwater best management practices for all new development.	X	
8.	We have land use measures that will protect the natural resources in our community (steep slope regulations, floodplain or marsh protection, etc.).	X	

Social and Economic Development**Growth Preparedness**

Each community should identify and put in place the pre-requisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These might include infrastructure (e.g. roads, water, sewer) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities and managing new growth when it occurs.

Statement		Yes	No
1.	We have population projections for the next 20 years that we refer to when making infrastructure decisions.	X	
2.	Our local governments, the local school board, and other decision-making entities use the same population projections.		X
3.	Our elected officials understand the land-development process in our community.	X	
4.	We have reviewed our development regulations and/or zoning code recently, and believe that our ordinances will help us achieve our QCO goals.	X	
5.	We have a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.	X	
6.	We have designated areas of our community where we would like to see growth, and these areas are based on a natural resources inventory of our community.	X	
7.	We have clearly understandable guidelines for new development.	X	
8.	We have a citizen-education campaign to allow all interested parties to learn about development processes in our community.	X	
9.	We have procedures in place that make it easy for the public to stay informed about land use issues, zoning decisions, and proposed new development.	X	
10.	We have a public-awareness element in our comprehensive planning process.	X	

Appropriate Businesses

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

Statement		Yes	No
1.	Our economic development organization has considered our community's strengths, assets and weaknesses, and has created a business development strategy based on them.	X	
2.	Our economic development organization has considered the types of businesses already in our community, and has a plan to recruit businesses and/or industries that will be compatible.	X	
3.	We recruit firms that provide or create sustainable products.	X	
4.	We have a diverse jobs base, so that the loss of an employer will not result in significant adverse effects locally.		X

Employment Options

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

Statement		Yes	No
1.	Our economic development program has an entrepreneur support program.		X
2.	Our community has jobs for skilled labor.	X	
3.	Our community has jobs for unskilled labor.	X	
4.	Our community has professional and managerial jobs.	X	

Housing Choices

A range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community (thereby reducing commuting distances), to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.

Statement		Yes	No
1.	Our community allows accessory units like garage apartments or mother-in-law units.		X
2.	People who work in our community can also afford to live in the community.	X	
3.	Our community has enough housing for each income level (low, moderate and above average).	X	
4.	We encourage new residential development to follow the pattern of our original town, continuing the existing street design, and maintaining small setbacks.	X	
5.	We have options available for loft living, downtown living, or “neo-traditional” development.	X	
6.	We have vacant and developable land available for multifamily housing.	X	
7.	We allow multifamily housing to be developed in our community.	X	
8.	We support community development corporations that build housing for lower-income households.	X	
9.	We have housing programs that focus on households with special needs.	X	
10.	We allow small houses built on small lots (less than 5,000 square feet) in appropriate areas.	X	

Educational Opportunities

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

Statement		Yes	No
1.	Our community provides workforce training options for its citizens.		X
2.	Our workforce training programs provide citizens with skills for jobs that are available in our community.		X
3.	Our community has higher education opportunities, or is close to a community that does.	X	
4.	Our community has job opportunities for college graduates, so that our children may live and work here if they choose.	X	

Governmental Relations

Regional Solutions

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

Statement		Yes	No
1.	We participate in regional economic development organizations.	X	
2.	We participate in regional environmental organizations and initiatives, especially regarding water quality and quantity issues.	X	
3.	We work with other local governments to provide or share appropriate services, such as public transit, libraries, special education, tourism, parks and recreation, emergency response, E-911, homeland security, etc.	X	
4.	Our community thinks regionally, especially in terms of issues like land use, transportation and housing, understanding that these go beyond local government borders.	X	

Regional Cooperation

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

Statement		Yes	No
1.	We plan jointly with our cities and County for comprehensive planning purposes.	X	
2.	We are satisfied with our Service Delivery Strategy.	X	
3.	We initiate contact with other local governments and institutions in our region in order to find solutions to common problems, or to design region wide strategies.	X	
4.	We meet regularly with neighboring jurisdictions to maintain contact, build connections, and discuss issues of regional concern.	X	

Supporting Analysis of Data and Information

The following pages are an analysis of supporting data and information found in the Technical Appendix. The pertinent data and analysis of selected trends are summarized. See the Technical Appendix for detailed information from Census 2000 data, interviews, and significant other research conducted for the City of Richmond Hill's Comprehensive Plan Community Assessment. Only the evaluation and data necessary to substantiate important trends and character areas are presented in this analysis.

There are a number of trends identified that affect the City. The population growth rate is projected to increase by 80 percent by the year 2015. This rate of growth is faster than the growth rate of both Bryan County and the State during the same period. This rapid growth rate is likely related to the large amount of spillover growth experienced from neighboring Chatham County, as well as the favorable quality of life in Richmond Hill and Bryan County. Decision-makers will want to review the section identifying Issues and Opportunities to determine other trends to watch and issues to address.

The overarching trends and observations for Richmond Hill are summarized in the following statements:

- Creating housing choice and affordability is vital to the diversity and livability of the community.
- Recent population growth in the City is expected to continue, although at a slower rate over the next 20 years.
- Coordination of economic development efforts and economic diversification is essential to the long-term health of the City's economy.
- Decrease the need for residents to commute outside of Richmond Hill and Bryan County for employment by creating more employment opportunities within the City.

The policies through which community leaders choose to address these trends will determine the way in which the City of Richmond Hill will build its community and neighborhoods.

Existing Development Patterns

Due to recent growth and development experienced in the City of Richmond Hill, there is little undeveloped or vacant land available in the City—only 0.62 percent remains. Most of this undeveloped land is just south of Richmond Hill.

As such, existing development patterns indicate that the City serves primarily as a bedroom community, most likely to neighboring Chatham County and the City of Savannah. With just over 42 percent of developed land being utilized for residential uses, the City should consider developing reuse policies for areas that become obsolete or dilapidated.

Agriculture and forestry lands take up 15.68 percent of the existing land use for the City of Richmond Hill, with Parks, Recreational and Conservation lands following at 14.63 percent. This high percentage of parks and recreational land is attractive to communities such as Richmond Hill, which have a primarily residential make-up. These uses serve to increase the quality of life within the City of Richmond Hill.

Commercial and industrial land uses are 8.27 percent and 0.91 percent, respectively. Richmond Hill must continue to pursue a well-rounded balance of land uses in order to maintain and improve upon a healthy tax base. A balanced tax base is necessary to ensure adequate infrastructure and facilities are available for City residents.

Population

The Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development (CQGRD) forecasts Richmond Hill's population to reach 14,825 by 2030, a 113 percent increase from 2000. This growth will be impacted by available housing choices and job opportunities in the region.

Projections show two age cohorts increasing faster than the others do. The age cohorts are the 5 to 13 cohort, and the 35 to 44 cohort.

Per capita income has grown steadily since the 1980 Census, with projections indicating the per capita income for Richmond Hill residents in 2020 will be \$31,281. This figure is significantly higher than the 2000 per capita of \$19,000.

While income levels have increased over the last 20 years, the issue of household poverty is still relevant for many. The 2000 Census showed 10.3 percent of the population was below the poverty level. Again, the percentage of the population living in poverty has increased since the 1990 Census. Based on 1990 Census data, just below 6 percent of the population lived below the poverty level. This increase indicates an important trend for policy-makers to be aware of, especially as it relates to housing affordability.

Economic Development

According to the 2000 Census, 77 percent of the labor force in the City of Richmond Hill commutes outside of the City to work, only slightly less than the 80 percent reported in 1990.

The City has significantly changed over the last 25 years. Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative & Waste Management Services grew over 3300 percent in the 20 years between 1980 and 2000; however, this industry sector only comprised 5.4 percent of jobs in Richmond Hill's labor force. In 2000, the largest single industry sector was Educational, Health & Social Services at 18 percent, followed closely by Retail Trade at 13 percent.

Ideally situated just off of Interstate 95, Richmond Hill is blessed with a tremendous asset in its access to major roadways and waterways. With U.S. Highway 17 and SR 144 intersecting within the City and the Port of Savannah approximately 20 miles away, the City has already taken steps to attract business and industry to its community through its special tax district and Freeport tax exemption.

Tourism is another growing industry for the City of Richmond Hill. Recently awarded designation as a Preserve America community, the City is making strides in its heritage tourism efforts. In addition, J. F. Gregory City Park, Fort McAllister and the Henry Ford Plantation all serve as tourist draws and economic generators for the community.

Housing

Richmond Hill's housing stock is largely comprised of detached, single-family homes, constituting nearly 70 percent of the total housing units. Though residents are seeing some increase in multi-family options and special needs housing, availability of both are still limited.

Most of the housing stock in Richmond Hill is relatively young, with 80 percent of all housing units in the City being less than 20 years old in the year 2000. In addition, existing housing was considered to be in excellent condition at the time of the 1990 Census and the 2000 Census, having complete kitchen and plumbing facilities.

With affordable housing in the region increasingly becoming a scarce commodity, housing costs are typically rising at a faster rate than family income. For the City of Richmond Hill, the median property value experienced a 50 percent increase between 1990 and 2000 according to Census data, while the median household income increased by 43 percent during the same period.

The City should address a variety of housing policy issues. These issues include building code enforcement and promoting the construction of affordable multi-family housing through policies and ordinances that provide for higher density units where infrastructure and services are available.

Natural Resources and Cultural Resources

Richmond Hill has significant marketable natural and cultural resources, which are under constant threat of encroachment due to the rapid pace of growth in the City.

In light of this, the City has made great strides in preserving, protecting and promoting its natural resources. With 34 percent of the total land area of Richmond Hill identified as wetlands, the City has set aside Conservation Protection areas. These Conservation Protection areas represent eight percent of the total surface area of Richmond Hill, not including the 500 acres of wetlands within the wastewater treatment facility.

In addition, the City of Richmond Hill received a Coastal Incentive Grant from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources in 2004 to develop a Wetlands Education Center within the City, resulting in the John W. Stevens Wetlands Education Center.

With all of its successes, the City needs to continue efforts to promote historic preservation, including adopting a historic preservation ordinance and encouraging the activities of the newly revitalized Historic Preservation Commission.

Community Facilities

The City of Richmond Hill maintains an adequate water supply and treatment facility, serving 100 percent of the City’s population. In addition, the City has implemented a progressive approach for its sewerage system and wastewater treatment. The Georgia Municipal Association recognized Richmond Hill as a “Trendsetter” City in 2006 for its innovative method of utilizing wetlands and man-made sewage lagoons as part of its state-of-the-art Sterling Creek Wastewater Treatment Facility.

Richmond Hill’s public safety and fire protection services currently meet the needs of the existing population; however, as growth continues, the City must consider staffing requirements and equipment upgrades in order to maintain its level of services and ensure that crime rates remain low as they are presently.

The City’s parks and recreational facilities offer both passive and active recreational opportunities, appealing to a wide variety of interests and citizen needs. As with other public facilities, Richmond Hill should proactively plan for future growth demands by considering designating lands for future parks and greenspace—not only for recreational purposes but also because these amenities are increasingly becoming economic draws for industries and businesses looking to relocate.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Continuing dialogue between Richmond Hill, the City of Pembroke and Bryan County has improved due to the commitment of leadership in all jurisdictions. One example of a successful intergovernmental coordinating effort in the communities is the Joint Development Authority of Bryan County.

As with many small communities, many of Richmond Hill’s services are provided by Bryan County, though the City provides many of its own services as well, including police and fire protection; code enforcement; recycling; curbside pickup and yard debris removal; planning and zoning; road paving and maintenance; as well as water and sewer services, among many others.

Richmond Hill is served by the Bryan County School System. As growth continues, coordinated efforts between the City and County will become critical. Other opportunities for continuing improvement between jurisdictions will include the future implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, more specifically the during the Community Agenda phase that will involve a melding of the plans. This exercise will encourage increased communication and intergovernmental coordination.

Compliance with Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria

One of the goals of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 is the protection of our State’s environments, natural resources, and other significant areas. Included in the Act are minimum standards and procedures generally known as the “Environmental Planning Criteria” or “Part V Criteria” (named from Part V of House Bill 215, which became the Planning Act). In order to maintain eligibility for certain state grants, loans, and permits, local governments implement regulations consistent with these criteria.

The rules for Environmental Planning Criteria were developed by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and are part of the local government planning standards. These rules direct local governments to establish local protection efforts to conserve critical environmental resources. They are divided into the following five sections:

- Water Supply Watersheds
- Groundwater
- Wetlands
- Protected Rivers
- Protected Mountains

The City of Richmond Hill has adopted local ordinances in response to the Rule of Environmental Planning Criteria.

Analysis of Consistency with Service Delivery Strategy

The intent of the Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) is to minimize any duplication and competition among local governments. The SDS must be verified by the Department of Community Affairs in order to remain eligible for state administered grants or state permits.

As such, Richmond Hill is in compliance with the standards set forth by the State for Service Delivery.

The City of Richmond Hill maintains an amicable working relationship with staff and elected officials from surrounding jurisdictions as well as those from Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center and the Department of Community Affairs.

City of Richmond Hill

Comprehensive Plan 2007 - 2027



Technical Appendix

Prepared for:



DRAFT

February 2008

Prepared by:



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Technical Appendix

The Technical Appendix is required to meet the planning requirements of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) as outlined in the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. As such, the City of Richmond Hill is required by DCA to prepare a Comprehensive Plan that meets the requirements prescribed for an Intermediate Planning Level to retain its Qualified Local Government (QLG) certification.

The Technical Appendix provides a selective look at data from a number of sources including the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Georgia Department of Labor, DCA and local data sources.

The data is presented in the following areas:

- Population
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Natural Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Community Facilities and Services
- Intergovernmental Coordination
- Transportation

The data has been summarized in the Supporting Analysis of Data and Information section of the Executive Summary. The summary of data attempts to present important trends and implications related to each of these areas.

Population Element

The Population element provides the City of Richmond Hill with the opportunity to inventory and assess the trends and demographic characteristics of the City’s population. This information will form the foundation for planning decisions on economic development, community facilities and services, transportation, housing and land use. In addition, the element may be used as a basis for determining the desired growth rate, population densities and development patterns that are consistent with the goals and policies established in other elements of the plan. Both past and present population data are analyzed to project the future population for the City. Characteristics that are analyzed in the Population element include total population, age distribution, racial composition, and income.

Past, Present, and Projected Population Trends

Total population includes the historic, current, and projected total population of the City. Richmond Hill’s growth rate is compared to that of Bryan County, the state of Georgia, and the United States. This information will assist the community in identifying trends and future needs.

The historic data and future projections are from the Department of Community Affairs’ Data View Sets. Information contained in these tables spans a 45-year period—25 years prior to the planning period and 20 years after the planning date. The information in these tables will be used to identify past, current, and future population trends.

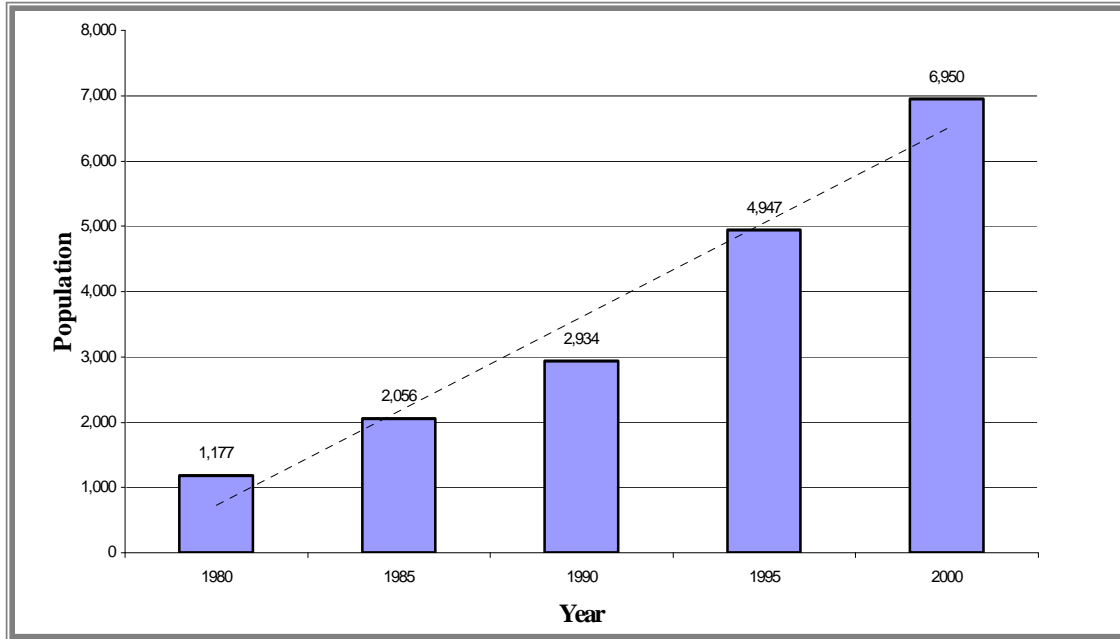
Table P-1 Population Growth, 1980-2000

Year	Richmond Hill		Bryan County	Georgia	US
	No.	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
1980	1,177	NA	NA	NA	NA
1985	2,056	74.7	25.9	8.7	4.7
1990	2,934	42.7	20.5	9.1	4.8
1995	4,947	68.6	25.8	12.6	6.7
2000	6,959	40.7	20.5	12.4	6.0

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

The population of Richmond Hill increased significantly from 1980 to 2000 (see Table P-3 and Figure P-1). During each five-year period since 1980, Richmond Hill’s population has increased from 40 to 75 percent.

Figure P-1 Richmond Hill Population



Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

The rate of population growth in Richmond Hill during the last 20 years has greatly exceeded that of Bryan County, Georgia, and the United States as shown in Table P-1. In Richmond Hill, the largest rates of change for a five-year period occurred between 1985 and 1990, and again between 1990 and 1995. A similar trend was seen in the County. However, in each five-year period during the previous 20-year period (1980-2000), Richmond Hill experienced a larger rate of growth than Bryan County. A possible explanation for this large growth rate can be attributed to the City's proximity to Savannah, which is easily accessed by both I-95 and US Highway 17. This proximity provides Richmond Hill with a prime location for city workers who would rather live in a smaller community and commute to work.

Population Projections

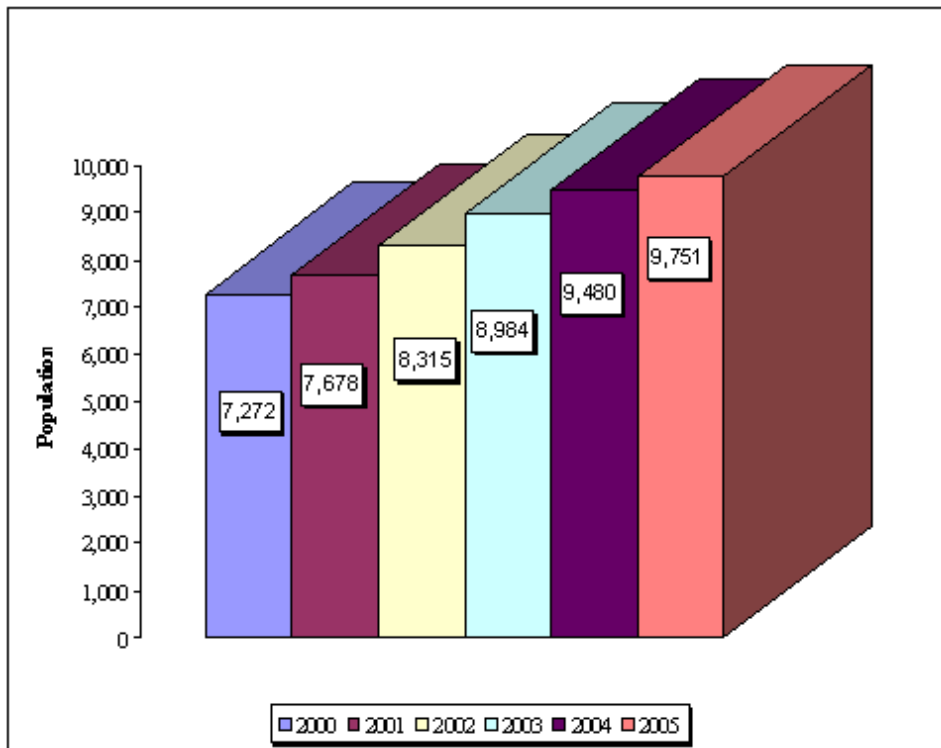
Utilizing the number of building permits issued annually, the type of construction, and the average household size (2.8 persons in the 2000 Census), the City of Richmond Hill developed its own estimation of population growth between 2000 and 2005. Richmond Hill issued between 100 and 240 building permits per year for the last 5 years, indicating dramatic growth in the City. Table P-2 and Figure P-2 support Richmond Hill's estimated population increase by demonstrating that the number of building permits have increased by more than 40 percent—from 6,959 in 2000 to 9,751, in 2005. This is significantly higher than the U. S. Census Bureau's 2005 estimate of Richmond Hill's population of 9,187. It is also higher than both the U.S. Census' and Georgia Tech's projections shown in Table P-3.

Table P-2 Richmond Hill Population Increase, 2000-2005

Year	Building Permits Issued	Population Increase	Total Population
Base Population (2000 Census)			6,959
2000	111	313	7,272
2001	144	406	7,678
2002	226	637	8,315
2003	237	668	8,984
2004	176	496	9,480
2005	96	271	9,751

Source: City of Richmond Hill

Figure P-2 Population Estimate Based on Building Permit Data¹



Source: City of Richmond Hill and Georgia Department of Community Affairs

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) developed projections, based on the US Census data, for Richmond Hill for the period 2005 to 2030 (see Table P-3).

¹ 2005 number only to 6/30; Building permit data from Richmond Hill Building Inspections Department; Average Household Size from DCA (<http://www.georgiaplanning.com/dataviews/census2/>); Average of 2000 estimate and 2005 projection (2.83 and 2.81 respectively).

According to the U.S. Bureau of Census², projections are estimates of the population for future dates. They illustrate plausible courses of future population change based on assumptions about future births, deaths, international migration, and domestic migration. Projected numbers are based on an estimated population consistent with the most recent decennial census as enumerated, projected forward using a variant of the cohort-component method. DCA also used the U. S. Bureau of Census methodology.

The Georgia Institute of Technology³ (Georgia Tech) also developed population projections for Richmond Hill through 2030. Georgia Tech utilized similar methodology as DCA in addition to adjusting its model with local data.

The DCA projections predict the population of Richmond Hill will increase by 1,445 persons each five-year period, which is a straight line projection. Estimates of population based on building permit data for 2005 show that Richmond Hill grew by 2,792 persons between 2000 and 2005 for an estimated total of 9,751, which is nearly equal to DCA’s 2010 population estimate of 9,850. Although Georgia Tech’s estimate for 2005 is very similar to Richmond Hill’s, projections for the population of Richmond Hill to increase more than 210 percent by 2030 is not far from the U.S. Census prediction of 2,255 in the same period. Both Georgia Tech and DCA anticipate Richmond Hill will continue to gain population, but at a progressively slower rate, over the next 25 years.

Table P-3 Population Projections: U.S. Census versus GA Tech

Year	U.S. Census		GA Tech	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
2000	6,959		6,959	
2005	8,405	120.8	9,839	141.4
2010	9,850	117.2	11,349	115.3
2015	11,296	114.7	12,513	110.3
2020	12,741	112.8	13,458	107.6
2025	14,187	111.3	14,228	105.7
2030	15,632	110.2	14,825	104.2

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs, GA Tech

Age Distribution and Analysis

Population data have been gathered and classified by age group for Richmond Hill. The particular age groups have been chosen because of their relationship to community needs.

² Note: The US Census (DCA) predictions follow the trend established by the decennial censuses up to and including 2000. Although this is one way to make such predictions, it may not be the best given other circumstances governing population changes occurring throughout the South. Careful analysis must be given to more than just historical trends.

³ Georgia Coast 2030: Population Projections for the 10-County Coastal Region, Center For Quality Growth And Regional Development of the Georgia Institute of Technology, September 2006

For instance, the 5-13 age group represents elementary school age students, whereas the 14-17 represents middle and high school students. The Bryan County Public School System is serving both of these age groups. The age groups of 25-34 and 35-44 represent the heart of the workforce. Residents 65 and over represent the retirement age population.

**Table P-4 Age Distribution for Richmond Hill
(Rate of Change 1980-2000)**

Age Range	1980	1985		1990		1995		2000	
	No.	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
0 – 4	91	184	202.2	277	50.5	465	67.9	653	40.4
5 – 13	163	362	222.1	561	55.0	959	70.9	1,357	41.5
14 – 17	71	106	49.3	140	32.1	247	76.4	354	43.3
18 – 20	65	88	35.4	111	26.1	185	66.7	258	39.5
21 – 24	85	122	43.5	158	29.5	261	65.2	363	39.1
25 – 34	253	452	78.7	651	44.0	917	40.9	1,182	28.9
35 – 44	143	338	236.4	532	57.4	931	75.0	1,329	42.7
45 – 54	118	157	33.1	195	24.2	457	234.4	719	57.3
55 – 64	100	118	18.0	135	14.4	204	51.1	272	33.3
65 and over	88	131	48.9	174	32.8	323	85.6	472	46.1
TOTAL	1,177	2,056	74.7	2,934	42.7	4,947	68.6	6,959	40.7

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

As noted in the assessment of the total population, Richmond Hill experienced a large population increase of approximately 75 percent from 1980 to 1985. Table P-4 shows that during this same period of time the number of children eligible to attend elementary school increased by 122.1 percent; and those in the heart of the workforce, ages 35-44, increased by 136.4 percent. In the second notable population increase within the City (1990 to 1995), the number of people age 65 and over experienced the most dramatic increase (85.6 percent), followed by the middle and high school aged children (76.4 percent). In the year 2000 the growth rate for all age groups seems to have begun to stabilize at around 40 percent.

Table P-5 shows projections for 2005 to 2020. The growth rate for all groups appears to be about 20 percent in 2005 (from the base established by the 2000 Census—not shown). This trend is quite a dramatic decrease from the previous five years. In 2005, the two groups with the most dramatic increase are elementary school age children and adults from 35-44 years old (22.0 percent and 22.3 percent, respectively). The rate of growth for all age groups is expected to slowly and steadily decline over the next 25 years, with the average projected growth rate for all groups to be approximately 11 percent.

**Table P-5 Richmond Hill Projected Age Distribution
(Rate of Change 2005-2025)**

Age	2005	2010		2015		2020		2025	
	No.	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
0 – 4	794	934	17.6	1,075	15.1	1,215	13.0	1,356	11.6
5 – 13	1,656	1,954	18.0	2,253	15.3	2,551	13.2	2,850	11.7
14 – 17	425	496	16.7	566	14.1	637	12.5	708	11.1
18 – 20	306	355	16.0	403	13.5	451	11.9	499	10.6
21 – 24	433	502	15.9	572	13.9	641	12.1	711	10.9
25 – 34	1,414	1,647	16.5	1,879	14.1	2,111	12.3	2,343	11.0
35 – 44	1,626	1,922	18.2	2,219	15.5	2,515	13.3	2,812	11.8
45 – 54	869	1,020	17.4	1,170	14.7	1,320	12.8	1,470	11.4
55 – 64	315	358	13.7	401	12.0	444	10.7	487	9.7
65 and over	568	664	16.9	760	14.5	856	12.6	952	11.2
TOTAL	8,405	9,850	17.2	11,296	14.7	12,741	12.8	14,187	11.3

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Race and Ethnicity

Racial composition includes the historic, current, and projected racial breakdown of the residents of Richmond Hill (see Table P-6). Race is broken into five categories: White, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, and Other. The Other category includes mixed races.

Table P-6 Race Distribution for Richmond Hill (Percentage of the Population)

Race	1980		1990		2000		2010		2020	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
White	1,141	96.9	2,771	94.4	5,656	81.3	7,914	80.3	10,171	79.8
African American	32	2.7	119	4.1	953	13.7	1,414	14.4	1,874	14.7
American Indian	0	0.0	5	0.2	42	0.6	63	0.6	84	0.7
Asian American	2	0.2	26	0.9	102	1.5	152	1.5	202	1.6
Other	2	0.2	13	0.4	206	3.0	308	3.1	410	3.2
TOTAL	1,177	100.0	2,934	100.0	6,959	100.0	9,850	100.0	12,741	100.0

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Richmond Hill is predominately populated by White citizens. In the last census, the White population comprised 81.3 percent of the total population. This number is down from 1980, in which the category held 96.9 percent of the City’s citizens. The White

percentage of the population is projected to continue to decline while all other categories will continue to increase. In the year 2020, nearly 80 percent of the population is expected to be White, 15 percent African American, 3 percent Other, 2 percent Asian, and 1 percent American Indian.

Table P-7 Race Distribution of Bryan County (Percentage of the Population)

Race	1980		1990		2000		2010		2020	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
White	7,938	78.0	13,018	84.3	19,386	82.8	25,110	83.6	30,834	84.1
African American	2,190	21.5	2,293	14.9	3,311	14.1	3,872	12.9	4,432	12.1
American Indian	19	0.2	27	0.2	74	0.3	102	0.3	129	0.4
Asian American	10	0.1	73	0.5	197	0.8	291	1.0	384	1.0
Other	18	0.2	27	0.2	449	1.9	665	2.2	880	2.4
TOTAL	10,175		15,438		23,417		30,038		36,659	

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Historically, Richmond Hill has had a lower percentage of minority citizens than Bryan County (see Table P-7). By the year 2020, the County is projected to be 84.1 percent White, 12.1 percent African American, 2.4 percent Other, one percent Asian, and less than one percent American Indian.

Table P-8 Hispanic Population Growth Rate in Richmond Hill

Year	No.	Percentage of Population (%)	Rate of Change (%)
1980	9	0.8	NA
1985	26	1.3	288.9
1990	42	1.4	61.5
1995	150	3.0	357.1
2000	258	3.7	72.0
Projection			
2005	320	3.8	24.0
2010	383	3.9	19.7
2015	445	3.9	16.2
2020	507	4.0	13.9
2025	569	4.0	12.2

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Richmond Hill’s Hispanic population is represented in Table P-6 in various racial categories. Table P-8 pulls these numbers out of the existing categories and analyzes the Hispanic population separately. It is clear to see that the Hispanic population within the City has increased dramatically over the last twenty years averaging an annual growth of nearly 140 percent. Future projections show the Hispanic population of Richmond Hill continuing to increase over the next 20 years, but at a much slower rate. Projections into the next 20-year period show this population remaining relatively stable at approximately 4 percent of the City’s total population.

Income Distribution

Per capita income is the average income computed for every man, woman, and child in a geographic area. It is derived by dividing the total income of all people 15 years old and over in a geographic area by the total population of that area. Income data are not collected for people under 15 years old even though these people are included in the denominator of the per capita income equation. This measure is rounded to the nearest whole dollar.

Table P-9 Per Capita Income and Rate of Change (1996 Dollars)

Jurisdiction	1980		1990		2000		2010		2020	
	\$		\$	(%)	\$	(%)	\$	(%)	\$	(%)
Richmond Hill	6,501		12,156	87.0	18,891	55.4	25,086	32.8	31,281	24.7
Bryan County	4,883		11,083	227.0	19,794	78.6	27,250	37.7	34,705	27.4
Georgia	NA		13,631	NA	21,154	55.2	NA	NA	NA	NA

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Table P-9 shows the greatest increase in per capita income for residents of Richmond Hill and Bryan County from 1980 to 1990. During this period, the per capita income of Richmond Hill increased by nearly 90 percent, resulting in a 1990 per capita income of approximately \$12,000. From 1990 to 2000, the per capita income of the City increased another 55 percent, resulting in a 2000 per capita income to nearly \$19,000. This number is projected to increase over the next 20 years, but at a slower rate. Per capita income for the City in 2020 is expected to be \$31,281.

Table P-10 Income Distribution as a Percentage of the Population

Income	1990		2000	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Less than \$9999	70	6.7	223	9.0
\$10000 - \$14999	96	9.2	133	5.3
\$15000 - \$19999	127	12.2	115	4.6
\$20000 - \$29999	178	17.1	305	12.3
\$30000 - \$34999	61	5.9	134	5.4
\$35000 - \$39999	101	9.7	169	6.8
\$40000 - \$49999	130	12.5	208	8.4
\$50000 - \$59999	142	13.7	280	11.3
\$60000 - \$74999	101	9.7	413	16.6
\$75000 - \$99999	25	2.4	290	11.7
\$100000 - \$124999	8	0.8	123	4.9
\$125000 - \$149999	0	0.0	49	2.0
\$150000 and above	0	0.0	46	1.8
TOTAL	1,039	100.0	2,488	100.0

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Income distribution data for Richmond Hill residents in 1990 and 2000 are provided in Table P-10. In 1990 income levels clustered between \$15,000-\$29,999 (29.3 percent) and \$40,000-\$59,999 (26.2 percent). In 2000, the percentage of the population earning less than \$60,000 decreased by 23.2 percent, while the percentage of those earning more than \$60,000 increased by 24.1 percent.

Table P-11 Population for Whom Poverty Status is Determined

Population	1989	1999
Income below poverty	171	722
Total Population	2,934	6,982
Percentage of Population	5.8	10.3

Source: U.S. Census, 1990 STF3 and 2000 SF3

From 1989 to 1999, the percentage of the population earning an income below the poverty level has increased from 5.8 percent to 10.3 percent of the total population (Table P-11).

As shown in Table P-12, the median household income in Georgia, Bryan County and Richmond Hill experienced substantial increases. In 1989, Richmond Hill's median household income was higher than those of Georgia and Bryan County. In 1999, however, the median household income in Richmond Hill still exceeded that of the state of Georgia, but remained lower than Bryan County's median household income.

Table P-12 Median Household Income

	1989	1999	% Change
Georgia	29,021	42,433	46.2
Bryan County	28,623	48,345	68.9
Richmond Hill	32,917	47,061	43.0

Source: U.S. Census, 1990 STF3 and 2000 SF3

Economic Development

The purpose of the Economic Development element is to provide a multi-dimensional picture of the City's economy through a broad range of data and information. The element explores the health of the local economy and the relationship between City government and its responsibilities, such as establishing and enforcing land use policies and regulating new development. This chapter provides the local government the opportunity to inventory and assess the community's economic base, labor force characteristics, and local economic development opportunities and resources; to determine economic needs and goals, and to merge this information with information about population trends and characteristics, natural resources, community facilities and services, housing and land use in order to set forth a strategy that will help create a viable, well-balanced economy.

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) states in its State Planning Goals and Objectives for Local Planning Requirements that the goal for a community's economic development should be "to achieve a growing and balanced economy, consistent with the prudent management of the state's resources that equitably benefits all segments of the population." The overall goal is to retain and enhance an economy that reinforces Richmond Hill's character and promotes its assets.

Economic development can be defined as the process of creating and maintaining a healthy local economy. Because the economy plays such a vital role in all aspects of community life, it is important to carefully examine the economy in the comprehensive planning process. A healthy economy can serve as a tool to help accomplish other goals. As such, it is important that the Economic Development section be integrated with all elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

The following pages look at the economic data for the City of Richmond Hill and Bryan County, as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), the Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL), Georgia Tech's Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development (CQGRD), as well as interviews with regional and local officials.

The discussion of the City of Richmond Hill includes comparative data with Bryan County, the 10-county coastal Georgia region, and the State at large. The objective of this review is to provide an overview of the economy for the City of Richmond Hill and its residents.

Economic Conditions

While understanding trends in Richmond Hill's employment sector is certainly important, it is also necessary to understand the broader picture of economic development as it applies to the local industry mix throughout Bryan County. The local industry mix is measured by the number of jobs in each sector. Based on figures from 2000, the study released by the CQGRD in 2006 reveals that 75 percent of the County's employment is concentrated within four sectors—services, retail, state and local government, and

construction. Table ED-1 provides base figures for 2000 as well as industry projections for 2030.

Table ED-1 Bryan County Industry Projections, 2000 and 2030

Year	Construction	Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	Manufacturing	Retail	Services	State/Local Govt.
2000	13.4%	8.8%	4.2%	18.1%	25.6%	18.0%
2030	14.3%	8.7%	0.2%	16.0%	32.8%	17.7%
Change	0.9%	0.0%	-2.2%	-2.1%	7.2%	-0.3%

Source: CQGRD Study, 2006, based on Woods & Poole, Economics, Inc.

Employment figures for 2030 are based on industry projections from Woods and Poole, Economics, Inc. As Table ED-1 indicates, only the services and construction industries are expected to grow, at 7.2 percent and 0.9 percent respectively. Conversely, this growth will likely be offset by downward trends in the manufacturing, retail, and state and local government sectors, which are expected to experience job losses at -2.2 percent, -2.1 percent and -0.3 percent, respectively. While Bryan County only had 7,000 jobs in the year 2000, that number is expected to almost double by 2030 to 13,500 jobs—an increase of 92.9 percent.⁴

Economic Base

Understanding the economy of the region, and most importantly the County as a whole, is critical to the process of identifying economic issues and opportunities affecting the City of Richmond Hill. The following discussion will provide insight into the economic influences for the City. These influences must be viewed within the larger scope of the region, state and nation.

The term “employment” describes people that work in Richmond Hill, whereas the term “labor force” describes residents of Richmond Hill that work. A large segment of Richmond Hill’s labor force is employed outside of the City; an equally large portion of Richmond Hill’s employment base lives outside of Bryan County.

The existing conditions of the community have been inventoried by examining employment, wages, and planned economic activities.

Employment by Industry

Employment in the City of Richmond Hill has changed significantly over the last 25 years. Table ED-2 shows the change in employment by industry from 1980 to 2000.

⁴ Georgia Coast 2030: Population Projections for the 10-County Coastal Region, CENTER FOR QUALITY GROWTH AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, September 2006.

Table ED-2
City of Richmond Hill Change in Employment by Industry, 1980-2000

	1980	2000	Percent Change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting & Mining	11	7	-36.4
Construction	31	232	648.4
Manufacturing	110	396	260.0
Wholesale Trade	16	216	1,250.0
Retail Trade	93	415	346.2
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	49	246	402.0
Information	NA	49	NA
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	30	183	510.0
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative & Waste Management Services	5	174	3,380.0
Educational, Health & Social Services	69	578	737.7
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation & Food Services	48	361	652.1
Other Services	15	166	1,006.7
Public Administration	85	171	101.2
Total Employed Civilian Population	562	3,194	468.3

Source: DCA Dataview

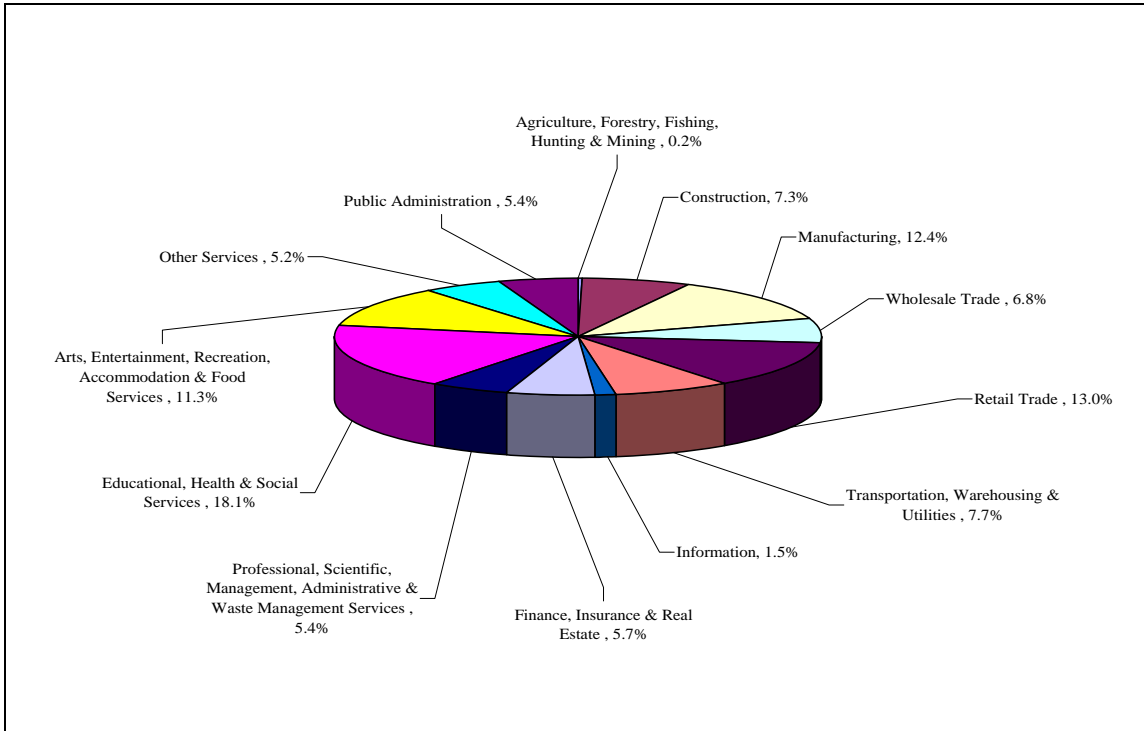
The total employed civilian, or non-military, population grew over 450 percent during the years between 1980 and 2000. Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative and Waste Management Services grew over 3,300 percent in employment during that time period. Other industries experiencing tremendous growth were the Wholesale Trade and Other Services categories both over 1,000 percent. However, it is important to note that because the “Other Services” category is so vague, it is difficult to determine just where this growth occurred and what implications this change has on the City of Richmond Hill.

The only industry sector experiencing a decline in Richmond Hill was Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting & Mining, which dropped 36 percent over the 20-year period.

Based on 2000 U.S. Census data, the four largest employment sectors for the City of Richmond Hill are Educational, Health & Social Services at 18 percent; Retail Trade at 13 percent; Manufacturing at 12 percent; and Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation & Food Services at 11 percent.

Figure ED-1 provides further analysis of these estimates.

Figure ED-1 City of Richmond Hill Employment by Industry, 2000



Source: DCA Dataview

Regional and National Comparisons

Regionally, the City of Richmond Hill is equidistant from the Cities of Savannah and Hinesville. Twenty miles southwest of Savannah, Richmond Hill is only 20 miles from neighboring Hinesville—also southwest of Savannah and Richmond Hill. Located off of Interstate 95, the presence of the Interstate, U.S. 17 and SR 144 provide easy access to the City. The presence of Fort Stewart, just 24 miles away, is another regional draw to the City.

A Shift-Share analysis of coastal Georgia’s employment, based on the 10-county CGRDC region, provides an examination of industry sectors that have a competitive share of the regional economy. Utilizing data obtained from the University of Georgia, several regional industry sectors have a competitive share of regional employment.⁵ The top three sectors identified by GeorgiaStats were Education and Health Services; Trade, Transportation, and Utilities; and the Professional and Business Services sector.

With 19,462 jobs across all industry sectors, the competitive share component reveals that the CGRDC 10-county region is secure in obtaining additional employment, indicating a productive advantage. The findings of this analysis provide encouragement

⁵ Figures obtained from the GEORGIA STATISTICS SYSTEM: ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYMENT CHANGES, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA. July 2007, www.georgiastates.uga.edu/sasweb/cgi-bin/broker

for economic development prospects not only for the 10-county region, but also for the City of Richmond Hill.

The analysis of the regional economy is not complete without a closer look at the overall changes in employment. Again, a regional approach is appropriate in that people do not live, or frequently, work within the boundaries of a city’s limits or county line. People’s shopping habits and community patterns inevitably spill over into neighboring communities, affecting their economies and respective costs of living.

As such, Table ED-3 illustrates the employment changes across the region from 2000 to 2005 by industry sector. Table ED-3 gives employment figures as well as the change in percent growth.

Table ED-3 Employment Changes in the Region, 2000-2005

Sector	Employment, 2000	Employment, 2005	Employment Change	Percent Growth, 2000 - 2005
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	48,256	52,316	4,060	8.4
Education and Health Services	33,877	45,303	11,426	33.7
Leisure and Hospitality	29,749	33,899	4,150	14
Professional and Business Services	21,894	25,445	3,551	16.2
Manufacturing	26,862	21,974	-4,888	-18.2
Public Administration	15,062	16,910	1,848	12.3
Construction	12,659	13,671	1,012	8
Financial Activities	8,202	10,859	2,657	32.4
Other Services	7,784	7,409	-375	-4.8
Information	3,572	2,993	-579	-16.2
Natural Resources and Mining	976	1,062	86	8.8
Total	208,893	231,841	22,948	

Source: www.georgiastats.uga.edu

In 2005, the region reported a diverse economy, with no single sector dominating the market or accounting for more than 23 percent of the total economy. While Trade, Transportation and Utilities industry was the largest, accounting for almost 23 percent of the economy, it experienced some of the smallest growth rates in the period from 2000 to 2005. Education and Health Services experienced the most growth at approximately 34 percent and comprised 19.5 percent of the total economy. Financial Services, also experiencing significant growth from 2000 to 2005 at 32 percent, only represented 4.7 percent of the overall economy.

It is important to recognize that the timeframe from 2000 to 2005 represents a recovery period for the entire nation from an economic downturn that began in 1999.

Table ED-4 offers a comparative analysis of the industry mix in 2000 for the City of Richmond Hill, Bryan County and the state of Georgia. As Table ED-4 reveals, the industry mix for Richmond Hill largely reflects that of the state of Georgia, except in the areas of Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing/Hunting & Mining; Professional, Management, Administrative & Waste Management Services; and Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation & Food Services.

With Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing/Hunting & Mining taking up less of the job market than other areas of the State, this trend implicates that Richmond Hill serves as a more urban/suburban community that is either developed or experiencing significant development. As the latter is the case in the City of Richmond Hill, the trends seen in the other sectors are typical of a bedroom community—the Professional, Management, Administrative and Waste Management Services industry in Richmond Hill takes up four percent less of the job market in the City than it does in other parts for the State, suggesting people employed in this industry work elsewhere. In addition, the Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services industry is stronger in the City than in other areas of Georgia, indicating a significant portion of the population spends their leisure time in the community. Another possibility is that area residents, such as those in other parts of the County, travel to Richmond Hill for these services.

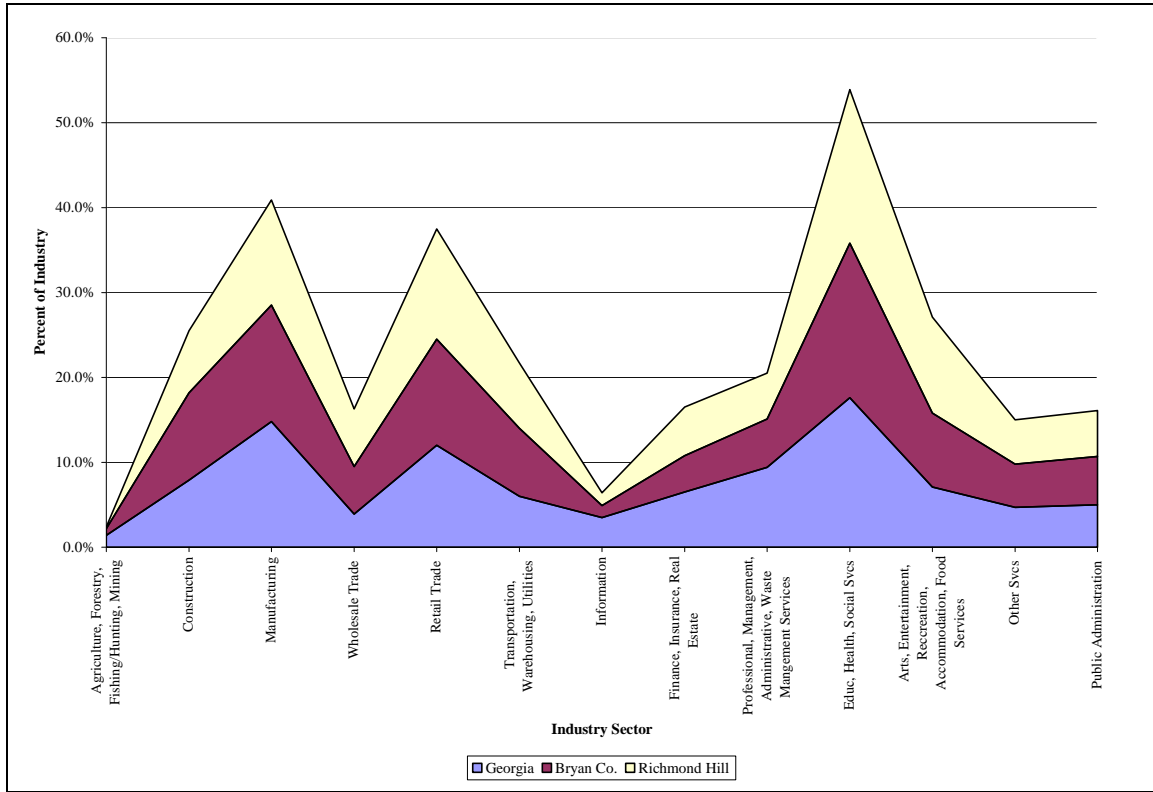
Table ED-4 Comparison of Industry Mix, 2000

	Georgia	Bryan Co.	Richmond Hill
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing/Hunting, Mining	1.4%	0.8%	0.2%
Construction	7.9%	10.3%	7.3%
Manufacturing	14.8%	13.7%	12.4%
Wholesale Trade	3.9%	5.6%	6.8%
Retail Trade	12.0%	12.5%	13.0%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	6.0%	8.0%	7.7%
Information	3.5%	1.4%	1.5%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	6.5%	4.3%	5.7%
Professional, Management, Administrative, Waste Management Services	9.4%	5.7%	5.4%
Education, Health, Social Services	17.6%	18.2%	18.1%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, Food Services	7.1%	8.7%	11.3%
Other Services	4.7%	5.1%	5.2%
Public Administration	5.0%	5.7%	5.4%

Source: DCA Dataview

Figure ED-2 provides another perspective of the same data regarding the industry mix in Richmond Hill, Bryan County and the state of Georgia.

Figure ED-2
Comparison of Industry Mix: Georgia, Bryan County and Richmond Hill, 2000



Source: DCA Dataview

Because employment by industry data is not available for the United States, limited comparative analysis is available. However, 2000 U.S. Census figures indicate that the total employed civilian population for the nation grew by approximately 12 percent from 1990 to 2000, an increase of 14,040,310 jobs.

As seen in Table ED-5, the growth in overall employment experience in Richmond Hill (119 percent) and the surrounding area was significantly higher than both the nation and the state of Georgia, demonstrating the rapid growth and development occurring in the coastal region. Richmond Hill is the primary benefactor of this healthy and vibrant economy.

Table ED-5
Comparison of Change in Total Employed Civilian Population, 1990-2000

	Percent Change:
United States	12.1
Georgia	24.3
Bryan County	61.5
Richmond Hill	119.4
Pembroke	59.6

Source: DCA Dataview

Labor Force

While economic development certainly encompasses more than jobs and job growth, it is imperative that a community be well aware of its labor force—both its strengths and limitations. As one definition states that economic development is “the process of improving a community’s well-being through job creation, business growth, and income growth as well as through improvements to the wider social and natural environment that strengthens the economy,”⁶ the power of the labor force is undeniably the driving force of a healthy economy, in all respects.

The following discussion provides an overview of the City of Richmond Hill’s labor force, as well as that of greater Bryan County and the surrounding area.

Employment Status

According to the 2000 Census, the City of Richmond Hill has a total employed labor force of 3,194 people. Within the private wage or salary workers “Class of Worker” labor force there were 2,494 people in 2000, an increase of 231 percent from 1990 to 2000 (Table ED-6). The Government workers category showed a labor force of 549 in 2000, with a growth rate of 80.6 percent between 1990 and 2000. In 2000, there were 151 self-employed workers, increasing from 75 in 1990. This figure represents an increase of approximately 200 percent.

Table ED-6
Richmond Hill Employed Labor Force, 1990-2000

Class of Worker	1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000
Private Wage or Salary Workers	1,077	2,494	231.6
Government Workers	304	549	80.6
Self-Employed Workers	75	151	201.3
Unpaid Family Workers	0	0	
TOTAL	1,456	3,194	

Source: US Bureau of Census 1990 and 2000

Table ED-7 presents information on labor force participation by sex in 2000. The City of Richmond Hill had a total labor force (employed and unemployed) of 3,605 persons, with 73.6 percent of the population ages 16 years and older in the labor force. Male participation (81.2 percent) in the labor force was higher than that of females (67.2 percent). The labor force participation rate is a measure of the extent to which the working-age population actively participates in the structured or documented, local economy. Low participation rates could indicate problems with certain segments of the working-age population that have adequate access to jobs and economic opportunities.

⁶ An Economic Development Toolbox: Strategies and Methods. APA, Report Number 541, October 2006.

Table ED-7
Richmond Hill Labor Force Participation (Persons 16 Years and Over) by Sex, 2000

Labor Force Status	Males	% of Males	Females	% of Females	Total Male and Female	% of Total Persons (16 and over)
In Labor Force	1,826	81.2	1,779	67.2	3,605	73.6
Not in Labor Force	424	18.8	869	32.8	1,293	26.4
Total Population	2,250		2,648		4,898	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000

Earnings, Wages and Personal Income

Table ED-8 compares the annual median earnings of residents in Richmond Hill and Bryan County in 1999. As with employment statistics throughout this chapter, the differences between Richmond Hill and Bryan County are minimal.

Table ED-8
Median Earnings in 1999 (Dollars) by Sex for Population 16 Years and Over with Earnings

Median Earnings in 1999 (Dollars) by Sex for Population 16 years and over with earnings	Richmond Hill	Bryan County
Total	26,812	26,774
Male	33,472	34,375
Female	18,779	18,937

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000

Although data for weekly wages are not available at the city-level, the most current data on average weekly wages by economic industry are provided below for Bryan County (see Table ED-9). In 2003, the highest average weekly wage in Bryan County was in Manufacturing, followed by the Federal Government, Wholesale Trade, Finance, and State Government industries.

Table ED-9
Average Weekly Wages for Bryan County, 1990-2003

Industry	1990	1995	2000	2003
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	* ⁷	\$287	\$340	\$380
Mining	*	*	*	*
Construction	315	390	497	601
Manufacturing	376	447	611	879
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	-*	424	442	638
Wholesale Trade	457	635	501	783
Retail Trade	204	187	250	393
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	389	517	558	706
Services	207	237	335	514
Federal Government	*	*	*	861
State Government	418	479	562	644
Local Government	*	*	*	568

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

Table ED-10 compares average weekly wages for all industries in Bryan County to those of the Savannah Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)⁸, as well as the state of Georgia, from 1990 through 2004. Bryan County had an average weekly wage of \$501 in 2004, which is about 26 percent lower than that of the Savannah MSA (\$632) and about 45 percent lower than the State (\$728). Bryan County's average wages increased by 3.5 percent per year since 1990, as did the Savannah MSA. The State's annual average wage increase was 4.4 percent over the 14-year period.

⁷ *Denotes confidential data relating to individual employers and cannot be released. (Georgia Department of Labor)

⁸ The Savannah MSA consists of Bryan, Chatham and Effingham Counties in Georgia. In addition, Liberty and Long Counties complete the Combined MSA for Savannah, Hinesville and Fort Stewart. The Savannah Market Trade Area extends into the South Carolina counties of Beaufort and Jasper (Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce, 2007).

Table ED-10
Comparison of Average Weekly Wages for All Industries, Georgia and Bryan County, 1990-2004

Year	Bryan County	Savannah MSA	Georgia	% Difference ⁹	
				Bryan County / Savannah MSA	Bryan County / Georgia
1990	\$284	\$405	\$424	42.6	49.3
1991	311	414	444	33.1	42.8
1992	305	424	471	39.0	54.4
1993	303	437	480	44.2	58.4
1994	305	445	488	45.9	60.0
1995	311	459	509	47.6	63.7
1996	322	482	531	49.7	64.9
1997	342	497	562	45.3	64.3
1998	364	533	598	46.4	64.3
1999	385	551	629	43.1	63.4
2000	407	563	658	28.8	57.2
2001	437	580	687	27.5	54.7
2002	455	592	704	26.5	50.4
2003	468	605	704	4.3	21.4
2004	501	632	728	26.1	45.3

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

As seen in Table ED-11, aggregate earnings for Bryan County¹⁰ increased at a rate of 85 percent over the 10-year span from 1990 to 2000. Agriculture earnings decreased 27 percent between 1980 and 1990, rising sharply by 402 percent from 1990 to 2000.

Construction earnings saw a 229 percent rate increase between 1980 and 1990, increasing again by 267 percent from 1990 to 2000.

Weekly wages for the Finance industry grew by 322 percent from 1980 from 1990. The industry also experienced a 287 percent increase from 1990 to 2000.

In addition, Transportation wages increased 44 percent from 1980 to 1990, and again experienced a sharp increase of 258 percent from 1990 to 2000.

⁹ Ratio = Georgia Average Weekly Wages divided by Bryan Average Weekly Wages

¹⁰ Note: As seen throughout the Economic Development Element, it is relevant to analyze Bryan County data when specific data for Richmond Hill is unavailable. It should be clear that a large percentage of economic activity in the County is occurring in Richmond Hill.

From 1980 to 1990, Wholesale Trade in Bryan County saw the largest increase for the 10-year period, growing nearly 400 percent. The wages for this industry continued to grow from 1990 to 2000, yet at a lower rate of 77 percent.

Table ED-11 Aggregate Earnings by Industry for Bryan County, 1980-2000

Industry	1980		1990			2000		
	\$ Amount	% of Total	\$ Amount	% of Total	% Change	\$ Amount	% of Total	% Change
Farm Earnings	\$1,045,000	2.5	\$820,000	1.1		\$729,000	0.5	
Agriculture	\$533,000	1.3	\$391,000	0.5	-26.6	\$1,572,000	1.1	402.0
Mining	\$0	0	\$0	0	NA	\$7,000	0	NA
Construction	\$3,170,000	7.6	\$7,242,000	9.7	228.5	\$19,364,000	14	267.4
Manufacturing	\$10,002,000	24.1	\$10,828,000	14.5	8.3	\$10,683,000	7.7	-1.3
Transportation	\$2,269,000	5.5	\$3,272,000	4.4	44.2	\$8,443,000	6.1	258.0
Wholesale Trade	\$609,000	1.5	\$2,403,000	3.2	394.6	\$4,257,000	3.1	77.2
Retail Trade	\$6,310,000	15.2	\$11,464,000	15.4	81.7	20,281,000	14.7	76.9
Finance	\$978,000	2.4	\$3,146,000	4.2	321.7	\$9,032,000	6.5	287.1
Services	\$7,093,000	17.1	\$13,445,000	18	89.6	27,624,000	20	205.5
Fed Govt - Civilian	\$773,000	1.9	\$1,142,000	1.5	47.7	\$2,109,000	1.5	84.7
Fed Govt - Military	\$1,067,000	2.6	\$2,823,000	3.8	264.6	\$1,594,000	1.2	-43.5
State & Local Govt	\$7,593,000	18.3	\$17,557,000	23.6	231.2	32,217,000	23.4	83.5
Total Earnings	41,442,000		74,533,000			137,912,000		85.0

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Table ED-12 demonstrates that personal income for Richmond Hill residents increased by 365 percent from 1990 to 2000. All income categories experienced dynamic rates of change within those ten years, with staggering increases occurring in Social Security (1,045 percent), Retirement (1,035 percent), and Self-Employment (758 percent) income categories.

Table ED-12 Personal Income by Type for Richmond Hill (in dollars), 1990-2000

Aggregate Income Category	Richmond Hill				
	1990		2000		
	\$	% of Total	\$	% of Total	% Change
Wage or salary income for households	31,795,216	87	103,710,000	77.8	326.2
Other types of income for households	31,795,216	1.1	103,710,000	2.2	326.2
Self employment income for households	392,517	3.9	2,974,500	2.3	757.8
Interest, dividends, or net rental income	1,421,488	1.4	3,105,900	4.1	218.5
Social security income for households	516,976	3.6	5,400,900	3.2	1,044.7
Public assistance income for households	1,326,914	0.1	4,232,000	0.3	318.9
Retirement income for households	43,200	2.9	447,200	10.1	1,035.2
Total income	36,541,951		133,340,000		364.9

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

Georgia's total income for the same 10-year period, as outlined in Table ED-13, increased by a rate of 95 percent. This increase also demonstrates growth in most personal income categories, albeit much less dramatic than that of Richmond Hill. The State's only category showing a decrease from 1990 to 2000 was Public Assistance, which declined almost 100 percent.

Table ED-13 Personal Income by Type for Georgia (in dollars)

Aggregate Income Category	Georgia				
	1990		2000		
	\$	% of Total	\$	% of Total	% Change
Wage or salary income for households	68,393,747,335	78.5	133,220,601,500	78.2	
Other types of income for households	980,166,673	1.1	2,897,846,900	1.7	295.6
Self employment income for households	5,450,375,467	6.3	9,529,395,400	5.6	74.8
Interest, dividends, or net rental income	4,897,744,209	5.6	8,973,470,100	5.3	83.2
Social security income for households	3,776,110,950	4.3	6,881,827,400	4.0	82.2
Public assistance income for households	625,890,309	0.7	374,957	0.0	-99.9
Retirement income for households	2,990,380,519	3.4	7,776,117,500	4.6	260.0
Total income	87,114,415,462		170,271,810,700		95.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 – 2000

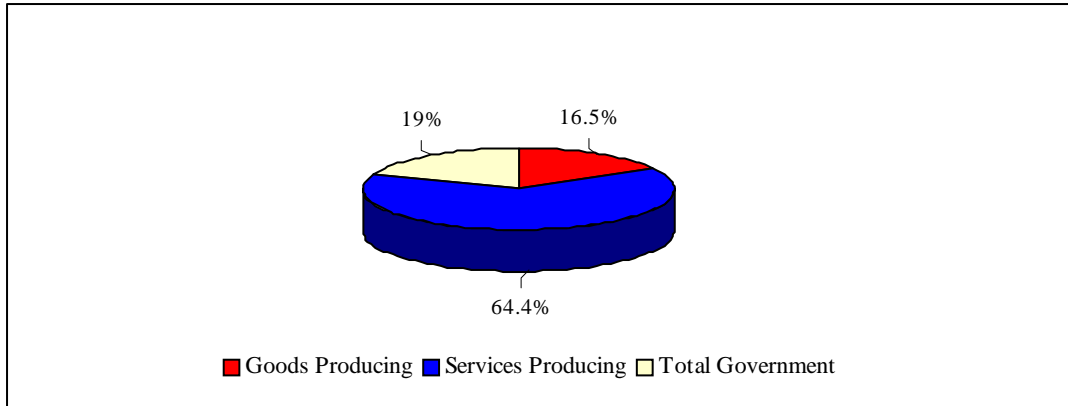
Occupations

As discussed earlier, Figure ED-3 demonstrates that Service Producing industries were the dominant sector in Bryan County¹¹ in 2003. Service Producing industries, identified in Figure ED-4, accounted for the largest share (64.4 percent) of employment in 2003 (Figure ED-3). Bryan County’s second largest employment sector was Government, largely due to the presence of Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield. In 2003, this sector accounted for 19 percent of the community’s employment. Goods Producing industries represented the third largest sector employer in 2003 for Bryan County.

The Service Producing and Goods Producing industries both continue to grow in Bryan County as well as throughout the entire coastal Georgia region, as indicated in the 2004 Coastal Georgia Regional Plan. The coastal region as a whole surpasses surrounding regions, the State, and the nation in the growth of the services sector. This trend has been attributed to the recent growth in the coastal region’s population as well as the expansion and promotion of tourism. Population growth and tourism development are both service-intensive.

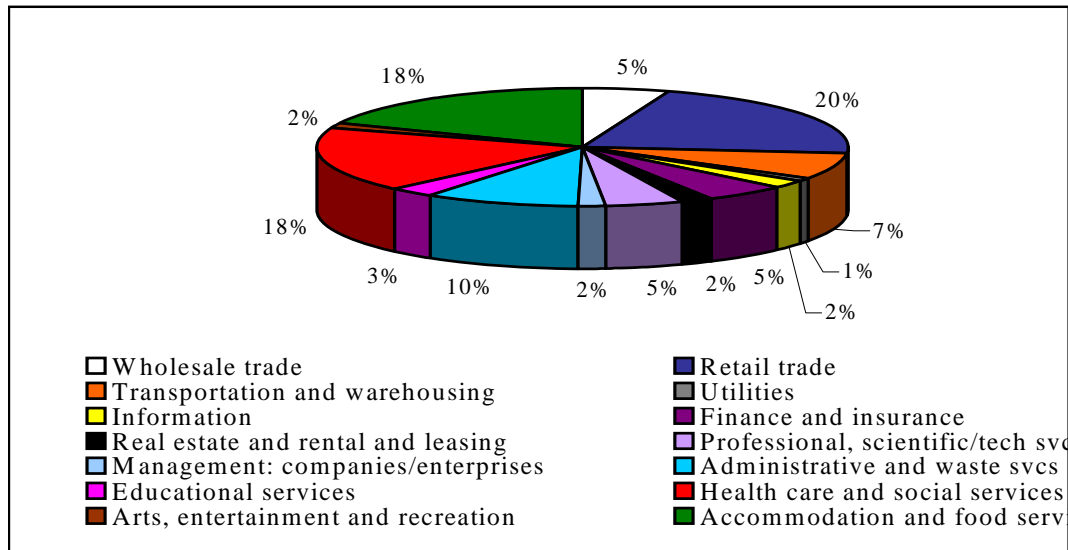
¹¹ Source: <http://explorer.dol.state.ga.us/mis/profiles/Counties/bryan.pdf>

Figure ED-3 Employment by Major Sector in Bryan County, 2003



Source: Georgia Department of Labor¹²

Figure ED-4 Employment by Service Producing Industry Type in Bryan County, 2003



Source: Georgia Department of Labor

Building off of previous analysis in Figure ED-1, Figure ED-4 demonstrates Bryan County’s Service Producing industry in 2003, based on data from the Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL).

As Figure ED-4 illustrates, in 2003 Bryan County’s largest Service Producing industry was Retail Trade, accounting for 20 percent of the Service Producing jobs. Following Retail Trade as the County’s next largest Service Producing industries are Accommodations and Food Services at 18 percent, Health Care and Social Services, also at 18 percent, and Administrative and Waste Services at 11.2 percent.

¹² For more information on Industrial Classification go to the Georgia Department of Labor website at www.dol.state.ga.us/wp/industry_data.htm.

Unemployment

Another key issue for assessing a community's economic situation is the unemployment rate. In 2000, the unemployment rate in Richmond Hill was 2.7 percent, down from 3.1 percent in 1990. A similar trend occurred in Bryan County where the unemployment rate declined from a high of 4.2 percent in 1990 to 3.1 percent in 2000.

While data is not available at the city-level for Richmond Hill in 2006, the Georgia Department of Labor does provide estimates for Bryan County. In 2006, Bryan County's unemployment rate was 3.5 percent, which was lower than both the state of Georgia and the United States' unemployment rates at 4.6 percent each.

Table ED-14 demonstrates the historical unemployment status for the labor force in the CGRDC's 10-county region¹³, Bryan County and the state of Georgia. In 2006, the Department of Labor estimated an unemployment rate of 3.5 for Bryan County, compared to 4.1 for the coastal Georgia region and 4.6 for the state of Georgia.

¹³ The Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center covers a 10-county area, including Bryan, Bulloch, Camden, Chatham, Effingham, Glynn, Liberty, Long, McIntosh and Screven Counties

Table ED-14
Unemployment Rate for the Coastal Region, Bryan County and Georgia, 1990-2005

Year	Unemployed Coastal Region	Rate (%)	Unemployed Bryan County	Rate (%)	Unemployed Georgia	Rate (%)
1990	9,759	4.7	300	4.2	170,747	5.2
1991	9,369	4.4	327	4.4	166,069	5.0
1992	13,461	6.1	432	5.4	227,635	6.7
1993	12,519	5.7	393	4.7	206,798	5.9
1994	11,640	5.2	398	4.5	182,076	5.1
1995	11,456	5	380	4.0	176,822	4.8
1996	11,183	4.8	377	3.8	174,689	4.6
1997	11,596	4.8	371	3.5	175,102	4.5
1998	10,778	4.4	349	3.2	167,559	4.2
1999	9,485	3.8	349	3.1	154,994	3.8
2000	9,632	3.7	359	3.1	149,326	3.5
2001	9,884	3.8	357	3.0	170,858	4.0
2002	11,282	4.3	425	3.4	208,110	4.8
2003	11,677	4.4	440	3.4	206,141	4.7
2004	11,820	4.2	454	3.3	202,124	4.6
2005	13,324	4.6	518	3.6	224,598	4.9
2006	12,597	4.1	564	3.5	219,835	4.6

Source: Georgia Department of Labor: Labor Force and Unemployment Data, Historical Yearly Average

As stated above, unemployment rate information is not available at the city level. Historically, Bryan County’s unemployment rate has remained lower than that of the region and of the state. Based on the data from 1990 and 2000, however, Richmond Hill’s unemployment rate is expected to be lower than that of Bryan County.

Commuting Patterns

Tables ED-15 through Table ED-17 outline the changes in the commuting patterns of Richmond Hill’s residents between 1990 and 2000. The data indicates that a large majority of the City’s resident labor force—80 percent in 1990 and 77 percent in 2000—worked outside of Richmond Hill (Table ED-15).

Table ED-15 Richmond Hill Labor Force Employment by Place of Work, 1990 and 2000

Category	1990		2000	
	No.	%	No.	%
Total Population	2,934		6,959	
Worked in Georgia	1,551	100.0	3,449	100.0
Worked in Richmond Hill	310	20.0	792	23.0
Worked outside of Richmond Hill	1,241	80.0	2,657	77.0
Total Labor Force Population	1,551	52.9	3,449	49.6
Resident Labor Force commuting outside of Richmond Hill	80.0%		77.0%	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000

Table ED-16 Means of Transportation to Work, 1990 and 2000

	1990	2000	% Change
Total:	1,551	3,449	222.4
Car, truck, or van:	1,504	3,287	218.6
Drove alone	1,270	2,982	234.8
Carpooled	234	305	30.3
Public transportation	0	0	0.0
Motorcycle	0	0	0.0
Bicycle	0	0	0.0
Walked	0	49	NA
Other means	27	7	-74.1
Worked at home	20	106	530.0

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000.

Table ED-17 Travel Time to Work, 1990 and 2000

	1990	2000	% Change
Total:	1,551	3,449	222.4
Did not work at home:	1,531	3,343	218.4
Less than 5 minutes	28	94	335.7
5 to 9 minutes	147	372	253.1
10 to 14 minutes	146	228	56.2
15 to 19 minutes	110	171	55.5
20 to 24 minutes	188	413	219.7
25 to 29 minutes	212	347	63.7
30 to 34 minutes	510	1,041	204.1
35 to 39 minutes	47	207	440.4
40 to 44 minutes	23	105	456.5
45 to 59 minutes	74	205	277.0
60 to 89 minutes	46	112	243.5
90 or more minutes	0	48	NA
Worked at home	20	106	530.0

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000

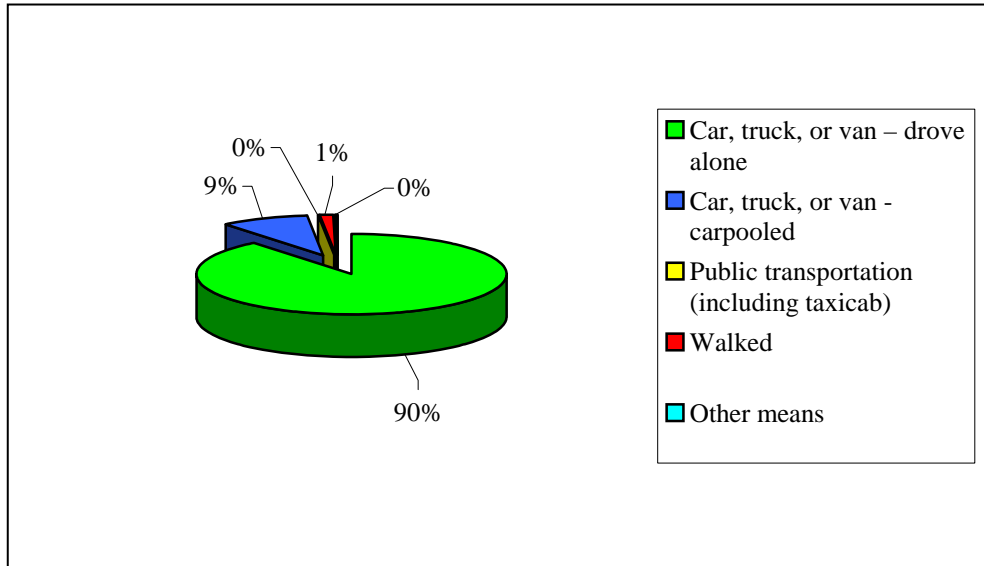
Table ED-18 and Figure ED-5 indicate that driving alone is the dominant form of commuting in Richmond Hill. Commuting by way of public transit was non-existent in 2000, and walking represented just 1.4 percent of Richmond Hill residents' commuting routine.

Table ED-18 Commuting to Work for Richmond Hill Residents, 2000

Category	No.	% of Total
Car, truck, or van – drove alone	2,982	86.5
Car, truck, or van - carpooled	305	8.8
Public transportation (including taxicab)	0	0
Walked	49	1.4
Other means	7	0.2
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	26.8	NA

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

Figure ED-5 Commuting to Work for Richmond Hill Residents, 2000



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

Table ED-19 demonstrates that the majority of Bryan County residents that work outside the County (56.5 percent) commuted to jobs in Chatham County. This trend is expected to increase unless more jobs that require local labor force skills are created within the community. Further development and diversification of the local economy in these areas will improve revenue generated from sales tax, increase employment opportunities for residents, and lower transportation costs related to commuting. The data indicates that Bryan County serves as a bedroom community to neighboring Chatham County.¹⁴

Table ED-19 Place of Work for Bryan County Residents, 2000

County	No.	% of Total
Chatham	6,215	56.5
Bryan	2,766	25.2
Liberty	907	8.2
Effingham	238	2.2
Bulloch	236	2.1
Glynn	66	0.6
Camden	3	0.0
Other	565	5.2
Total	10,996	100.0

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

¹⁴ Source: Coastal Georgia Regional Development Plan, 2004.

Economic Resources

Supportive Services for Existing Business and Industry

Economic development in Richmond Hill and Bryan County is sustained primarily through the efforts of the following agencies:

The Joint Bryan County Economic Development Authority: Chartered in 1998 by Bryan County and the City of Richmond Hill, the Development Authority is focused on supporting existing business and encouraging new businesses to locate in Bryan County.

Richmond Hill-Bryan County Chamber of Commerce: The Chamber of Commerce offers assistance to existing businesses in relocation and expansion, representing Bryan County and Richmond Hill. The Chamber promotes membership businesses to visiting tourists through the Welcome Center, provides a free listing in their Membership Directory and Buyer's Guide.

In addition, the Chamber offers information about current Chamber projects in its newsletter, maintains an inventory of available office space and industrial property, as well as supplies its members with a list of prospects. The lobby of the Welcome Center is also available for members to distribute literature in display racks.

Richmond Hill Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB): The Richmond Hill CVB serves to promote sustainable development of the visitor industry in the Richmond Hill area, and is responsible for promotion of tourism, conventions, and trade shows in Richmond Hill and Bryan County.

These partnerships enable the City and local businesses to work together towards effective growth. Citizen participation and community collaboration have led to creative solutions on development issues, prevention programs for the youth, and greater community understanding of good planning and investment.¹⁵ Other entities that play a role in local economic development activities include the banking industry as well as other promoters of business and commerce.

Economic Development Programs and Tools

Special Tax District

In 2005, Richmond Hill utilized a specific special taxing district. A one (1) mil differential (a millage rate of .001 is expressed as 1 mil) was collected in the amount of taxes received from residents and businesses within the City of Richmond Hill and the unincorporated areas of Bryan County. This revenue source was achieved through establishing special service tax district(s) within the unincorporated area of Bryan County. The above millage rate differentials are to be maintained until 2008, when the differentials will be renegotiated prior to issuance of the 2008 tax bills.

¹⁵Source: City of Richmond Hill

Freeport Tax Exemption

Because of Richmond Hill’s proximity to both the Port of Savannah (about 23 miles) and the Port of Brunswick (about 60 miles), many business owners that rely on import/export activities of the ports may choose to reside within the City. The Freeport Tax Exemption exonerates certain types of inventory from a locally established percentage (between 20 to 100 percent) for raw materials and goods in process, finished goods held by manufacturers, and finished goods held for out-of-state shipment. Bryan County has adopted a freeport tax exemption of 100 percent.

Business Expansion Support Act

Georgia Ports Authority’s “Business Expansion Support” Act, or BEST, is a major force in expanding business in Georgia. BEST provides advantageous, state-supported incentives to create jobs and help businesses realize high returns on investment. The BEST Act provides a tax credit of \$1,750 for each new job created by industries starting or expanding operations. In addition, an extra \$500 of tax credit per job is provided if the local port is used for cargo transport by the new or expanding business.

Small Business Development

Georgia’s Small Business Development Center (SBDC): The SBDC network offers management assistance to existing small businesses and to people who wish to start a business. The SBDC program is supported by the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the University System of Georgia. As such, the program provides free consulting services, continuing education courses at a minimal cost, and business research to Georgia’s citizens.

The SBDC provides individual consulting assistance in the following areas:

- Developing Business Plans
- Government Procurement –Through the Automated Georgia Bid Match Program
- Market Research
- Record Keeping and Accounting
- Cash-Flow Analysis
- International Trade Opportunities
- Loan Package Assistance

The Coastal Area District Development Authority (CADD): The Coastal Area District Development Authority was created in 1976 by the Coastal Area Planning and Development Commission in Brunswick, Georgia, to administer a \$5 million grant to a seafood processor in Glynn County. This grant agreement permitted the creation of the

CADDA Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). As loan payments are made, these funds are, in turn, loaned to other qualified businesses within the communities serviced by CADDA.¹⁶

In addition to assisting businesses through the Revolving Loan Fund, in May 1982, CADDA became a Certified Development Company for the purpose of delivering the Small Business Administration (SBA) 503/504. This program provides longer repayment terms, a reasonable fixed interest rate, and up to 90 percent financing of eligible fixed assets to expanding small businesses in the region.

In 1986, CADDA broadened its scope of assistance to small businesses by adding the service of packaging SBA guaranteed loans for banks under the SBA 7a program. This program enables CADDA to assist small business customers with a loan program structured to fit the needs of most companies, especially those companies not initially creating jobs.

In 1990, CADDA responded to the need to provide rural areas with funds and applied for the Federal Intermediary Relending Program. Funds were made available to CADDA for relending in 1991. Rural Economic and Community Development (RECD) assistance is available through CADDA at a reasonable interest rate designed to provide assistance to businesses in rural areas.

CADDA is also able to assist cities and counties by providing lower interest rates and favorable terms for businesses through the application for grants under the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) Employment Incentive Program (EIP). This program provides grants to cities and counties that can be loaned to qualified businesses. A revolving loan fund is created from the repayment of these loans.

As of 2006, CADDA had received total approvals for \$6,433,643 for SBA 504 and 7a loans and approved \$3,135,928 in EDA RLF and IRP loans, for the City of Richmond Hill. These funding programs have also leveraged \$12,956,580 in bank and borrower funding. At the end of Fiscal Year 2005, these SBA projects had created and/or retained 212 full-time jobs for Bryan County and 8,016 full-time jobs for the total CADDA region.¹⁷

The Savannah Minority Business Development Center (SMBAC): The SMBAC offers existing and potential minority entrepreneurs a wide range of services, from initial counseling on how to start a business, to more complex issues of business planning and growth. General business counseling, information dissemination, and referral services are free of charge. Assistance beyond this is considered management and technical assistance for which the SMBAC subsidizes.

¹⁶ CADDA serves the counties of Bryan, Bulloch, Camden, Chandler, Chatham, Effingham, Glynn, Liberty, Long, McIntosh, and Wayne.

¹⁷ Source: Coastal Area District Development Authority (CADDA)

Higher Educational Opportunities

Several higher education and training programs are available for the residents of Richmond Hill and Bryan County in neighboring counties. Four-Year Colleges include Armstrong Atlantic State University in Savannah (12 miles), Georgia Southern University in Statesboro (64 miles), Savannah State University, (25 miles), South University in Savannah (17 miles), and Savannah College of Art and Design (21 miles).

Community Colleges that provide educational opportunities for Richmond Hill's workforce include East Georgia College in Statesboro (64 miles), Ogeechee Technical College, also in Statesboro (59 miles), Coastal Georgia Community College in Brunswick (57 miles), and Savannah Technical Institute (18 miles).

College and graduate level courses are also available at or through the Fort Stewart Military Base (23 miles) in Liberty County. These courses are offered through Armstrong Atlantic State University, Columbia College, Central Texas College, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Webster University, Central Michigan University, Central Texas College, and St. Leo College.

In addition, Brewton-Parker College, a four-year private college whose main campus is located in Mount Vernon, Georgia, offers courses through its satellite locations. Satellite campuses are located in nearby Hinesville (20 miles) and neighboring Savannah (20 miles).

Economic Trends

Sector Trends

As previously mentioned, manufacturing was once the largest industry within Richmond Hill. With the development of Georgia's modern deep-water ports in Savannah and Brunswick, many new employers now dominate the coastal region. These industries include military bases, tourism, as well as related sectors of the service and retail trade industries.

Richmond Hill's tremendous growth since the 1980s has also boosted the construction, housing, and service industries. During 2000, retail trade and educational, health, and social services replaced manufacturing as the top employment in Richmond Hill. Data indicates that in the next 20 years, Retail Trade and Educational, Health and Social Services will become the City's dominant industries, followed by Manufacturing and the Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Services industry.

Ports

The development of coastal Georgia's ports in Brunswick and Savannah represent a significant addition to the employment base for the coastal region. Ports play an essential role in the regional economy as well as the transportation system—not only for the state of Georgia but for the nation. The Georgia ports are the most westward East Coast port system in the United States.

The Port of Savannah was the nation's fastest growing port from 2001 to 2004, according to the Georgia Ports Authority. In addition, the Port employs over 750 people, making it the tenth largest port in the U.S.¹⁸

The ports are a vital part of the coastal region's economy, including Bryan County and the City of Richmond Hill. Georgia's coastal ports meet the demand for water transportation services, which is driven by the consumers and producers of waterborne cargo. This demand initiates a chain of economic activity that contributes not only to the regional economy, but to the State and national economies as well.

The overall economic impact of the coastal port industry, port users, and public port capital expenditures is significant. Along with the deep-water ports of coastal Georgia, the inland waterways that support related barge traffic have also helped to spur employment further inland and throughout the region.

Military

In addition to Georgia's ports, military facilities are also among the region's greatest economic engines, with direct and indirect employment totaling many tens of thousands statewide. Not only are these two sectors sizeable and stable, but like manufacturing, they also provide some of the highest paying jobs. Military facilities in Georgia serve as catalysts for supporting a wide variety of indirect business activity, furthering the region's economic diversification.

In 1941, the U.S. Congress appropriated three million dollars to purchase 525,000 acres in Liberty and Bryan Counties for the purpose of constructing an anti-aircraft training center. The boom began with the ordered construction of 6,000 buildings to be built in 90 days. By 1943, more than 55,000 soldiers were added to the area's population existing at that time. Today, Fort Stewart is the largest military installation east of the Mississippi at 279,269 acres and has a stable military and civilian population of more than 20,000.

Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield is extremely significant to Richmond Hill, as well as Bryan County, serving as a large portion of the local population and an important economic driver. In 2004, there were 244 Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Field civilian employees living in the City of Richmond Hill.¹⁹ Later data from a Fort Stewart Command Data Summary, dated December 2007, indicates that 836 military personnel from Fort Stewart live off-post in Richmond Hill. In terms of economic impact, the total expenditure impact in the region was \$1,171,059,800 in 2003, resulting in annual direct employment of 20,267 jobs in the region.²⁰ In addition, the indirect employment impact of annual expenditures resulted in 10,134 jobs, totaling 30,401 jobs for the region.

¹⁸ Source: Georgia Ports Authority

¹⁹ Source: Bryan County Development Authority; Command Data Summary, Fort Stewart Resource Management Office

²⁰ The CGRDC ten--county region of Bryan, Bulloch, Camden, Chatham, Effingham, Glynn, Liberty, Long, McIntosh, and Screven Counties

Tourism

In 2004, Richmond Hill received a certificate of designation as a Preserve America community. Preserve America is a White House initiative created to encourage and support preservation efforts through heritage tourism, education and historic preservation planning. Promotional opportunities are provided through this designation to promote the City's preservation efforts and highlight Richmond Hill as a heritage tourism destination.

The J. F. Gregory City Park, a 335-acre multi-use recreational area and important Wetlands Educational Center, provides Richmond Hill with momentum in heritage tourism as well as memberships in the Georgia Colonial Coast Birding Trail and the Coastal Georgia Greenway. The Park is also interpreted as part of the Georgia Civil War Historic Trail.

Additionally, the City participates in the Southern Passages Corridor. Celebrating the historic US Highway 17 corridor, this tri-state initiative is designed to strengthen place and regional identity by celebrating local heritage through educational pursuits. Southern Passages Corridor's website boasts, "The BBQ and Ol' Time Family Festival includes food, music, games, and fireworks, at J. F. Gregory City Park in Richmond Hill", and, "In Richmond Hill you will find Southern charm, rich history, as well as boating adventures, fresh and saltwater, fishing, eclectic golf courses, comfortable and scenic campsites, and great seafood exactly to your taste."

Other annual events held at J. F. Gregory Park include the Henry Ford Days Festival, Chili Cook-off, Holiday Parade, and the 4th of July Festival. The Veterans Memorial is also located in J. F. Gregory City Park.

Richmond Hill's popularity for special events and festivals also continues to grow. The three-day Great Ogeechee Seafood Festival, sponsored by the City and the Chamber of Commerce, is a regional event that attracted over 26,000 visitors in 2005.²¹

Richmond Hill's hospitality business is host to tourists visiting historic Fort McAllister. Fort McAllister, located just outside of the City in the south part of Bryan County, is one of the Southern Confederacy's best-preserved earthwork fortifications. During the last days of the Civil War, General William T. Sherman eventually captured the Fort and, from this location, prepared for the siege and capture of the City of Savannah.



Fort McAllister

²¹Source: Richmond Hill-Bryan County Chamber of Commerce

The Henry Ford Plantation, also known as the Richmond Hill Plantation, is a 1,800-acre tract containing the Henry Ford Mansion, the remains of three rice plantations and other historic structures. Today, the Ford-era structures provide historic character to Richmond Hill. The exclusive Ford Plantation is a private equity membership sporting and residential community.



The Ford Plantation

Both Fort McAllister and the Ford Plantation are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. See the Cultural Resources element for further information on historic sites in Richmond Hill.

Richmond Hill’s Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) serves to promote sustainable development of the visitor industry in the Richmond Hill area, and is responsible for promotion of tourism, conventions, and trade shows in Richmond Hill and Bryan County. The Richmond Hill CVB is located in the Historic Henry Ford Kindergarten Building in the heart of Richmond Hill.

Quality of Life

Richmond Hill’s quality of life offers a key competitive advantage to its economic base. The City offers southern charm, small town appeal, rich coastal history, abundant natural resources, expansive salt marshes, abundant freshwater and saltwater access, quality neighborhoods and schools, convenient access to Interstates 95 and 16, a relatively low tax base, as well as low crime rates.

Richmond Hill also has convenient access to three units of the State University system—Georgia Southern University, Armstrong Atlantic State University, and Savannah State University—as well as three regional medical facilities staffed by physicians representing all specialties. Maintaining this distinctive place and its developing sense of community will prove an important advantage for Richmond Hill in a fast-growing regional marketplace.

For additional information regarding Richmond Hill’s parks and school system, see the Community Facilities and Services element.

Trends in Development

Recent trends in the coastal Georgia region have seen resurgence in small retail, or “Mom and Pop” businesses.²² This growth is especially evident in the emerging tourist area of Richmond Hill. As larger industries have historically lacked interest in locating in the City, local small businesses are able to benefit from the



*Locally owned
business*

²²Source: Coastal Georgia Regional Plan, 2004

unique location advantages and the pro-business, pro-growth mind-set of local government. Independent retailers help sustain a community by promoting local character, linking neighbors in economic and social relationships, keeping dollars in the local economy, creating local jobs, reducing sprawl, and enriching the civic and cultural life of the community. These businesses include restaurants, gift shops, car washes, antique and floral shops, convenience stores, auto body shops, grocery stores, beauty and barber shops, etc.

In the spirit of promoting small business development and entrepreneurship, the Richmond Hill-Bryan County Chamber of Commerce began the Business Bryan initiative. Realizing that 93 percent of Bryan County's businesses were small businesses (20 employees or less), Business Bryan was created to support this vital element of the Richmond Hill business community.²³ These efforts were rewarded by the County being designated an Entrepreneur Friendly Community by the Georgia Department of Economic Development. This designation allows Bryan County and its municipalities to be eligible for Entrepreneur Friendly Implementation Funds (EFIF)—grant money specifically designated for long-term programs that support entrepreneur or small business development.

Richmond Hill Downtown and the Convention Center

With plans to continue the development of a downtown area through thoughtful planning and cooperation from local developers, the City has initiated development of the 26,000-square foot Richmond Hill Convention Center.

Furthermore, Richmond Hill has developed plans to create a traditional downtown appearance. Attractive landscaping has been implemented at the Interstate 95 and US Highway 17 interchange, as well as along the US Highway 17 entrance from Chatham County. This entrance way will serve as a welcome to downtown Richmond Hill.

Future endeavors for the downtown, with the aid of a Transportation Enhancement Grant for \$300,000 awarded by the Georgia Department of Transportation, include implementing a cohesive urban design to unify the area along SR 144. Nearly a half-mile of raised medians along SR144 will be installed and planted with crepe myrtle trees, and the City will place park benches and coordinated trash receptacles along SR 144. Streetlight poles and fixtures will be replaced with typical Ford-era streetlight poles, and sidewalks will be replaced with materials providing historic ambiance within the vicinity of City Hall and J. F. Gregory Park. Additional planned improvements to enhance downtown appeal include landscaping to redevelop a square, as well as the encouragement of bike trails, mixed-use development, and pedestrian friendly access to new developments.²⁴

²³ Retrieved from the City of Richmond Hill website, www.richmondhill-ga.gov, Monday, November 05, 2007.

²⁴ Source: City of Richmond Hill

Commercial Centers

In early 2007, the Target Corporation began hiring several hundred employees to staff its newest distribution center in Georgia. Although this facility is housed in neighboring Liberty County's 4,700-acre MidCoast Business Center in Midway, the impact of such a large employer is bound to have economic benefits for Bryan County and the City of Richmond Hill. Target anticipates building a 1.5 million square foot regional distribution center that will initially employ 500 area residents and projects to hire another several hundred employees in the first years of operation.

In addition, several other new development projects are in the works for the next few years in Richmond Hill. Commercial and retail development continues to occur along the US Highway 17 and SR 144 corridors. While no major industrial or heavy commercial projects are proposed within the city limits for the near future, there are several significant projects in Chatham County that will continue to provide employment opportunities for the residents of Richmond Hill.

Major Employers in Richmond Hill and the Bryan County Area

Richmond Hill's largest employers in 2005 were Hobart Corp (Illinois Tool Work), Kroger Supermarket, the City of Richmond Hill and Harveys Supermarket.²⁵ Since then, the Ford Plantation has joined the ranks as one of the largest employers in Richmond Hill. Commercial businesses not only represent a source of jobs for the City, but they also serve as a significant source of revenue through taxes collected and required utility services.

Bryan County's largest employers in 2005 were the Bryan County Board of Education, Bryan County Government, Pembroke Telephone Company, Dillon Transport, Inc., and Express Packaging, Inc. According to the Georgia Department of Labor, Atlantic Underground Utilities, Inc., Cook Management Services, Inc., McDonald's Restaurant, and Ryder Integrated, Inc., were among the largest employers in Bryan County.²⁶

According to the Georgia Department of Labor, the eight largest employers in the surrounding region in 2005 were Candler Hospital Inc., Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation, Kroger Company, Memorial Health University Medical, St. Joseph's Hospital, Inc., and Wal-Mart Associates, Inc., in Chatham County; Fort James Corporation in Effingham County; and Claxton Poultry Company in Evans County.

Table ED-20 lists the largest employers, types of business, and estimated number of employees for the Bryan County area in 2005.

²⁵ Source: Bryan County Development Authority and Georgia Department of Labor

²⁶ Source: Georgia Department of Labor, 2007.

Table ED-20 Major Employers and Estimated Number of Employees in the Region, 2005

County	Employer ²⁷	Type of Business	Number Employed
Bryan	Bryan County Board of Education	Educational Services	800
	Bryan County Government	Local Government	372
	Hobart Corp.*	Restaurant Supply Manufacturer	150
	Kroger Supermarket*	Grocery	110
	Pembroke Telephone Company	Communications	58
	Dillon Transport, Inc.	Trucking	55
	City of Richmond*	Local Government	55
	Harveys Supermarkets	Grocery	45
	Express Packaging, Inc.	Corrugated Box Manufacturer	41
	Black Creek Golf Club	Golf Course	27
	Mega Cast	Precast Concrete Manufacturer	21
	Marble Bath & Accessories*	Cultured Marble Products	20
	Bilmar CNC Inc.*	CNC Machining	16
	Global Commodities	Shipping/Packaging	15
Chatham	Hunter Army Airfield ²⁸	Military Defense	Military – 4,905
			Civilian – 577
	Gulfstream Aerospace	Small Jet Aircraft Manufacture	4,300
	Georgia Ports Authority	Shipping	6,500
	Memorial Health	Hospital	4,934
	St. Joseph's/Candler	Hospital	3,800
	International Paper	Pulp & Paper Manufacturing	1,800
	Wal-Mart Supercenter	Retail	1,675
	Georgia-Pacific Savannah River Mill	Paper Products	1,408
	Great Dane Trailers, Inc.	Transportation Equip. Manufacturer	1,100
	Kroger	Retail Food	1,100
	The Home Depot	Retail, Home and Garden	967
Savannah Electric	Electric Utility	549	
Liberty	Fort Stewart Army Base 16	Military Defense	Military – 22,422
			Civilian – 3,485
	Wal-Mart Associates, Inc.	Retail	575
Target Distribution Center	Retail Distribution	500 (initial)	

Source: Bryan County Development Authority, Georgia Ports Authority, Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce, and CGRDC staff

²⁷ Asterisk (*) indicates business located in Richmond Hill

²⁸ Source: Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce, 2004 Workforce Trends, revised 10/03

Regional Growth

The City of Richmond Hill, as one of several suburban communities to neighboring Chatham County, is anticipated to experience continued rapid growth and development. The interchanges off of Interstate 95 will serve as primary areas for economic opportunities. Although much of the development will be geared toward the needs of the traveler, some industrial and residential development will also occur. Residential and industrial developments will follow the extension of public infrastructure to these interchanges.²⁹

Richmond Hill and Bryan County are fortunate to have access to the economic development resources offered by the University of Georgia; the Georgia Institute of Technology; the Georgia Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism; the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; and Georgia Power. The programs and tools necessary to foster economic development are readily available, and with local initiative and planning, the use of these resources can be coordinated to serve the area well.

In addition, the evolution of the telecommunications field will provide the City with the opportunity to reach greater numbers of people, offering both educational enhancement and economic development training. Technology, such as virtual courses and online training, enables Richmond Hill to share and acquire resources from around the region, the State, the nation, and the world.³⁰

²⁹ Source: Coastal Georgia Regional Plan, 2004

³⁰ Source: Coastal Georgia Regional Plan, 2004

Housing Element

The Housing element inventories the existing housing stock and its condition, occupancy, and affordability characteristics for the City of Richmond Hill. The information provided in the Housing element will form the basis for assessing the adequacy and suitability of existing housing to serve current and future population and economic development needs. This chapter will also allow for the articulation of community housing goals. Overall, the information provided in the housing section will formulate an implementation program for the adequate provision of housing to include all sectors of the population.

Housing is not only a large consumer of land in the City of Richmond Hill, but it is also one of the most important factors in people's lives. Housing directly affects the quality of life, health, safety, and welfare of the residents in a community. With respect to housing, Richmond Hill's goal should be to ensure that residents have access to adequate and affordable housing.

Housing Types and Mix

It is important to take a close look at the existing housing supply in Richmond Hill to determine the number and types of housing needed for the next 20-year planning period. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, boats, recreational vehicles, vans, tents, etc., are counted as housing units only if they are occupied as someone's usual place of residence. Vacant mobile homes are included, provided they are intended for occupancy on the site where they stand. A tabular summary of the City's housing data is presented to familiarize the reader with comparable and contrasting housing data and trends.

As shown in Table H-1, single units make up the largest share of total housing units available in Richmond Hill from 1980 to 2000. Since 1980, the percentage of single units has declined slightly. However, in 2000, single units were abundant and comprised nearly 70 percent of the total housing units. The decline from 1980 to 2000 merely represents a diversification in the City's housing stock. Over the next 20 years, this percentage is not expected to decline significantly.

The second-highest percentage of housing stock from 1980 to 2000 is structures with three-to-nine housing units. The number of these units increased from 44 in 1980 to 391 in 2000, nearly an 800 percent increase over the 20-year period. Structures with three-to-nine units increased to approximately 18 percent of the total in 1990. However, the category is projected to level out around 15 percent over the next 20 years.

Many multi-unit structures were added from 1980 to 2000, especially structures with 50-or-more units. In 1990, there were no structures in Richmond Hill with 50 or more units. In 2000, the City had 289 units in the 50-or-more-units category, making it the third largest share at 11 percent of Richmond Hill's total housing stock.

Mobile homes and trailers make up a very small percentage of the City's housing stock. From 1980 to 2000, the number of mobile homes increased from 35 to 93. Although the

rate of change during this 20-year period is over 250 percent, the proportion of mobile homes remains at approximately 3.5 percent in 2000.

Table H-1 Housing Units by Type, 1980-2000

Type of Unit	1980		1990		2000	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Single Units (detached)	351	81.3	765	73.6	1,822	69.0
Single Units (attached)	0	0.0	17	1.6	17	0.6
Double Units	0	0.0	6	0.6	0	0.0
3 to 9 Units	44	10.2	186	17.9	391	14.8
10 to 19 Units	0	0.0	24	2.3	27	1.0
20 to 49 Units	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
50 or more Units	2	0.5	0	0.0	289	11.0
Mobile Home or Trailer	35	8.1	41	3.9	93	3.5
Total Housing Units	432		1,039		2,639	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

The total number of housing units in Richmond Hill increased from 432 in 1980 to 1,039 in 1990, an increase of 241 percent. Between 1990 and 2000, the total number of housing units went from 1,039 to 2,639, representing an increase of 254 percent over that 10-year period. Not only do these increases show progressive growth in the City, but they also signal an overall diversification of the housing stock, providing residents with additional housing options.

Residential building permit data for the years 2000 through 2005 were obtained from the City of Richmond Hill and are presented in Table H-2. The data for 2005 are through July 2005.

Table H-2 Residential Building Permits issued 2000-2005

Year	Building Permits Issued	Total Housing Units
Base		2,639
2000	111	2,750
2001	144	2,894
2002	226	3,120
2003	237	3,357
2004	176	3,533
2005(Jan-Jul)	96	3,629
Total	990	3,629

Source: City of Richmond Hill

The Census of 2000 reported 2,639 dwelling units in the City. With the addition of 990 units during the period 2000 to 2005, the Richmond Hill's housing stock is now estimated to be 3,629, an increase of 38 percent in five years.

DCA developed projections for Richmond Hill for the period 2005 to 2025 (see Table H-3). They project that the total number of housing units in Richmond Hill will increase by 552 units each five-year period. In the period 2000 to 2005, the projected the number of housing units in the City will increase by 20 percent to 3,191. The CGRDC’s 2005 estimate of total housing units in Richmond Hill (3,629) is closer to DCA’s 2010 estimate of total housing units (3,743). Because of the discrepancy in estimates, the City of Richmond Hill must be careful to monitor housing availability, as the City is currently growing at a rate nearly twice that projected by DCA.

Table H-3 Housing Units by Type DCA Projections, 2005-2025

Type of Unit	2005		2010		2015		2020		2025	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Single Units (detached)	2,190	68.6	2,558	68.3	2,925	68.1	3,293	68.0	3,661	67.8
Single Units (attached)	21	0.7	26	0.7	30	0.7	34	0.7	38	0.7
Double Units	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
3 to 9 Units	478	15.0	565	15.1	651	15.2	738	15.2	825	15.3
10 to 19 Units	34	1.1	41	1.1	47	1.1	54	1.1	61	1.1
20 to 49 Units	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
50 or more Units	361	11.3	433	11.6	504	11.7	576	11.9	648	12.0
Mobile Home or Trailer	108	3.4	122	3.3	137	3.2	151	3.1	166	3.1
Total Housing Units	3,191		3,743		4,294		4,846		5,398	

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs: Original Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

According to the DCA’s projections, single-family units (detached) will continue to make up the largest share of the total housing units in Richmond Hill. Structures with three-to-nine housing units are projected to remain the second highest category, comprising approximately 15 percent of total housing units. The third largest housing type will remain structures with 50 or more units, projected to comprise roughly 12 percent of the City’s total housing stock.

The actual number of mobile homes and trailers is projected to increase; however, the number of mobile homes as percentage of the City’s total housing stock is expected to decrease.

Condition and Occupancy

Age of Housing

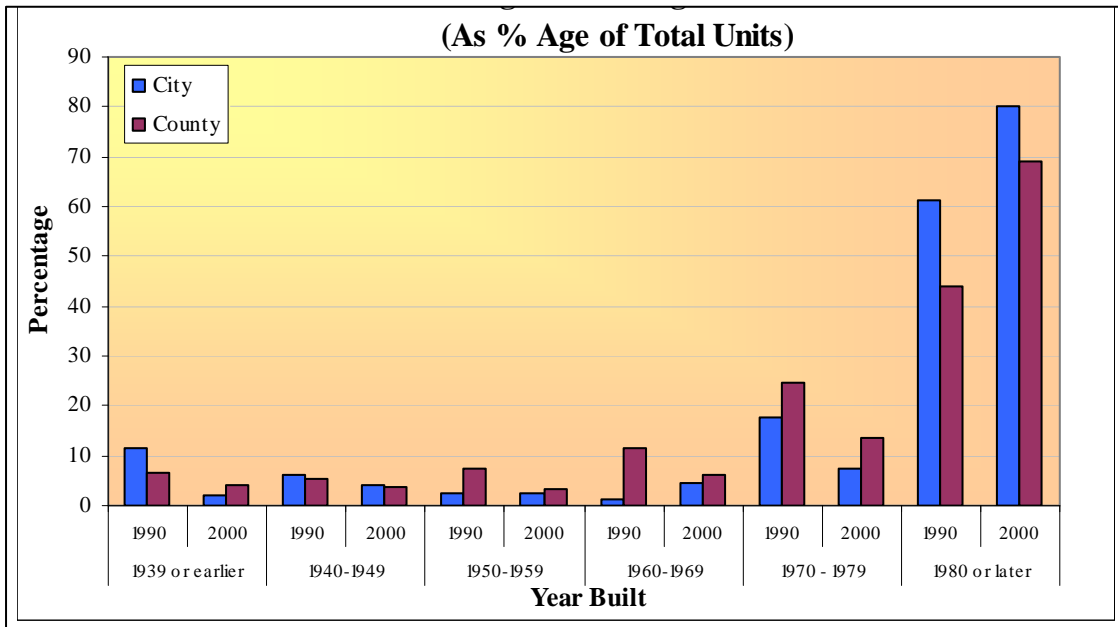
Richmond Hill has a relatively young housing stock, as demonstrated in Table H-4. In 2000 about 80 percent of all housing units in the city were less than 20 years old. In addition, about 70 percent of Bryan County’s housing units were less than 20 years old in 2000.

Table H-4 Age of Housing Units as a Percentage of Total Units

Year Built	Richmond Hill				Bryan County			
	1990		2000		1990		2000	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
1980 or later	642	61.3	2110	80.0	2,448	44.1	5,977	68.9
1970 – 1979	183	17.6	190	7.2	1,358	24.5	1,188	13.7
1960 – 1969	14	1.3	116	4.4	652	11.7	536	6.2
1950 – 1959	26	2.5	62	2.3	413	7.4	276	3.2
1940 – 1949	62	6	105	4	305	5.5	336	3.9
1939 or earlier	120	11.5	56	2.1	373	6.7	362	4.2
Total	1,039		2,639		5,549		8,675	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

Figure H-1 Age of Housing Units



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

Condition of Housing

A measure of housing condition is used to assess the percentages of housing units that lack complete plumbing and/or kitchen facilities. Using this measure, the housing stock in Richmond Hill is in excellent condition (Table H-5).

Table H-5 Condition of Housing Units as a Percentage of Total Units

	Category	1990		2000	
		No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Plumbing	Complete	1,039	99.2	2,639	100.0
	Lacking	0	0.0	0	0.0
Kitchen	Complete	1,039	99.2	2,639	100.0
	Lacking	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Total	1,039		2,639	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

Both the 1990 Census and the 2000 Census estimated that all housing units in Richmond Hill have complete plumbing and kitchen facilities.

Occupancy of Housing

The U.S. Bureau of Census classifies a housing unit as occupied if it is the usual place of residence for a person or group of persons living in it at the time of enumeration, or if the occupants are only temporarily absent; that is, away on vacation or business. A housing unit is vacant if no one is living in it at the time of enumeration, unless its occupants are only temporarily absent. Units temporarily occupied at the time of enumeration entirely by persons who have a usual residence elsewhere also are classified as vacant.

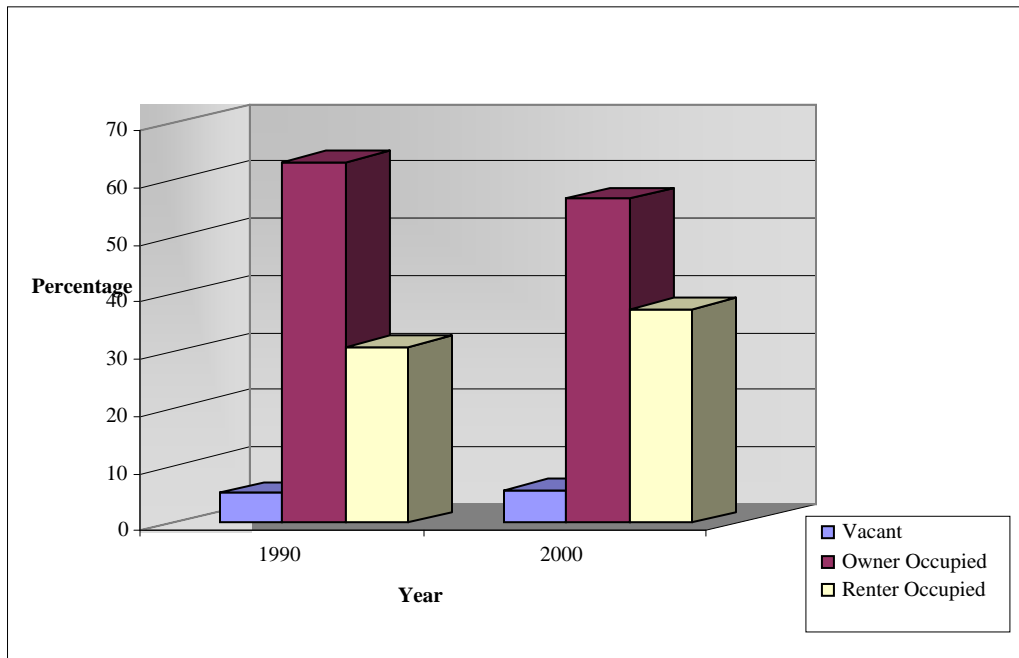
Table H-6 shows that the occupancy rates for both owner and renter housing units in 1990 was approximately 95 percent. Only 54 units were vacant, resulting in an overall vacancy rate of approximately 5 percent. In 2000, the total occupancy rate for owners and renters saw a slight but insignificant decrease. The vacancy rate in 2000 shows a slight increase from 1990, but this is likely due to the introduction of additional houses into the housing stock over the 10-year period through new construction and annexation. Figure H-2 illustrates the change in occupancy status from 1990 to 2000.

Table H-6 Occupancy Status as a Percentage of Total Units

Housing Units	1990		2000	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Vacant	54	5.2	153	5.8
Owner Occupied	662	63.2	1,497	56.7
Renter Occupied	323	30.9	989	37.5
TOTAL	1,039		2,639	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

Figure H-2 Richmond Hill Occupancy Status, 1990 and 2000



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

Table H-7 provides more detailed data on vacant housing units by category. Almost half of the units classified as vacant in 2000 were for rent. Richmond Hill had a homeowner vacancy rate³¹ of 2.1 percent, down by nearly 1 percent from 1990. The renter vacancy rate increased over this time from 1.8 percent to 6.3 percent.

³¹ Homeowner and renter vacancy rates calculated by formula provided by First Quarter 2005 definitions

<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/hvs/qtr105/q105def.html>

Homeowner/Renter vacancy rate equals Units for Sale/Rent Only divided by the sum of Owner/Renter Occupied Units and Units for Sale/Rent Only.

Table H-7 Vacancy Status as a Percentage of Total

Category	1990		2000	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
For rent	6	12.8	66	47.1
For sale only	20	42.6	31	22.1
Rented or sold, not occupied	7	14.9	5	3.6
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	4	8.5	2	1.4
For migrant workers	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other vacant	10	21.3	36	25.7
Total vacant units	47	100.0	140	100.0

Source: US Census 1990 and 2000 SF1

Cost of Housing

Median values of owner-occupied housing and median monthly rent from 1990 through 2000 in Richmond Hill are presented in Table H-8. From 1990 to 2000, the median property value in the city increased by nearly 50 percent, resulting in a 2000 median property value of nearly \$100,000. The median monthly rent increased by nearly 60 percent during the same time period, increasing from \$348 to \$547. Rent as a percent of income also increased between 1990 and 2000, but at a rate of only 1 percent.

Table H-8 Cost of Housing, 1990 and 2000

Category	1990	2000	Rate of Change
Median property value	\$66,400	\$97,100	46.2%
Median rent	\$348	\$547	57.2%
Median household income	32,917	47,061	43.0%
Median Rent as percent of median income	13%	14%	1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

Burdened Households

The Department of Community Affairs defines cost-burdened as households paying 30 percent or more of their net income on total housing costs. Households paying more than 50 percent of net income are classified as severely cost-burdened. Table H-9 shows that in 1990, the percentage of the population paying 30 to 49 percent of net income on housing costs was 14 percent.

Cost Table H-9 Cost Burdened Households, 1990 and 2000

Category	1990		2000	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
30% - 49%	147	14.0	325	12.3
50% and greater	NA	NA	210	8.0
Not computed	3	0.3	88	3.3
Total Housing Units	1,047	NA	2,639	NA

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

In 2000, the population percentage in this category dropped to 12.3 percent. Data for severely cost burdened households are not available for 1990. In 2000, 8.0 percent of the population was classified as severely cost burdened.

Special Housing Needs

There are households with identifiable special needs, as defined by Georgia law for which the City must plan. Specific groups with special housing needs include elderly residents; the homeless; victims of domestic violence; migrant workers; persons with disabilities; persons with HIV/AIDS; and those recovering from substance abuse. These special housing needs are provided through a variety of groups. Existing housing for these groups is appropriate to the current and future needs and desires of the community.

The City of Richmond Hill does not currently provide special housing for any population with special needs. Each special needs category is discussed in greater detail below. Interviews with service providers, combined with hard data sources, revealed the following about special housing needs in Richmond Hill:

Elderly

According to the Georgia Department of Human Resources, “Georgia has the fourth fastest growing 60+ population, and the third fastest growing 85+ population in the United States.” Recent figures reported by the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University indicate that between the year 2000 and 2030, Georgia’s elderly is expected to grow over 140 percent—from 785,275 to 1,907,837. Much of this trend can be attributed to the aging Baby Boomer generation. While the services and needs of this unique age cohort have always been important, the policy implications for the nation and the state of Georgia are tremendous. For the first time in known-history, this age group is growing rather than declining (Matthews & Turnbull, 2007).³² Planning for their needs and the changing dynamic between the existing housing stock and future needs will continue to pose a policy dilemma if communities do not prepare for this growth.

³² Matthew, J.W. & Turnbull, G.K. *Housing the Aging Baby Boomer Generation: Implications for Georgia Communities or It’s Too Late to Run...They’re Here!* Presented to the Georgia Conference on Aging—Georgia’s Aging Population: What to Expect and How to Cope, September 26, 2007.

Bryan County and its municipalities are in a unique situation as a suburban community experiencing spill-over growth from Chatham County. In 2000, Chatham County had the fourth largest near-elderly population—those aged 55-64—as well as the fourth largest elderly population, or those aged 65-74, with 11,007 and 11,422 seniors respectively. The oldest elderly (75 and older) population of 6,999 put Chatham County at number three in the state as having the largest elderly population in that cohort.

As of 2000, 7 percent of Richmond Hill’s total population was aged 65 and over. This group of residents represents 28 percent of the same category age group for Bryan County. Bryan County Health & Rehabilitation Center is currently Richmond Hill’s only nursing home (100 beds) with an average occupancy of 98 percent in 2005. Magnolia Manor on the Coast is an independent living retirement community located in Richmond Hill. It currently offers 120 units, with another eight units devoted to assisted-living. Elderly needs continue to be an issue in Richmond Hill.

As several studies indicate, most seniors prefer to age in place. However, the ability to provide services to this unique population presents its own challenges. Health and housing needs and affordability are always issues to consider; however, the benefits of implementing senior-friendly planning by considering changing traditional zoning standards to encourage mixed-use and higher densities are becoming increasingly important as sound policies to serve the elderly population. The City of Richmond Hill should create processes that will identify and address the needs of seniors.

Homeless

There is currently no provision for the homeless within the City of Richmond Hill. However, providers of services to the homeless in the Richmond Hill area are Union Mission in Savannah and Coastal Georgia Homeless Shelter in Brunswick.

Domestic Violence Victims

The Tri-Community Shelter in Hinesville (Liberty County) is designated by the Department of Human Services to be the emergency domestic violence shelter for residents of Bryan County. They offer shelter for a period of 30 days and support services for victims of domestic violence and their children.

Migrant Farm Workers

The Housing Assistance Council (HAC) states that no national data exists that accurately count migrant and seasonal farm workers or their housing. Off-farm housing is typically not available for brief, large influxes of renters.³³ The HAC recommends that housing providers should consider the different needs of migrant families and unaccompanied farm workers when approving plans for new housing. However, according to local

³³University of Georgia, Institute of Community and Area Development. (1995, June). Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers in Georgia: Estimates of the Migrant Health Program Target Population [Summary].

service providers there is not a notable population of migrant farm workers in Richmond Hill that require housing assistance.

Disabled Persons (Mental and Physical)

According to 2000 Census data, there are 3,576 people (aged 5+) in Bryan County with disabilities, representing 15.3 percent of the County's total population. Mental health sufferers can find treatment within Bryan County through Gateway Behavioral Health Services at their location in the City of Pembroke. This facility offers assessment, day support, and other support services. Gateway's Camden County Developmental Disabilities Service Center also serves residents of Bryan County, offering various assessment and support services. Because no special housing exists in the County for disabled persons, a need likely exists.

Additionally, the Georgia Department of Human Resources Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addictive Diseases provides an Intake and Evaluation Team that services Region 5, including Bryan County.

HIV/AIDS Patients

According to the Georgia Department of Human Resources, between 1990 and 1999 only six AIDS cases were reported in the Brunswick Health District, which includes Bryan County. This does not create a notable unmet housing need for this group. Savannah's Union Mission Phoenix Project addresses the needs of persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWH/As), especially those who are homeless or without support systems.

Other regional organizations that offer services for those suffering from HIV or AIDS include the Coastal Area Support Team (CAST), the Southeast AIDS Training and Education Center (SEATEC), as well as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's program, Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOWPA).

Additional resources include The Amethyst Project in Statesboro; as well as My Brothaz Home, Planned Parenthood of Georgia, and the Union Mission Phoenix Project, all located in Savannah. County Health Departments, CARE Centers and Wellness Centers also offer opportunities for individuals suffering from AIDS or HIV.

Persons Recovering from Substance Abuse

In 2002, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs published a report on Special Population Groups in Georgia. This study reported that in 2001, there were 1,394 cases of adult substance abuse treatment needs in Bryan County—meaning almost 6 percent of the population required such treatment.

Again, Gateway Behavioral Health Services provides assessment and support services for the Richmond Hill/Bryan County area through their Camden, Chatham, Effingham, Glynn, and McIntosh facilities. The closest is the Gateway facility in Darien (McIntosh County), which includes a home in conjunction with treatment. The Bryan County Family Connection also provides related services to families and teens.

Recovery Center of Georgia, Inc., and Coastal Harbor Treatment Center are just two of many agencies in nearby Savannah that provide support services and treatment for individuals suffering from substance abuse problems.

Jobs-Housing Balance

Jobs-Housing balance is a planning tool that local governments can use to achieve a roughly equal number of jobs and housing units within their community.³⁴ Successful implementation of a jobs-housing balance employs the consideration of both quantitative and qualitative components. Ideally, the jobs available in a community should match the labor force skills, and housing should be affordable for workers who wish to live in the area. Traffic congestion caused by workers commuting to jobs outside the area can affect quality of life, driver frustration levels, air quality, and worker productivity and is often considered when addressing a jobs-housing strategy. However, households take into account many other factors besides proximity to job sites in selecting the locations of their homes.

The jobs-housing unit ratio is calculated by dividing the number of jobs by the number of housing units.

According to the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), 1.3-1.7 to 1 is considered within the ranges of ratios that constitute “balance”. For Richmond Hill, the jobs-housing ratio in 1990 was 0.5 jobs for each housing unit; in 2000, the ratio dropped slightly to 0.3 to 1 (Table H-11).

³⁴ Atlanta Regional Commission, Jobs-Housing Balance/Georgia Quality Growth Toolkit, 2002.

Table H-11 Place of Work for Richmond Hill, 1990 and 2000

Category	1990		2000	
	No.	%	No.	%
Total Population	2,934		6,959	
Worked in Georgia	1,551	100.0	3,449	100.0
Worked in Richmond Hill	310	20.0	792	23.0
Worked outside of Richmond Hill	1,241	80.0	2,657	77.0
Worked outside of Georgia	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total Labor Force Population	1,551	52.9	3,449	49.6
Total housing units ³⁵	1,039		2,639	
Resident Labor Force commuting outside of Richmond Hill	80.0%		77.0%	
Jobs-housing ratio	0.5: 1		0.3: 1	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF1)

This quantitative evaluation shows that Richmond Hill’s jobs-housing balance is well below the acceptable range. A large majority of the City’s resident labor force—80 percent in 1990 and 77 percent in 2000—worked outside of Richmond Hill. Although there was a 3 percent decrease of residents working outside the city in 2000, the percentage range of resident commuters indicates that the City serves primarily as a bedroom community. For more information on commuting patterns for Richmond Hill residents, see Chapter 3 – Economic Development: Commuting Patterns, pages 49 and 50, Tables ED-13 through ED-16.

³⁵ See Table 1

Natural Resources Element

With the rapid pace of development in the coastal Georgia area, natural resources are under the constant pressure of encroachment or destruction. In order to maximize developable property, significant resources are often overlooked or forgotten. With more and more emphasis being placed on protecting existing resources and improving the quality of life in the coastal area, the Comprehensive Plan for Richmond Hill will address the current state of these important resources.

The Natural Resources element is related to the Community Facilities element in that several areas known to contain sensitive species have been designated as open space. In addition, the Natural Resources element relates to the Cultural Resources element as these resources require conservation and protection from the impacts of development, as well as the implementation of regulations or policies for their protection or management. Because of their importance to the community character, natural resources are also seen to have an economic value in attracting visitors, as reflected in Economic Development element. The Natural Resources element is also included in this Comprehensive Plan's chapter on Areas Requiring Special Attention.

One of the goals of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 is the protection of our state's natural resources, environment, and vital areas. Included in the Act are minimum standards and procedures generally known as the "Environmental Planning Criteria or "Part V Criteria." The Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria were developed by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and are part of the local government planning standards. The rules direct local governments to establish local protection efforts to conserve critical environmental resources divided into the five sections of Water Supply Watersheds, Protection of Groundwater Recharge Areas, Wetlands Protection, River Corridor Protection, and Mountain Protection.

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) states in its State Planning Goals and Objectives for Local Planning Requirements that a community's planning goals and objectives for its Comprehensive Plan's Natural Resources element should be the conservation and protection of its environmental and natural resources. As such, the overall goal of the Natural Resources element is twofold: 1) to identify significant natural resources within the planning area including greenspace and habitat for sensitive and endangered species, and 2) to establish a plan to preserve these resources and protect them from negative impacts of development where feasible, or provide mitigation as appropriate.

This element is intended to provide a basis for understanding natural resource issues and to establish goals and objectives to conserve these natural resources for the benefit of the entire community and its quality of life.

Wetlands

Wetlands perform valuable ecological functions such as flood control, pollution abatement and the provision of habitat for wildlife, especially in the widespread tidal

wetlands systems within Bryan County. In addition, wetlands provide aesthetic and recreational benefits. Wetland preservation efforts have increased through the enhancement of public knowledge and understanding of the function and importance of wetlands.

In the United States, Georgia ranks ninth in total acreage of wetlands. Since the late 1700s, it is estimated that Georgia has altered 1.5 million acres of wetlands, with the vast majority of those alterations due to conversion to other land uses. Additionally, the South Atlantic Coastal Plain accounts for a large majority of the conversion of freshwater wetlands. While the 1993 Federal Administration Wetlands Plan calls for a concerted effort by EPA and other federal agencies to work cooperatively toward achieving an overall “zero net loss” of wetlands in the short term and a net increase in the quantity of the nation’s wetlands in the long run, there have been no statutory or executive level directives to carry out this policy. Achieving the goal of no net loss is dependent upon limited changes to regulations, memoranda of understanding, cooperative agreements, and other partnerships between federal, state, and local governments, conservation organizations, and private citizens.

As described by the Bureau of Land Management, the South Atlantic Coastal Plain is part of a continuous Coastal Plain that extends from New York to Texas, and covers northeastern Florida, southern Georgia, the eastern Carolinas, and the Great Dismal Swamp in Virginia. The western boundary is the fall line that marks the beginning of the hilly Piedmont on the west.

The Georgia Atlantic Coast is lined with barrier islands that support sand dune and maritime forest habitats and are backed by marshland. Estuaries are less saline marsh nearest the coast, and river valleys become increasingly wooded farther inland, thus supporting significant areas of bottomland hardwood forests. Lowland areas are somewhat marshy and limit agricultural opportunities; however, forestry activities are viable in this region.

Regulatory and Wetlands in Richmond Hill

Of the 429,294 tidal marshland acres in the state of Georgia, Richmond Hill encompasses approximately 2,067 acres of wetlands within the city limits, as identified by the Department of Natural Resources. This comprises about 34 percent of the total area of Richmond Hill. The City has set aside Conservation Preservation areas within its limits that primarily consist of these identified wetlands. These areas comprise approximately 8 percent of the total surface area of the City. These areas do not include the 500 acres of wetlands identified within the wastewater treatment facility area.



Lower Coastal Plain

Richmond Hill is part of the Lower Coastal Plain portion of the South Atlantic Coastal Plain, which extends for about 65 miles

between the Savannah and St. Marys Rivers and contains the remains of older and higher shorelines west of the present coast.

The City of Richmond Hill has taken steps to preserve, protect and promote its wetlands. In 2004, the City received a Coastal Incentive Grant from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to develop a Wetlands Education Center, helping to finance the John W. Stevens Wetlands Education Center.



*The John W. Stevens Wetlands
Education Center*

The John W. Stevens Wetlands Education Center is the only center of its kind in Coastal Georgia. The Center, located in J. F. Gregory Park, provides a meeting place for school groups and an interactive educational experience with information about wetland ecosystems and preservation. The mostly-paved walking trail encompasses three-and-a-half miles of wetlands. The area was originally rice fields and was used to feed the Southern States during the Civil War period. Today, this natural wetlands area is enhanced by birdhouses, lighting and wildlife viewing stands.

Policy Assessment

In the 2001 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court known as the Swank Decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Section 404 of the Clean Water Act gave sole dredging and filling rights for navigable waterways to the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. In these instances, draining or filling are prohibited unless no other alternatives exist. Other courses of action include the mitigation of loss or replacements in kind from a wetlands bank area.

Currently, the state of Georgia has no law protecting freshwater wetlands other than those in the coastal areas. There are significant coastal wetlands adjacent to Richmond Hill. However, no regulatory or policy alternatives are in place to be considered for use in identifying threatened wetlands where development meets or exceeds the threshold for the Development of Regional Impact (DRI). Under the rules of DRI review, an evaluation of the development's impact on the natural environment would be conducted. See Map NR-1 for Wetlands areas in the City of Richmond Hill.

The majority of the identified wetlands within the city limits are in the vicinity of the Ogeechee River as well as the northwest and southwest areas of the City. Richmond Hill has a comprehensive natural resource inventory, which is used to guide development and protect sensitive areas. Land use ordinances provide protection of the City's natural resources.

Groundwater Recharge Areas

Regulatory and Policy Assessment

Groundwater recharge areas are where water that eventually seeps down into an aquifer first enters the ground. Groundwater readily moves through porous soils and rocks such as sand, gravel, sandstone or limestone. Non-porous soils such as clay, shale, or granite generally restrict the movement of groundwater. As water moves downwards due to pressures such as gravity, the water flows through porous soils until it reaches a non-porous layer of rock or soil, where it forms a confining layer around the groundwater and functions as an aquifer.

Protecting groundwater recharge areas is extremely important. Once contaminated, it is nearly impossible, both scientifically and financially, to reclaim these areas as a source of potable water for a community. In Georgia, most of the groundwater recharge areas for the Floridan aquifer occur along the “Fall Lines.” Fall lines are areas where the upper boundary of the aquifer’s confining layer outcrops at the surface that separates the Piedmont and the Coastal Plain. Groundwater from the Upper Floridan Aquifer is the primary source of drinking water for the City of Richmond Hill. Currently, there are areas of significant groundwater pollution and saltwater intrusion that affect the aquifer. None of these areas, however, are in the immediate vicinity of the City. At this time, there are no ordinances or legislation in the City of Richmond Hill that address groundwater protection of recharge areas.

Recharge Areas in Richmond Hill

As stated above, there are no identified groundwater recharge areas within the city limits of Richmond Hill. In the Code of Ordinances for the City of Richmond Hill, Chapter 56 Storm-water Management for Development Activities addresses significant sources of runoff pollution. Stormwater runoff has been identified as a major source of pollution and contamination for groundwater recharge areas. Although not containing any groundwater recharge areas, the City has taken a hands-on approach in addressing the management and quality of runoff to ensure that downstream areas or nearby recharge areas receive the minimal impact from the City’s persistent development.



The Ogeechee River

Protected Rivers: The Ogeechee

Policy and Regulatory Assessment

The state of Georgia has acted to protect significant river resources within its boundaries by enacting the Mountain and River Corridor Protection Act (O.C.G.A. 12-2-1, et seq.). All rivers in the State that have an average annual flow of 400 cubic feet per second (cfs) are covered by the act. Rivers that fall within the jurisdiction of the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act (O.C.G.A. 12-5-280, et seq.) are covered under the

Act as well. The land corridors running along rivers serve vitally important ecologic functions and provide for numerous recreational opportunities.

- Scientific research and documentation cite many reasons to maintain vegetated corridors along the banks of rivers and streams, including:
- Reducing the volume and velocity of stormwater runoff; and therefore, protecting the hydrologic profiles of the surrounding water systems
- Reducing the sediment and pollutants flowing to the open water and serving as sources of water quality impairment
- Providing for upland wildlife habitat areas
- Maintaining water temperature; and therefore, maintaining quality habitats

Crucial to water quality is the function a vegetated streamside or river corridor that protects the entire watershed from the harmful impacts associated with non-point source pollution. The vegetation works like a filter, removing harmful nutrients, chemicals and sediments and protects the integrity of riverbed or stream channel.

The Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center (CGRDC) prepared a Regional River Corridor Protection Plan that describes the applicability of the River Corridor Protection Act to the local governments within the 10-county CGRDC region. The City of Richmond Hill has the distinction of being at the point along the Ogeechee River that forms the dividing line where protection under the Mountain and River Corridor Protection Act ends and protection under the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act begins. The most significant portion of the City’s river border, however, is covered under the latter.



The Great Ogeechee

The jurisdiction of the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act extends to “coastal marshlands” or “marshlands,” which include intertidal area, mudflats, tidal water bottoms, and salt marsh areas within estuarine area of the State whether or not the tidewaters reach the littoral area through natural or artificial watercourses.³⁶ The Act limits activities such as dredging, filling, structures, and agriculture. A permit system offering limited activity in the above categories is established for those activities deemed consistent with the above-mentioned Georgia Coastal Management Plan. See Map NR-2 for Protected Rivers and Coastal Marshland in Richmond Hill.

³⁶ State of Georgia Coastal Management Program and Program Document, June 2003, NOAA Office of Coastal Resources Management

The Ogeechee River in Richmond Hill

The City of Richmond Hill is fortunate to have one of the state's most valuable river resources as a significant portion of its border. The Ogeechee River offers City residents not only outstanding recreational opportunities, but also a picturesque scenic resource that should be preserved and made available for the citizens to enjoy.



A scenic view of the Ogeechee River

J. F. Gregory Park and the John W. Stevens Wetlands Education Center provide public recreational access and environmental education, made possible by Richmond Hill's initiative to preserve and promote its wetlands along the Ogeechee River. The Center features a pedestrian nature trail over three-and-a-half miles of wetlands. Potential exists for extension of this trail to the Ogeechee River.

Water Supply Watersheds and Water Supply Sources

Regulatory and Policy Assessment

The groundwater resources for Richmond Hill are the Upper and Lower Floridan Aquifers. The Floridan aquifer system consists primarily of limestone, dolomite and calcareous sand and covers approximately 100,000 square miles in southern Alabama, southeastern Georgia, southern South Carolina and all of Florida. The Upper Floridan Aquifer has been the principle fresh water source for coastal Georgia since the 1800s and was considered unlimited at one time. However, extensive consumption in the Upper Floridan Aquifer near the population centers of Hilton Head, SC, Savannah, GA, and Brunswick, GA, have changed the groundwater level, the rate and distribution of recharge and discharge, the rate and direction of groundwater flow, and the overall quality of the water in the aquifer system.

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division's (EPD) "Coastal Georgia Water and Wastewater Permitting Plan for Managing Salt Water Intrusion," was completed in June 2006 and is based on the results of a seven-year study called the Sound Science Initiative. The Plan adheres to the guiding principles set forth in the Water Planning Act: "Water resources are to be managed in a sustainable manner so that current and future generations have access to adequate supplies of quality water that supports both human and natural systems." In addition, the Plan sets forth how EPD will conduct ground and surface water withdrawal permitting, and management and permitting of wastewater discharges.³⁷

³⁷ Coastal Georgia Water and Wastewater Permitting Plan for Managing Salt Water Intrusion, June 2006

Areas north (Hilton Head/Savannah/Tybee Island) and south (Brunswick) of Bryan County are both experiencing saltwater intrusion into the Upper Floridan aquifer. Richmond Hill does not contribute significantly to the development or extent of saltwater intrusion at those locations.

Water Supply Watersheds and Water Supply Sources in Richmond Hill

The City of Richmond Hill is located in the Lower Ogeechee Watershed. Even though the City shares a portion of its boundary with the Ogeechee River, it is not a source of municipal water at this time. As such, Richmond Hill currently draws all of its municipal water from wells in the Upper and Lower Floridan Aquifers.

Richmond Hill has been on the cutting edge of environmental issues, implementing unique solutions to regional problems. In addition to building a constructed wetlands wastewater treatment facility (see the Community Facilities element in this Comprehensive Plan), Richmond Hill was granted a permit to drill into the Lower Floridan Aquifer, a first in the state of Georgia. The project to provide community water from the Lower Floridan is complete.

The City of Richmond Hill has ordinances in place that protect watershed/water supply sources and protect wellheads within the City. In addition, Richmond Hill's subdivision and development regulations encourage the use of impervious surface coverage within the City. To further those efforts, Richmond Hill has also received a Coastal Incentive Grant from Georgia DNR's Coastal Management Program (GCMP) to develop a non-point source pollution program.

Richmond Hill currently benefits from the Ogeechee watershed in the areas of recreation and scenic vistas. The City's residents should be acutely aware of the importance of maintaining the quality of the Ogeechee watershed. Their unique position comes from being not only a downstream recipient in the watershed but also serving as an upstream steward.

With the City's current rate of development, the degradation of the watershed through runoff from impervious surfaces and lack of buffers, or inadequate buffers, may soon become an issue. A watershed study may be conducted to determine the percent of impervious surfaces within the City. Thresholds for impervious surfaces can then be established along with acceptable standards for river buffer zones and impervious surface setbacks to ensure that the quality of the watershed is maintained for the future.

Steep Slopes

Being located in the Georgia Coastal Plain, the ground elevation of Richmond Hill is relatively flat. Elevations across the City range from Mean Sea Level (MSL) to approximately +6.7 meters (21.9 feet) above MSL. There are no areas in the City of Richmond Hill that qualify as steep slopes.

Septic Tank Suitability and Prime Agricultural Land

Septic Suitability

The City's wastewater collection and treatment system currently serves 4,100 households and 450 businesses, or 100 percent of the City's population. There are no households or businesses within the city limits that use private septic systems. Septic suitability is not an issue for the life of this plan.

Prime Agricultural Land

Most of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (SCS) identified "prime agricultural land" in Bryan County occurs north of Fort Stewart, in and around the City of Pembroke. There are no agricultural lands in Richmond Hill. The rest of the County is comprised of extensive areas of loamy sands suited for pasture and commercial timber production. With the current rate of growth in the City, mixed urban and suburban land uses have taken over where agricultural and timber croplands once existed.

With the future rate of growth that is predicted for the City, the prospects of maintaining any productive agricultural land within the city limits is tentative at best. Constrained by extensive wetlands, swamps and streams, the best agricultural areas in Richmond Hill are prime for future development. At this point, any agricultural land remaining in the City is most likely being held by owners for its "highest development potential" in the future.

In the best interest of the community, areas that were once open farm and woodlands should be succeeded with large passive recreational areas, open space and extensive natural buffers to provide the same rural agricultural atmosphere that once dominated the area.

Floodplain

Regulatory and Policy Assessment

The rivers and streams in the Coastal Plain of Georgia contain wide floodplains that carry and store floodwaters and tidal storm surges. Most floodplains in Richmond Hill consist of swamps, pine, and hardwood forests.

Due to the high water table, many areas in Richmond Hill are susceptible to flooding. The ability of a floodplain to carry and store floodwaters should be preserved in order to protect human life and property from flood damage. In addition, undeveloped floodplains often contain wetlands and other areas vital to a diverse and healthy ecosystem. By making wise land use decisions in the development and management of floodplains, beneficial functions are protected and negative impacts to the quality of the environment are reduced. Increasing population density threatens the integrity of floodplains. Therefore, it is in the public interest that the City of Richmond Hill consider the important hydrologic functions of floodplains when considering where development should and should not occur.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) produces Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) that delineate 100- and 500-year flood zones, as well as base flood elevations and floodways, for every county in the state of Georgia.

The City of Richmond Hill has addressed flooding and the minimization of its impact in the Code of Ordinances for the City of Richmond Hill, Chapter 42, "Floods". The ordinances adequately address issues and measures of prevention pertinent to the city. See Map NR-3 for Flood Zones in the City of Richmond Hill.

Floodplains in Richmond Hill

The counties in the coastal Georgia region are undergoing a FEMA sponsored flood insurance rate map modernization. The updated Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRM) of Bryan County and the City of Richmond Hill were delivered in 2007.

Base flood elevations are available for most of Richmond Hill. A study is ongoing to determine base flood elevations throughout the City.

Air Quality

The City of Richmond Hill does not have any industrial facilities that require an Air Quality Permit. Air Quality is governed by the Georgia Environmental Rules, Chapter 391-3-1 et seq. (Air Quality Control) and O.C.G.A. 12-9-1 et seq. (Georgia Air Quality Act). The Environmental Protection Division (EPD) administers these rules and regulations.

Air quality regulations do not apply to specific government or non-government entities. They are applicable to certain emission units or processes. Open burning provisions are enforced by the local EPD office. The Georgia Forestry Commission, along with some municipal governments, issue open burning permits. Issuance of open burning permits must be in compliance with State regulations.

If the City of Richmond Hill desires to adopt their own open burning regulations, the regulations must be equal to or more stringent than those of the State.

The air quality throughout the coastal region of Georgia remains good, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). During the summer months levels of Ozone and particulate matter may elevate due to increased vehicle traffic and air stagnation near major highways. The lack of a traditional heavy manufacturing base and the associated burning of fossil fuels have contributed to consistently high air quality in Richmond Hill and the surrounding area.

According to NOAA, there are currently no air quality issues within the City.

Water Quality

In addition, there are currently no water quality issues in Richmond Hill. In 1997, the City created a Water Initiative to increase the quality of life in the community through wise management and protection of water resources. Richmond Hill continues to pursue

environmental excellence beyond what is required by Georgia law in the management and protection of water resources. The City has taken a proactive approach to water resources in order to make the connection between land use and water quality and quantity. The Water Initiative is intended to protect valuable water resources for environmental and economic benefits into the future. Currently, the City is working with a water conservation consultant in conjunction with Richmond Hill's Water Conservation Program.

In 2002, the City decided to redesign the Richmond Hill Water Initiative in accordance with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' WaterFirst Program. The City's participation in the program is intended to provide responsible leadership in the protection of natural resources and in the education of leaders and the community regarding the importance of careful water management. Richmond Hill hopes to receive the designation as a WaterFirst Community for its approach toward water resources, comprehensive land use, and management and protection of water resources into daily operations.³⁸

Soil Types

Southeastern Georgia is classified as the Atlantic Coast Flatwoods due to soil type and climatic conditions. The elevation is consistent at just above sea level. In addition, the area is characterized by poorly drained soils that are underlain by marine sands, loams or clays and have a high water table that experiences seasonal changes depending on the amount of precipitation. Because there is a significant area of marsh soils along the coast and in Bryan County, the soil contains high content levels of silt and clay. The soils are also nearly continuously saturated, having a high salt content. Refer to Map NR-4 for details of soil types and areas.

Plant and Animal Habitats

Bryan County encompasses a wide range of natural habitats, from hardwood forests to coastal salt marshes. This variety of habitats supports rich wildlife, including a large number of recreationally and commercially targeted species. The County's inland aquatic habitats—ponds, rivers, and marshes—harbor many species of fish and waterfowl, including a number of migratory bird species. Forested habitats are home to popular game species such as the eastern cottontail rabbit, gray squirrel, white-tailed deer, wild turkey and feral hog.

Additionally, Bryan County is home to 214 species of plants and animals that are classified as endangered, threatened or rare.³⁹ State and Federal legislation related to endangered plants and animals include the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, the state Wildflower Preservation Act of 1973, and the state Endangered Wildlife Act of 1973.

³⁸ City of Richmond Hill, Department of Community Development

³⁹ Georgia Department of Natural Resources

The primary reason species become extinct is the loss of habitat. Because the rate of development has accelerated in Richmond Hill over the past decade, it is likely that some species that previously were thriving may be added to the existing endangered list.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that all federally sponsored actions, and all privately sponsored actions using federal funds or applying for federal permits must assess their properties for endangered species and propose plans to reduce or avoid impact. In addition, it is recommended that the identification of any plant or animal habitats occur during both the master plan process and the land disturbance-permitting process.

Plants and Animals Status

Bryan County and the City of Richmond Hill include the historic home ranges of a number of rare, threatened and endangered plants and animals. While not inclusive, the following list provides a reference of those species that may be encountered in the area. With development encroaching upon the habitats of these listed species, greenspace, conservation land, wetlands and naturally occurring buffers continue to play an ever important role in maintaining a viable environment for regional flora and fauna.

Currently there are no specific habitats associated with rare, threatened or endangered species listed in Richmond Hill.

Animals			
	<i>Acantharchus pomotis</i> Mud Sunfish	US	<i>Gopherus polyphemus</i> Gopher Tortoise
US	<i>Acipenser brevirostrum</i> Shortnose Sturgeon	US	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> Bald Eagle
GA	<i>Aimophila aestivalis</i> Bachman's Sparrow		<i>Heterodon simus</i> Southern Hognose Snake
US	<i>Ambystoma cingulatum</i> Flatwoods Salamander		<i>Micrurus fulvius fulvius</i> Eastern Coral Snake
US	<i>Caretta caretta</i> Loggerhead Turtle	GA	<i>Notophthalmus perstriatus</i> Striped Newt
GA	<i>Clemmys guttata</i> Spotted Turtle		<i>Nyctanassa violacea</i> Yellow-crowned Night-heron
	<i>Crotalus adamanteus</i> Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake		<i>Ophisaurus attenuatus</i> Slender Glass Lizard
	<i>Cyprinella leedsi</i> Bannerfin Shiner	US	<i>Picoides borealis</i> Red-cockaded Woodpecker
US	<i>Drymarchon couperi</i> Eastern Indigo Snake		<i>Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus</i> Florida Pine Snake
GA	<i>Elanoides forficatus</i> Swallow-tailed Kite		<i>Pseudobranchius striatus</i> Dwarf Siren
US	<i>Eubalaena glacialis</i> Northern Right Whale		<i>Rana capito</i> Gopher Frog
US	<i>Eumeces egregius</i> Mole Skink		<i>Rana virgatipes</i> Carpenter Frog
	<i>Farancia erytrogramma</i> Rainbow Snake		<i>Seminatrix pygaea</i> Black Swamp Snake
			<i>Umbra pygmaea</i> Eastern Mudminnow

Plants			
	Amorpha georgiana var. georgiana Georgia Indigo-bush		Mikania cordifolia Heartleaf Climbing Hempweed
GA	Elliottia racemosa Georgia Plume	GA	Physostegia leptophylla Tidal Marsh Obedient Plant
GA	Epidendrum conopseum Green-fly Orchid		Platanthera nivea Snowy Orchid
	Illicium parviflorum Yellow Anise- tree		Ponthieva racemosa Shadow-witch Orchid
	Liatris pauciflora Few-flower Gay- feather		Rhynchospora torreyana Torrey Beakrush
GA	Litsea aestivalis Pondspice	GA	Sarracenia minor Hooded Pitcherplant
	Malaxis spicata Florida Adders- mouth	GA	Stewartia malacodendron Silky Camellia
			Zenobia pulverulenta Zenobia

Natural Communities

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Division has no natural communities listed within the boundaries of the City of Richmond Hill.

Other Significant Resources

Nature Parks, Recreation and Conservation Areas

The Georgia Colonial Coast Birding Trail is intertwined with the 300-acre rice field located in the back of J. F. Gregory Park, where a bird watching tower was built by the City. Various types of birds can be viewed including songbirds, wading birds, and waterfowl.

The East Coast Greenway is a proposed 3,000-mile trail system that is planned to connect all of the major cities from Maine through Florida. As part of the East Coast Greenway, the Coastal Georgia Greenway is planned to connect South Carolina to Florida through coastal Georgia.

The Coastal Georgia Greenway will link towns, historic and cultural centers, waterways, parks, wildlife preserves, lighthouses, and the historic Bartram Trail. The spine of the system is a 125-mile proposed bike path that would serve as Georgia's link of the East Coast Greenway. The greenway program will link Georgia Department of Transportation

bike routes to the coast and serve as a clean, safe, and green facility that will provide trails for bicyclists, hikers, tourists, commuters, equestrians, persons with disabilities, non-motorized boaters, and naturalists.

The Bryan County-Richmond Hill Trail will allow users to experience the Ogeechee River from historic rice dikes, then visit J. F. Gregory Park or stop in at Richmond Hill City Hall for further tourist information. There are no federal or state nature parks, recreation or conservation areas in the City of Richmond Hill.

Greenspace

The City of Richmond Hill recently acquired land for an outdoor recreational project through the Georgia Greenspace Funding. The primary goal of this land acquisition was to restore beauty to surrounding neighborhoods located near the southern portion of the city limits by preserving community land and providing residents with a recreational alternative.

Boles Community Park, a nearly six-acre parcel, is intended to serve as a passive park.. It will provide a new recreational facility for visitors and residents to enjoy walking, hiking, bicycling, picnicking, bird watching, and other nature-based activities. It will consist of two mulch trails, educational signage, pavilion, benches, picnic tables, water fountain, and other passive park accessories. The park is significant to the City's ability to expand while maintaining greenspace for all to enjoy.

In 2000, the Georgia General Assembly created the Georgia Greenspace Program to “permanently protected land and water, including agricultural and forestry land that is in its undeveloped, natural state or that has been developed only to the extent consistent with, or is restored to be consistent with, one or more listed goals for natural resource protection or informal recreation.”⁴⁰

Richmond Hill has developed ordinances encouraging open space preservation and requiring new developments to minimize the amount of land consumed. In addition, the City has designated open space for use as public greenspace and/or parks. By setting aside a larger portion of greenspace and natural areas and incorporating them in future designs, the City strives to improve the quality of life and make Richmond Hill a more desirable place to live.

Scenic Views

There are many scenic areas in Bryan County; most scenic views and sites can be found by traveling down the Ogeechee River and its tributaries. By both car and boat, many square miles of open marshlands and coastal estuaries are visible, providing memorable scenic vistas. Local roads and streets that cross at the edges of marshes or rivers serve as access to such views. The City and County are interested in protecting the appearance of

⁴⁰ Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Greenspace Commission, <http://www.state.ga.us/dnr/greenspace/index.html>

these scenic sites that contribute to Richmond Hill's character as a unique and aesthetically pleasing community.

Community Tree Assessment

In 2006, Richmond Hill was awarded an Urban Forestry Grant from the Georgia Forestry Commission's Urban & Community Forestry Grant Program for its Community Tree Assessment project. The \$21,815.00 grant is to aid the City in its initiative to assess community trees, provide educational resources and interactive online lessons on proper tree maintenance.⁴¹ In addition, funds received from the Urban Forestry Grant are aiding the City's efforts to finalize its tree ordinance, currently under legal review.

⁴¹ Retrieved from the City of Richmond Hill website, www.richmondhill-ga.gov, Monday, November 05, 2007.

Cultural Resources Element

The Cultural Resources element introduces the reader to background information through a historical summary of Richmond Hill’s pre-history and history. Following this review, a listing of the five properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) highlights the cultural assets within the boundary of Richmond Hill.

As noted by coastal historian Buddy Sullivan, “In the town itself nothing remains of anything older than the Ford-era structures, except a cemetery or two.” For this reason, local historic sites, with few exceptions, date solely from this era. Surrounded by a handsome brick fence, the colonial Savage family cemetery is, today, within the Richmond Heights Subdivision. Located off Greenwich Avenue, there are no easements for access to this colonial family’s cemetery on City-owned property. However, the cemetery is maintained by the good graces of the neighborhood. A second historic cemetery is located immediately adjacent to Highway 144 West.

This discussion is concluded by an assessment of the current state of historic preservation and related preservation efforts within the growing City of Richmond Hill.

In the State Planning Goals and Objectives, as outlined in the Local Planning Requirements, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) states that a community’s planning goals and objectives for the Cultural Resources element of their Comprehensive Plan should be the conservation and protection of cultural resources. Also, the Georgia General Assembly has established the “Georgia Historic Preservation Act” to further preservation goals within the State. The Georgia Historic Preservation Act empowers each county and municipality in the State to enact ordinances providing for the protection, enhancement, perpetuation, and use of places, districts, sites, buildings, structures, and works of art having a special historical, cultural, or aesthetic interest or value.

The Cultural Resources element is directly related to the Natural Resources element, and may influence the Community Facilities & Services and the Existing Development Patterns elements. Because of their importance to the community character, cultural resources also have an economic value in attracting visitors, as reflected in Economic Development element. In addition, these resources are also included in this Comprehensive Plan’s Areas Requiring Special Attention narrative and map.

Cultural traditions and artifacts are the most important links between our past, present and future. They are the components that bind communities together and are the common ground that provide community cohesiveness and historic as well as cultural perspective.

Background and Historic Summary

Notable colonialists made their mark on the sands of time in Ogeechee/Bryan Neck where the present-day boundaries of Richmond Hill define a growing, prosperous community. Colonial land grants record their names—Savage, Sterling, Mackay, Harn, Butler and third Royal Governor, James Wright (1760-1775), a professional administrator

who governed with a reputation for, “Integrity and Uprightness joined with solid sense and sound Judgment.” Where Southeastern Native Americans once trod, indentured servants labored as documented in historical records. These laborers worked off debt for transport from the Old World to the New World, often toiling for seven or more years to achieve independence.⁴²

In 1750, when the fledgling province of Georgia allowed the import of African slaves, the floodgates opened for the growth of spreading plantations. For Georgia and her new residents, the tidewater emphasis was upon the cultivation of indigo, cotton, and a golden grain—rice. Within this context, Silk Hope and Sedgfield Plantations used the tidal flow method for rice cultivation, the “agricultural centerpiece of Bryan County,” during the post Revolutionary War period and into the early decades of the 19th century. These plantation lands were within the modern boundaries of the City of Richmond Hill. As Loyalists, such as Wright, lost their Ogeechee Neck plantations in 1782/1783 due to the Georgia Act of Confiscation and Banishment, names on the landscape changed.⁴³

Revolutionary patriots colored the pages of the past in St. Philip Parish, one of eight parishes within Georgia’s colonial era. Following the adoption of Georgia’s first Constitution in February 1777, eight original counties were created. In 1793, two additional counties were formed, including Bryan County.⁴⁴ Named for the wealthy, shrewd and land-hungry planter Jonathan Bryan, the territory encompassed Richmond Hill, the tidewater reaches, as well as the piney woods of the interior. As local government began to take shape in the new County, a site was selected on William Clark’s plantation at Cross Roads for the seat of government.⁴⁵

Intersecting the Savannah to Darien Stage Coach Road and the Bryan Neck Road, Cross Roads proved a suitable location. Known as “Ways Station” in later times, and eventually Richmond Hill, the site remained the County Seat for seventeen years until 1814. Its convenient location served the needs of a growing planter class and settlers, who were moving into the backcountry of Bryan County.

Throughout the early antebellum period, a planter class dependent upon the labor of hundreds amassed large tracts of land and great wealth. Richard J. Arnold, a leading rice grower, skillful in business and management techniques, entertained famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted at his White Hall Plantation. Olmsted is the designer of New York City’s Central Park. The renowned landscape architect made astute observations about the area—the world had arrived on the doorsteps of coastal Bryan County, Georgia.⁴⁶

⁴² Sullivan, Buddy 2000. *From Beautiful Zion to Red Bird Creek*, pgs. 18-25; Barefoot, Patricia 2000. *Images of America, Brunswick the City by the Sea*, pg. 10.

⁴³ Sullivan, Buddy 2000. *Ibid*, pg. 13, 28.

⁴⁴ *The New Georgia Encyclopedia*, www.newgeorgiaencyclopedia.com

⁴⁵ Sullivan, Buddy 2000. *From Beautiful Zion to Red Bird Creek*, pgs. 47-49.

⁴⁶ Sullivan, Buddy 2000. *Ibid*, pgs. 84-86.

Railroad Influence

Originally, the old stage coach road from Savannah to Darien served the coastal population. However, as the population grew and the railroad came through the area during the 1850s, the Savannah, Albany & Gulf Railroad (S.A. & G. Railroad) passed through town creating a new transportation mode. The S.A. & G. Railroad transported commodities and men from Georgia’s interior to the Port of Savannah. This form of “through-traffic” was important, because it supplied a commercial feeder line for a growing South Atlantic port.⁴⁷ The new rail bed passed through the lands of planters Richard J. Arnold, William Law, and William J. Way, from whom “Ways Station” took its name. Known as “Way’s No. 1 ½,” the railroad depot was the second scheduled stop outside of the Savannah city limits. The S.A. & G. Railroad merged with the Atlantic & Gulf (A & G) Railroad in April 1863 and was bankrupt by 1874. Eventually, the A & G became part of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad. It is this background that gives Richmond Hill its strong connection to themes associated with the railroad and its history in Georgia.⁴⁸

Fort McAllister

A sandy road led from Ways Station to the Civil War earthen works at Genesis Point on the Great Ogeechee River, known as Fort McAllister—named after Joseph L. McAllister of Strathy Hall plantation.⁴⁹ Built by 1862, the Fort put up a brave defense against the



Fort McAllister

Union Navy’s continual bombardment and assault by ironclads. Fort McAllister was defended staunchly as W.T. Sherman’s seasoned forces marched to the sea leaving devastation and despair in their path. In December 1864, the Fort, though courageously defended, succumbed to an overwhelming number of Union forces. This capture made it possible for Sherman’s army to march into the backside of Savannah unopposed as Confederate troops fell back, withdrawing into Carolina.⁵⁰

Another character who colored the pages of Richmond Hill’s past was Henry Ford. Ford partially restored Fort McAllister during the late 1930s and into the 1940s. Today, owned by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the Fort operates as a state park and historic site. Fort McAllister is located in close proximity to Richmond Hill, in south Bryan County. Its story lends itself to the Georgia Civil War Heritage Trail System and heritage tourists who seek out the interpretation of a divisive era in our country’s history. Fort McAllister is located outside of Richmond Hill. Nevertheless, the tourism provided by Fort

⁴⁷ Stewart, Dorothy Houseal (Spring 1994). *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, “Survival of the Fittest: William Morrill Wadley and the Central of Georgia Railroad’s Coming of Age, 1866-1882,” Volume LXXVIII, Number 1, pgs. 49; 64-65.

⁴⁸ Sullivan, Buddy 2000. *Ibid*, pgs. 162-170.

⁴⁹ Sullivan, Buddy 2000. *Ibid*, pg. 176.

⁵⁰ Sullivan, Buddy 2000. *Ibid*, pgs. 190-194.

McAllister is a significant benefit to the economy of Richmond Hill, as well as to the surrounding area.

The Atlantic Coastal Highway, a precursor to U.S. Highway 17, facilitated 20th century travel into this area. In October 1927, the highway officially opened; and in September 1930, a concrete and steel swing-span bridge crossed the Ogeechee River just north of Ways Station, accommodating travelers from Maine to Miami.⁵¹

Henry Ford Era

On the cusp of the Great Depression, automobile magnate Henry Ford purchased property in Bryan Neck, an area still suffering from the closure of timber mills and the aftereffects of the Civil War. Seeking a winter home, he advised a Savannah realtor to inquire about the availability of land. In May 1925, Ford's initial purchase of 100 acres foreshadowed the acquisition of numerous plantations and landholdings, including the site of Fort McAllister—about 85,000 acres in Chatham and Bryan Counties.⁵²

Convinced that the lowly coastal goldenrod plant held promise as a source of rubber and to circumvent foreign dependency, Ford worked with the great inventor Thomas A. Edison, experimenting with the plant at the Edison Laboratory in Fort Myers, Florida. After Edison's death in October 1931, Ford continued experiments in Georgia. Agricultural experimentation emphasized recycled forest waste products, as well as growing various crops at Ford Farms—later renamed Richmond Hill Plantation.⁵³ In this same decade, Ford donated land for what operates today as an 87-acre Richmond Hill Fish Hatchery, which raises fish for stock in Georgia's streams and rivers.⁵⁴

Under the direction of Henry Ford, over 290 buildings were constructed in the Richmond Hill vicinity during the 1930s and 1940s—among those remaining are a chapel, community house, pay station, and the kindergarten. Today, City officials contemplate the future of these relic structures as development pressures increase in this growing community. Henry Ford's endearing contributions to the Richmond Hill community derive from those educational opportunities offered through school construction as well as health facilities at the Ways Station Health Clinic. These facilities provide a higher quality of life for those whose lives he touched in Richmond Hill.⁵⁵

With the completion of their winter home, Richmond Hill Plantation assumed its new naming, and legend holds that Henry Ford suggested changing "Ways Station" to "Richmond Hill." This name change was formally adopted on May 1, 1941, by council. Within ten years, the Ford era at Richmond Hill ended with his death in April 1947. Operations ceased at the plantation in September 1951, as authorized by Ford heirs.

⁵¹ Sullivan, Buddy 2000. Ibid, pg. 287.

⁵² Sullivan, Buddy 2000. Ibid, pgs. 297-303.

⁵³ Sullivan, Buddy 2000. Ibid, pgs. 303-309.

⁵⁴ GA DNR, Wildlife Resources Division, www.gadnr.org

⁵⁵ Sullivan, Buddy 2000. Ibid, pgs. 314-322.

Leaving their footprints on the sands of time, the Henry Ford family contributed to the rich history of Bryan County and Richmond Hill.⁵⁶

Fort Stewart and Interstate 95

Rural displaced residents moved to Richmond Hill when the U.S. government confiscated middle Bryan County lands in September 1940, creating what is today a 279,000-acre Fort Stewart military reservation. Demand for goods and services by the military presence remain a constant within the growing City of Richmond Hill. Due to speculative growth, at Blueberry Village and the Bottom, the township of Richmond Hill was incorporated as the City of Richmond Hill in 1962. By July 1971, the Eisenhower Interstate System arrived in town, and the Georgia coast was connected by I-95 in late 1974.⁵⁷

Growth Pressures into the 21st Century

Economic boom times ensued with new businesses and subdivisions requiring more services for the newcomers who flooded the lower portion of Bryan County by the 1990s. Planning for projected and “unabated growth” required upgraded infrastructure, new zoning regulations, and a community plan to address the demands of growth in such a desirable area.⁵⁸ One of the most significant achievements of the city government in the 21st century was the designation in 2005 as a “Preserve America” Community. Satisfying rigid criteria, a key factor in this community’s selection was the development of a 335-acre multi-use recreational area at J. F. Gregory Park. The Park serves as a centerpiece for the City of Richmond Hill and as a destination for heritage tourists.⁵⁹

Within this context, a progressive community maintains a rich tradition and adheres to a nationwide program to set aside and recognize the cultural properties that meet the standards of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. Enacted as law on October 15, 1966, this important Act laid the groundwork for The Secretary of the Interior “to expand and maintain” a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). These historic places include districts, sites, buildings and structures, objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology and engineering, and reflect the American culture. Please refer to Historic Sites Map CR-1 to see the locations of the five properties located within Richmond Hill that are listed on the National Register.

National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Sites

The most noteworthy historic building in Richmond Hill, listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), is the Henry Ford Mansion, completed in 1938. Henry Ford’s grand Greek Revival mansion, located within Ford Plantation (aka Richmond Hill Plantation), is a centerpiece of great opulence and wealth of the past. Four other sites listed on the NRHP are located within an approximately ten-mile radius of the City. The first listing occurred in May 1970, noting the significance of Fort McAllister State

⁵⁶ Sullivan, Buddy 2000. Ibid, pgs. 323-327.

⁵⁷ Sullivan, Buddy 2000. Ibid, pgs. 354-357; 365-371.

⁵⁸ Sullivan, Buddy 2000. Ibid, pg. 375.

⁵⁹ Personal Communication, Jan L. Bass, Community Development Specialist, August 9, 2005.

Historic Park. As stated previously, this Civil War era site attracts heritage tourists who follow a Civil War Heritage Trail. During the remainder of the 1970s, four additional sites were listed, including the Henry Ford Mansion. In April 1972, listed was an important Mississippian Period (AD 900 – 1200) archaeological site at Seven Mile Bend. Strathy Hall reflects a classic Plantation Plain-style home, with a nearby avenue of oaks leading from the Great Ogeechee River, through a 20th century waterfront development, to the old home site. Finally, Kilkenny dates from 1837 and was restored by Henry Ford. Unusual features of this structure are the eyebrow windows.

Table CR-1 shows those sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), within the Richmond Hill 31324 zip code. Only the Ford Plantation is physically located within the current City limits, and is described below. However, sites such as Fort McAllister State Historic Park contribute largely to heritage tourism and the coffers of the City. Table CR-2 shows other non-NRHP historic sites in Richmond Hill.

Table CR-1 National Register of Historic Places Listing in Richmond Hill vicinity

Site Name	Type of Site	Year Built	Address
Strathy Hall	Building	c. 1843	51 Mill Hill Landing
Strathy Hall Cemetery	Cemetery	Mid 1700s	
Fort McAllister State Park	Site	1861	894 Fort McAllister Rd
Ford Plantation	Site	1936	Ford Neck Road
Kilkenny	Building	c. 1747	Kilkenny Road

The Ford Plantation⁶⁰

Henry Ford, the famous and wealthy automobile magnate, began buying land around Richmond Hill in March 1925. No one, except maybe Ford himself, could have imagined just how much of a lasting impact he would make on this section of Bryan County. Starting with the purchase of a 100-acre tract, Ford eventually owned about 85,000 acres in Chatham and Bryan Counties.

Savannah architect Cletus W. Bergen was engaged to design the Fords’ winter home—Richmond Hill Plantation (now better known as the Ford Plantation). Construction began in 1936. Overlooking the majestic views of the Great Ogeechee River, their Greek-Revival style home was partially constructed of bricks taken from a former Savannah River plantation known as “The Hermitage.” The Ford river mansion featured a ballroom, dining room, parlor, first floor kitchen, six bedrooms upstairs and seven bathrooms. Ambitious plans resulted in a total of 292 buildings on the Ford property, providing employment opportunities and



The Ford Plantation

⁶⁰ Sullivan, Buddy 2000. *From Beautiful Zion to Red Bird Creek: A History of Bryan County, Georgia*; www.fordplantation.com; Richmond Hill Plantation National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form.

contributing to the education, health, well-being, and economic prosperity of area residents. Today, Ford-era structures remain on the landscape at Richmond Hill, even as development pressures alter the land. The exclusive Ford Plantation sprawls over 1,800 acres as a private equity membership sporting community with full amenities; a limited number of home sites vary in acreage and design, but will not exceed 400. A showcase of this development is the Greek-Revival home of Henry and Clara Ford, listed on the National Register of Historic Places on January 30, 1978.

Table CR-2 Other Historical Site Listings in Richmond Hill

Site Name	Type of Site	Year Built	Address
Richmond Hill Fish Hatchery	Building/site	1938	Ford Avenue
Bryan County Courthouse Annex	Building	1939	Ford Avenue
Community House	Building	c. 1930s	Ford Avenue
St. Anne's Catholic Church	Building	1936	1095 Ford Ave
Cannan Baptist Church	Building	c. 1913	Ford Avenue
Burch House	Building		62 Maple Street
The Bottom	Site	c. 1927	Ford Avenue
Ford Plantation	Site	1920s	Ford Neck Road
Kindergarten Building	Building	c. 1937	Ford Avenue
Richmond Hill Teacherage	Building	c. 1941	Ivey Street
Martin House	Building	c. 1937	Ivey Street
Long House	Building	c. 1943	32 Lynwood Drive
Bakery/Sweet Shop	Building	c. 1941	Ford Avenue
Ukkelberg House	Building	c. 1936	10155 Ford Ave
J. F. Gregory House	Building	c. 1930s	Richard Davis Drive
Pay Station Building	Building	c. 1930s	Dearborn Avenue
Blueberry Village	Site/Building	1930s	Ford Avenue
Carpenter House	Building		61 Maple Street
Hobbs House	Building		63 Maple Street
School Principal's House	Building		64 Maple Street
The Barber Shop	Building	c. 1930s	Magnolia Street

Other Historic Sites located within the City of Richmond Hill

Other than the Ford Plantation’s designation as a National Register of Historic Places Site, all sites in Table CR-2 have a National Register site designation of Local Historic Site.

Readers should note that with only few exceptions, all of the cultural sites listed herein are Henry Ford era properties or developments financed by Ford to achieve a variety of goals and objectives. This occurred primarily during a very active 10-year period, dating from 1936 through 1946. Within Richmond Hill proper, there are between 100 and 125 structures remaining from the Ford era—all of which have a distinctive look and a very basic color scheme.

In addition, local historic sites include an African-American church, as well as two colonial era cemeteries. Located within the Richmond Heights Subdivision, the first cemetery was situated long ago on the colonial era Silk Hope Plantation and served as the final resting place for members of the Savage family. Located along a heavily trafficked east to west corridor on Georgia Highway 144/Ford Avenue is the second cemetery, a lonely spot in an urbanizing setting of pine trees.

The Georgia Historic Commission marker that denotes the “dead town” of Hardwicke tells the story of a planned British colonial town; this dates from a time when Bryan County was known for its administrative purposes as St. Philip Parish.

Richmond Hill Teacherage, circa 1941

Located at Lynwood Avenue and Ivey Street—only one block from the Richmond Hill School—the Teacherage building was a convenient, inexpensive residence for single teachers. They paid \$36 per month rental; this included three meals per day and maid service. Live-in cooks and a building supervisor managed the needs of up to 14 educators who resided at the white Richmond Hill Teacherage.



Richmond Hill Teacherage

The Bottom

Located in a swamp, or the “bottom,” until drained and filled with soil, The Bottom holds distinction as the first subdivision funded by Henry Ford. Each of the approximately 75 homes featured two or three bedrooms as well as indoor plumbing. Similar to his scheme for the Model T, workers were allowed only one choice for an exterior color scheme—white with black shutters. Garages, for parking the family car and a small workshop area, featured a two-gable front façade. Prior to a 1945 Internal Revenue Service ruling, employees lived rent-free in the subdivision. A ruling of illegality resulted in levying a \$15 per month rental fee; reputedly, Henry Ford authorized a \$15 per month raise for workers affected by the new rental agreement.



The Bottom

The John F. “Jack” Gregory House, circa 1930

Hired by Henry Ford in 1925 as the superintendent of Ford Farms, J. F. Gregory’s responsibilities were legendary. They included the supervision and management of farming, lumbering operations, housing and health services for Ford workers, education as well as oyster harvesting in season. Mr. Gregory’s house is unique, as it features a basement. A Ford-era brick fence surrounds the 37 x 70’ garden area, adjacent to the former Gregory home on three sides. Today, the Richmond Hill Planning and Zoning Department occupies the Gregory House. The City of Richmond Hill received a generous grant in 2003 from The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. to restore the historic landscaping of the garden—Cherokee roses, crepe myrtles and ground cover. Close by is the entrance to the J. F. Gregory Park, a community asset and gathering spot for families and weddings.



J. F. Gregory House

The Barber Shop

An 87-plus year-old Mr. Bailey Carpenter took care of Henry Ford’s barbering needs and conducted business at his gabled wood frame shop on Magnolia Street. He continues to work today at his shop serving members of the Richmond Hill community.



The Barber Shop

The Commissary

The Commissary supplied not only Ford employees, but also the entire community, with groceries and general merchandise. Residents bought a variety of food, fresh produce and shellfish produced at the Ford Farms. A staff butcher cut meats to order. A Coastal Community Christian Church and childcare facility—Ford’s Academy—currently occupy the former commissary building, recycling the structure for community needs in the 21st century.



The Commissary

The Bakery/Sweet Shop, circa 1941

Managed by Ira Womble, The Bakery or Sweet Shop made and sold a variety of baked goods: bread, cakes, pies, and doughnuts as well as ice cream. Enjoyment of these delicious sweets made The Bakery Shop a popular gathering place on the Ford Plantation. Located on Ford Avenue (Georgia 144) today, the structure serves as the



The Bakery/Sweet Shop

Village Loan Company.

The Pay Station Building

Located within Richmond Heights Subdivision at the intersection of Greenwich Avenue and Dearborn Street, this five-room structure served the needs of the Ford Plantation's superintendent, office manager, and bookkeeper. A telephone exchange operated there as well as the processing of Ford employees' payroll. The Pay Station Building has recently undergone restoration.



The Pay Station Building

The Community Center

Located at 10512 Ford Avenue, the Carter Funeral Home-Bryan Chapel occupies the former Community Center structure. Young adults from throughout Bryan County were scheduled for two week's residence at the Center where they learned cooking, sewing and cleaning skills.



The Community Center

Martha-Mary Chapel

Located adjacent to The Community Center, the former chapel with its distinctive Christopher Wren-style steeple serves the faith-based community today as St. Anne's Catholic Church. Under Henry Ford's direction, this pre-



Martha-Mary Chapel

fabricated structure was built at a cost of \$28,000 in 1936 and fashioned after a Meeting House in Bradford, Massachusetts. One of six Martha-Mary Chapels built in Michigan, Massachusetts and at Richmond Hill, the chapels were named in memory of Henry and Clara Ford's mothers, Martha Ford and Mary Bryant.

Bryan County Court House Annex

Built in 1939, the Annex functioned not as a courthouse, but as a gathering place where community business, such as voting, was conducted. Secret orders, including the Masons and the Order of the



Bryan County Courthouse Annex

Eastern Star, used this facility for meetings. Continuing this tradition, the building houses County offices where meetings are held.

The Richmond Hill Fish Hatchery

In 1936, Henry Ford donated approximately 90 acres of land to the state of Georgia for a fish hatchery. Using Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) laborers, state authorities completed the construction work for the Richmond Hill Fish Hatchery within two years. Currently, 38 fish production and rearing ponds, covering 18.8 acres of water, serve as hatchery for eight different types of fish, including striped bass and hybrid striped bass. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources operates the hatchery through its Wildlife Resources Division and conducts outreach programs with annual “Kids Fishing Events” in the months of June and September.



The Richmond Hill Fish Hatchery

Canaan Baptist Church, circa 1913

Established in 1913 by Rev. David Boles, Sr., Pastor and Brother Fred Gilbert, Deacon and Church Chairman, the Canaan Baptist Church serves a congregation today in its central location. This gabled structure is a prominent feature along Highway 144/Ford Avenue, along the east side of the CSX Railroad tracks.



Canaan Baptist Church, circa 1913

Kindergarten Building, circa 1937

Encompassing over 3,500 square feet, the Kindergarten offered a classroom setting for pre-school instruction and served 25-40 children per year. The Kindergarten was the first in Bryan County. Teachers provided transportation for the students on an as-need basis. Currently owned by a Methodist retirement home, Magnolia Manor, the old Kindergarten serves as the headquarters of the Richmond Hill Historical Society Museum and the Richmond Hill Welcome Center. The Museum houses a variety of artifacts and contains several period rooms, a number of which date to the prosperous Ford era at Richmond Hill.



Kindergarten Building

Savage Family Cemetery

Located within Richmond Heights Subdivision, the walled Savage family cemetery reminds us of the colonialists who pursued new lives in early Georgia. Although a native Bermudan, Thomas Savage (1738-1786) moved to Charleston, South Carolina, and later re-located to Richmond Hill where he met and married Mary Butler in 1757. Through this marriage, Savage acquired large tracts of land where rice was cultivated on the Ogeechee River at Silk Hope Plantation near the present Richmond Hill town limits.



Savage Family Cemetery

Unnamed Cemetery

Located on the north side of a busy and heavily trafficked Highway 144/Ford Avenue, this small cemetery features less than two dozen burial sites within a piney woods setting. Its location threatens the long-term integrity of this lonely resting spot—for all intents and purposes, this cemetery is “endangered.”



Unnamed Cemetery

Blueberry Village

The second of Henry Ford’s housing projects was “Blueberry Village”—a subdivision consisting of approximately 60 houses. In most respects, houses were similar to The Bottom in the number of rooms, plumbing, a lackluster color scheme and garage amenities. Rental agreements were similar as “The Bottom” too; however at Blueberry Village, each parcel included a garden plot, and residents were encouraged to grow “Victory gardens.” In 1956, both subdivisions were acquired by a land company—the Richmond Hill Land Company. Residences were sold by the principals, Marc Levine and David Cohen. Subsequently, when their land company deeded streets and parks to the community, the stage was set for the incorporation of the City of Richmond Hill in March 1962.

The Martin House, circa 1937

Located on Lynwood Drive, this house was built for bookkeeper Aimor Martin and his family. Because of the challenges that faced Martin’s daughter Mary Lou, an early polio victim, alterations, such as easily accessible cabinets and ramps, were added to the Martin home. Not only did Henry Ford authorize purchase of a wheel chair for Miss Martin, but he also sent her to Dearborn, Michigan, where she received treatment at no cost through the Ford Hospital.



The Martin House

The Ukkelberg House

When Thomas A. Edison died in 1931, Henry Ford continued plant experimentation searching for a cheap source of rubber in the lowly coastal goldenrod. One of Edison's understudies at his Fort Myers, Florida, laboratory was Minnesotan, Harry G. Ukkelberg. In July 1936, Ukkelberg moved to Richmond Hill where he continued plant experiments and took the lead in research until 1941 when a disastrous fire struck the laboratory. For the next seven years, Ukkelberg supervised all operations at Ford Farms and successfully cultivated truck crops such as English peas, carrots, cucumbers, Irish potatoes, turnips, mustard, broccoli, rutabagas, onions, cabbage and beets—where rice fields once reined supreme.



The Ukkelberg House

The Long House, circa 1943

Lucy and Leslie Long lived in a Ford-built home on Lynwood Drive. While Lucy taught at the Ways Consolidated School, her husband Leslie worked at the Ford Laboratory. Leslie worked with agronomist H.G. Ukkelberg, and chemists Jack Oliver and Frank McCall. Among other experiments, they developed a process for producing rayon from sawdust.



The Long House

Historic Preservation in Richmond Hill

In the past, active members of the Richmond Hill Historical Society provided the City with information on the creation of a historic district overlay. This fell by the wayside due to inertia or possibly, more likely, the other critical demands upon staff and volunteer time due to the explosive growth within the City, and its pursuit of annexation. An initial stage of interest was reflected in the Richmond Hill Code of Ordinances. This includes an Appendix A, Zoning, Section 18 providing for a Richmond Hill Historical Overlay District created to:

“Recognize and protect the unique character and integrity of the City, and allow for productive uses, and perpetuate an appreciation of the City’s architectural and historic assets and the importance of preserving them.”

Furthermore, the intent of the Richmond Hill Historical Overlay District, *“shall not change the existing zoning classification of the affected properties or the authorized uses thereof, except where a proposed use cannot be developed in a manner compliant with the architectural design standards herein.”*

Sections A – D provide a Statement of Intent, Allowed Architectural Forms or Types, Subdivision of the Historical Overlay District, and outline a Building Permit Application

Process, to be added at a later date. Although this regulation sets the stage for local control, neither the overlay district nor the building permit application process has been implemented. In general, however, merchants and homeowners are encouraged to retain the “Ford look” that is so characteristic of the industrialist’s imprint on the City and the numerous structures remaining. In addition, as the economic benefits of historic preservation become more apparent to the City, the Code prescription for an historical overlay district can be enacted and enforced. Concomitant with this follows Design Guidelines appropriate to the Richmond Hill “look.”

The local and civic leaders value preservation issues. In 1998, Council and Mayor Richard R. Davis established a Historic Preservation Commission. The mission of the four-member group was to preserve Richmond Hill’s architectural, archaeological and cultural landmarks.

They identified four major goals targeting preservation and restoration of historic places and objects of historic significance. In addition, the Commission was tasked with raising awareness of Richmond Hill’s rich history, as well as the promotion and distribution of materials of educational value on historic preservation. While the Commission remained inactive for some time, its first meeting was held in 2007.

Because there is no historic preservation ordinance within the City’s Code, the Commission has no incentive for achieving Certified Local Government Status, meaning eligibility for grant funding is not otherwise available to the City.

Richmond Hill Historical Society

The Richmond Hill Historical Society serves as a partner in the City’s quest to promote local history. Located at 11460 Ford Avenue, the Society’s museum headquarters is the 1940 Ford Kindergarten. The Museum is open daily from 10:00 AM until 4:00 PM, except major Holidays. The Museum offers history buffs an opportunity to observe aspects of the City’s past, especially the Henry Ford era. Eight rooms filled with historic memorabilia suggest yesteryear; the old Country Store holds special significance for rural coastal Georgians as does the exhibit on turpentine industry.

Nearby is the multi-storied Magnolia Manor Methodist Home for the elderly—owners of the old Kindergarten. Due to its strategic location along Ford Avenue as well as escalating land values, the period structure faces an uncertain future and fits within the plans for a “Ford Village” within the J. F. Gregory Park.

A new initiative of the Richmond Hill Historical Society is the “Ogeechee Riceland Historical District.” The intent of this designation is to promote the preservation of old rice dikes and canals along the Ogeechee River in south Bryan County; however, the historic district has nothing to do with a National Register district. In addition, the Society was given two railroad-era structures. These facilities could be used to interpret the strong connection between the railroad and the City of Richmond Hill. Any further work with the Riceland district or a railroad theme can only diversify the interpretation of the richness of Richmond Hill’s past.

Community Facilities and Services Element

The Community Facilities and Services element presents a plan for ensuring that community facilities and infrastructure are available to support existing development in order to permit orderly growth and to promote public health, safety and welfare. This element provides a city-wide assessment of various public services and facilities to promote a better understanding of service issues. This element provides a framework for coordinated planning between service agencies and the City. In addition, the Community Facilities and Services element provides a basis on which individual property owners can plan for the development of their property and be assured that basic infrastructure and services are available, or can reasonably be extended, to serve each site.

Specifically, the Community Facilities and Services element evaluates the existing level of public services and facilities in the City including water, sewer, storm water system, streets, fire protection, law enforcement, solid waste management, parks and recreation, administrative services, library, and school facilities, as required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The element serves as a guide for decision-making by public officials and the development community in setting priorities related to infrastructure improvements and the expenditures of funds.

The Community Facilities and Services element is directly related to the element on Existing Development Patterns in that new development must be planned in conjunction with the extension and availability of essential infrastructure. Other related elements include Natural Resources, as infrastructure improvements directly impact areas known to contain sensitive species or have been designated as open space; and Economic Development, as the City's community facilities and services have an economic value in attracting visitors and business growth.

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) states in its State Planning Goals and Objectives for Local Planning Requirements that a community's planning goals and objectives for its Comprehensive Plan's Community Facilities and Services element should be the assurance of community facilities and services provisions throughout the State to support efficient growth and development patterns that will protect and enhance the quality of life for Georgia's residents.

Public services are provided to the residents and businesses of Richmond Hill through a variety of departments and agencies. Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield sustains its own internal water supply, transportation, utility infrastructure, fire, and security services independent of the local governments in Bryan County.

The City of Richmond Hill is currently experiencing a rapid growth in population as well as land area. With these increases, the requests for services will also increase proportionally. These changes will place more demand on the current systems and challenge city leaders to meet these demands in a timely and cost effective manner.

The following key community facilities and services directly impact future development in Richmond Hill and Bryan County:

- Water Supply Distribution and Treatment
- Sewerage System Collection and Treatment
- Stormwater System
- Streets
- Solid Waste Management
- Public Safety
- Fire Protection
- Parks and Recreation
- Education
- Libraries
- Other Government and Administrative Services

These facilities and services are inventoried and required to be addressed by the Department of Community Affairs' *Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning*, effective May 1, 2005.

Map CF-1 shows the locations of current community facilities and service areas located within the City of Richmond Hill.

Water Supply Distribution and Treatment

The City of Richmond Hill currently contracts with a private firm—CH2M Hill - OMI, headquartered in Greenwood Village, Colorado—to operate and maintain the City's water, sewerage, storm-water, and streets systems. The contract is self-renewing on a yearly basis with no immediate plans to change the current arrangement.

As stated in the Natural Resources element, the groundwater resource for the City of Richmond Hill is the Upper and Lower Floridan Aquifer. The Floridan Aquifer system consists primarily of limestone, dolomite, and calcareous sand. It extends approximately 100,000 square miles in southern Alabama, southeastern Georgia, southern South Carolina and all of Florida.

Richmond Hill's water supply source is currently provided by four wells, two each in the Upper and Lower Floridan Aquifer, serving every household and business in the City. The system supplies 9,000 residents—approximately 3,200 households and 450 businesses in the City.

Richmond Hill tests and treats water for the presence of contaminants and concentrations of dissolved minerals. Treatment removes solids, and the water is fluorinated before distribution. Excess supply is stored in three tanks adjacent to the facility.

The system currently has an annual average daily demand of 1.7 million gallons and a peak daily demand of 1.8 mg. After a recent expansion, the system has a maximum permitted withdrawal of 3.5 mg/d. This excess capacity represents sufficient supply to last well into the life cycle of this Comprehensive Plan. The system remains in good repair with the average age of the 79.6 miles of water lines, ranging in size from 10 to 12 inches, with an average age of approximately 15 years. Replacement is scheduled on an as-needed basis.

The future supply and demand projections on Richmond Hill’s water resources, as seen in Table CF-1 and Figure CF-1, are based on the 2006 Georgia Tech population study completed for the member counties of the Coastal Georgia RDC.

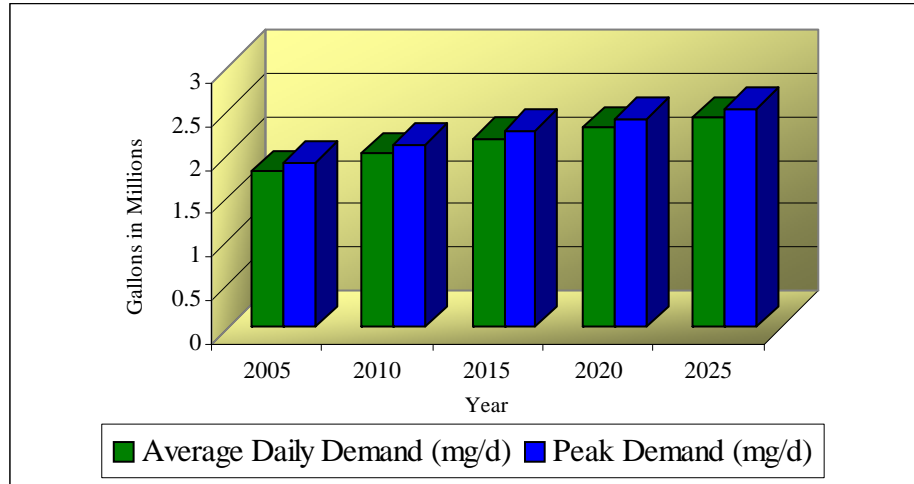
Table CF-1 Projected Water Supply Demand⁶¹

	Year				
	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Average Daily Demand (mg/d)	1.80	2.01	2.18	2.31	2.42
Peak Demand (mg/d)	1.90	2.11	2.28	2.41	2.52

Source: From this Comprehensive Plan’s Population Element, Table P-3: “Projected Population Growth”

⁶¹ The projections in Table CF-1 and Figure CF-1 are based on Table P-3, “Projected Population Growth” in Chapter 1, Population

Figure CF-1 Projected Water Supply Demands



Source: From this Comprehensive Plan’s Population Element, Table P-3: “Projected Population Growth”

Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment

Richmond Hill’s wastewater collection and treatment system currently serves 9,000 residents—approximately 3,200 households and 450 businesses, or 100 percent of the City’s households. There are no households or businesses within the city limits that use private septic systems.

The City’s current wastewater collection system consists of 89.6 miles of sewer lines, ranging in size from 10 to 12 inches, with an average age of approximately 15 years. There is a small area outside the city limits near Interstate 95 that is serviced by the City’s sewerage system. The collection system remains in good repair with new lines added as development takes place; older lines are replaced on an as-needed basis.



Sterling Creek Wastewater Treatment Facility constructed wetlands

The Sterling Creek Wastewater Treatment Facility, constructed in 1998, is located on Sterling Creek Drive. The treatment system consists of three processes designed to maximize wastewater treatment while using minimum energy. Primary treatment is provided by a four-cell lagoon, each cell designed to prepare wastewater for secondary treatment. Secondary treatment is provided by applying the wastewater at a slow rate to a series of eleven sloping overland flow fields, planted with nutrient removing grasses. Final treatment is provided by artificial wetlands, where plants chosen to target specific nutrients continue the cleaning

process, polishing the treated wastewater for discharge into the Elbow Swamp. An environment-friendly approach to wastewater treatment, Richmond Hill’s facility provides efficient performance, presents a natural appearance, and has been designated a wildlife sanctuary for its role in preserving the habitat of many coastal species.

Because of this progressive system, the City of Richmond Hill is recognized as being the first municipality in the state approved for this type of facility. In fact, Richmond Hill was named a “Trendsetter” City by the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) in January of 2006 for their innovative efforts to use wetlands and man-made sewage lagoons as part of its state-of-the-art wastewater treatment facility.

This innovative method precludes the use of chlorine in the treatment process, which substantially reduces the outflow’s general environmental impact. The City’s current daily treatment demand is 1.3 mg/d. With a current system capacity of 1.5 mg/d, expansion of the system is a high priority to meet the needs of continuously ongoing development within the City.

The City’s 2003-2007 Short Term Work Plan indicates the government’s intention to expand the existing system to serve areas outside the city limits. With an estimated useful life of 35 years, the facility should meet the demands for the life cycle of this plan, if expansion of the land treatment capacity takes place. The City has 500 acres of additional land at its disposal for expansion of the treatment system. Construction costs associated with the expansion of an overland flow-type system are relatively low as compared with other more traditional systems.

Other Community Facilities and Services

Storm Water System

Richmond Hill recently conducted a comprehensive Stormwater Study of the City to determine problem areas and future needs. Once the findings of this study are implemented, coupled with efforts to closely scrutinize new subdivision drainage design, they will greatly improve the City’s existing and future drainage and flood mitigation. Richmond Hill’s contract with CH2M Hill - OMI requires maintenance on the stormwater system on an as-needed basis, with no immediate plans for a major update at this time.

Streets

Richmond Hill presently contracts with CH2M Hill - OMI for maintenance of their streets. CH2M Hill - OMI conducts maintenance operation out of the City’s maintenance facility located on Bass Street. The City has approximately 104 miles of city streets as well as 25 miles of sidewalks. Ten miles of paved roads and five miles of sidewalks were added to the system in 2005. Richmond Hill does not have any unpaved roads in its jurisdiction.

City streets that are constructed in association with new development are accepted by the government after three years. For each year of acceptable roadway performance, a percentage of performance bond money is returned to the contractor until the three-year period expires. At that time, the City accepts responsibility for street maintenance. See Map CF-2 for the streets in Richmond Hill.

Solid Waste Management

The City of Richmond Hill operates under the Solid Waste Management Plan adopted August 5, 2003, and is effective until 2007. However, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs granted an extension to the City, allowing the update of their Solid Waste Management Plan to be due at the completion of the Comprehensive Plan in October of 2008. The plan is monitored on a continuous basis and updated as required by the Georgia Solid Waste Management Act of 1990.

Richmond Hill has contracted with Waste Management, Inc. for disposal and landfill services through February 2011, when the contract must go through the re-bidding process. The City has a disposal capacity assurance of 3,435.55 tons of waste per year through 2021. In recent years, Richmond Hill collected approximately 1,850 and 1,900 tons of solid waste in 2005 and 2006, respectively.

Additionally, the City maintains a composting facility located at the Sterling Creek Reclamation Facility. Consistent with the Solid Waste Management Plan Short Term Work Program, Richmond Hill continuously educates the public on recycling and guidelines for solid waste pickup.

In the future, Richmond Hill will face a greater demand for solid waste capacity due to rapid growth. Leaders will have to monitor waste management issues and address them on an as-needed basis. The contract for disposal capacity may have to be revisited in the near future. See Map CF-1 for the location of the recycling center.

Public Safety

The City of Richmond Hill Police Department is located on the City services campus at 120 Richard Davis Drive. This location is approximately three-fourths of a mile from the intersection of SR 144 and US Highway 17, providing an ideal central location within the city limits. The Department operates as a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, full-service law enforcement entity. The Department has 25 sworn officers and six civilian technicians. The Department maintains a fleet of 30 fully equipped vehicles to cover the City.

In 2005, officers responded to approximately 9,500 calls, or an average of 26 calls per day. The average response time per call was three minutes or less, with the average man-hours per call at .15 hours (approximately nine minutes). The Department's current ratio of officers per population is 2.2 officers per 1,000 residents, which is only slightly lower than the U.S. national average of 2.3 officers per 1,000 residents (Military Review, 2007).⁶² Because of the City's commitment to public safety, crime rates within Richmond Hill remain consistently low.⁶³

The current Police Service facility was constructed in 1999. With an estimated useful life of 30-50 years and adequately planned space allocation, the existing building should

⁶² Majors, Broemmel, J., Clark, T.L., & Nielsen, S., U.S. Army. "The Surge Can Succeed," *Military Review*, July-August, 2007, 110-112.

⁶³ City of Richmond Hill Planning Director, October 2007.

remain serviceable for the life of this Comprehensive Plan. The Department maintains state-of-the-art equipment, financed largely through seized funds and strategic purchases.

As the City grows in population and land area, the Department faces the challenge of maintaining the current level of service it provides. One of the Department's top priorities is an upgrade of their communication equipment. Also for the future, the number of officers and civilian staff should increase to maintain the current ratio, keeping in mind that any significant change in the crime rate or number of calls may warrant a further review of staffing levels. See Map CF-1 for the location of the Richmond Hill Police Department.

Fire Protection

The City of Richmond Hill Fire Department provides fire service for the entire City using a combination of professional and volunteer firefighters. The Department maintains two fire stations—one located at 9954 Ford Avenue and the other at 722 Timber Trail. In the past year, the Department responded to approximately 350 calls, with an average of .95 calls per day. The average response time per call is three to five minutes. Richmond Hill currently maintains an ISO (Insurance Service Organization) of four. The Department operates with a paid staff of eight, as well as 15 volunteers. The recognized national standard for staffing is 1.65 firefighters per 1,000 population. With the current paid staff and volunteers, the Department manpower levels are adequate for the foreseeable future.

The vehicle inventory for the Department consists of three engines, one ladder truck and one rescue unit. A new aerial truck was purchased in 2006. The current Short Term Work Program also outlines additional upgrades to equipment and facilities, enabling Richmond Hill's Fire Department to maintain its current level of service.

For the future, the City should monitor the ratio of paid staff to volunteers. With the national trend of decreased volunteer participation in local fire services, the City may be faced with the possibility of converting to an all-paid professional Department. Interviews with local planning officials indicate that the trend of lower rates of volunteerism holds true in Richmond Hill as well.⁶⁴

As the City increases in population and land area, the need for additional stations, equipment and fire infrastructure (lines and hydrants) must be addressed to maintain or improve the current ISO rating. In addition, the fire station on Ford Avenue or SR 144 dates from 1965. With an estimated useful life of 30 years, this station will need improvements, or replacing, within the life cycle of this Plan.

Parks and Recreation

The City of Richmond Hill is not home to any state or national parks; however, it is economically influenced by Fort McAllister State Park, located nearby to the south. Fort McAllister offers many opportunities for camping, picnicking, fishing, hiking, biking and

⁶⁴ City of Richmond Hill Planning Director, October 2007.

even birding, as the Fort is part of the Colonial Coast Birding Trail. In addition, the nature trail Red Bird Creek Trail is located close to Fort McAllister.

The State operates two wildlife management areas (WMAs), with one in Richmond Hill—the Richmond Hill WMA. The other WMA is located on Ossabaw Island. Wildlife management areas offer recreational opportunities to enjoy nature, bird-watch or pursue hunting or other game interests. A wealth of other natural and historic opportunities exists along Georgia’s coast for Richmond Hill residents seeking recreational activities.

Richmond Hill operates five public parks for the use of the community, as listed in Table CF-2. The five parks comprise a total of 350 acres of wood, grassy areas, fields and plantation-era rice field dikes. A full-time staff of three maintains the park grounds and facilities.

Table CF-2 Parks and Recreation Facilities

Park Name	Address/Location	Passive/Active	Playground Equipment	Restrooms	No. of Picnic Shelters
J. F. Gregory Park	Cedar Street	Passive/Active	Yes	Yes	1
Pierceville Forest Park	Sandpiper Road	Passive/Active	Yes	No	Ø
Blueberry Park	Rt. 144 & Oleander Road	Passive/Active	Yes	No	Ø
Richmond Heights Park	Richmond Heights Subdivision	Passive/Active	Yes	No	Ø
Boles Community Park	Harris Trail	Passive	No	No	1

Source: City of Richmond Hill

All but Boles Community Park, Richmond Hill’s newest park, offer a combination of passive and active recreation opportunities. Hiking trails, playground equipment and picnic shelters offer active recreation activities at the other four parks in the City.

Additionally, Bryan County maintains and operates a number of parks in southern areas of the County that are available to Richmond Hill residents. In southern Bryan County, recreational facilities are located at 85 Parkwood Avenue and 508 Timber Trail. Activities at these facilities include a gym; football, soccer, baseball and softball fields; indoor and outdoor basketball courts; tennis courts and restroom facilities. Bryan County also operates a playground for children at 23 Dixie Daniel Road.⁶⁵

For other recreation opportunities, Richmond Hill and Bryan County residents can access three DNR-maintained public boat ramps in southern Bryan County—Demere Creek,

⁶⁵ Retrieved from the Bryan County Parks and Recreation Department website, www.bryancountyga.org, November, 2007.

located near the 13-mile marker on SR 144 S; Fort McAllister, located on the SR 144 Spur at the Fort McAllister entrance; and Belfast Siding Road, near the I-95 overpass. A public fishing pier is also located on Belfast Keller Road at the Tivoli River Bridge.

With such a wealth of local and area parks and recreational opportunities, the City of Richmond Hill's Parks and Recreational facilities adequately meets the needs of current residents. However, as rapid population growth is certain to continue, Richmond Hill can proactively plan by considering designating lands for future parks and greenspace. In addition, the City can coordinate with Bryan County to make sure that the current level of quality of life is maintained for future residents.

Education

The Bryan County Board of Education (BOE) serves approximately 5,420 students, or 80 percent of the student-aged population enrolled in school. Five public schools operate within the City of Richmond Hill (see Table CF-3). According to the state of Georgia's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) report for 2006, all nine schools in the Bryan County system met test participation and academic performance standards.⁶⁶

In addition, there are several private schools operating in the City that provide alternatives to the public school system— Montessori Preschool, Calvary Christian Academy and the Richmond Hill Christian Academy. Home schooling children is another option; however, data regarding the number of children currently being home schooled in Richmond Hill or Bryan County is not readily available.

⁶⁶ Retrieved from the Governor's Office of Student Achievement website, <http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/ayp2006/overview>, October 2007.

Table CF-3 Educational Facilities in Richmond Hill

Facility Name	Address/Location	Acres	Grades	Maximum Enrollment	Enrollment (2007)	Year Built/Upgraded	Est. Useful Life
Richmond Hill Elementary School	120 Constitution Way	17.5	2-3	650	720	1949/1985	0
			PK		140 (2005)*		
Dr. G.W. Carver Elementary School	476 Frances Meeks Way	30	4-5	650	693	1998	30
Richmond Hill Primary School	471 Frances Meeks Way	15	K-1	650	693	1992	28
Richmond Hill Middle School	665 Harris Trail	30	6-8	950	1,063	1981/2003	25
Richmond Hill High School	1 Wildcat Drive	32	9-12	1,250	1,296	1994/2003	30

Source: Bryan County Board Of Education. 2007 Enrollment Figures from the Georgia Department of Education.⁶⁷

*Note: Enrollment figures for 2007 were not available for Richmond Hill Elementary School’s Prekindergarten Program. Therefore, this analysis uses figures released by the Bryan County Board of Education in 2005.

Currently, the educational system facilities in Richmond Hill face similar challenges faced by other public facilities—that of rapid growth in the population and land area of the City. The present inventory of schools and classrooms is minimally meeting the needs of the population through the use of temporary portable classrooms. Each of the buildings is at or exceeds its designed capacity for enrollment. Most of the buildings in the system are less than ten years old or have been expanded in the last ten years. During the 2004-2005 school year, Richmond Hill High School added five science labs and 13 additional classrooms in an effort to meet these needs.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Retrieved from Georgia Department of Education website, <http://public.doe.k12.ga.us>, Tuesday, November 6, 2007.

⁶⁸ Retrieved from the Bryan County Board of Education website, www.bryan.k12.ga.us, Tuesday, November 6, 2007.

Short term planning by the BOE to meet the interim needs will alleviate some of the capacity problems. However, in the long term, planning of new facilities should be based on accurate future population growth projections for the life of the Plan to ensure adequate capacity in each facility. The BOE may choose to add targeted or multiple grade use facilities, as well as split sessions to accommodate future short term population needs.

Libraries

There is one library in the City of Richmond Hill, located at 9607 Ford Avenue. The Library is part of the Statesboro Regional Library System. The building was expanded to its current 7,500 square feet in 2000. The 2004-2005 circulations for this branch were 74,023 volumes, or roughly 7.5 volumes per 1,000 population. This figure is above the national average of 6.5 volumes per population per year.

This figure demonstrates that the branch is well utilized, and at some point in the life of this Plan, future expansion may be warranted. As the Library is not directly connected with the City of Richmond Hill's local government, any future expansion plans would be initiated directly from citizen and staff feedback.

Administrative Services

The City of Richmond Hill operates under a Mayor-Council form of government. The City Manager handles the day-to-day management of administrative services. City Hall is located at 40 Richard Davis Drive in the City's centrally located administrative campus on SR144. City staff includes a City Clerk, Code Enforcement Department, and Planning and Zoning Department.

The City Clerk's Office handles all licensing for Richmond Hill as well as voter registration, utility billing, reservations, and open law records requests. The Code Enforcement Department fields citizen complaints pertaining to code violations, building and zoning, sewage disposal, littering, business licenses, and general regulation enforcement. The Planning and Zoning Department is in charge of building permits, building inspections, sign permits, variances, plan review, sale of water meters, and the collection of associated tap and connection fees.

The City's current administrative building was constructed in 1998 and has a useful life of 30-plus years. The Planning and Zoning building, which is also located on the administrative campus, was built in the 1940s as discussed in the Cultural Resources element. The issues of the building's age and limited square footage will need to be addressed in the near future to maintain an adequate level of service for City residents.

Richmond Hill's administrative staff of 32 is adequate to handle the needs of residents for the foreseeable future. Periodic review of staffing levels should be conducted to ensure the current level of service is maintained.

Consistency with Service Delivery Strategy

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs requires that all community facilities addressed in this element are reviewed for consistency with the current Service Delivery Strategy. A review of the facilities and services conducted during this planning process confirms that there are amendments that have occurred in the way services are provided under the current Richmond Hill Service Delivery Strategy developed in 2001. Table CF-5 provides an assessment of the services provided by the City of Richmond Hill.

Table CF-4 Consistency with Service Delivery Strategy

Service	Provider for the City		Inconsistencies in need of resolution
	Richmond Hill	Bryan County	
Animal Control		X	
Civil Defense/EMA		X	
Clean and Beautiful			Service no longer provided
Clerk of Courts		X	
Code Enforcement	X		
Coroner		X	
County Jail		X	
Curbside Pickup	X		
E-911		X	
Elections	X		
Emergency Medical Services		X	
Engineering	X		
Extension Service		X	
Family and Children Services		X	
Fire Protection	X		
Forestry Commission		X	
Health Department		X	
Juvenile Court		X	
Landfill Maintenance		X	
Libraries		X	
Magistrate Court		X	
Mosquito Control	X		
Municipal Courts	X		
Planning, Zoning, Inspections	X		
Police Department	X		
Probate Court		X	
Recreation		X	
Recycling			
Registrar		X	
Road Department	X		
Section 5311 (Formerly S-18)		X	
Senior Citizens		X	
Sheriff's Department		X	
State Court		X	
Stormwater Run-off	X		
Summer Lunch Program		X	
Superior Court		X	
Surveyor		X	

Tax Assessor		X	
Tax Commissioner		X	
Waste Water Treatment	X		
Water Supply	X		
Yard Trash Removal	X		

Intergovernmental Coordination Element

Intergovernmental coordination is a crucial element to any municipality's service provision and delivery strategy. The Intergovernmental Coordination element serves to aid the City of Richmond Hill and its officials in assessing their coordination mechanisms and processes. These mutual aid agreements can facilitate revenue-sharing and encourage intergovernmental cooperation and support.

As local governments across the nation are seeking to provide more efficient service delivery within their communities, intergovernmental coordination offers one such avenue to achieve that goal. Examples of mutual aid agreements or other forms of intergovernmental cooperation include utilizing a county-wide service delivery strategy, entering into intergovernmental agreements for services, engaging in joint planning, incorporating special legislation, and encouraging joint meetings and work groups for the purpose of furthering multi-jurisdictional coordination. By coordinating efforts among jurisdictions, local governments save their respective tax payers money, offer more efficient service delivery, and minimize or eliminate the duplication of services.

The purpose of this element is to assess the existing coordination mechanisms and processes currently in place in the City of Richmond Hill. In addition, by evaluating current standards of intergovernmental cooperation, Richmond Hill can identify areas of opportunity to increase and enhance coordination efforts with the City of Pembroke and Bryan County. This element considers coordination efforts with other agencies or authorities that provide services to Richmond Hill residents as well.

Maintaining strong working relationships among municipalities requires effort and communication. The following discussion provides an opportunity to increase communication among jurisdictions while evaluating current practices and considering opportunities for future coordination.

As outlined in the Community Facilities and Services element, Bryan County provides the many of the services available to the residents of Richmond Hill (See Table CF-4, Community Facilities and Services). However, the City does perform many essential functions for its citizens, such as code enforcement; police and fire protection; recycling; curbside pickup and yard debris removal; mosquito control; road construction and maintenance; water supply, stormwater and wastewater management; planning, zoning, and inspections; engineering; elections; and municipal courts.

The following list provides a brief description of agreements in place at the time this Assessment was drafted. As before, refer to the Service Delivery Strategy outlined in the Community Facilities and Services element for a complete list of county-wide services provided by Bryan County.

Animal Control: Bryan County has agreed to provide this service County-wide.

E-911: There is an inter-local agreement for Bryan County, the City of Richmond Hill, and the City of Pembroke to provide E-911 services throughout the County. There are

two dispatch centers in Bryan County. In north Bryan County there is Bryan Central, and in south Bryan there is Richmond Hill Communications. The two offices are responsible for eight 911 telephone lines, six emergency, two TDD and four administration telephone lines. The staff duties include but are not limited to: dispatching all law enforcement agencies in North and South Bryan, as well as in the Cities of Pembroke and Richmond Hill; emergency medical services; and four fire departments at both ends of the County and in both Cities.

Land Use Agreement: Richmond Hill maintains a land use agreement between the City of Pembroke and Bryan County regarding annexation (water and sewer services are determined by land use maps).

Recreation: The Bryan County Parks and Recreation Department operates a County Park in Richmond Hill.

Tax Equity Agreement: One November 8, 2001, all of the respective governments in Bryan County agreed to a method for addressing concerns about tax equity. There is to be a reduction in the amount of taxes collected in both Richmond Hill and Pembroke, the amount of which is expressed as a millage rate differential. At the time of this Assessment, the millage rate differential between unincorporated Bryan County, the City of Richmond Hill and the City of Pembroke remains as it was initially negotiated in 2001.

Waste Water Treatment: There is an agreement with Bryan County that Richmond Hill may provide waste water treatment services within a designated area outside its corporate limits.

Water: There is an agreement with Bryan County that Richmond Hill may supply water services within a designated area outside its corporate limits. In addition, water is purchased from the City of Savannah to supply Genesis Point, shared equally by Bryan County and the City of Richmond Hill.

The adequacy and suitability of the coordination mechanisms address the many needs of the community. The communities could work harder to celebrate and promote unifying efforts. The Joint Development Authority of Bryan County is a good example of the cooperative efforts in the communities. The Cities of Richmond Hill and Pembroke, along with Bryan County, have the opportunity for cooperation in areas such as future annexation, coordinating mapping and planning services, economic diversification, and restoration of historic and tourist areas.

One future area of cooperation will be the implementation of their respective Comprehensive Plans. Although the Community Assessments for each municipality were approached separately, the Community Agenda phase will involve a melding of the Plans and encourage increased communication and intergovernmental coordination.

As Bryan County and its Cities continue to grow, there is also an opportunity for cooperative work in responding to the accelerated population growth rates experienced throughout the County. By increasing efforts of intergovernmental coordination, each

local government gains by avoiding duplication of services, saving tax-payer dollars and encouraging cooperation to benefit the entire County.

Adjacent Local Governments

The City of Richmond Hill is in the southern part of Bryan County, which is separated from northern portions of the County by Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield. Surrounding the southern portion of Bryan County is Liberty County to the south. The Belfast River and St. Catherine’s Sound also serve as a southern border to portions of Bryan County. The Ogeechee River separates southern Bryan County from Chatham County to the north.

Independent Special Authorities and Districts

The Middle Coastal Unified Development Authority (MCUDA) includes Bryan County, as well as the Counties of Bulloch, Candler, Chatham, Effingham, Evans, Liberty, Long, Montgomery, Screven, Tattnall, Toombs and Wheeler. This 13-county region allows member counties to take advantage of state grants specific to economic development projects that will provide a regional benefit.

School Boards

Bryan County is served by the Bryan County School System. The Board of Education has a chairman, vice-chairman and five other elected members that serve staggered, four-year terms. The School Superintendent maintains the daily operations of the Bryan County System.

Because Bryan County is divided by Fort Stewart/ Hunter Army Airfield, the School System provides duplicate facilities. The City of Richmond Hill is served by five schools—Richmond Hill Primary School (K-1), Richmond Hill Elementary School (Pre-K, 2-3), Dr. G.W. Carver Elementary School (4-5), Richmond Hill Middle School (6-8), and Richmond Hill High School (9-12). For further information regarding the Bryan County School System, please refer to the Community Facilities and Services element.

Independent Development Authorities and Districts

The Joint Development Authority of Bryan County provides services and directs its efforts to Bryan County as a whole, including the City of Richmond Hill. Its mission is “to enhance the quality of life in Bryan County by promoting economically and environmentally sound development through coordination of the available public and private economic development resources in Bryan County and its region,” (www.bryancountyga.com, 2007). Governed by a Board of Directors, the daily operations are handled by the Development Authority’s Executive Director and staff.

Federal, State, or Regional Programs and Activities

The Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center (CGRDC) serves the City of Richmond Hill as well as the City of Pembroke and Bryan County. The CGRDC is the regional planning agency for the coastal Georgia region. All planning activities for Richmond Hill and greater Bryan County should be consistent with the Regional Plan

produced by the CGRDC. The CGRDC works with and provides services for the 10 counties and 35 municipalities within its service region—Bryan, Bulloch, Camden, Chatham, Effingham, Glynn, Liberty, Long, McIntosh and Screven Counties.

The City of Richmond Hill, as a municipality of Bryan County, falls within the service area for the state of Georgia’s Coastal Management Program (GCMP). Functioning as a resource for local governments, GCMP provides technical assistance and education for the 11 counties that make up Georgia’s coastal zone, including Brantley, Bryan, Camden, Charlton, Chatham, Effingham, Glynn, Liberty, Long, McIntosh and Wayne Counties.

GCMP, a program of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources’ Coastal Resources Division, strives to balance economic development opportunities along the coast with preserving and protecting the natural and cultural heritage of the region. Its services include managing saltwater fisheries, monitoring water quality, administering coastal marshland permits and short permits, providing technical assistance, and reviewing federal activities for consistency with state laws and program requirements. Advised by the Coastal Advisory Council, the GCMP also administers the Coastal Incentive Grant Program of which Richmond Hill is a recipient.

The University of Georgia’s Cooperative Extension Service maintains an office in neighboring Pembroke that provides services for all of Bryan County, including Richmond Hill. Established by Congress in 1914 to deliver information from land-grant colleges to all Americans, today County Extension Agents help keep farmers abreast of the latest developments in agricultural technology, research and marketing strategies. In addition, county extension offices frequently administer local 4-H programs. Other duties include helping parents cope with the pressures of balancing work, home and children, as well as encouraging family healthy practices and educational resources related to nutrition and food safety.

The Georgia Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) also maintains an office in the City of Pembroke that services Richmond Hill and greater Bryan County. DFCS is a division of the Georgia Department of Human Resources that investigates child abuse and neglect; finds foster homes for abused and neglected children; provides help and support for low-income and/or out-of-work parents who are struggling to get back on their feet; assists with childcare costs for low-income families, where the parents are working or receiving workforce training; as well as other support services for families as needed.

Other important State agencies or resources available to the City of Richmond Hill and its residents include:

- Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)
- Georgia Department of Labor (DOL)
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

- Georgia Department of Human Resources (DHR)
- Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA)

Transportation Element

Examining transportation is essential to any Comprehensive Plan, and with the growth that is occurring in the coastal Georgia region, the City of Richmond Hill is no exception. Interstate 95, US 17 and State Road 144 are the major highways that run through Richmond Hill. Map CF-2 in the Community Facilities and Services element illustrates the transportation network in Richmond Hill.

Richmond Hill has two interstate interchanges along Interstate 95. US 17 is a four lane highway through Richmond Hill linking Chatham and Liberty County. While State Route 144 is currently a four-lane highway through the City of Richmond Hill, the roadway narrows to two lanes toward the southern city limit line. The State Department of Transportation (DOT) has scheduled the road for widening to a four-lane highway from Timber Trail to Belfast Keller Road.

US Highway 17 and State Route 144 intersect in Richmond Hill, thus providing a regional transportation network that easily moves traffic to the nearby Interstate 95.

The City contracts with OMI for maintenance of the 104 miles of paved roads. There are no unpaved roads within the city limits. While the existing transportation network was designed for low traffic volume the needs of the community are rapidly changing. As growth continues, Richmond Hill will need to proactively plan to meet future transportation demands. Access management, public transportation and other alternative congestion mitigation strategies aimed at reducing transportation demand should be explored before resorting to new roadway construction or widening projects that serve single-occupant vehicles.

Richmond Hill has approximately 25 miles of sidewalks; however, there is room for improvement to increase connectivity throughout the City. The City of Richmond Hill is currently upgrading streets and sidewalks on Ford Avenue in the immediate vicinity of City Hall. However, there were numerous sections of missing sidewalks in the city. These are typically found where one project or subdivision stops and another was constructed. The City should consider pursuing or requiring connection of city right-of-way sidewalks and adjacent subdivisions and development. This would offer residents a continuous path in and between neighborhoods, schools, and businesses.

The City of Richmond Hill does not have public transportation at this time, thus lacks transportation alternatives for transit-dependent persons who need a means of mobility to get to jobs, services, health care, and recreational amenities.

The Georgia Department of Transportation maintains nine traffic counters in the City of Richmond Hill and one outside the city limits, just north of the I-95 and US 17 interchange. Table 1 demonstrates the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) over a four-year period for each location.

Table 1 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) in Richmond Hill

Traffic Count (TC) Number	Location	Year			
		2003	2004	2005	2006
0196	I-95 between Exits 87 and 90 N/S	31,952/ 31,858	65,500	60,120	61,650
0198	I-95 north of Exit 90 N/S	36,898/ 36,996	76,981	70,660	72,990
0101	US 17 near city limits N/S	10,987/ 10,488	10,743/ 10,394	9,170/ 9,820	7,610/ 10,180
0109	US 17 near Mulberry Dr. N/S	8,878/ 8,656	8,820/ 8,617	8,590/ 8,250	10,120/ 10,240
0103	US 17 N. Ponderosa Rd. N/S	11,169/ 10,938	8,075/ 6,691	11,640/ 11,160	12,180/ 12,070
0105	US 17 S. Ponderosa Rd. N/S	9,431/ 8,997	8,734/ 8,548	8,740/ 8,310	10,100/ 9,690
0178	SR 144 at Forrest St. E/W	5,844/ 5,705	4,650/ 4,996	4,990/ 5,160	5,540/ 5,900
0176	SR 144 at Hill St. E/W	8,442/ 8,099	9,091/ 9,209	9,520/ 9,420	10,280/ 9,710
0174	SR 144 at Port Royal Rd.	12,513	12,662	13,820	14,610

Source: GDOT, STARS Program

As seen in Table 1, the heaviest traffic in Richmond Hill occurs along the interstate. Traffic along US 17 south of I-95 is heavy and continues through the city, suggesting that commuters are presumably heading north to Chatham County for employment. State Route 144 south of the city limits bears witness to the tremendous residential growth that has occurred in unincorporated Bryan County. Commuters have few options other than to travel through Richmond Hill towards Interstate 95 or US 17.

According to the Georgia Department of Transportation's State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for Fiscal Years 2008-2011, the City of Richmond Hill is

scheduled to receive \$300,000 in federal funds for Richmond Hill's Transportation Enhancement Improvements, to landscape and beautify State Route 144 to the CSX rail crossing.

The Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center (CGRDC) is working with the City of Richmond Hill, as well as the City of Pembroke and Bryan County, on the implementation of the Bryan County Bicycle Pedestrian Plan. This plan is in response to an identified lack of a local bicycle and pedestrian network and safety conditions in all three jurisdictions.

As reported in the Bryan County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan completed in 2006, 22 motor vehicle/pedestrian crashes occurred in the County from January 2000 through March 2006. Of those, only three injuries were reported in Richmond Hill. During the same time frame, six motor vehicle/cyclist crashes were reported in Richmond Hill.

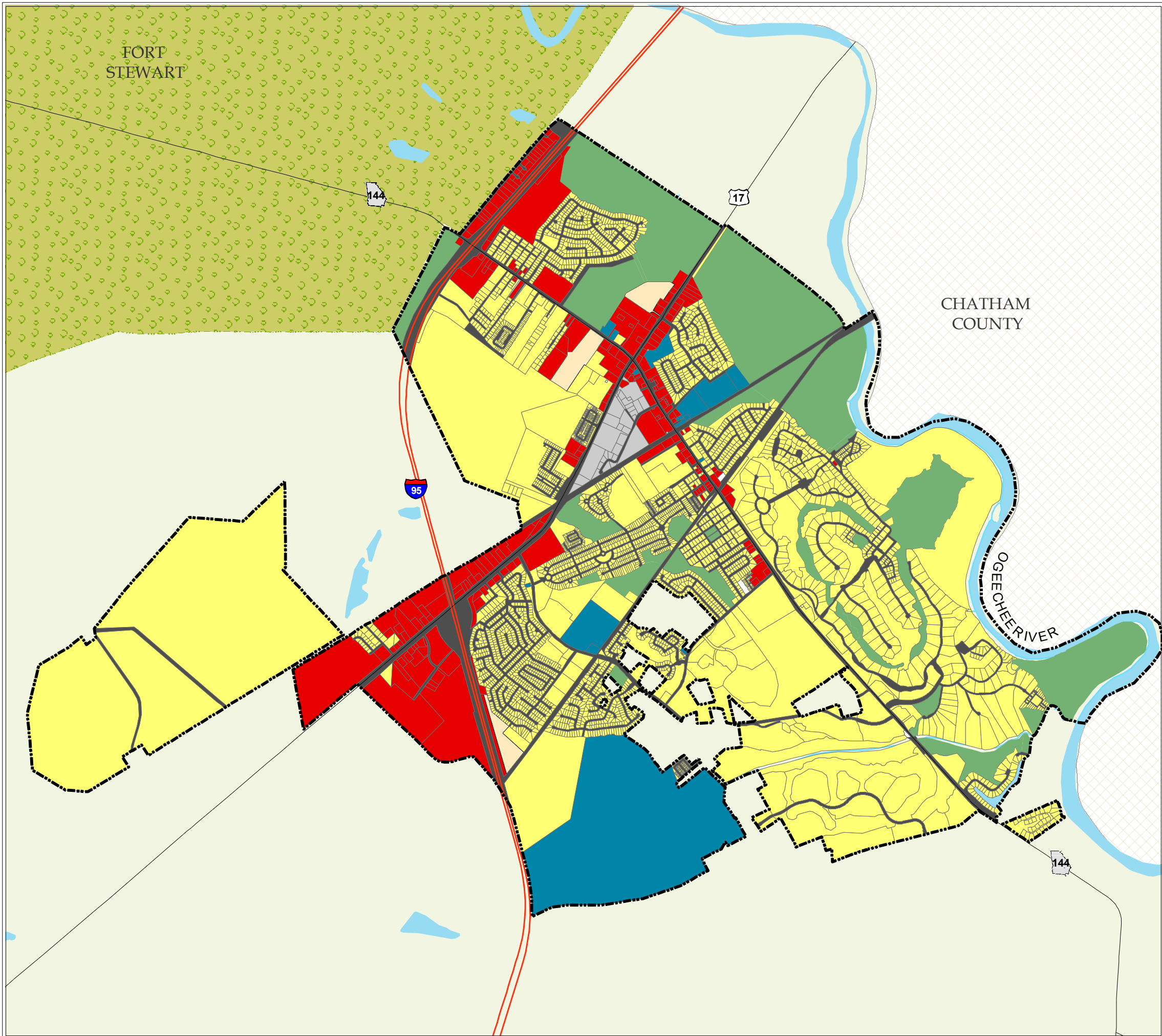
Multi-purpose paths or trails are a means of reducing crashes. Recommendations from the Plan for Richmond Hill included: construction of a shared use path from the end of Mulberry Drive to Cedar Street and J. F. Gregory Park; and construction of shared use path connecting City Hall Campus to the city owned lot on US Highway 17 via the right-of way off Ford Avenue.

As State Route 144 is widening from two to four lanes, the City should advocate for the inclusion of a four-foot wide paved shoulder on each side of the road for improved motorist and bicycle operation and safety, as well as construction of five-foot wide sidewalk between adjacent streets and subdivisions

In conjunction with the Bryan County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, the CGRDC is also working on a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan for Bryan County Elementary School, which is located in Pembroke. SRTS provides a more detailed review, focusing on the areas surrounding the school, with the primary goal of identifying the challenges to students who wish to walk or bike to school. SRTS seeks to improve conditions and increase safety for students, in turn, encouraging children to walk or bicycle to school.

Grade schools and the Pre-Kindergarten Center in the City of Richmond Hill present a unique opportunity of all being located on what can be considered the same campus. The campus roughly encompasses property between Frances Meeks Way and Maple Street from Ford Avenue to Golden Grove Lane.

The campus also presents the unique situation in that the Board of Education owns approximately 0.33 miles of street right-of-way through the campus. This presents the opportunity to do a detailed Safe Routes to School study encompassing all four schools - the first step in making them eligible under the states expanded Safe Routes to School initiative for funding of infrastructure improvements.



Existing Land Use

City of Richmond Hill

Bryan County

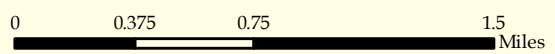
Georgia



MAP: LU-1

Legend

- City Boundary
 - Interstate
 - State Highway
 - Rivers and Lakes
 - Fort Stewart
 - Unincorporated Bryan County
 - Chatham County
- #### Land Use
- Agriculture/Forest
 - Commercial
 - Industrial
 - Parks/Recreation/Conservation
 - Public/Institutional
 - Residential
 - Transportation/Communication/Utilities
 - Vacant/Undeveloped



Planning and Government Services Department
GIS Division, December 12, 2007

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Source: Bryan County Tax Assessors database, field verification, and City of Richmond Hill staff

Areas Requiring Special Attention

City of Richmond Hill
Bryan County
Georgia



MAP: LU-2

Legend

- Interstate
 - State Highway
 - Rivers and Lakes
 - Fort Stewart
 - Chatham County
 - City Boundary
 - Unincorporated Bryan County
- Areas Requiring Special Attention**
- Areas in need of Aesthetic Improvements
 - Areas of Historic Significance
 - Areas of Potential Annexation
 - Areas of Significant Natural/Cultural Resources
 - Areas of rapid development/change of use
 - Transportation Infrastructure Maybe Outpaced



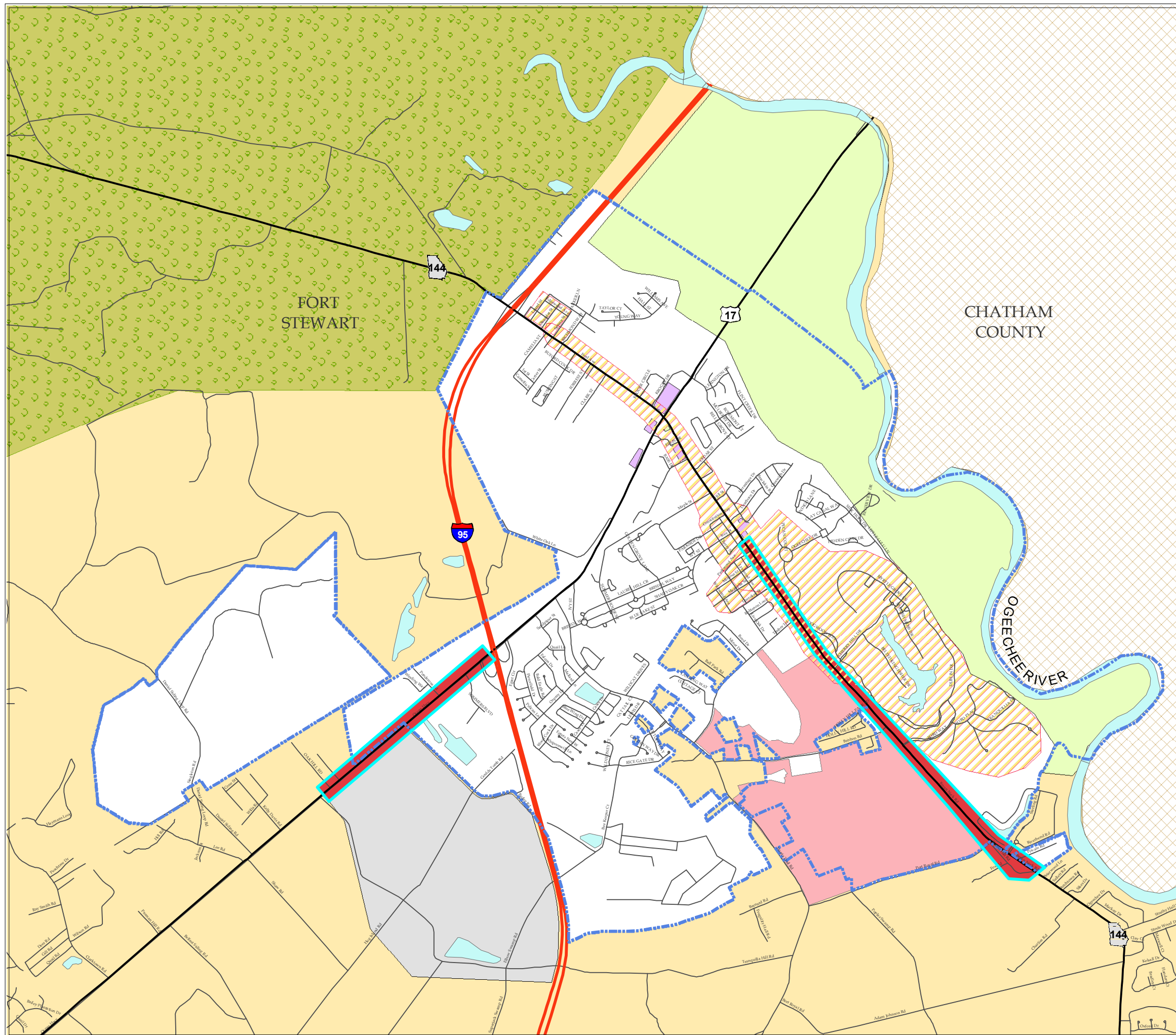
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Planning and Government Services
GIS Division, December 12, 2007

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Data Source: Bryan County, the City of Richmond Hill, and Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center



FORT STEWART

Character Areas

City of Richmond Hill

Bryan County

Georgia



MAP: LU-3

Legend

- Interstate
 - State Highway
 - Roads
 - Rivers/Streams
 - City Boundary
 - Rivers and Lakes
 - Chatham County
 - Unincorporated Bryan County
- Character Areas (Status)**
- Forest Lakes (Developing)
 - Commercial (Developed)
 - Richmond Reserve (Developing)
 - Richmond Place (Suburban)
 - Residential (Developing)
 - Cherokee (Stable)
 - Conservation Preservation
 - Downtown
 - Ford Plantation (Developing)
 - Main Street
 - Melrose (Stable)
 - Mulberry (Stable)
 - Piercefield/ Sterling Creek (Stable)
 - Richmond Heights (Stable)
 - Richmond Hill Plantation (Developing)
 - Richmond Place/ Lost Plantation (Suburban)
 - Stable Residential
 - The Oaks (Developing)
 - Traditional Neighborhood
 - Undeveloped



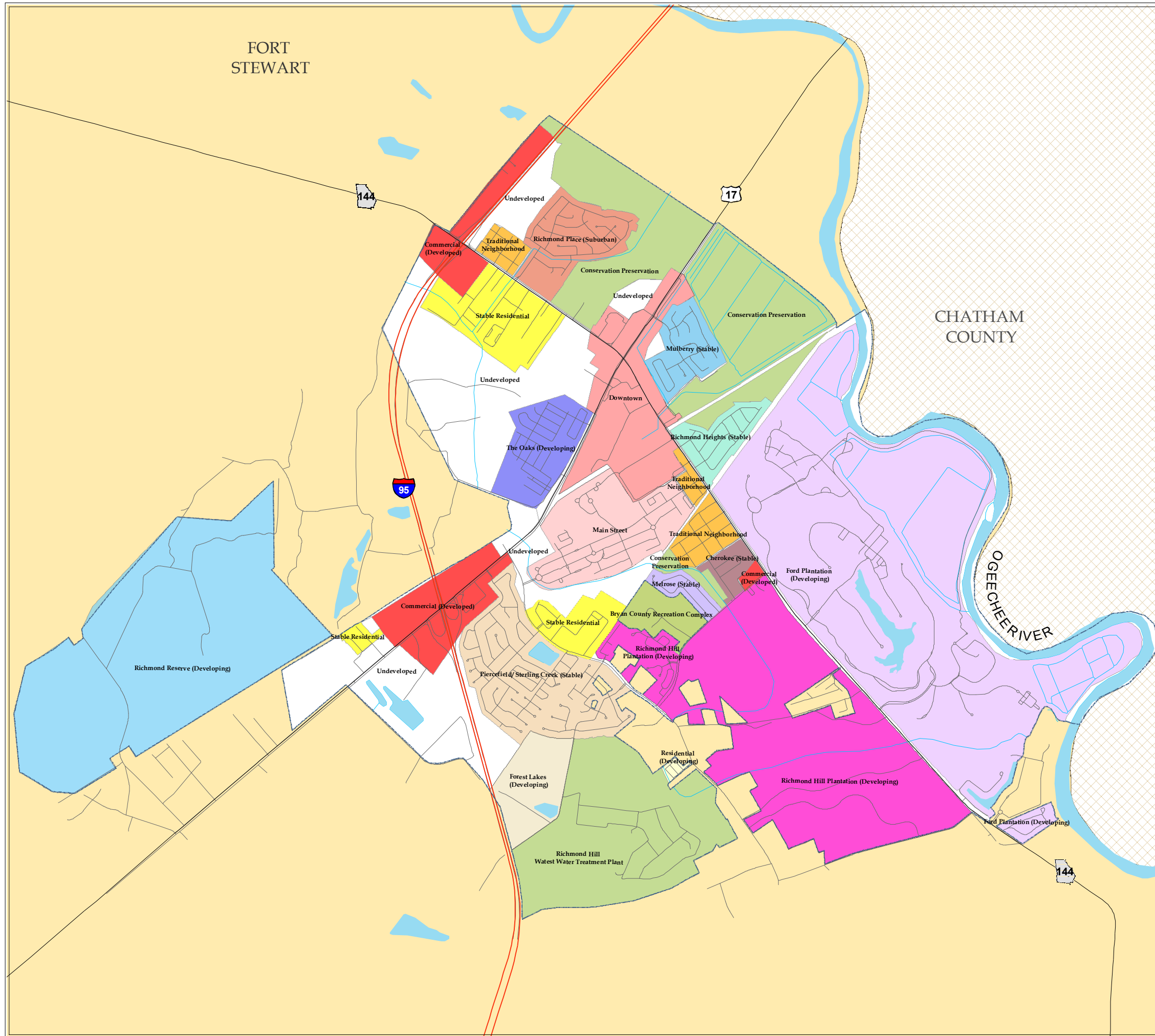
0 0.375 0.75 1.5 Miles

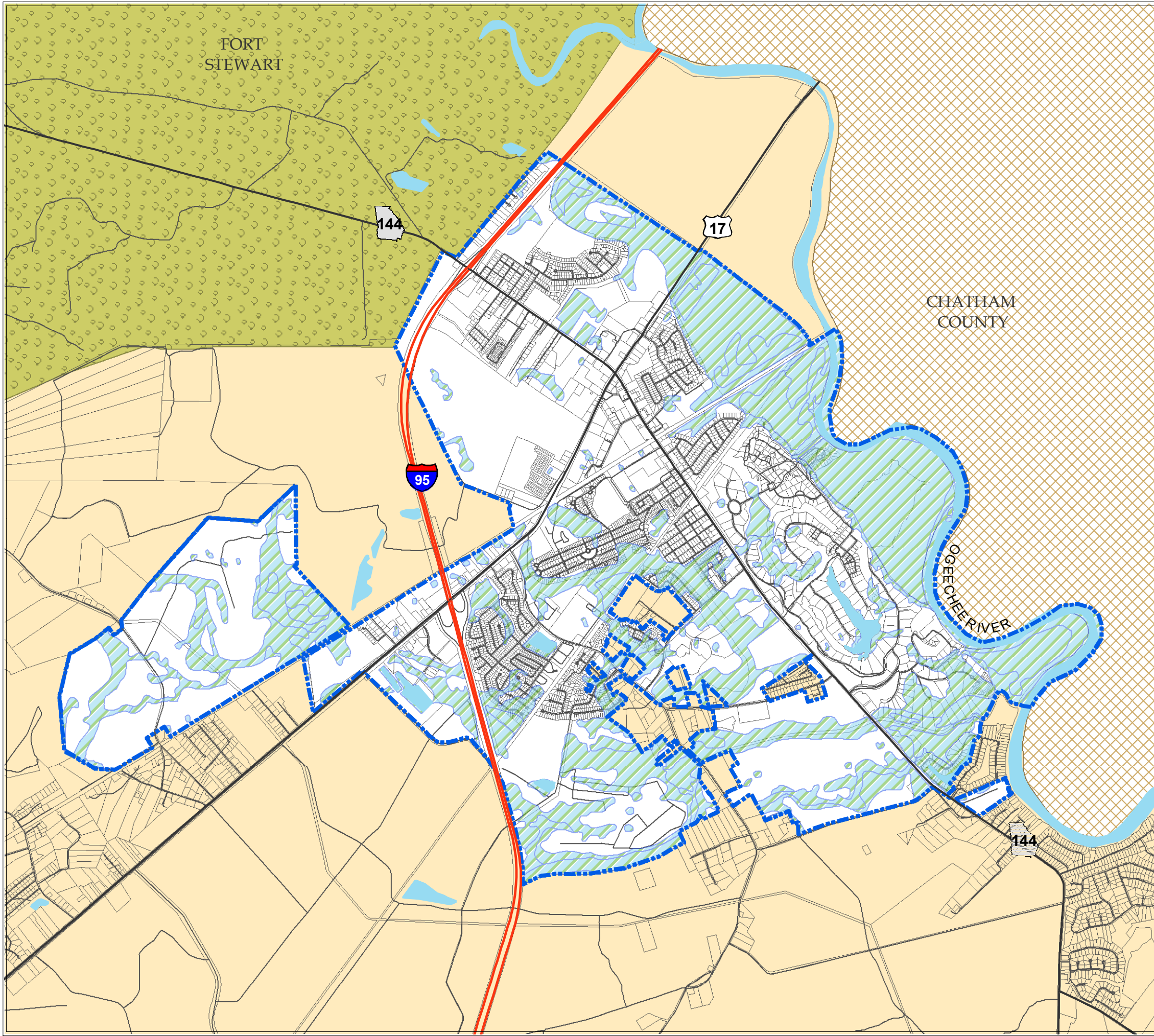


Planning and Government Services Department
GIS Division, December 12, 2007

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Data Source: City of Richmond Hill and Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center





Wetlands Areas

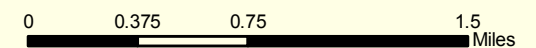
City of Richmond Hill
Bryan County
Georgia



MAP: NR-1

Legend

- Interstate
- State Highway
- Roads
- Parcels
- City Boundary
- Chatham County
- Unincorporated Bryan County
- Rivers and Lakes
- Wetlands



Coastal Georgia
Regional Development Center

Planning and Government Services
November 2007

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Data Source: National Wetlands Inventory and
Spatial Engineering, Inc.

Protected Rivers and Coastal Marshland

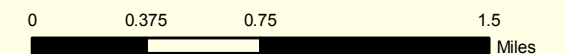
City of Richmond Hill
Bryan County
Georgia



MAP: NR-2

Legend

- Interstate
- State Highway
- Protected River
- City Boundary
- City Parcels
- County Boundary
- Chatham County
- Fort Stewart
- Lakes and Rivers
- Marshlands

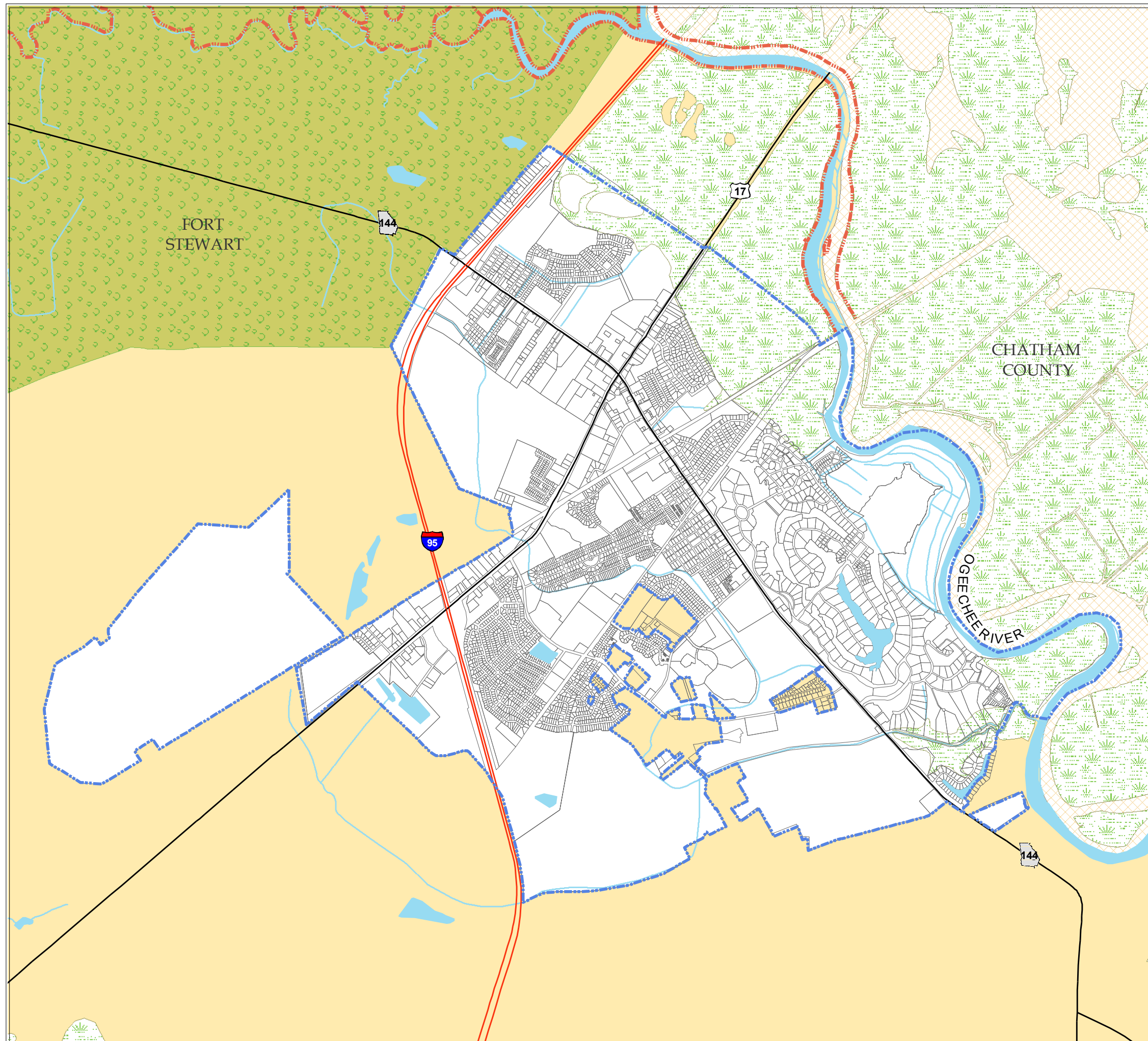


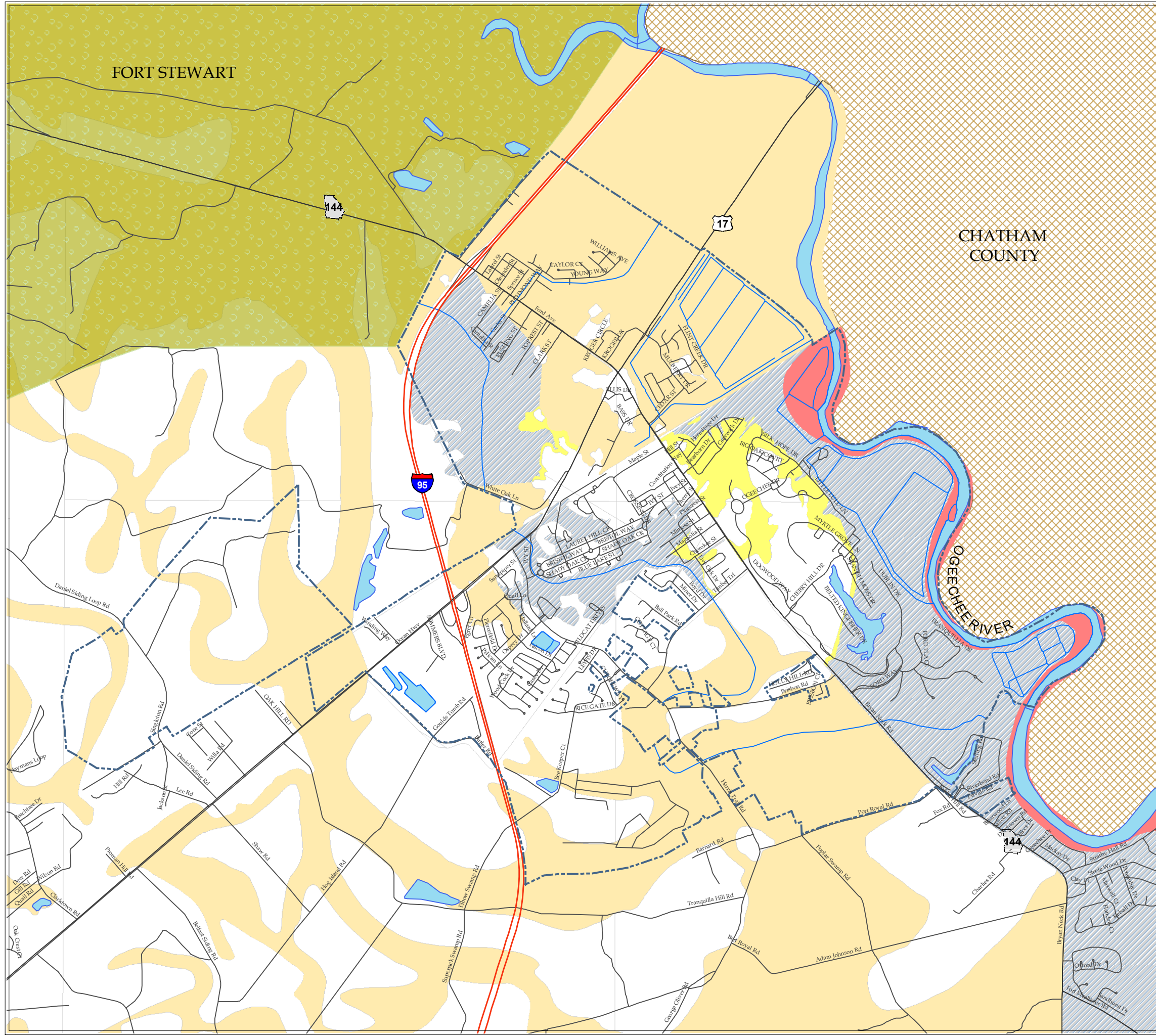
Coastal Georgia
Regional Development Center

Planning and Government Services
November 2007

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Data Source: <https://gis1.state.ga.us/index.asp> and Spatial Engineering, Inc.





Flood Zones

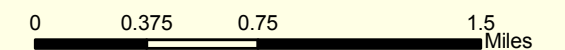
City of Richmond Hill
Bryan County
Georgia



MAP: NR-3

Legend

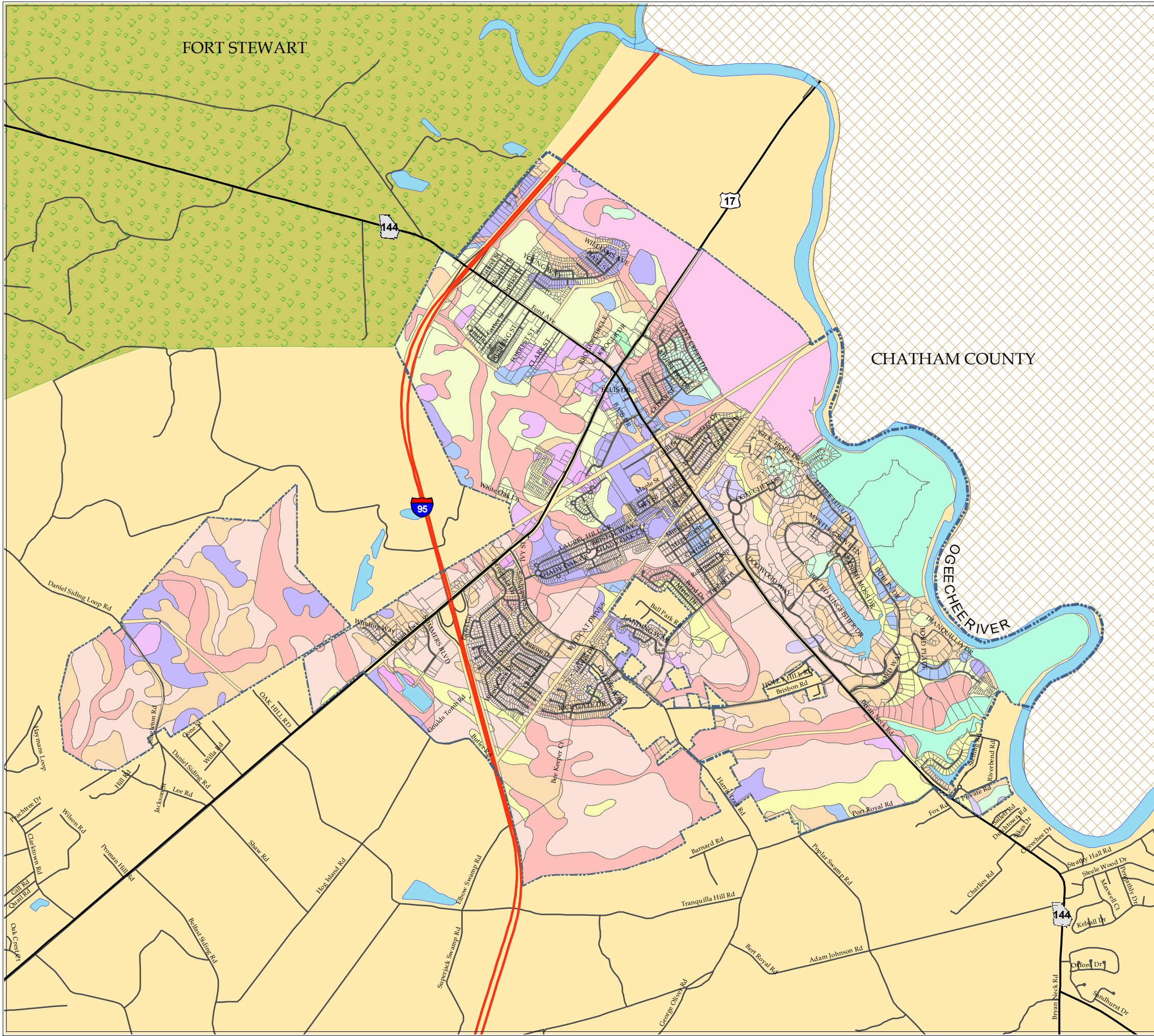
- Interstate
 - State Highway
 - Roads
 - Streams
 - Rivers and Lakes
 - City Boundary
 - Fort Stewart
 - Chatham County
- Flood Zones**
- Zone
- Base Flood Elevation Determined
 - Coastal Flooding With Velocity Hazard
 - No Base Flood Elevation Determined
 - 500 Year Flood Zone
 - Outside Flood Zone



Planning and Government Services
November 2007

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Data Source: FEMA Q3 Data, Spatial Engineering, Inc.



Soil Types

City of Richmond Hill
Bryan County
Georgia



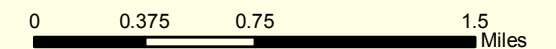
MAP: NR-4

Legend

- Interstate
- State Highway
- Rivers and Lakes
- City Boundary
- Fort Stewart
- County Boundary
- Chatham County

Soil Type

- Albany fine sand
- Borrow Pit
- Cape Fear Soils
- Craven loamy fine sand
- Ellabelle loamy sand
- Fresh water swamp
- Mascotte Sand
- Meggett loam
- Ocilla complex
- Ogeechee loamy fine sand
- Olustee fine sand
- Pelham loamy sand
- Pooler fine sandy loam
- Tidal marsh, fresh
- Wahee sandy loam



Planning and Government Services
November 2007

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Data Source: <http://datagateway.nrcs.usda.gov/OrderStatus.asp>

Historic Sites

City of Richmond Hill

Bryan County

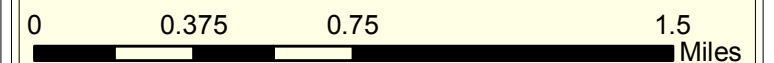
Georgia



MAP: CR-1

Legend

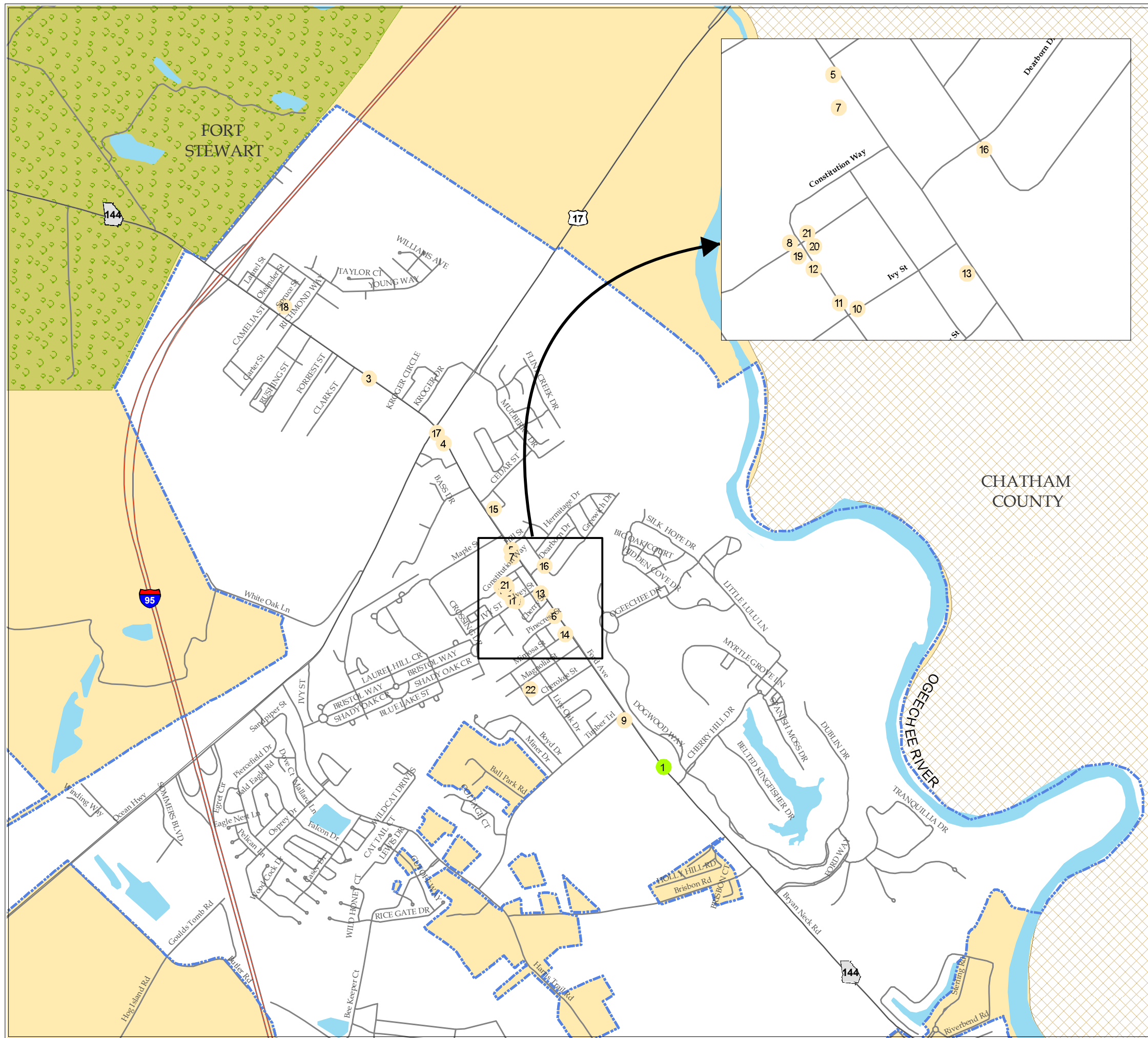
- Interstate
 - State Highway
 - Roads
 - Rivers and Lakes
 - City Boundary
 - Fort Stewart
 - Chatham County
 - County Boundary
- National Register Sites**
- 1 Ford Plantation
 - 2 Richmond Hill Fish Hatchery
 - 3 Bryan County Courthouse Annex
 - 4 Community House
 - 5 St. Anne's Catholic Church
 - 6 Cannan Baptist Church
 - 7 Burch House
 - 8 The Bottom
 - 9 Kindergarten Building
 - 10 Richmond Hill Teacherage
 - 11 Martin House
 - 12 Long House
 - 13 Bakery/Sweet Shop
 - 14 Ukkelberg House
 - 15 Gregory House
 - 16 Pay Station Building
 - 17 "Dead Town" of Hardwicke
 - 18 Blueberry Subdivision
 - 19 Carpenter House
 - 20 Hobbs House
 - 21 School Principal's House
 - 22 The Barber Shop



Planning and Government Services
November 2007

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Data Source: National Register of Historic Places, Spatial Engineering Inc., and Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center

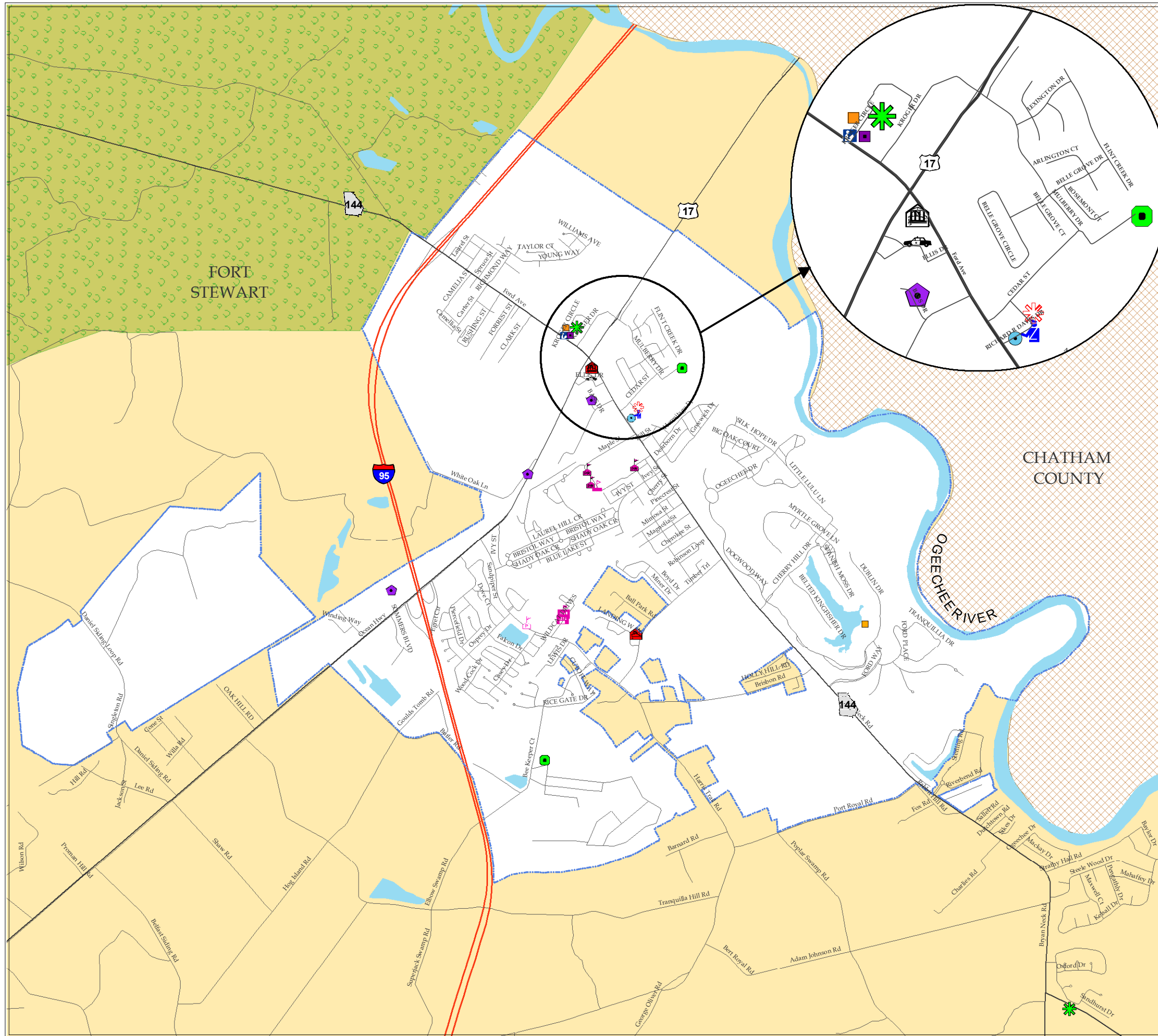


Community Facilities

City of Richmond Hill
Bryan County
Georgia



MAP: CF-1



Legend

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Interstate | Health Department |
| State Highway | High School, Public |
| Roads | Library |
| Rivers and Lakes | Middle School |
| City Boundary | Police Station |
| Fort Stewart | Primary School |
| Unincorporated Bryan County | Recycling Center |
| City Hall | Senior Center |
| City Jail | Sheriff's Office |
| County Courthouse | Wastewater Treatment Plant |
| County Offices | Water System |
| Elementary School | |
| Fire Station | |

Community Facilities

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| City Hall | Recycling Center |
| City Jail | Senior Center |
| County Courthouse | Sheriff's Office |
| County Offices | Wastewater Treatment Plant |
| Elementary School | Water System |
| Fire Station | |



0 0.35 0.7 1.4 Miles

Coastal Georgia
Regional Development Center

Planning and Government Services
November 2007

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Data Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs,
Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center,
City of Richmond Hill










Transportation Routes

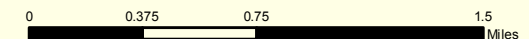
City of Richmond Hill Bryan County Georgia



MAP: CF-2

Legend

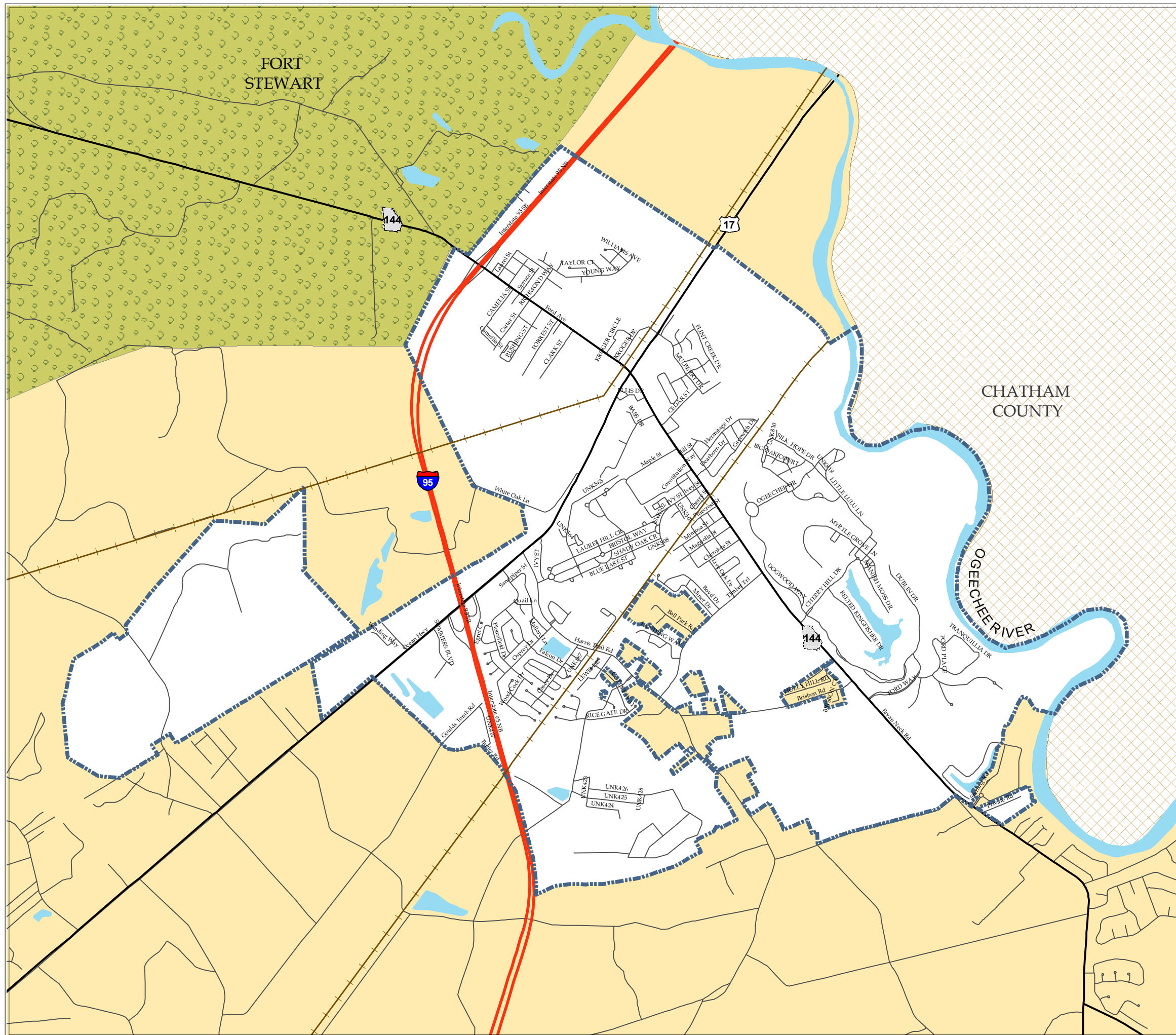
-  Interstate
-  State Highway
-  Roads
-  Railroads
-  Fort Stewart
-  City Boundary
-  Chatham County
-  County Boundary
-  Rivers and Lakes

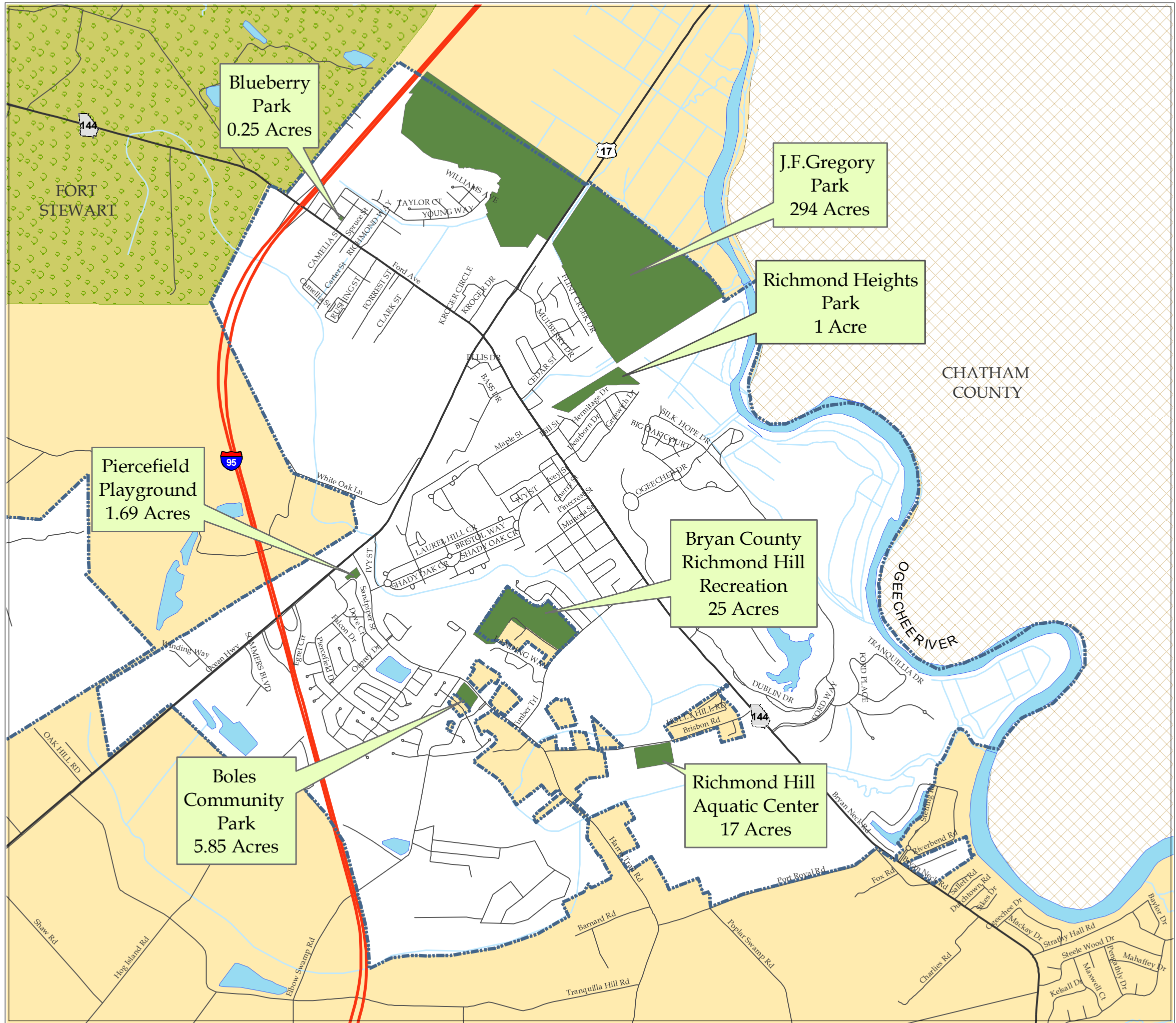


Planning and Government Services
November 2007

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Source: Bryan County, the City of Richmond Hill, Spatial Engineering, Inc., and Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center





Parks

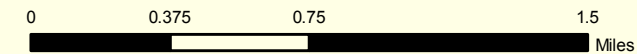
**City of Richmond Hill
Bryan County
Georgia**



MAP: CF-3

Legend

- Interstate
- State Highway
- Roads
- Streams
- Fort Stewart
- City Boundary
- Chatham County
- County Boundary
- Rivers and Lakes
- Parks



Coastal Georgia
Regional Development Center

Planning and Government Services
November 2007

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Data Source: City of Richmond Hill Planning Department and Spatial Engineering, Inc.

Service Delivery Areas

City of Richmond Hill
Bryan County
Georgia



MAP: IG-1

Legend

- Interstate
- State Highway
- Roads
- Rivers and Lakes
- City Boundary
- Fort Stewart
- Chatham County
- Unincorporated Bryan County
- Water/Sewer Service Areas



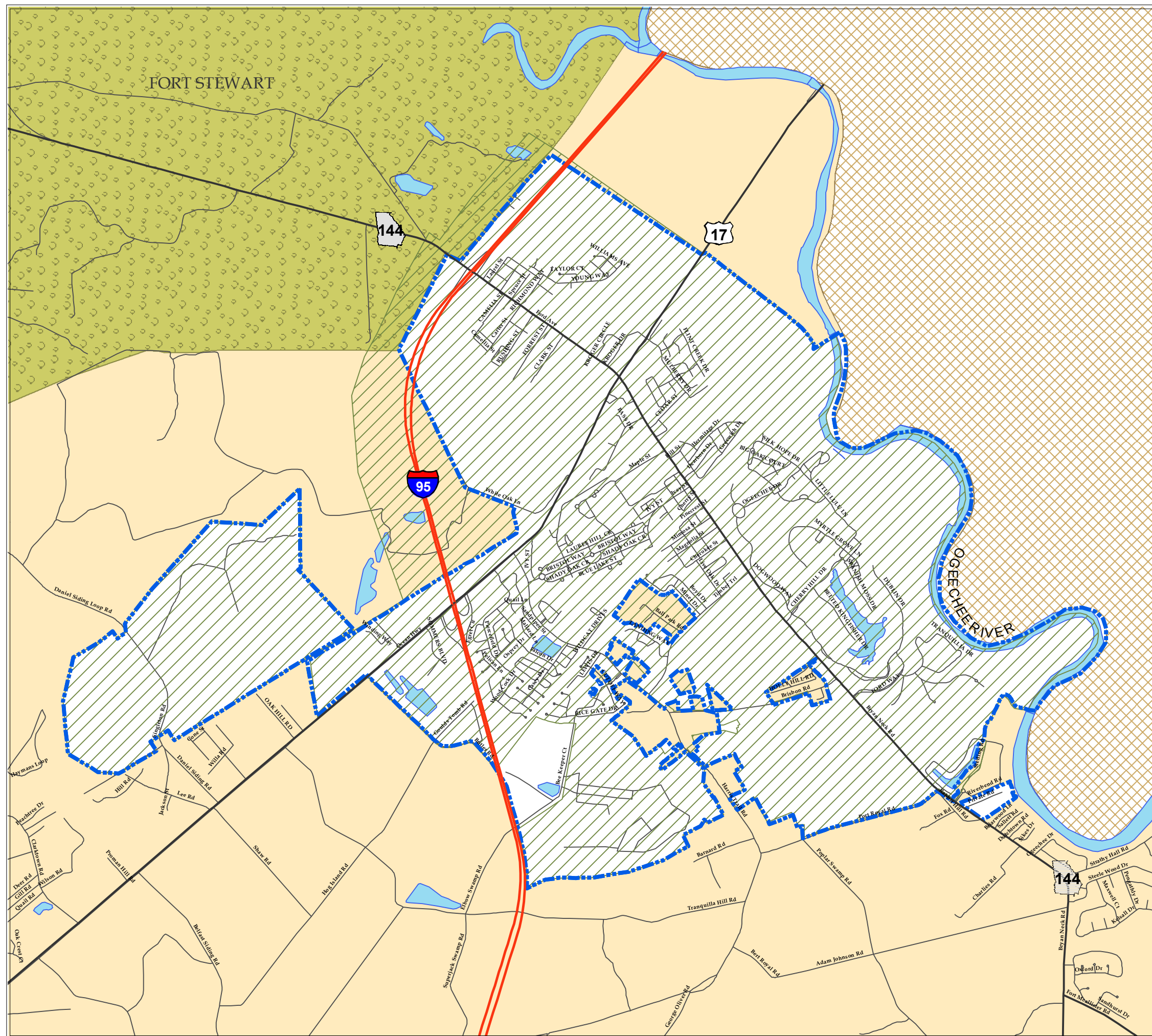
0 0.5 1 1.5 Miles



Planning and Government Services
November 2007

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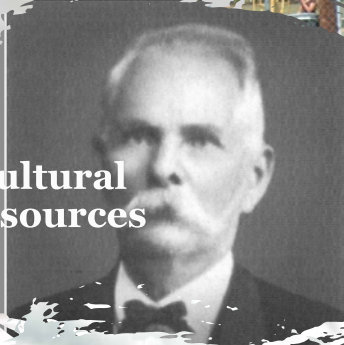
City of Pembroke Comprehensive Plan

Community Assessment

Population



Cultural
Resources



Natural
Resources



Economic
Development



Housing



Community
Facilities



Prepared for:

DRAFT

Prepared by:



January 2008

Coastal Georgia
Regional Development Center

City of Pembroke

Comprehensive Plan Community Assessment

Pembroke City Council

2007

Judy B. Cook, Mayor
Johnnie A. Miller, Sr., Council Member
Randall Butler, Council Member
Joel C. Burnsed, Council Member
Ernest Hamilton, Council Member
Elijah Lewis, Jr., Council Member

2008

Judy B. Cook, Mayor
Johnnie A. Miller, Sr., Council Member
Tony Greeson, Council Member
Doug Kangeter, Council Member
Angela McCormick, Council Member
Tiffany Walraven, Council Member

City of Pembroke

Comprehensive Plan Community Assessment

Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee

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Noah Covington, Pembroke Telephone Company
Sharroll Fanslau, The Heritage Bank
Betty Hill, City Clerk, City of Pembroke
Wanda Lane, Reporter/Media
Ricky McCoy, Clerk of Works, City of Pembroke
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Acknowledgements

The development of a Comprehensive Plan is a significant endeavor. The journey could not have come this far without the contribution of many individuals that are committed to the prosperous future of the City of Pembroke. It is difficult to recognize everyone who has given of his or her time and knowledge. The writers wish to express their appreciation for the assistance given by many individuals and agencies for which there is not space to acknowledge their individual contributions.

The Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center (CGRDC) would like to thank the City of Pembroke for engaging our organization in the project. The writers greatly appreciated the commitment of time and energy for the many contributions of the staff. The CGRDC is pleased to have the opportunity to assist and support the community in their Comprehensive Plan. The partnership that has developed will benefit the City and the Coastal Georgia region at-large.

The members of the Advisory Committee played, and will continue to play, a valuable role in guiding this project. The writers would like to thank each member of the Advisory Committee for their continuing commitment to developing their Comprehensive Plan. The development of a Comprehensive Plan is both a burden and an accomplishment. We offer our sincere appreciation for the contributions of these individuals.

Thank you one and all.

Introduction

The State of Georgia requires that the City of Pembroke prepare a Comprehensive Plan once every ten years. Further, the City of Pembroke is directed by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to complete an Intermediate level plan. An Intermediate level Community Assessment must include recommended issues and opportunities, evaluation of existing development patterns, analysis of consistency with the Quality Community Objectives, and supporting data, all of which is an environmental scan of the community that takes into consideration both physical and demographic data.

The Comprehensive Plan is a long-range (20-year) statement of the community's vision for future development. The purpose of the plan is to provide a guide for local government officials and other community leaders for making everyday decisions that are supportive of the community's stated vision for its future. The plan should serve as the local government's guide for assessing development proposals, including rezoning applications and redevelopment plans. For residents, business owners and members of the development community, the plan provides insight into what types of land uses and development are appropriate at various locations throughout the City. Finally, by evaluating various local government functions and services, the plan is a point of reference for government staff in preparing capital improvements programs and associated budgets.

A Comprehensive Plan, in the State of Georgia, consists of three components:

- Community Assessment
- Community Participation Program
- Community Agenda

This document represents the first component, the Community Assessment. The Community Assessment is a concise and informative report that presents a factual foundation upon which the rest of the Comprehensive Plan is built.

The Community Participation Program is the second component of a Comprehensive Plan. It describes steps that are taken by the City of Pembroke to ensure adequate public and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the third component, the Community Agenda.

The Community Agenda, the third and most important part of the plan, is where the City of Pembroke is charged with creating a vision for the future of the City as well as a strategy for achieving this vision. The Community Agenda provides guidance for the future decision-making regarding the City.

The City of Pembroke completed its previous comprehensive plan in March of 1993. It contains a wealth of information about the City of Pembroke's status at the time, including its existing patterns, goals, and vision for the future.

The City officially began this Comprehensive Planning process on July 31, 2007, with a kick-off meeting, followed by two Citizen Committee meetings focusing on the elements of the Technical Appendix. The Citizen Committee meetings looked at Population, Economic Development, Housing, Natural Resources and Cultural Resources, Community Facilities and Services, and Intergovernmental Coordination.

As required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, this Assessment was prepared according to the Rules for Local Planning. This document, along with the Community Participation Program (CPP), will be submitted to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for review following a public hearing and “resolution to submit” voted upon by the Pembroke Mayor and City Council.

Following DCA’s review and acceptance of the Assessment and CPP, development of the Community Agenda will commence. This will be accompanied by extensive opportunities for the City of Pembroke to provide input into the plan. The Community Agenda is the most important component of the Comprehensive Plan and includes the statement of the community’s vision, the issues and opportunities that will be addressed during the twenty-year time period of the plan, and the strategy for achieving the vision and addressing the identified issues and opportunities.

The complete Pembroke Comprehensive Plan Update will be submitted to DCA prior to the City’s deadline for adopting the plan on October 31, 2008.

The Community Assessment has four key sections:

- Identification of Potential Issues and Opportunities;
- Analysis of Existing Development Patterns, which includes identifying Areas Requiring Special Attention and identification of Character Areas;
- Analysis of Consistency with Quality Community Objectives; and
- Supporting Analysis of Data and Information.

The document is presented in an “executive summary” format as to be attractive and accessible to all community members and serve as a quick reference for government officials and staff.

The majority of the findings included in this report are supported by extensive data and analysis provided in the attached Technical Appendix.

Community Profile

Named after the prominent Judge Pembroke Williams in the late 1800's, the City encompasses approximately eight square miles and is designated as an historic railroad town. Situated in Southeast Georgia, Pembroke is the County Seat of Bryan County, a member of the 10-county Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center (CGRDC).

Pembroke is situated conveniently near the larger City of Savannah (approximately 36 miles to the east); the City of Statesboro (approximately 25 miles to the north); and Fort Stewart (0.98 miles to the south, based on the installation boundary). Fort Stewart is the largest military installation east of the Mississippi River, encompassing 280,000 acres.

While the 2000 Census gave a population of 2,397 for the City, the population is projected to grow by 66 percent by the year 2015 (See the Population Element). This anticipated growth will challenge City leaders to not only maintain the quality of life Pembroke citizens expect, but will bring confronting issues. The median household income in the City was \$28,456, with more than 50 percent of the households in Pembroke earning less than \$30,000 a year as reported at the 2000 Census.

From an economic development perspective, the City has realized several successes, including having recently been designated a Better Hometown community in 2007, symbolizing recognition from the Department of Community Affairs of the City's efforts towards downtown revitalization. In addition, Governor Perdue recently announced the City of Pembroke the recipient of a \$500,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allocated for much needed water and sewer improvements.

While the manufacturing industry continues to play an important role in the fabric of the City, as with many communities throughout the coastal Georgia region this industry is declining. To offset this decline is the rapidly growing services industry. According to the 2000 Census, the four largest employment sectors for the City of Pembroke are Educational, Health and Social Services, Manufacturing, Construction, and Retail Trade. The City continues its trend from the 1990 Census as a commuter city, with almost 70 percent of the labor force commuting outside of the City to work, predominantly heading east to Chatham County.

The City has experienced a small but steady growth in housing through the years, with a growth rate of approximately 55.5 percent from 1990 to 2000 (See the Housing Element). The City will be challenged with providing housing opportunities to its residents. The majority of existing housing is single-family dwellings. Escalating housing costs will create opportunities for a broader range of housing types.

With the many challenges facing the City of Pembroke, there are also many opportunities for the City to promote for a prosperous future, from the newly created Historic District to a new recreational area that includes the cleanup and reclamation of a site that contained the City's former oxidation pond for wastewater treatment.

Identification of Potential Issues and Opportunities

The Community Assessment is the first step in identifying potential issues and opportunities. It is an all-inclusive list of potential issues and opportunities for further study. The Community Participation process and the Community Agenda process will modify this list through additional analysis and review.

The process begins with a review, by staff and the Advisory Committee, of a published list of typical issues and opportunities provided in the State Planning Recommendations. It is the role of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, community participants, community leaders, and City of Pembroke officials to transform this list into a Community Agenda that reflects the vision of the City. In the Community Agenda is a final, locally agreed upon, list of issues and opportunities the City of Pembroke intends to address. The Short Term Work Program is the final document that adds specific descriptions and implementation actions during the first five-year period of the comprehensive planning period.

This list of issues and opportunities is intended to prompt thinking of what the community needs to address in the Community Agenda.

In addition to this list, the Analysis of Quality Community Objectives will help further define the community's issues and opportunities.

Existing Development Patterns

Issues

- Areas to be annexed will cause growth to spread away from the center of the City.
- Need to promote contiguous development.
- Need for new industry and jobs.
- Dispute of appropriate and desired land uses.
- The City should consider zoning more land for industrial uses.
- Limited parking available in downtown district.
- Prevalence of manufactured homes.

Opportunities

- Areas to be annexed create population growth and potential for economic growth.
- Parking concerns can be addressed through Transportation Enhancement (TE) grants.
- Desire to promote industrial growth to create job opportunities.

- Existing County industrial park.
- Former oxidation pond presents opportunity to develop industrial land or place for greenspace and walking trails.
- The City has a lot of land available for a variety of uses.
- The City has a wealth of agricultural land.
- Interest in creating bike/pedestrian trails along existing County-maintained canals.
- City has a lot of foot traffic, especially in downtown district.
- Desire to continue centralized development and promote connectivity.
- On-going project to make sidewalks handicap accessible.
- Strong sense of place, primarily in downtown district.
- Three major highways run through the City—Highways 280, 119 and 67.
- Presence of Fort Stewart.
- Potential for growth from county and state-owned industrial parks near I-16 and I-95.

Population

Issues

- The growth rate is limited by the lack of job opportunities within the City.
- Addition of new living quarters at Fort Stewart limits ability of military families and retirees have limited ability to move to Pembroke because of loss of living allowance.

Opportunities

- Military families and retirees also drawn to Pembroke due to small town amenities and quality of life.
- Growing Hispanic population also drawn to small town atmosphere and serve as contributing members of the community.
- Growth in number of retirees to the area, due to the influx of residents from Florida looking to escape the path of seasonal hurricanes.

Economic Development

Issues

- City of Pembroke lacks sufficient staff capacity to promote economic development full time.
- Majority of workers commute outside of Pembroke for employment.
- The City lacks sufficient jobs or economic opportunities for local residents.
- Pembroke does not have a vision for the future economic development of the community.
- Economic efforts do not focus on helping grow local small businesses.
- Business retention is not active or successful.
- Business recruitment is not active or successful.
- There is a need for increases in education and training opportunities.
- Area technical schools and programs do not market to Pembroke despite proximity, i.e., Georgia Southern University, Savannah Tech and Ogeechee Tech.
- Discussion of pending U.S. Highway 280 bypass.
- Mindset of Pembroke residents is resistant to change.

Opportunities

- City must bring in industry to create jobs and job opportunities.
- Pembroke is positioned for growth.
- There is interest in providing better incentives to promote business and industry.
- The Bryan County Development Authority, located in Pembroke and the lead organization for economic development in Bryan County, currently employs two full-time professionals - an executive and an administrative assistant.
- Pembroke has the ability to capitalize on significant traffic to and from Fort Stewart, and elsewhere, and capture retail market.
- Higher education and technical training opportunities are available and close, i.e., Georgia Southern University, Savannah Tech and Ogeechee Tech.
- The City should capitalize and promote presence of existing and active railroad.

- Pembroke should advertise its potential and amenities to visitors and new residents through various media outlets

Housing

Issues

- The City has substantial amounts of older, dilapidated housing.
- There are not enough assisted living facilities available.
- Pembroke has insufficient housing available for seniors.
- There is too much manufactured housing within the City.
- The issue of manufactured and mobile home parks is driving down property values.
- Limited financing is available for housing.
- More ordinances are needed to create desired development and housing options.
- The City lacks code enforcement.
- There is neighborhood opposition and/or support for development, dependent upon location.
- Low wages and income levels limit housing options and ability to buy.
- Too many apartments and smaller homes are being developed within the City—there is a need for 1,600-2,000 square foot homes.

Opportunities

- A market exists for affordable housing, empty-nesters, etc.
- Available capacity exists for sewer and water infrastructure.
- There is available land within new developments to create bike and pedestrian trails and preserve greenspace.
- Pembroke can create ordinances and policies to require developers to incorporate greenspace, design and sidewalks into new developments.
- If these principals are adhered to, population growth and income will follow.
- Increases in housing growth due to annexation will lead to increase in business opportunities and economic development.

- The City has sufficient schools and medical facilities to facilitate growth.

Natural & Cultural Resource

Issues

- The City lacks cultural and civic facilities and resources.
- There is a need for a venue or gathering place for local artists, musicians, bands, events, etc.
- Pembroke does not have a Historic Preservation Commission, and there are few efforts to promote historic preservation.
- Pembroke's Revitalization Committee is dormant.
- Citizens are unaware of natural and cultural resources and their significance.
- The City has insufficient staff capacity and resources to support these organizations.
- Natural and cultural resources are not being improved, enhanced, or promoted.
- Current development practices are not sensitive to natural and cultural resources.
- Local natural resource protection is inadequate.
- Local protection of historic and cultural resources is inadequate.

Opportunities

- Pembroke has available land within new developments to create bike and pedestrian trails and preserve greenspace.
- Pembroke has been designated as a Tree City, USA, and has a tree ordinance.
- The City has a desire to preserve the old theater in the downtown district.
- Open space is available behind the theater for outdoor activities and/or parking.
- The community is active and involved when activities or events are held.
- The City owns a vacant lot near Dubois Square that offers potential as such a venue.
- Bogs and wetlands exist just off of U.S. Highway 280.
- There are opportunities to preserve wildlife habitats, such as the use of former oxidation pond.

Community Facilities and Services

Issues

- Pembroke lacks public transportation, busing, etc, except for senior citizens.
- The City has a lack of staff.
- The City lacks maintenance of active recreation areas due to limited staff capacity.
- The Police Department has high rates of turnover; also not enough policemen.
- The City's website needs updates to increase accessibility and usability.
- The cost of providing public services and facilities for new development typically exceeds the revenue from this development.
- Some parts of the community are not adequately served by public facilities.
- There is a lack of code enforcement for blighted areas.
- Pembroke has complaints related to water rates.
- Drainage improvements needed, specifically at the intersection of Church Street and Anderson Lane.

Opportunities

- Available capacity exists for sewer and water infrastructure.
- A new community center is being built using prison detail.
- Pembroke should market the excess capacity of the public utilities.
- City has applied for CDBG funding that should increase water and sewer service to remaining houses.
- City has worked with areas to be annexed and developers to ensure that new developments will receive water and sewer.
- Pembroke has potential to develop law offices and facilities around County Courthouse.
- Local YMCA provides recreational programs for the community.
- The YMCA hires interns from Georgia Southern University to promote recreational activities, etc.
- The presence of railroad provides potential for public transportation.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Issues

- Pembroke does not plan with adjacent communities for areas near mutual boundaries.
- There is the perception of a North-South split within Bryan County due to the presence of Fort Stewart, which physically divides the County.
- Pembroke has a lack of building and code enforcement due to poor coordination between City and County efforts.
- There is little to no communication with the Board of Education.
- Pembroke does not share plans or planning information with neighboring communities.
- Some County residents, particularly in southern Bryan County, have a desire to see Pembroke replaced as the County Seat.

Opportunities

- Pembroke has a working relationship with the Georgia Department of Corrections to use state prison detail, located in Long County, to build the new Community Center.
- The City has a working relationship with GDOT.
- Pembroke is the County Seat.
- Pembroke can renew and enhance City-County relationships through the Joint Comprehensive plan process.
- Pembroke has a Theater Board, Downtown Development Authority, Housing Authority and Hospital Authority.

Transportation

Issues

- People lack transportation choices for access to housing, jobs, services, goods, health care, and recreation.
- Our community lacks a local trail network.
- Local trails are not linked with those of neighboring communities, the region, and the state.
- Need for increased education regarding bike/pedestrian safety.

- Need to install necessary bike/pedestrian facilities, such as bike racks, etc.

Opportunities

- There is an opportunity to install trails to run contiguous to the existing canals throughout the City.
- Three major highways run through the City—Highways 280, 119 and 67.
- Presence of active rail lines.
- Proximity to I-95 and I-16.

Analysis of Existing Development Patterns

The purpose of analyzing existing land use is to enhance the community's understanding of the geographic distribution of various land uses, determine development patterns, identify existing and potential land use conflicts, and to help outline opportunities and constraints to future development. The process of developing a land use plan involves the analysis of existing land use patterns. This includes analysis of current and future public services and facilities. The analysis will further explore the physical environmental issues and opportunities that are related to land development and serve as the basis for long-range growth and development in the City.

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) states in its Local Planning Requirements that a community's planning goals and objectives assure land use planning in support of efficient growth and development patterns that will promote sustainable economic development, protection of natural and cultural resources, and provision of adequate and affordable housing. The following analysis presents three components of existing development patterns: Existing Land Use, Character Areas, and Areas Requiring Special Attention.

The existing land use map is a representation of current conditions on the ground during the preparation of the Community Assessment. The existing land use map has been prepared based on information available as of August 2007.

Existing Land Use

Table LU-1 and Figure LU-1 show the amount of land allocated for each land use in Pembroke. As demonstrated in both Table LU-1 and Figure LU-1, according to the Bryan County Consolidation and Evaluation of the Tax Digest for 2007, the City of Pembroke does not have any undeveloped or vacant lands.¹

Map LU-1 illustrates the geographical dispersion of land uses in the City.

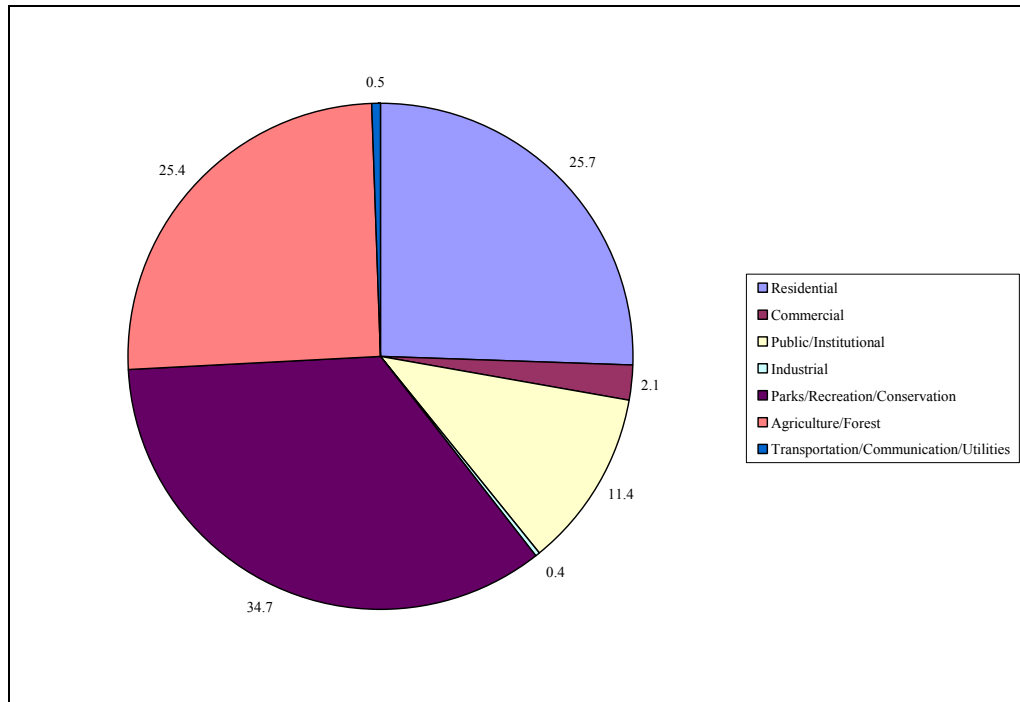
¹ *Consolidation & Evaluation of Digest, 2007, City of Pembroke.* Released by the Bryan County Tax Assessors' Office on November 16, 2007.

**Table LU-1
Existing Land Uses, City of Pembroke, 2007**

Land Use Categories	Acres	Percent
Residential	1154.62	25.7
Commercial	92.72	2.1
Public/Institutional	511.22	11.4
Industrial	17.44	0.4
Parks/Recreation/Conservation	1562.66	34.7
Agriculture/Forest	1142.10	25.4
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	20.55	0.5
Total	4501.31	100.0

Source: City of Pembroke, Consolidation & Evaluation of Digest, November 16, 2007

**Figure LU-1
Existing Land Uses, City of Pembroke, 2007**



Source: City of Pembroke, Consolidation & Evaluation of Digest, November 16, 2007

Existing development patterns have a direct impact on determining future growth. At present, most of the suburban area development is taking place north and southwest of the downtown. The largest amount of land is characterized as Parks/Recreation/Conservation (34.7 percent).

Residential land use accounts for approximately 25.7 percent of Pembroke’s total land use, followed closely by Agriculture/Forest at 25.4 percent.

The Residential category consists mostly of single-family housing, though Pembroke is seeing an increase in the stock of multi-family housing, as well as an abundance of manufactured and mobile homes in the City. Building permit data provided by City staff shows approximately 280 building permits issued between 2000 and 2006.

Existing Land Use Map

In order to promote quality community growth, a mixed balance of land use should be maintained to provide for the cost effective delivery of services and infrastructure. Commercial and industrial land uses remain very low in comparison to other categories. Primarily, these areas are scattered along major roads such as US Highway 280 East and Georgia State Route 119; they include both commercial and light to medium industries.



US Highway 280 West Commercial Corridor

Existing Land Use Summary

Despite the growth that Pembroke is beginning to see within the City, Pembroke still retains a great deal of its rural character with over 60 percent of existing land characterized as Agriculture/Forestry or Parks/ Recreation/Conservation. Development has occurred where land has become available for sale and developers have determined that development is economically feasible. The conversion of land designated “agricultural” to residential and commercial uses has not followed any overall plan or pattern.



Pembroke agricultural land

Because of Pembroke’s location relative to Savannah, the Port of Savannah and Fort Stewart, there will be continued pressure for development in certain areas of the City. Amenities, such as a good

school system, and excellent vehicular access will also fuel development pressure. This growth will be moderated by the restriction on development without sanitary sewer systems and the lack of water distribution systems in some areas. A major goal of this plan will be to assure that development occurs in an orderly manner and that the infrastructure needed to meet the needs of development will be in place.

Recommended Character Areas

The Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center, in consultation with the City of Pembroke, has delineated the following character areas based on the definition and criteria of character areas. These character areas are shown on Map LU-2. The areas include:

- Gateway Corridor
- Downtown
- Educational Complex
- Industrial Area
- Light Industrial Area
- Suburban Area Developing
- Traditional Neighborhood Redevelopment
- Traditional Neighborhood Stable
- Conservation Areas and Public Use

These areas possess individually unique characteristics. Therefore, policies and implementation strategies should be created to address each area specifically.

Character Area	Location / Description	Development Strategy
Downtown	<p>Encompasses from Harn Street east to Warnell Avenue and from West Smith Street south to East Dubois Street.</p> <p>Central Business District/Commercial</p>	<p>Preserve historic sites from demolition and encourage rehabilitation by providing appropriate incentives such as tax credits and National Register of Historic Places designation.</p> <p>Maintain architectural integrity of existing historical homes thorough architectural review board.</p> <p>Encourage compatible infill development in scale and architecture to maintain the area’s historic feel.</p> <p>Strive to preserve traditional density and lot size.</p> <p>Encourage mixed uses where appropriate.</p>
Gateway Corridor	<p>Located from south city limits along Main Street to East Dubois. Picks up again at West Smith Street and branches east along Camelia Drive to city limits and west along North Main Street to the Mason Road/SR 67 split. Also follows East Bacon Street from Warnell Avenue to the city limit and West Bacon Street from the Butler Street intersection to the city limit.</p> <p>Area is increasingly experiencing commercial development.</p>	<p>Improve the aesthetic appearance with appropriate signage and landscape beautification, including a vegetative buffer for all new developments along gateway.</p> <p>Promote tourism using these gateways to bring tourists to visit downtown and other significant historic sites.</p>

Character Area	Location / Description	Development Strategy
Industrial Area	<p>Encompasses land north and south of East Bacon Street from Warnell Avenue to city limit, including South Industrial Boulevard.</p> <p>Heavier industrial development is expected.</p>	<p>Encourage greater mixes of uses, such as retail and services to serve industrial employees, to reduce automobile reliance/use on site.</p>
Light Industrial Area	<p>Encompasses a northeast portion of undeveloped land along East Bacon Street and US Highway 280 and north to the city limit as far west as Camelia Drive (excluding section designated as Educational Complex).</p> <p>Future commercial/industrial development is expected.</p>	<p>Develop or, where possible, retrofit as part of planned industrial park having adequate water, sewer, storm water, and transportation infrastructure for all component uses at build-out.</p> <p>Incorporate landscaping and site design to soften or shield views of buildings and parking lots, loading docks, etc.</p> <p>Incorporate signage and lighting guidelines to enhance quality of development.</p>

Character Area	Location / Description	Development Strategy
<p>Suburban Area Developing</p>	<p>Southeast and southwest of Main Street and Bacon Street, extending out to the city limits in both directions. Also encompasses most of land northwest between West Bacon Street and Camelia Drive.</p> <p>Residential Subdivisions exist or are expected.</p>	<p>The development pressure is strong in Pembroke, therefore, it is vital to create policies and incentives to require and encourage preservation of green space and environmentally sensitive areas in all new development and redevelopment projects. Efforts should be focused on:</p> <p>Promoting moderate density, traditional neighborhood style residential subdivisions.</p> <p>Master-planned communities with mixed uses, blending residential development with schools, parks, recreation, retail business, and services, linked in a compact pattern that encourages walking, and minimizes the need for auto trips within the subdivision.</p> <p>Encourage strong connectivity through good vehicular and pedestrian/bike connections to retail/commercial services as well as internal street connectivity, connectivity to adjacent properties/subdivisions, and multiple use site access points.</p> <p>Encourage compatible architectural styles that maintain the regional character, and should not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture.</p>

Character Area	Location / Description	Development Strategy
Educational Complex	<p>Surrounded by Industrial Area, this portion of land is on the east side of Camelia Drive and encompasses Payne Road.</p> <p>Future school development.</p>	<p>Promoting bicycle and pedestrian connectivity throughout the campus and to surrounding neighborhoods, downtown and commercial centers.</p> <p>Promote a high quality of landscape buffering, signage etc. to enhance the aesthetics of the campus.</p>
Traditional Neighborhood Stable	<p>Includes four quadrants from downtown, extending northeast to Warnell Avenue, southeast to Lanier Street, northwest to West Smith Street and encompassing West Burkhalter Street, and southwest to South Popular Street and McFadden Drive.</p> <p>An older neighborhood with relatively well-maintained housing.</p>	<p>Encourage more homeownership and maintenance or upgrade of existing properties.</p> <p>Maintain high quality of infrastructure and services.</p> <p>Improve streetscapes, parks, and public facilities to maintain the high desirability of the areas.</p> <p>Develop bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to downtown historic areas and commercial centers.</p> <p>Promote a comprehensive sidewalk network by repairing existing sidewalks and providing new sidewalks (especially connecting churches and schools to neighborhoods).</p> <p>Enforce existing ordinances and zoning regulations.</p> <p>Encourage rapid redevelopment of newly vacant or abandoned properties.</p> <p>Promote neighborhood functions and gathering to reinforce a sense of place.</p>

Character Area	Location / Description	Development Strategy
<p>Traditional Neighborhood Redevelopment</p>	<p>First area encompasses from Harn Street to South Poplar Street and south to Clara Street.</p> <p>Second area encompasses from Ash Branch Road to east of Harry Hagan Road, and Patterson Street to south of Ennis Road.</p> <p>An older neighborhood where housing conditions are worsening due to low homeownership rates and neglect of property maintenance.</p>	<p>Formulate a redevelopment plan for these neighborhoods to address the deteriorating condition of housing structures.</p> <p>Enhance the integrity of the architectural design of the buildings.</p> <p>Public assistance and investment should be focused where needed to ensure that the neighborhood becomes more stable.</p> <p>Enhance the character of the neighborhood by improving the sidewalks, streetscape, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities.</p> <p>Allow compatible uses as infill development takes place.</p> <p>Apply historic preservation principles to preserve the character of the neighborhoods.</p>
<p>Conservation Areas and Public Use</p>	<p>South of East Bacon Street from East Lanier Street to west of South Industrial Boulevard.</p> <p>Primarily undeveloped natural lands and environmentally sensitive areas.</p>	<p>Preserve scenic areas and natural ecological features.</p> <p>Passive public and active parks should be developed to maximize potential for walking, bicycling, and other recreational activities.</p> <p>Promote these areas as tourism and recreational destinations.</p> <p>Promote conservation easements and other incentives for natural space preservation.</p>

Criteria for Areas Requiring Special Attention

Areas Requiring Special Attention are identified on Map LU-3 based on the following criteria as specified in the DCA rules:

- Areas of significant natural or cultural resources, particularly where these are likely to be intruded upon or otherwise impacted by development;
- Areas where rapid development or change of land uses is likely to occur;
- Areas where the pace of development has and/or may outpace the availability of community facilities and services, including transportation;
- Areas in need of redevelopment and/or significant improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness (including strip commercial corridors);
- Large abandoned structures or sites, including those that may be environmentally contaminated;
- Areas with significant infill development opportunities (scattered vacant sites);

Areas Requiring Special Attention

During the process of analyzing existing development patterns and trends, the City was asked to identify Areas Requiring Special Attention. These are areas of the City that should be given special consideration in order to maintain their unique characteristics, or may be targeted for future attention.

In consultation with the City staff and citizens work group, the following Areas Requiring Special Attention were identified and are presented in Map LU-3.

Areas of Significant Natural Resources

The City has identified land that runs contiguous to the Pembroke drainage canal system as an area with significant natural resources. The City should develop this area as a multi-use trail system connecting the different neighborhoods throughout the City to one another.

Areas of Significant Cultural Resources

Pembroke has many cultural resources located within the downtown area. The majority of the historic sites in the City are located within the traditional downtown commercial area, along US Highway 280 and Georgia State Highway 119.



Pembroke's historic downtown area

Areas Needing Significant Improvements

As the City grows, older areas should be constantly revisited with an eye toward redevelopment. Older northwest and southwest suburban areas have been identified as neighborhoods in need of significant improvements. The City should develop policies and strategies to address redevelopment and affordable housing in these areas to bring it up to the same level as the rest of the City.

Areas Where Development May Outpace Services

With the increasing population come areas of rapid development where services are not yet available. The City has designated the industrial tract north of US Highway 280 East as one of these areas, along with the area encompassing Mason Road to the west of Williams Road, as well as between W E Smith Road and Rogers Road.

Areas of Potential Annexation

The City can expand into areas northeast and southwest of the current City limits. These are areas where annexation is necessary for providing services. At the time of this Assessment, the City has annexed 40 acres and has plans to annex an additional 275 acres.

Analysis of Consistency with Quality Community Objectives

The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Office of Planning and Quality Growth has created the Quality Community Objectives Assessment to assist local governments in evaluating their progress towards sustainable and livable communities. The State requires communities to do an assessment of their current policies in order to gauge how they are progressing towards meeting these objectives. In most cases, the City of Pembroke has already begun to address the Quality Community Objectives, and will continue to work towards fully achieving the quality growth goals set forth by DCA.

Development Patterns

Traditional Neighborhoods

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

The City has many neighborhoods that model Traditional Neighborhood Development, including a mix of retail, commercial and residential that encourages walkability through sidewalks and neighborhood parks. The City has regulations in place to keep public areas clean and maintain its sidewalks and vegetation, making walking a viable and pleasant option. Pembroke is beginning to explore regulations that will promote new development in this pattern, as most of the existing zoning categories separate, single-use districts.

Infill Development

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

While there are few areas within the City of Pembroke currently in need of infill development, there are no policies or ordinances in place to address or promote redevelopment in these areas or in areas of where this could be of concern in the future.

Sense of Place

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

Pembroke has been very successful in identifying areas that make this the great City that it is, such as historic sites and structures, and the protection of its valuable resources. In addition, Pembroke has ordinances in place that regulate the size, placement and types of signs allowed in the community. However, the City needs to continue efforts to promote planning strategies and features that reinforce the concept of “Sense of Place.”

Transportation Alternatives

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

Pembroke does not have public transportation at this time, and while the City lacks a local trail network, it does have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations. The City needs to adopt a sidewalk ordinance that will require new development to provide sidewalks that connect to existing sidewalks wherever possible.

Regional Identity

Each region should promote and preserve a regional “identity,” or regional sense of place, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.

While Pembroke is somewhat characteristic of the Coastal Region, it needs to enhance its contribution to the region in areas of culture, commerce, and entertainment. In addition, the City needs to better define its unique character and heritage in the region and promote tourism opportunities based on these characteristics.

For a more complete assessment of development patterns, see the completed Quality Community Objectives Local Assessment found in the Technical Appendix.

Resource Conservation

Heritage Preservation

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

While there are designated historic districts within the City, there are inadequate ordinances in place to require new development to complement historic development, as well as an inactive historic preservation commission.

Open Space Preservation

New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation.

The City currently lacks ordinances and policies that could promote greenspace, conservation developments, set asides for open space, and land conservation.

Environmental Protection

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

Pembroke currently lacks ordinances that would encourage the protection of environmentally sensitive areas. In addition, the City needs to adopt and enforce the “Part V” Environmental criteria set forth by DCA, and consider the adoption of a tree preservation ordinance. The City needs to better identify their defining natural resources and take step to protect and preserve them.

For a more complete assessment of resource conservation, see the completed Quality Community Objectives Local Assessment found in the Technical Appendix.

Social and Economic Development

Growth Preparedness

Each community should identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These might include infrastructure (roads, water, and sewer) to support new growth; appropriate training of the workforce; ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired; or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities and managing new growth when it occurs.

While the City does have population projections that it refers to regarding infrastructure decisions, there is a lack of public knowledge and involvement in the areas of planning, development, and smart growth techniques.

Appropriate Businesses

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

While the City of Pembroke does work with the Development Authority of Bryan County, there is a lack of economic diversity and job recruitment. There needs to be more emphasis on recruiting businesses and industries that provide or create sustainable products and are compatible with the existing businesses and industries within the City.

Employment Options

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

With very little job growth and diversity, the majority of employment opportunities in the City continue to be manufacturing, with increasingly in the services related industries such as restaurants and retail as commercial development along Highway 280 continues

to grow. There is a need for more diverse employment in the City, creating more employment opportunities closer to home and thereby reducing the numbers of Pembroke residents who currently commute to work.

Housing Choices

A range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community (thereby reducing commuting distances), to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.

The City of Pembroke contains a variety of housing options as well as a wide range in the price of houses. Distributed around the City is a mix of low-density single-family residential homes, and the City is seeing an increase in multi-family residential, townhouses, apartments, and other options for affordable housing. The older residential areas of the City are in good condition and offer a more traditional style and design, while the new suburban developments contain a mix of housing options for new residents.

Educational Opportunities

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

There are a number of colleges, universities, and technical training opportunities in close proximity to Pembroke. While Pembroke residents have access to opportunities for higher education and professional training, the City should encourage the provision of more jobs for educated workers within the City.

For a more complete assessment of social and economic development, see the completed Quality Community Objectives Local Assessment found in the Technical Appendix.

Governmental Relations

Regional Solutions and Cooperation

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

The City of Pembroke currently has a working relationship and shares many services with Bryan County. However, there is room for improved communication and collaboration, specifically regarding “regional” issues like growth and land use, transportation, employment, and other related issues that go beyond local government borders.

For a more complete assessment of governmental relations, see the completed Quality Community Objectives Local Assessment found in the Technical Appendix.

Supporting Analysis of Data and Information

The following pages are an analysis of supporting data and information found in the Technical Appendix. The pertinent data and analysis of selected trends are summarized. See the Technical Appendix for detailed information from Census 2000 data, interviews, and significant other research conducted for the City of Pembroke's Comprehensive Plan Community Assessment. Only the evaluation and data necessary to substantiate important trends and character areas are presented in this analysis.

There are a number of identified trends that affect the City. The population growth rate is projected to change 66 percent by the year 2015. This rate of growth is faster than the growth rate of both Bryan County and the State during the same period. This rapid growth rate is the progenitor of trends not yet identified. Decision-makers will want to review the section Identification of Issues and Opportunities for a list of issues and opportunities. The overarching trends and observations for the City are summarized in the following statements:

- Creating housing choice and affordability is vital to the diversity and livability of the community.
- The rate of population growth is expected to change from one of stability to one of high growth.
- Coordination of economic development efforts and economic diversification is essential to the long-term health of the City's economy.
- Decrease the need for residents to commute outside of Pembroke and Bryan County for employment by creating more employment opportunities within the City.
- Guide development and impact of the potential US Highway 280 bypass.

The policies through which community leaders choose to address these trends will determine the way in which the City of Pembroke will build its community and neighborhoods.

Existing Development Patterns

Existing development patterns illustrate a relatively stable City where some neighborhoods are near or in a declining posture and many neighborhoods are stable and well kept. Areas of residential development as of 2001 were expanding north and west of the City of Pembroke. While development immediately east of Pembroke has been constrained by wetlands, the City is beginning to see some industrial growth in this area.



Pembroke traditional neighborhood



Area in need of redevelopment

Commercial development has typically centered around the central business district located along US Highway 280 on both sides of the Georgia Central Railroad; however, the City is seeing increasing commercial growth spreading out from this area along both US Highway 280 and Georgia State Route 119. While there are some commercial areas in need of redevelopment, great success has been achieved in the continuing revitalization of the downtown district.

Although the increasing urbanization of Pembroke is reducing the total land area, extensive wetlands and agricultural conservation areas continue to help balance land development in the community.

Population

The Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development (CQGRD) forecasts Pembroke's population to reach 4,672 by 2030, a 96.4 percent increase from 2000. This growth will be impacted by available housing choices and job opportunities in the region.

Projections show two age cohorts increasing faster than the others. The age cohorts are the 5-to-13 cohort and the 45-to-54 cohort.

Although Per Capita Income has grown steadily since the 1980 Census, the 2000 Census showed a high level of households, 23.6 percent, below the poverty level.

The educational attainment level of the residents of Pembroke has increased at each census, with an 84.2 percent increase from 1980 to 2000. The most significant changes occurred with the number of residents who reported some level of college education and at the graduate or professional level.

Economic Development

According to the 2000 Census, approximately 70 percent of the labor force in the City of Pembroke commutes outside of the City to work, a figure largely unchanged since the 1990 Census.

The City is experiencing very little job growth and diversity. While the manufacturing industry continues to decline, significant growth was seen in the Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services; Professional, Management and Business Services; and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting and Mining industries.

There are significant opportunities for recruitment of industry in Pembroke as well. The J. Dixie Harn Industrial Park (63 acres) within the city limits of Pembroke is approximately 40 percent occupied. In addition, the Bryan County Development

Authority has a 273-acre industrial/business park, the Interstate Centre, which is located at Exit 143 on I-16 and has recently purchased 297 acres that will become part of the Interstate Centre, as well as an additional 500 acres that will be known as Interstate Centre Phase II.

Between the excess public facilities capacity already available and the recently awarded CDBG in the amount of \$500,000 for water and sewer improvements, the City has an opportunity to support existing businesses and industries and successfully draw new ones to the area.



Entrance to J. Dixie Harn Industrial Park

Housing

With residential uses comprising the majority of the total developed area of the City, Pembroke is largely composed of detached, single-family homes, with manufactured or mobile home single-family housing steadily growing. Though residents are seeing some increase in multi-family options and special needs housing, availability of both are still limited.

Substandard housing does exist in Pembroke, but the condition of most of the housing stock, is in relatively good shape. However, some areas are experiencing decline as some houses are approximately 30-years old or older.



New multi-family housing

With affordable housing increasingly becoming a scarce commodity, housing costs are typically rising at a faster rate than family income. For the City of Pembroke, the median property value experienced a 70 percent increase between 1990 and 2000, according to Census data, while the median household income increased by 42.3 percent during the same period.

The City should address a variety of housing policy issues. These issues include building code enforcement and promoting the construction of affordable multi-family

housing through policies and ordinances that provide for higher density units when infrastructure and services are available.

Natural Resources and Cultural Resources

Pembroke has significant marketable natural and cultural resources, which are under constant threat of encroachment due to the rapid pace of growth in the City. In light of

this trend, the City has made remarkable progress with its Phase II TEA grant for streetscaping that has been authorized for late 2007. Its “Better Hometown” status recently awarded by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, its \$500,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) recently awarded by Governor Purdue, and its increasing awareness of the need to protect its valuable resources also demonstrate significant progress.

With all of its successes, the City still needs to work on promoting historic preservation through the creation of a Historic Preservation Commission. As well as encouraging the efforts of its existing revitalization committee.

Community Facilities

The majority of the City is currently served by public facilities. Excess sewer and water capacities are important factors in attracting new business/industrial and housing developments, and with the City currently utilizing approximately 35 percent of its maximum capacity for water supply and approximately 37 percent of its capacity for the City's new Water Pollution Control Plant, there is the opportunity for this capacity to be marketed by the City and/or used to provide services to additional residents outside the City limits.

While Pembroke's fire protection currently meet the needs of existing populations, police services are already strained, and as growth continues, both of these services will become increasingly insufficient.

Though some progress is being made with the construction of the new teen center, the City should explore more opportunities for parks and recreational opportunities for its residents who now primarily rely on Bryan County and Richmond Hill for such facilities.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Continuing dialogue between Pembroke, the City of Richmond Hill and Bryan County has improved due to the commitment of leadership in all jurisdictions. One example of a successful intergovernmental coordinating effort in the communities is the Joint Development Authority of Bryan County.

As with many small communities, many of Pembroke's services are provided by Bryan County. However, Pembroke does provide many of its own services, including police and fire protection, as well as water and sewer services.

The City is served by the Bryan County School System. As growth continues, coordinated efforts between the City and County will become critical. Other opportunities for continuing improvement between jurisdictions will include the future implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, more specifically during the Community Agenda phase, which will involve a melding of the plans and encourage increased communication and intergovernmental coordination.

Transportation

Examining the existing transportation network, particularly in a rapidly growing area, is essential to the vitality of the community. Transportation planning is a constantly changing, continuous process that examines the current demands and the expected future demands of the community in order to ensure that transportation improvements best suit the desires and needs of an area.

Downtown Pembroke sits at the intersection of three major highways—U.S. Highway 280, U.S. Highway 67, and State Route 119. These arterials provide a regional transportation network that easily moves traffic both to Interstate 16 and Interstate 95.

The existing transportation network was designed for low traffic volume and currently meets the needs of the community. However, transportation issues will need to be reevaluated as development continues to occur throughout the City.

At this time, the City of Pembroke does not have public transportation. In addition, the City lacks a local trail network that links new developments to existing ones, as well as connectivity to a regional trail network. However, it is important to note that Pembroke is considering the installation of multi-use trails to run contiguous to the existing canal system throughout Pembroke. The canal system is on City-owned property, meaning Pembroke already maintains the rights-of-way.

In an area like Pembroke, which is experiencing continuous growth, it is important to constantly monitor the changing demands in order to efficiently accommodate existing and future travel needs. This effort will benefit the community by mitigating the negative impact of transportation systems on Pembroke’s natural and social environment.

Compliance with Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria

One of the goals of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 is the protection of the State’s environments, natural resources, and other significant areas. Included in the Act are minimum standards and procedures generally known as the “Environmental Planning Criteria” or “Part 5 Criteria” (named from Part 5 of House Bill 215, which became the Planning Act). In order to maintain eligibility for certain state grants, loans, and permits, local governments implement regulations consistent with these criteria.

The rules for Environmental Planning Criteria were developed by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GDNR) and are part of the local government planning standards. These rules direct local governments to establish local protection efforts to conserve critical environmental resources. They are divided into the following five sections:

- Water Supply Watersheds
- Groundwater
- Wetlands

- Protected Rivers
- Protected Mountains

The City of Pembroke has adopted local ordinance to protect wetlands, which is the only critical resource found within the city.

Analysis of Consistency with Service Delivery Strategy

The intent of the Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) is to minimize any duplication of services and competition among local governments. The SDS must be verified by the Department of Community Affairs in order to remain eligible for state administered grants or state permits.

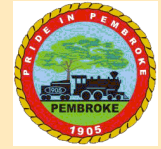
The City is in compliance with the standards set forth by the state for Service Delivery and is currently working to update the service delivery agreements with the appropriate jurisdictions.

The City of Pembroke maintains an amicable working relationship with staff and elected officials from surrounding jurisdictions, as well as those from Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center and the Department of Community Affairs.

Existing Land Use

City of Pembroke Bryan County Georgia

DRAFT



LU-1

Legend

- Rivers and Streams
- Lakes and Ponds
- Parcels
- City Boundary
- Land Use Descriptions:**
 - Agriculture/Forest
 - Commercial
 - Industrial
 - Parks/Recreation/Conservation
 - Public/Institutional
 - Residential
 - Transportation/Communication/Utilities
 - Vacant/Undeveloped



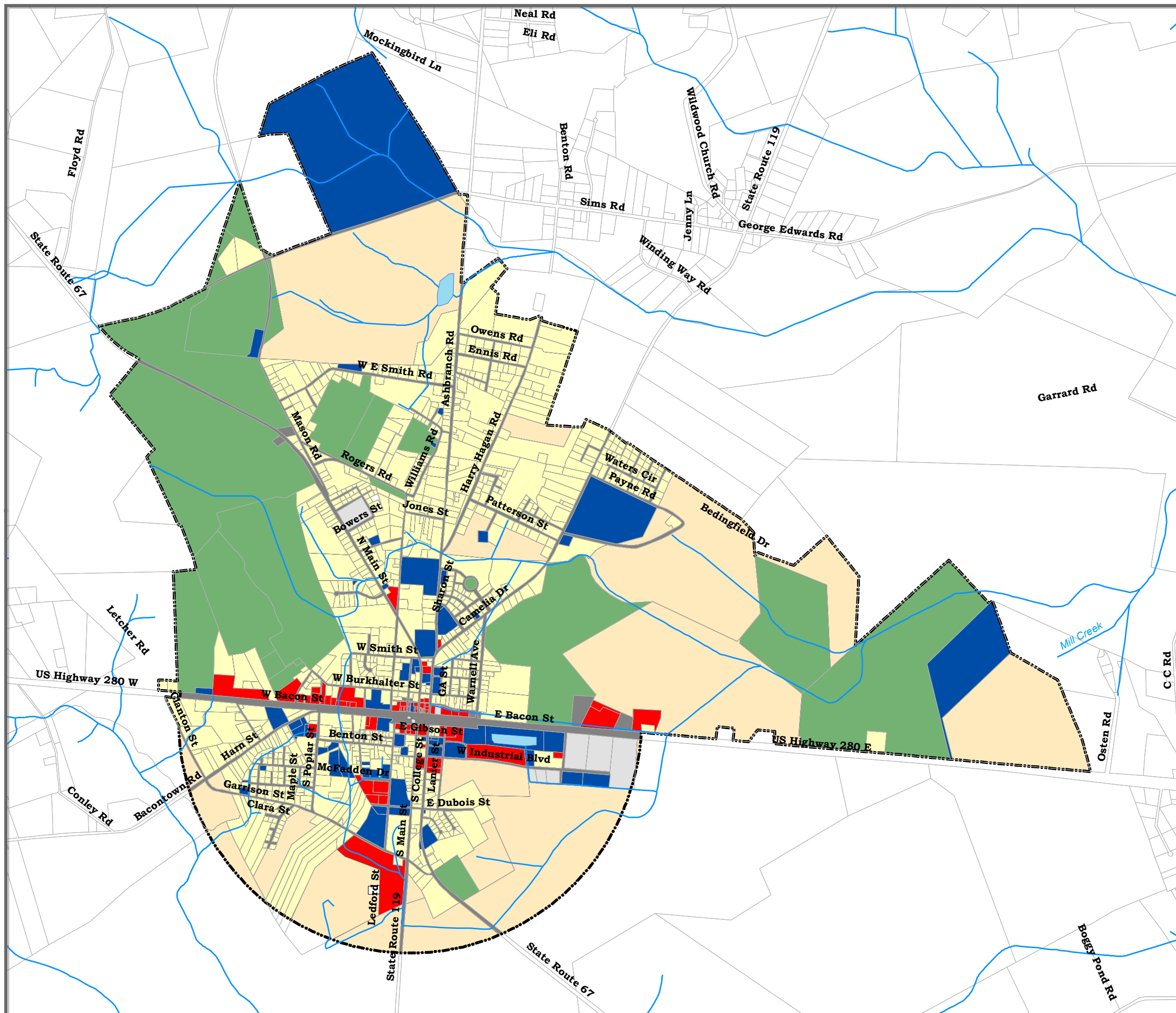
0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 Miles

Source: City of Pembroke & Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center



Planning and Government Services
Department, GIS Division
Revised: December 6, 2007

DISCLAIMER: This map has been prepared to facilitate public access to information. Data shown is for planning purposes only and its accuracy is NOT warranted. CGRDC assumes no liability for the quality, content, accuracy or completeness of the information and other items contained in this map. Individuals are advised to independently verify information before use.



Character Areas

City of Pembroke
Bryan County
Georgia

DRAFT



LU-2

Legend

- Rivers and Streams
- Lakes and Ponds
- Historic District
- Parcels
- Character Areas**
 - Conservation Area and Public Use
 - Downtown
 - Educational Complex
 - Gateway Corridor
 - Industrial Area
 - Light Industrial Area
 - Suburban Area Developing
 - Traditional Neighborhoods Redevelopment
 - Traditional Neighborhoods Stable



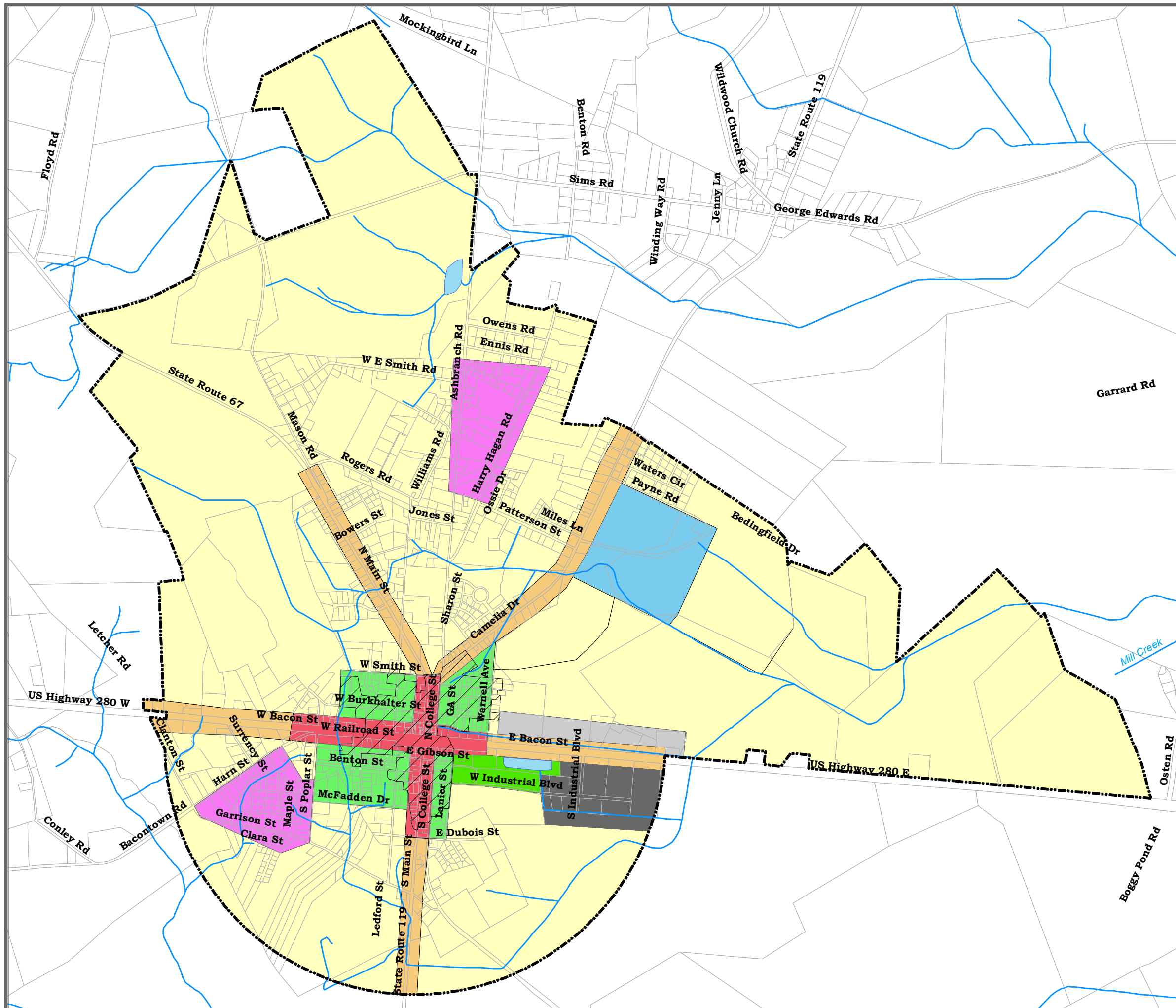
0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 Miles

Source: City of Pembroke &
Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center



Planning and Government Services
Department, GIS Division
Revised: December 6, 2007

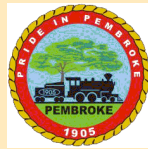
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Areas Requiring Special Attention

City of Pembroke
Bryan County
Georgia

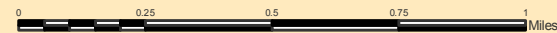
DRAFT



LU-3

Legend

- Rivers and Streams
- Lakes and Ponds
- Parcels
- City Boundary
- Areas Requiring Special Attention**
- Areas Needing Significant Improvements
- Areas Where Development May Outpace Services
- Areas of Potential Annexation
- Areas of Significant Cultural Resources
- Areas of Significant Natural Resources
- Community Gateway

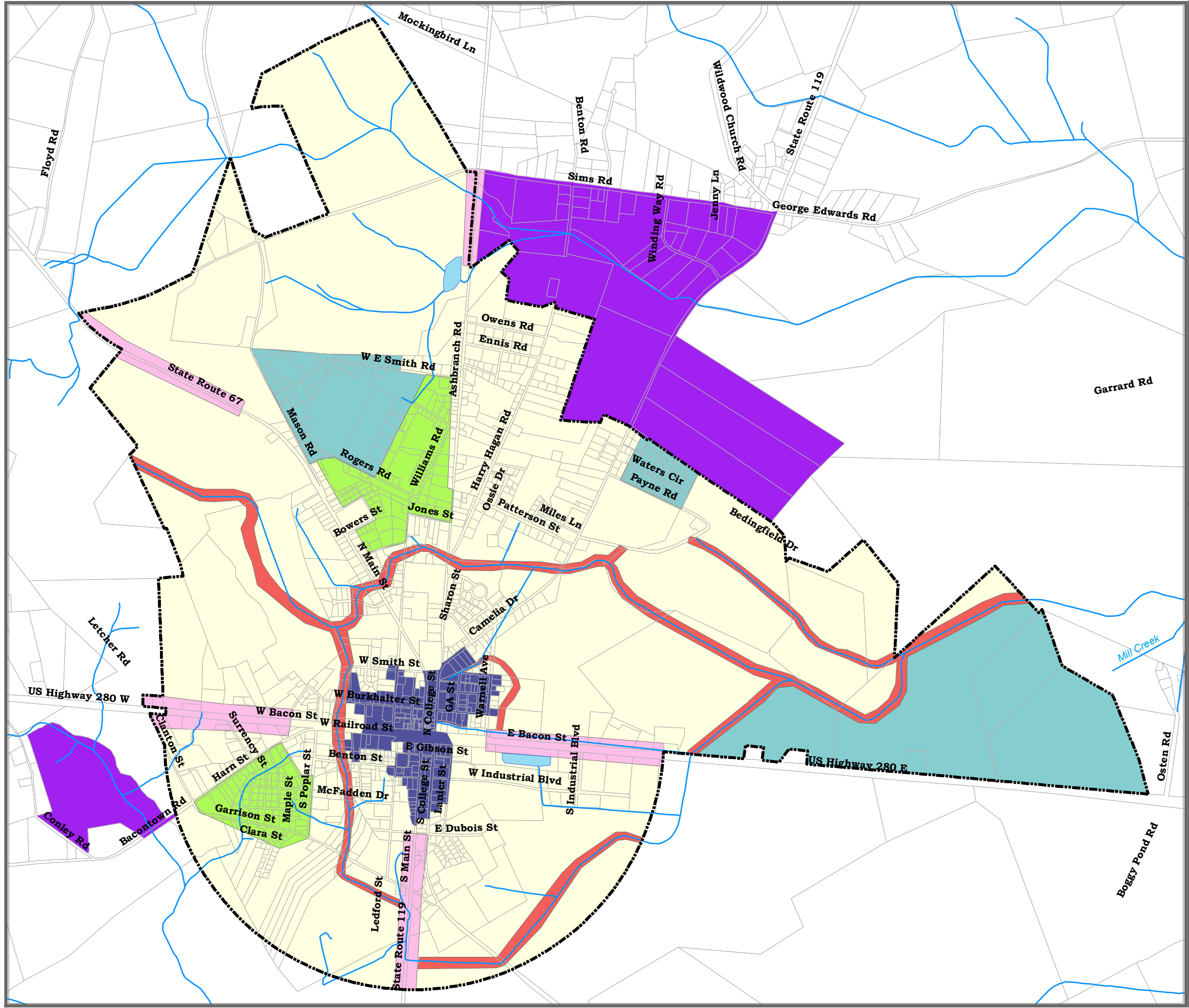


Source: City of Pembroke & Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center



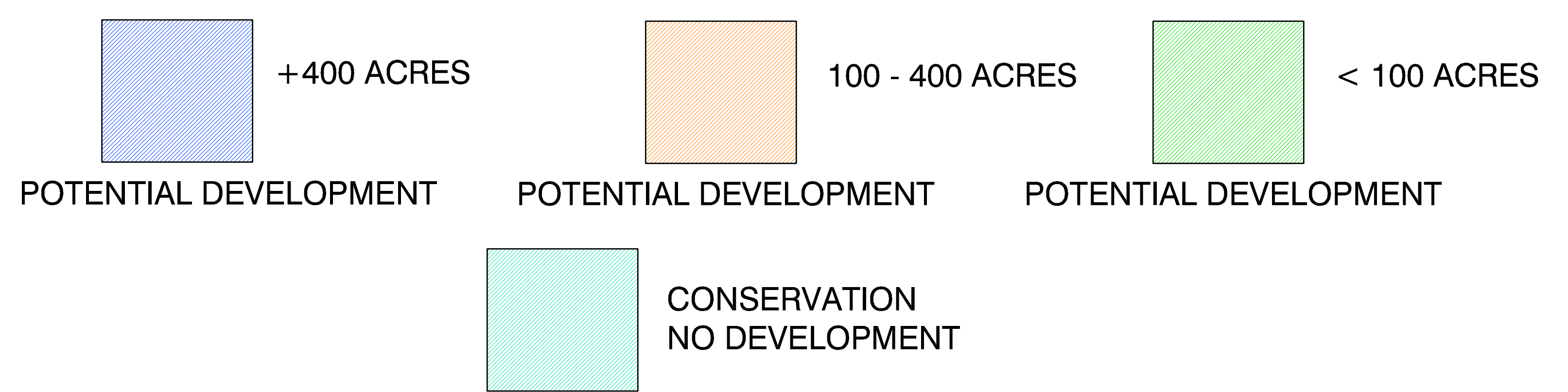
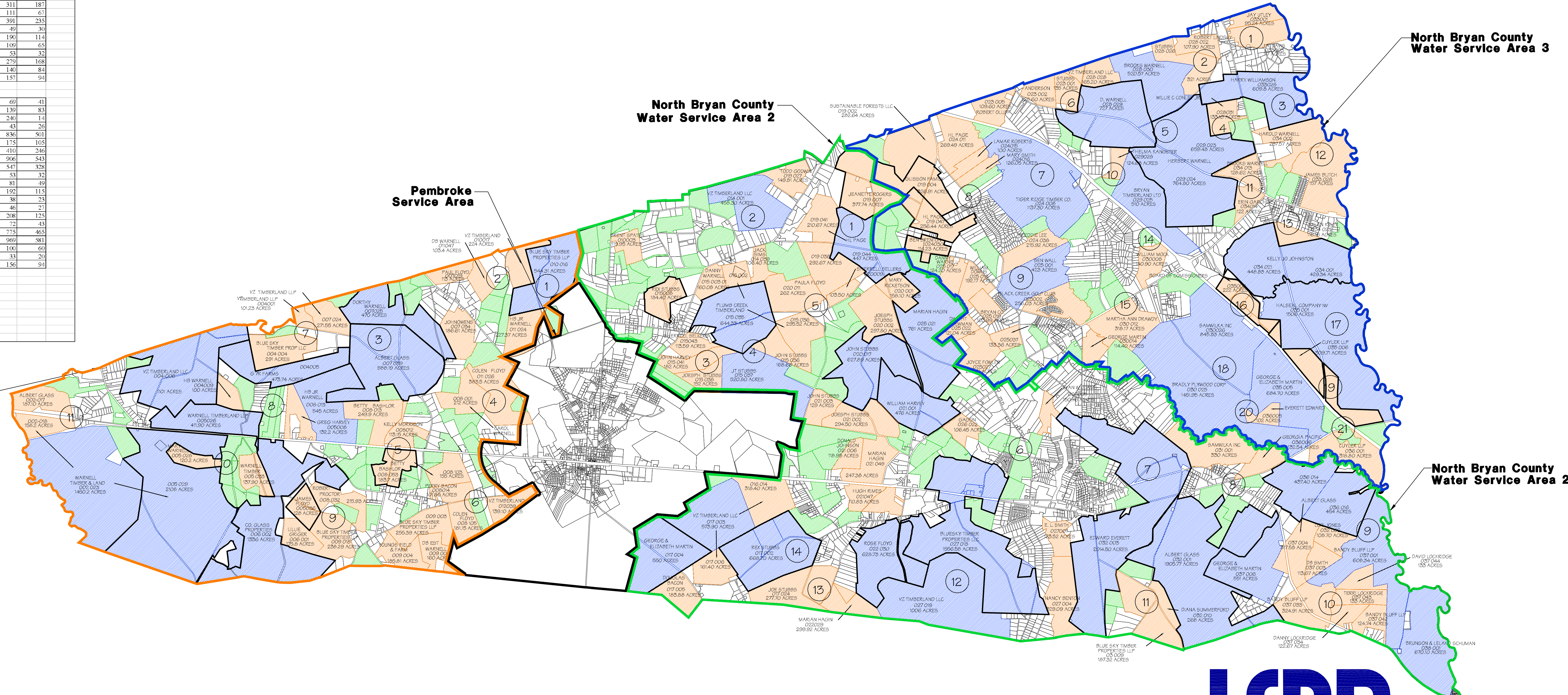
Planning and Government Services
Department, GIS Division
Revised: December 6, 2007

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NORTH BRYAN COUNTY BUILD OUT STUDY

OVERALL POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT					YEARS				
PROPERTY	START	AC	ERU/AC	UNITS	% COMPLETE				
					5%	25%	50%	75%	100%
SERVICE AREA 1									
TRACT 1	2005	544	25 ERU/AC	136	7	34	71	84	20
TRACT 2	2005	1,351	25 ERU/AC	338	17	84	100	84	50
TRACT 3	2005	8,882	25 ERU/AC	2,221	111	555	666	553	33
TRACT 4	2005	789	25 ERU/AC	197	10	50	59	50	30
TRACT 5	2005	1,077	25 ERU/AC	269	13	67	81	67	40
TRACT 6	2005	1,348	25 ERU/AC	337	17	84	101	84	51
TRACT 7	2005	696	25 ERU/AC	174	9	44	52	44	26
TRACT 8	2005	447	25 ERU/AC	112	6	28	34	28	17
TRACT 9	2005	912	25 ERU/AC	228	11	57	68	57	34
TRACT 10	2005	539	25 ERU/AC	135	7	34	41	34	20
TRACT 11	2005	613	25 ERU/AC	153	8	38	46	38	23
SERVICE AREA 2									
TRACT 1	2005	2,311	35 ERU/AC	809	116	202	243	202	121
TRACT 2	2005	2,573	35 ERU/AC	993	45	225	270	225	135
TRACT 3	2005	691	35 ERU/AC	242	12	61	73	61	36
TRACT 4	2005	1,164	35 ERU/AC	407	20	102	122	102	61
TRACT 5	2005	3,557	35 ERU/AC	1,245	62	311	374	311	187
TRACT 6	2005	1,269	35 ERU/AC	444	22	111	133	111	67
TRACT 7	2005	4,470	35 ERU/AC	1,565	78	391	470	391	235
TRACT 8	2005	563	35 ERU/AC	197	10	49	59	49	30
TRACT 9	2005	2,169	35 ERU/AC	759	38	190	228	190	114
TRACT 10	2005	1,241	35 ERU/AC	434	22	109	130	109	65
TRACT 11	2005	602	35 ERU/AC	211	11	53	63	53	32
TRACT 12	2005	3,190	35 ERU/AC	1,117	56	279	335	279	168
TRACT 13	2005	1,602	35 ERU/AC	561	28	140	168	140	84
TRACT 14	2005	1,751	35 ERU/AC	627	31	157	189	157	94
SERVICE AREA 3									
TRACT 1	2005	212	1.3 ERU/AC	275	14	69	83	69	41
TRACT 2	2005	428	1.3 ERU/AC	556	28	139	167	139	83
TRACT 3	2005	737	1.3 ERU/AC	958	48	240	287	240	144
TRACT 4	2005	133	1.3 ERU/AC	172	9	43	52	43	26
TRACT 5	2005	2,571	1.3 ERU/AC	3,342	167	836	1007	836	501
TRACT 6	2005	538	1.3 ERU/AC	699	35	175	219	175	105
TRACT 7	2005	1,202	1.3 ERU/AC	1,640	83	410	492	410	246
TRACT 8	2005	2,786	1.3 ERU/AC	3,622	181	906	1,087	906	543
TRACT 9	2005	1,682	1.3 ERU/AC	2,187	109	547	656	547	328
TRACT 10	2005	161	1.3 ERU/AC	213	11	51	64	51	32
TRACT 11	2005	250	1.3 ERU/AC	325	16	81	98	81	49
TRACT 12	2005	591	1.3 ERU/AC	768	38	192	230	192	115
TRACT 13	2005	116	1.3 ERU/AC	150	8	38	45	38	23
TRACT 14	2005	148	1.3 ERU/AC	182	9	46	55	46	27
TRACT 15	2005	640	1.3 ERU/AC	832	42	208	250	208	125
TRACT 16	2005	222	1.3 ERU/AC	288	14	72	86	72	43
TRACT 17	2005	2,881	1.3 ERU/AC	3,699	155	775	930	775	465
TRACT 18	2005	592	1.3 ERU/AC	769	38	192	230	192	115
TRACT 19	2005	309	1.3 ERU/AC	401	20	100	120	100	60
TRACT 20	2005	102	1.3 ERU/AC	132	7	33	40	33	20
TRACT 21	2005	481	1.3 ERU/AC	625	31	156	188	156	94



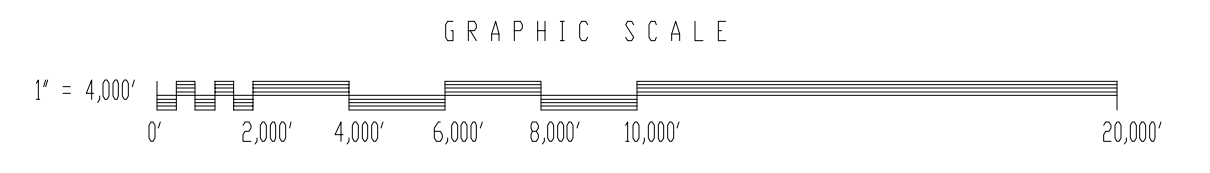
HUSSEY, GAY, BELL & DEYOUNG, INCORPORATED

• CONSULTING ENGINEERS •

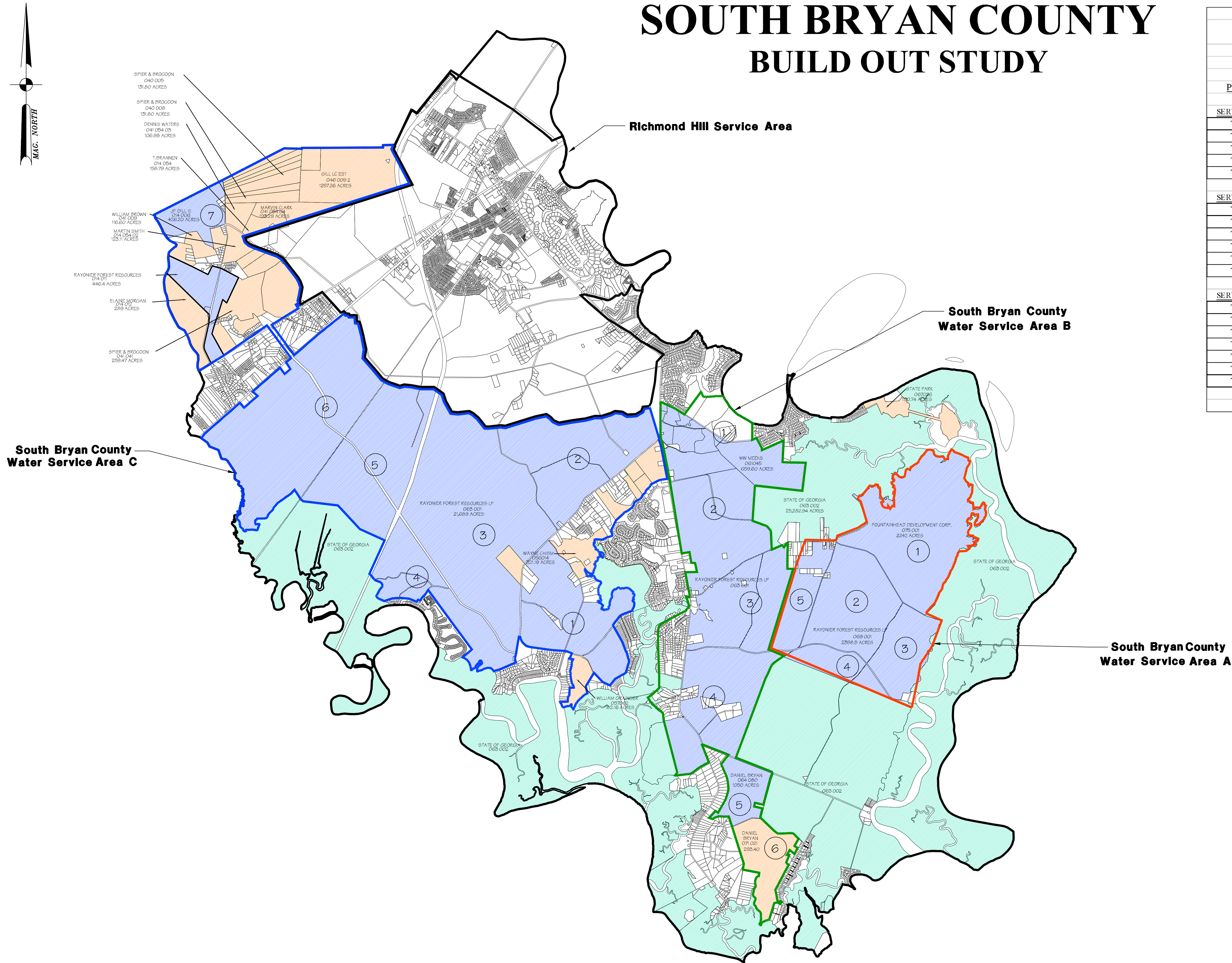
329 Commercial Drive P.O. Box 14247 Savannah, GA 31416-1247 Telephone: 912.354.4626 Facsimile: 912.354.6734	625 Green Street N.E. Gainesville, Ga 30501 Telephone: 770.535.1133 Facsimile: 770.535.1134
1219 Assembly Street P.O. Box 7967 Columbia, SC 29202 Telephone: 803.799.0444 Facsimile: 803.799.1499	749 Johnnie Dodds Blvd. P.O. Box 1771 Mt. Pleasant, SC 29465 Telephone: 843.849.7500 Facsimile: 843.849.7502

JMW J M Woods, Inc.
Landscape Architecture
Land Planning
P.O. Box 14211 Savannah, Georgia 31416 Telephone: 912.303.0282 Fax: 912.303.0411

AUGUST, 2005



SOUTH BRYAN COUNTY BUILD OUT STUDY



OVERALL POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT									
PROPERTY	START	AC	ERU/AC	UNITS	YEARS				
					% COMPLETE				
					1	5	10	15	20
					5%	25%	30%	25%	15%
SERVICE AREA A									
TRACT 1	2005	2250	1.3 ERU/AC	2,925	146	731	888	731	439
TRACT 2	2005	1034	1.3 ERU/AC	1,344	67	336	403	336	202
TRACT 3	2005	560	1.3 ERU/AC	728	36	182	218	182	109
TRACT 4	2005	316	1.3 ERU/AC	411	21	103	123	103	62
TRACT 5	2005	390	1.3 ERU/AC	507	25	127	152	127	76
SERVICE AREA B									
TRACT 1	2005	998	1.3 ERU/AC	1,297	65	324	389	324	195
TRACT 2	2005	1155	1.3 ERU/AC	1,502	75	376	451	376	225
TRACT 3	2005	1033	1.3 ERU/AC	1,343	67	336	403	336	201
TRACT 4	2005	1163	1.3 ERU/AC	1,512	76	378	454	378	227
TRACT 5	2005	341	1.3 ERU/AC	443	22	111	133	111	66
TRACT 6	2005	493	1.3 ERU/AC	641	32	160	192	160	96
SERVICE AREA C									
TRACT 1	2005	1698	1.3 ERU/AC	2,207	110	552	662	552	331
TRACT 2	2005	1482	1.3 ERU/AC	1,927	96	482	578	482	289
TRACT 3	2005	2892	1.3 ERU/AC	3,760	188	940	1,128	940	564
TRACT 4	2005	863	1.3 ERU/AC	1,122	56	281	337	281	168
TRACT 5	2005	1520	1.3 ERU/AC	1,976	99	494	593	494	296
TRACT 6	2005	2593	1.3 ERU/AC	3,371	169	843	1,011	843	506
TRACT 7	2005	2962	1.3 ERU/AC	3,851	193	963	1,155	963	378



HUSSEY, GAY, BELL & DEYOUNG, INCORPORATED

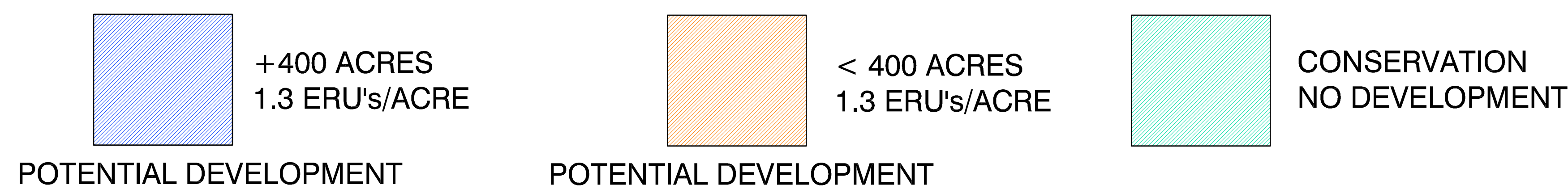
• CONSULTING ENGINEERS •

329 Commercial Drive
P.O. Box 14247
Savannah, GA 31416-1247
Telephone: 912.354.4626
Facsimile: 912.354.6754

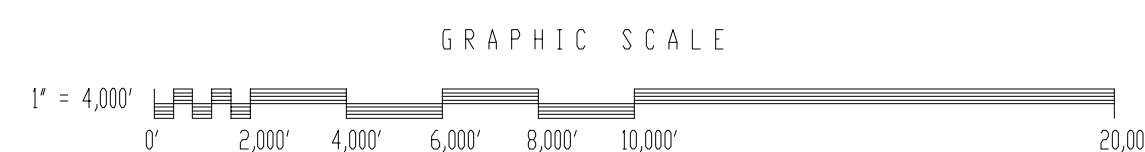
625 Green Street N.E.
Gainesville, Ga 30501
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Facsimile: 770.535.1134

1219 Assembly Street
P.O. Box 7967
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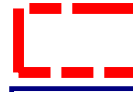




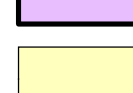
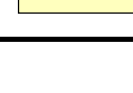


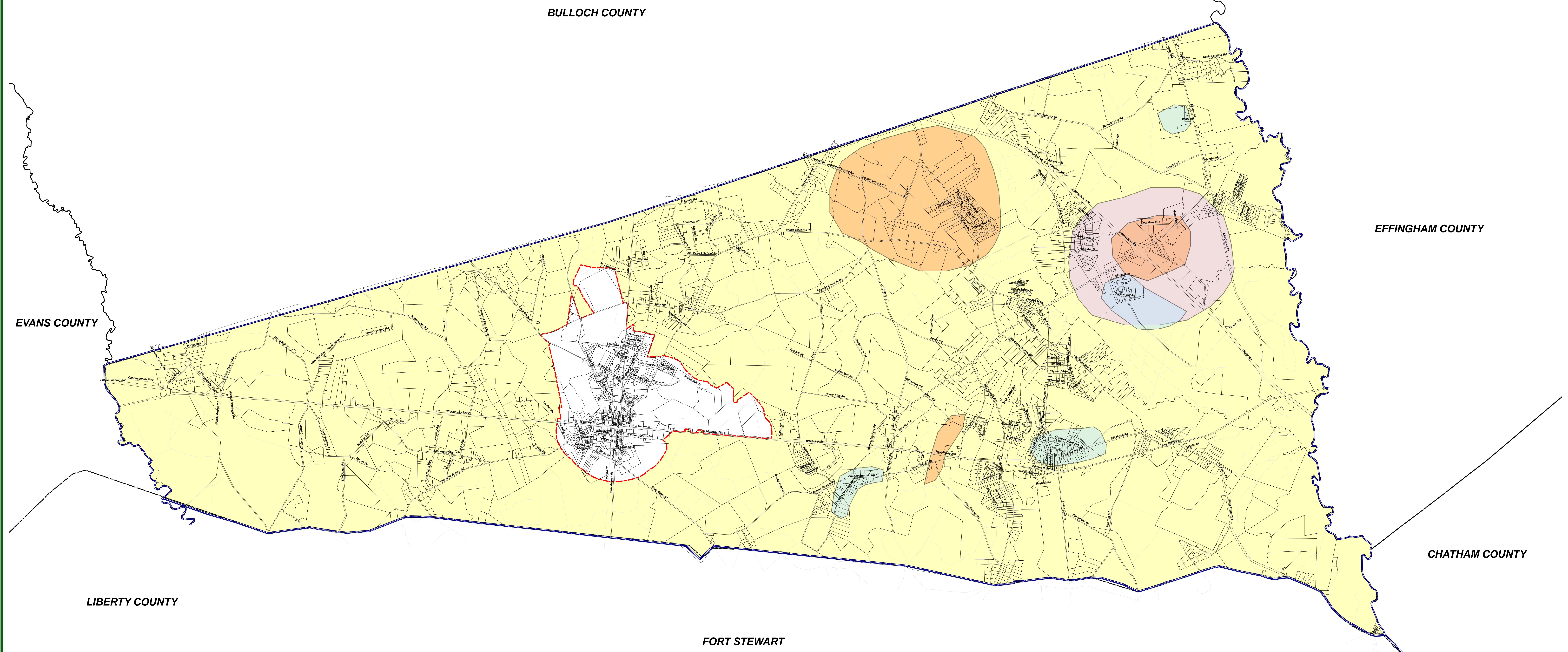
AUGUST, 2005



JMW J M Woods, Inc.
Landscape Architecture
Land Planning
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Legend

-  Pembroke
-  Bryan County Line
-  Fort Stewart Boundary
-  Rapid Development
-  Poverty_Disinvestment1
-  Areas of Special Attention
-  Agricultural/Residential/Open Space











*NORTH BRYAN COUNTY
 RAPID DEVELOPMENT, POVERTY/DISINVESTMENT,
 AND CHARACTER AREAS*

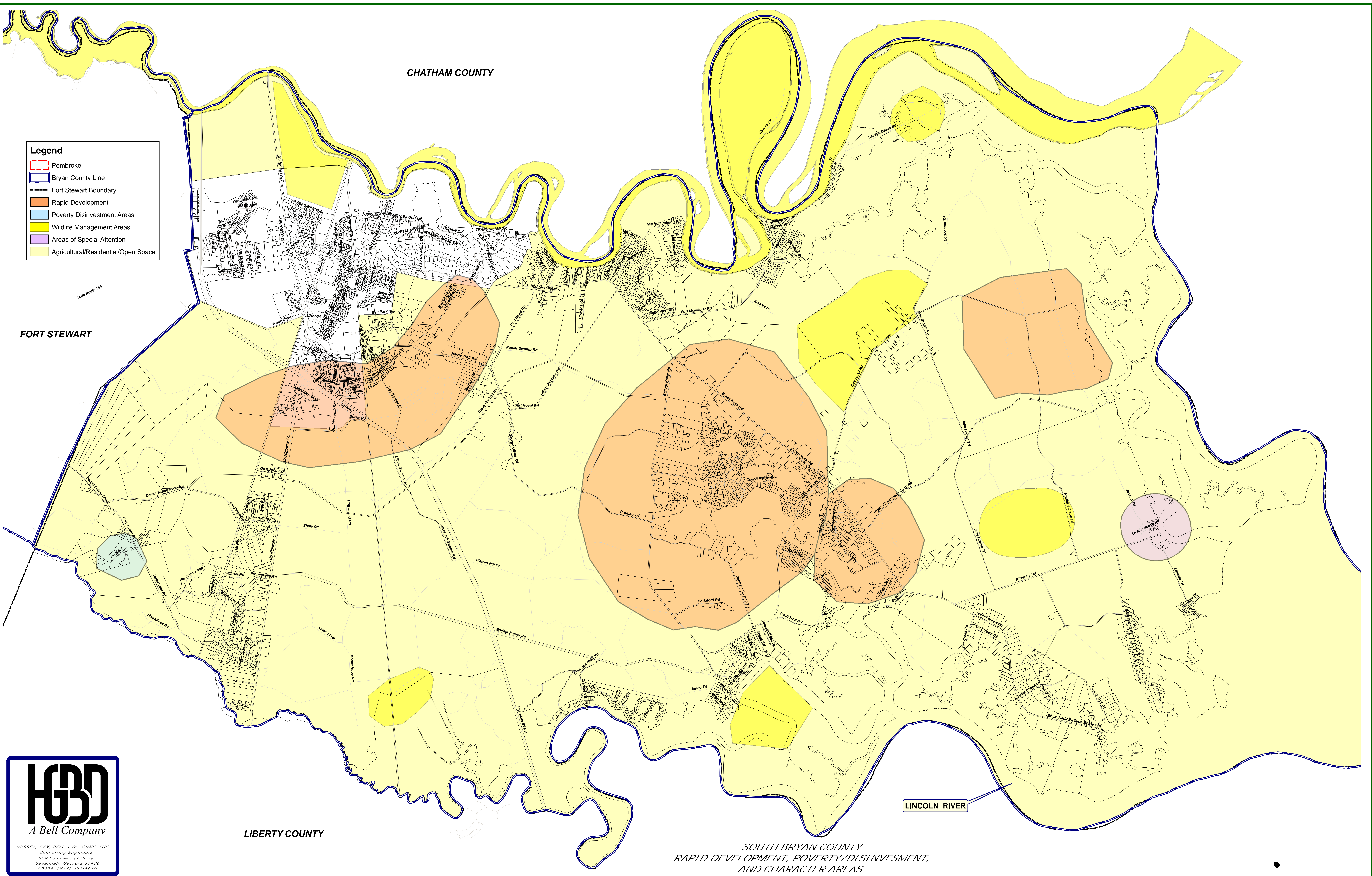
OCTOBER, 2005 SCALE: 1" = 3000'

CHATHAM COUNTY

Legend

-  Pembroke
-  Bryan County Line
-  Fort Stewart Boundary
-  Rapid Development
-  Poverty Disinvestment Areas
-  Wildlife Management Areas
-  Areas of Special Attention
-  Agricultural/Residential/Open Space

FORT STEWART



LIBERTY COUNTY

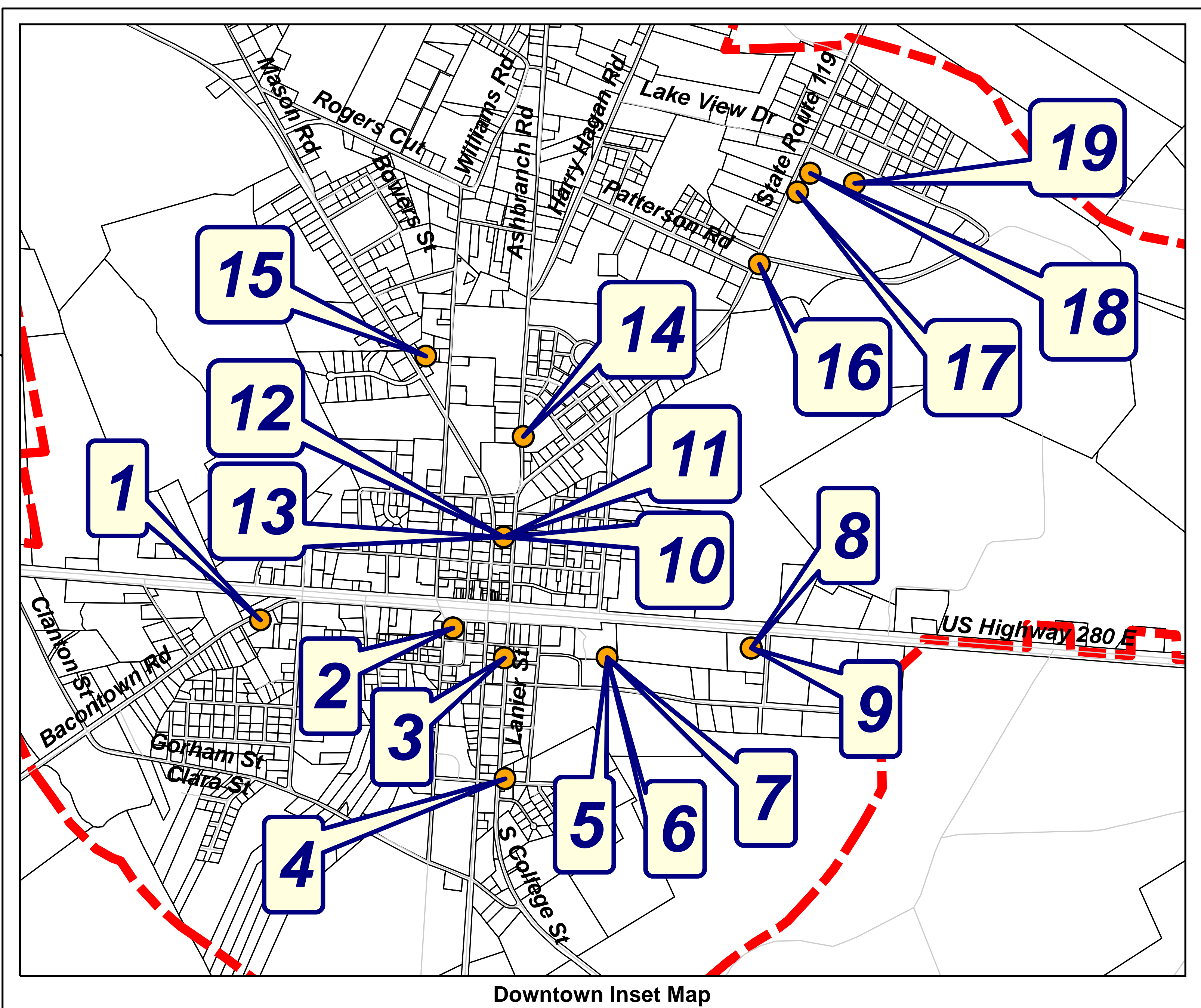
LINCOLN RIVER

*SOUTH BRYAN COUNTY
 RAPID DEVELOPMENT, POVERTY/DISINVESTMENT,
 AND CHARACTER AREAS*

OCTOBER, 2005 SCALE: 1" = 2000'



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Downtown Inset Map

BULLOCH COUNTY

EFFINGHAM COUNTY

EVANS COUNTY

LIBERTY COUNTY

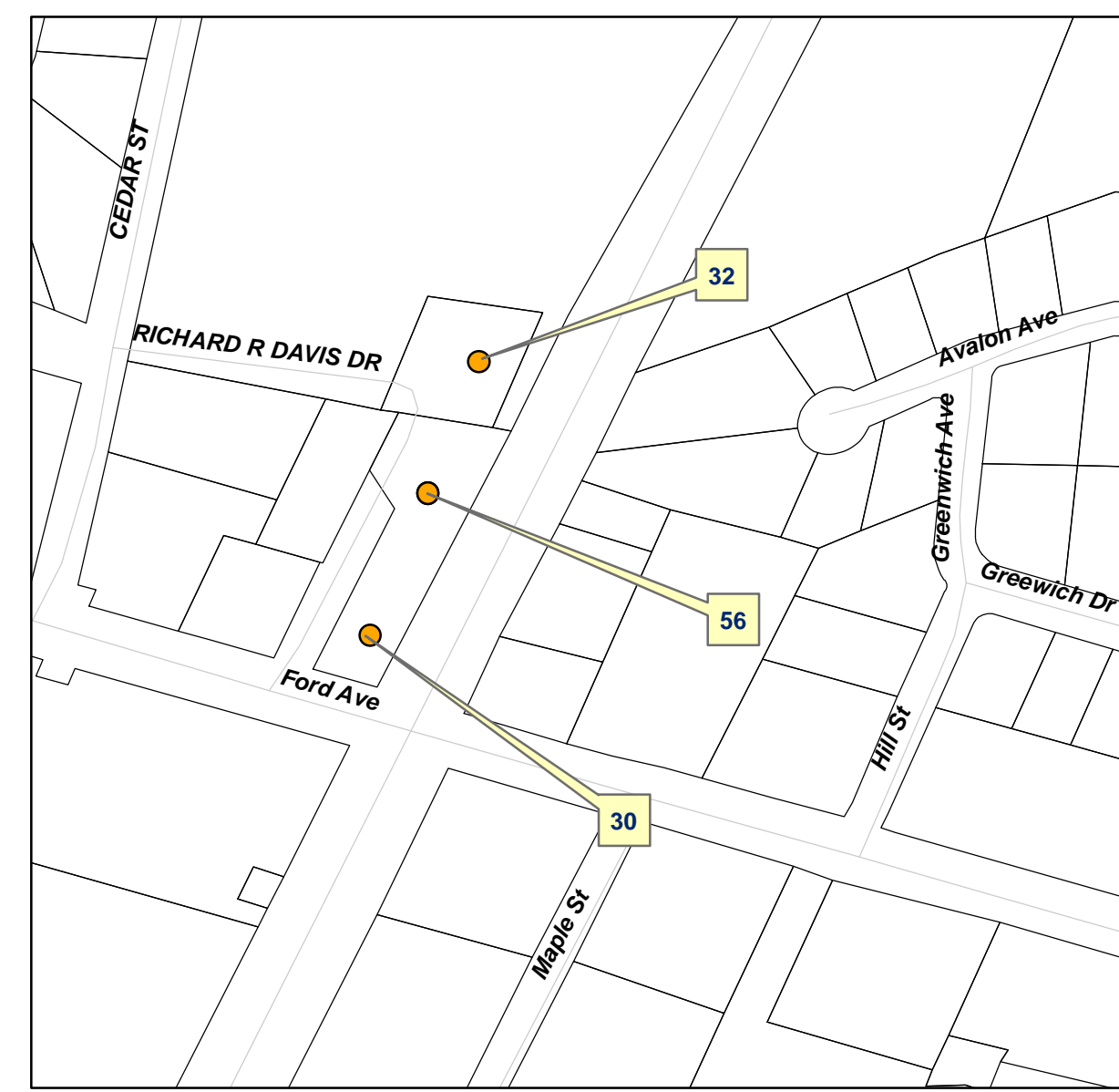
CHATHAM COUNTY

FORT STEWART

- 1 Millcreek Landfill
- 2 Pembroke Police Department
- 3 Bryan County Courthouse
- 4 Pembroke Well
- 5 Bryan County Sheriff's Office
- 6 Bryan County Jail
- 7 Dixie Harm Industrial Park
- 8 Bryan County Pre-K
- 9 Bryan Academy
- 10 City of Pembroke
- 11 Pembroke Police Station
- 12 Pembroke Volunteer Fire Department
- 13 Pembroke City Hall
- 14 Bryan County Elementary
- 15 Pembroke Water Tower
- 16 Pembroke Public Library
- 17 Bryan County High
- 18 Bryan County High
- 19 Bryan County Middle
- 20 North Bryan Co Fire Dept Bacon Town Station
- 21 Lanier
- 22 North Bryan County Volunteer Fire Department
- 23 Public Works
- 24 Blitchton Bryan County Volunteer Fire Department
- 56 Boat Ramp
- 57 Pembroke Wastewater Treatment Plant
- 58 Hendrix Park Gym
- 59 Interstate Centre Industrial Park
- 60 Water Tank
- 61 Wastewater Facility
- 62 Boat Ramp



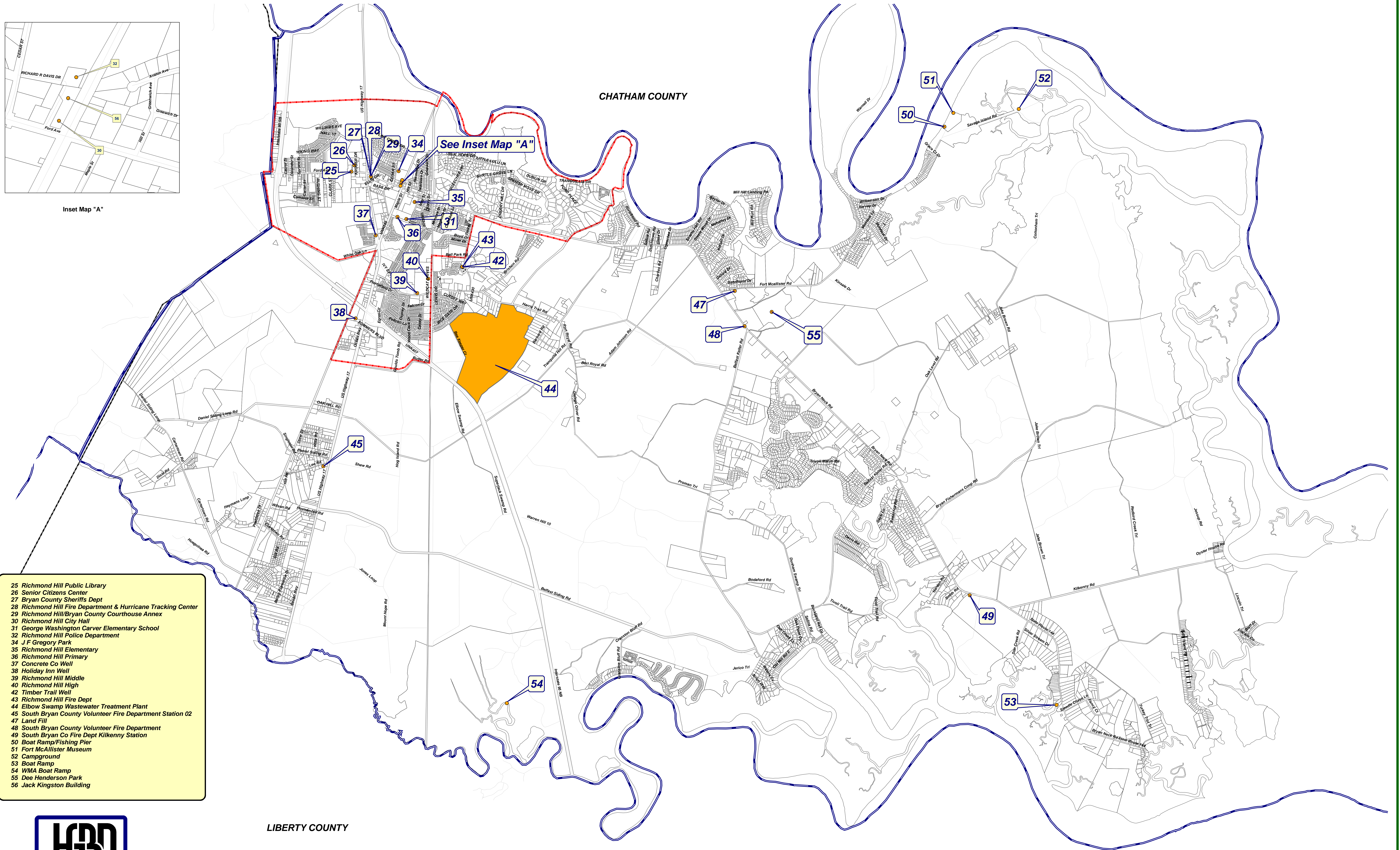
NORTH BRYAN COUNTY COMMUNITY FACILITIES



Inset Map "A"

CHATHAM COUNTY

See Inset Map "A"



- 25 Richmond Hill Public Library
- 26 Senior Citizens Center
- 27 Bryan County Sheriffs Dept
- 28 Richmond Hill Fire Department & Hurricane Tracking Center
- 29 Richmond Hill/Bryan County Courthouse Annex
- 30 Richmond Hill City Hall
- 31 George Washington Carver Elementary School
- 32 Richmond Hill Police Department
- 34 J F Gregory Park
- 35 Richmond Hill Elementary
- 36 Richmond Hill Primary
- 37 Concrete Co Well
- 38 Holiday Inn Well
- 39 Richmond Hill Middle
- 40 Richmond Hill High
- 42 Timber Trail Well
- 43 Richmond Hill Fire Dept
- 44 Elbow Swamp Wastewater Treatment Plant
- 45 South Bryan County Volunteer Fire Department Station 02
- 47 Land Fill
- 48 South Bryan County Volunteer Fire Department
- 49 South Bryan Co Fire Dept Kilkenny Station
- 50 Boat Ramp/Fishing Pier
- 51 Fort McAllister Museum
- 52 Campground
- 53 Boat Ramp
- 54 WMA Boat Ramp
- 55 Dee Henderson Park
- 56 Jack Kingston Building

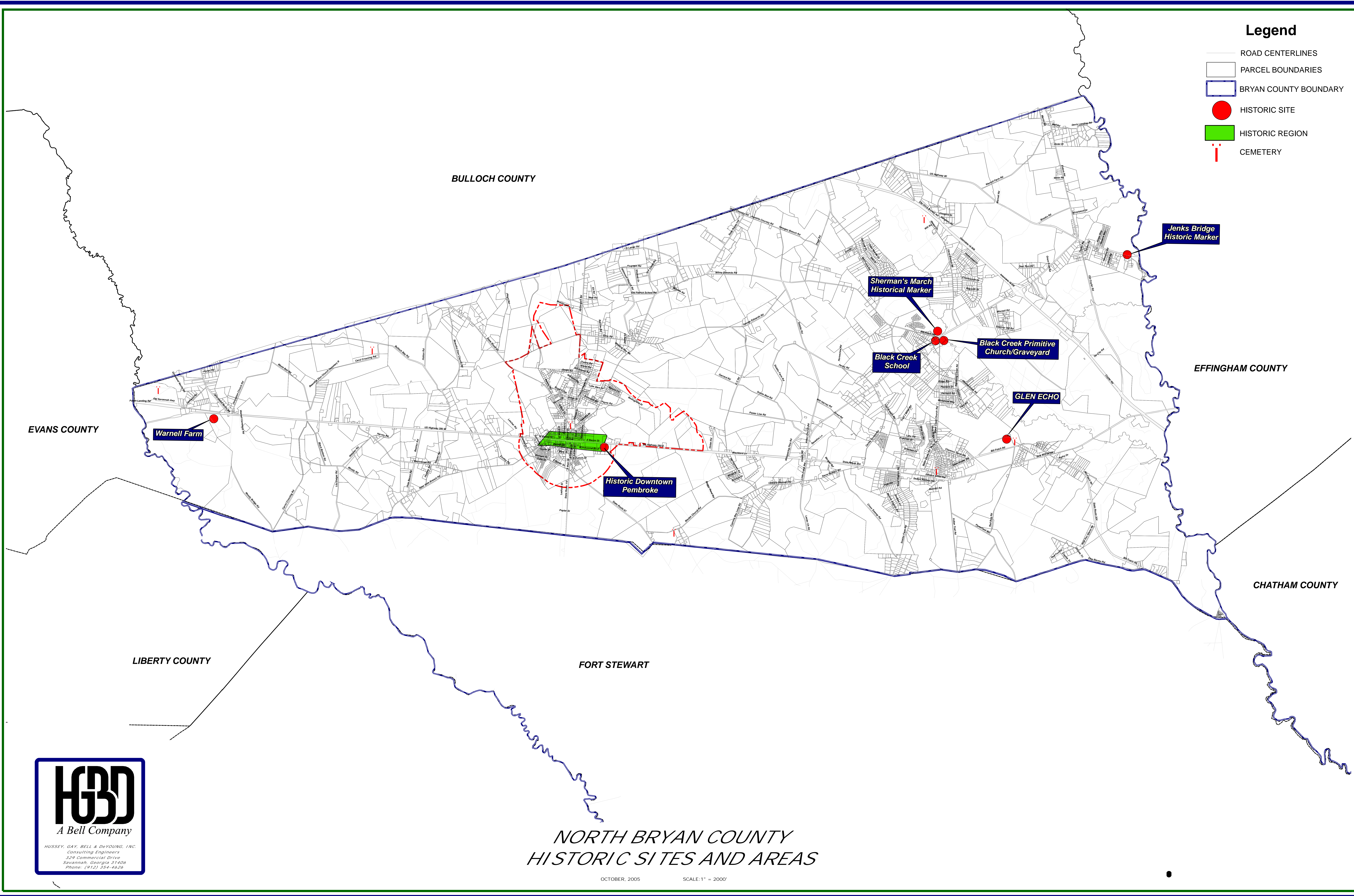
LIBERTY COUNTY

SOUTH BRYAN COUNTY COMMUNITY FACILITIES



Legend

- ROAD CENTERLINES
- ▭ PARCEL BOUNDARIES
- ▭ BRYAN COUNTY BOUNDARY
- HISTORIC SITE
- HISTORIC REGION
- ⋮ CEMETERY



BULLOCH COUNTY

EFFINGHAM COUNTY

EVANS COUNTY

LIBERTY COUNTY

FORT STEWART

CHATHAM COUNTY

Warnell Farm

Historic Downtown Pembroke

Sherman's March Historical Marker

Black Creek School

Black Creek Primitive Church/Graveyard







GLEN ECHO

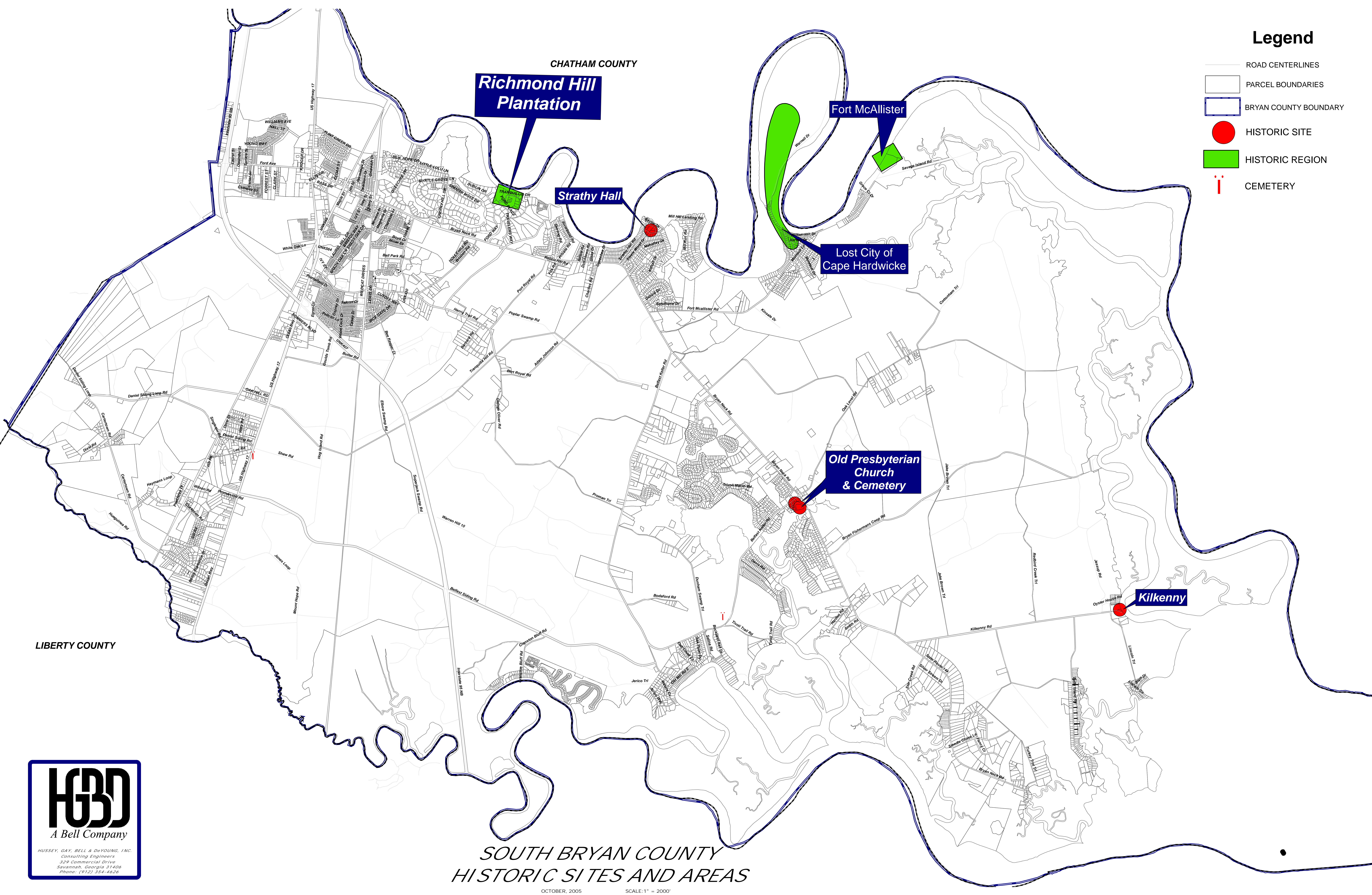
Jenks Bridge Historical Marker



*NORTH BRYAN COUNTY
HISTORIC SITES AND AREAS*

Legend

-  ROAD CENTERLINES
-  PARCEL BOUNDARIES
-  BRYAN COUNTY BOUNDARY
-  HISTORIC SITE
-  HISTORIC REGION
-  CEMETERY



CHATHAM COUNTY

Richmond Hill Plantation

Strathy Hall

Fort McAllister

Lost City of Cape Hardwicke

Old Presbyterian Church & Cemetery

Kilkenny

LIBERTY COUNTY



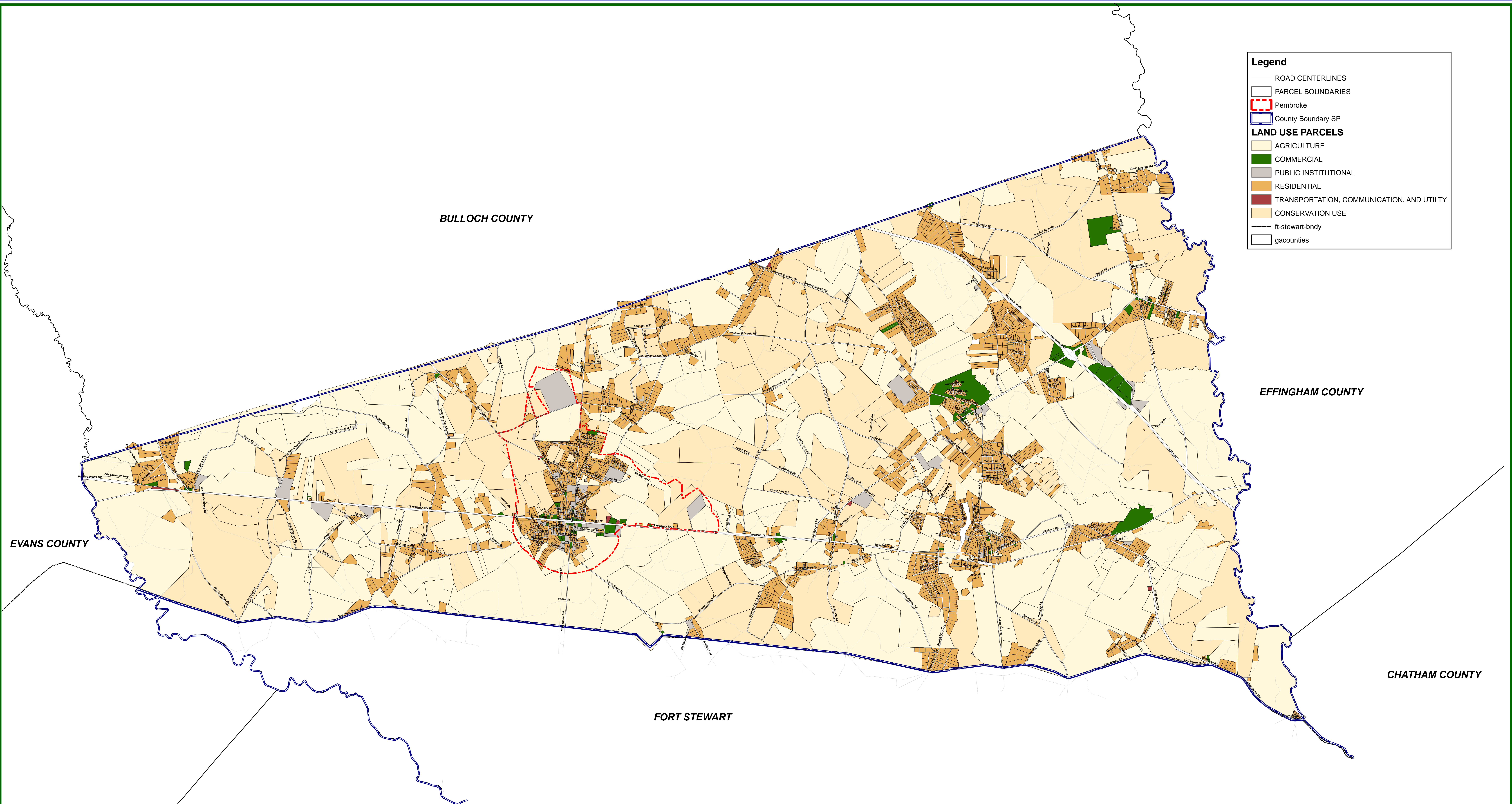
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Consulting Engineers
229 Commercial Drive
Savannah, Georgia 31406
Phone: (912) 354-4626

**SOUTH BRYAN COUNTY
HISTORIC SITES AND AREAS**

OCTOBER, 2005 SCALE: 1" = 2000'

Legend

- ROAD CENTERLINES
- PARCEL BOUNDARIES
- Pembroke
- County Boundary SP
- LAND USE PARCELS**
- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- PUBLIC INSTITUTIONAL
- RESIDENTIAL
- TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATION, AND UTILITY
- CONSERVATION USE
- ft-stewart-bndy
- gacounties



EVANS COUNTY

BULLOCH COUNTY

EFFINGHAM COUNTY

CHATHAM COUNTY

FORT STEWART

LIBERTY COUNTY

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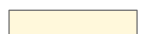







**NORTH BRYAN COUNTY
 LAND USE EXHIBIT**

OCTOBER, 2005 SCALE: 1" = 3000'

FORT STEWART

CHATHAM COUNTY

Legend

-  ROAD CENTERLINES
-  RICHMOND HILL CITY LIMITS
-  COUNTY BOUNDARY
- LAND USE PARCELS**
-  AGRICULTURE
-  COMMERCIAL
-  PUBLIC INSTITUTIONAL
-  RESIDENTIAL
-  TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATION, AND UTILITY
-  CONSERVATION USE
-  FT. STEWART BOUNDARY
-  GA. COUNTIES

CHATHAM COUNTY

BRYAN COUNTY

LIBERTY COUNTY

LIBERTY COUNTY

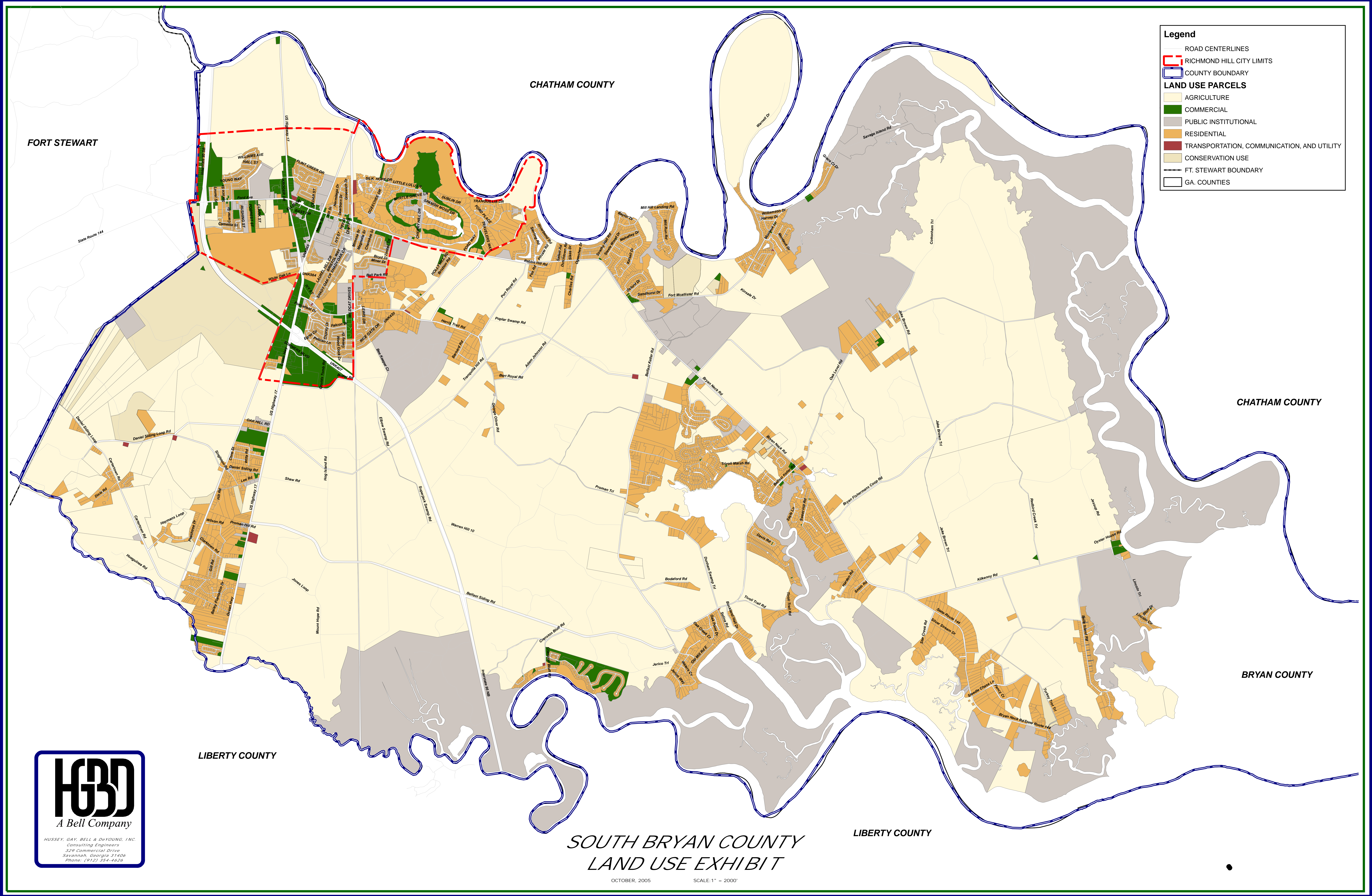
SOUTH BRYAN COUNTY LAND USE EXHIBIT

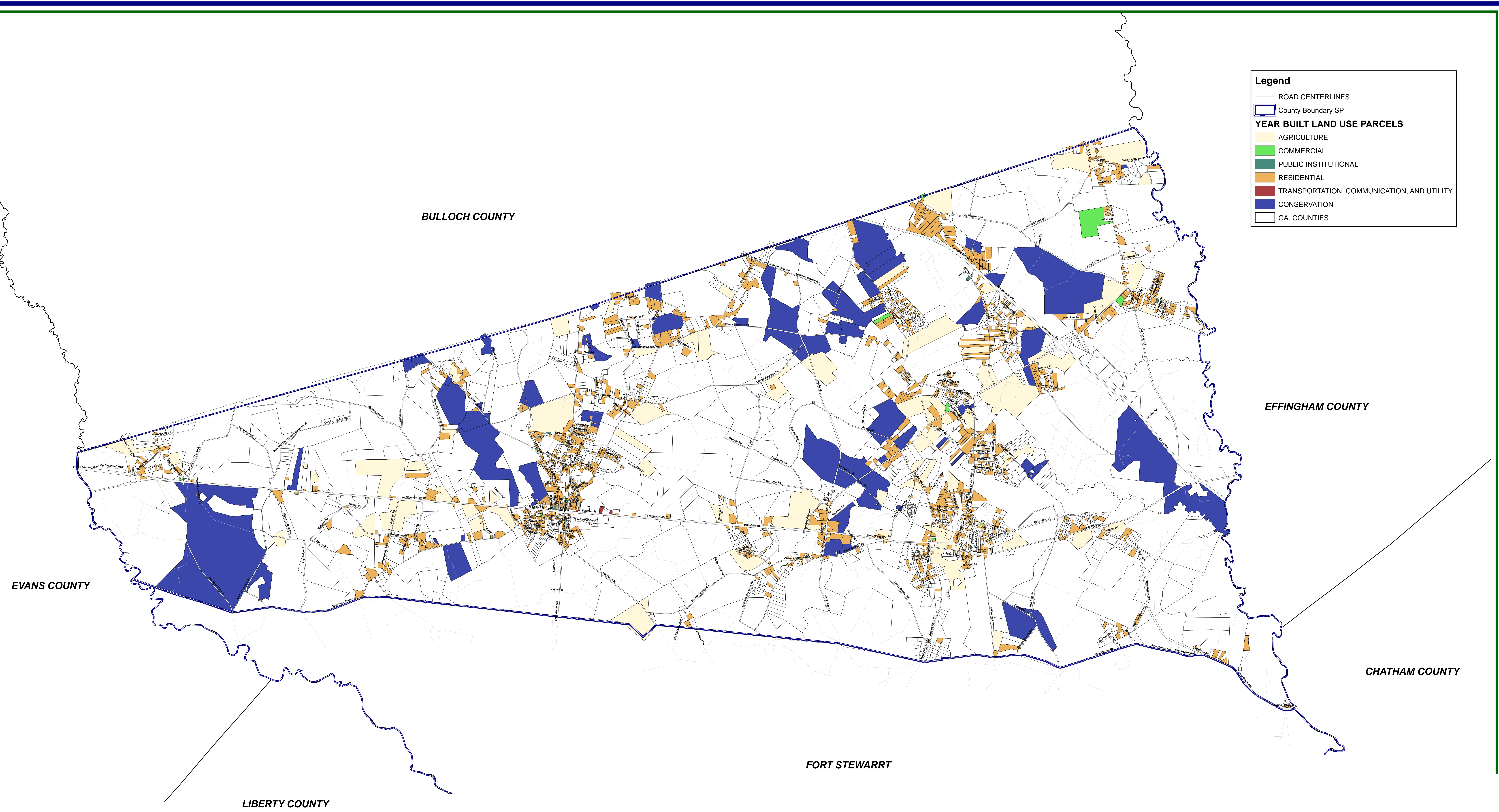
OCTOBER, 2005 SCALE: 1" = 2000'



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329 Commercial Drive
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Phone: (912) 384-6626





Legend

- ROAD CENTERLINES
- ▭ County Boundary SP
- YEAR BUILT LAND USE PARCELS**
- ▭ AGRICULTURE
- ▭ COMMERCIAL
- ▭ PUBLIC INSTITUTIONAL
- ▭ RESIDENTIAL
- ▭ TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATION, AND UTILITY
- ▭ CONSERVATION
- ▭ GA. COUNTIES

BULLOCH COUNTY

EFFINGHAM COUNTY

EVANS COUNTY

CHATHAM COUNTY

LIBERTY COUNTY

FORT STEWARRT

*NORTH BRYAN COUNTY
LAND USE EXHIBIT
DEVELOPED PARCELS ONLY*

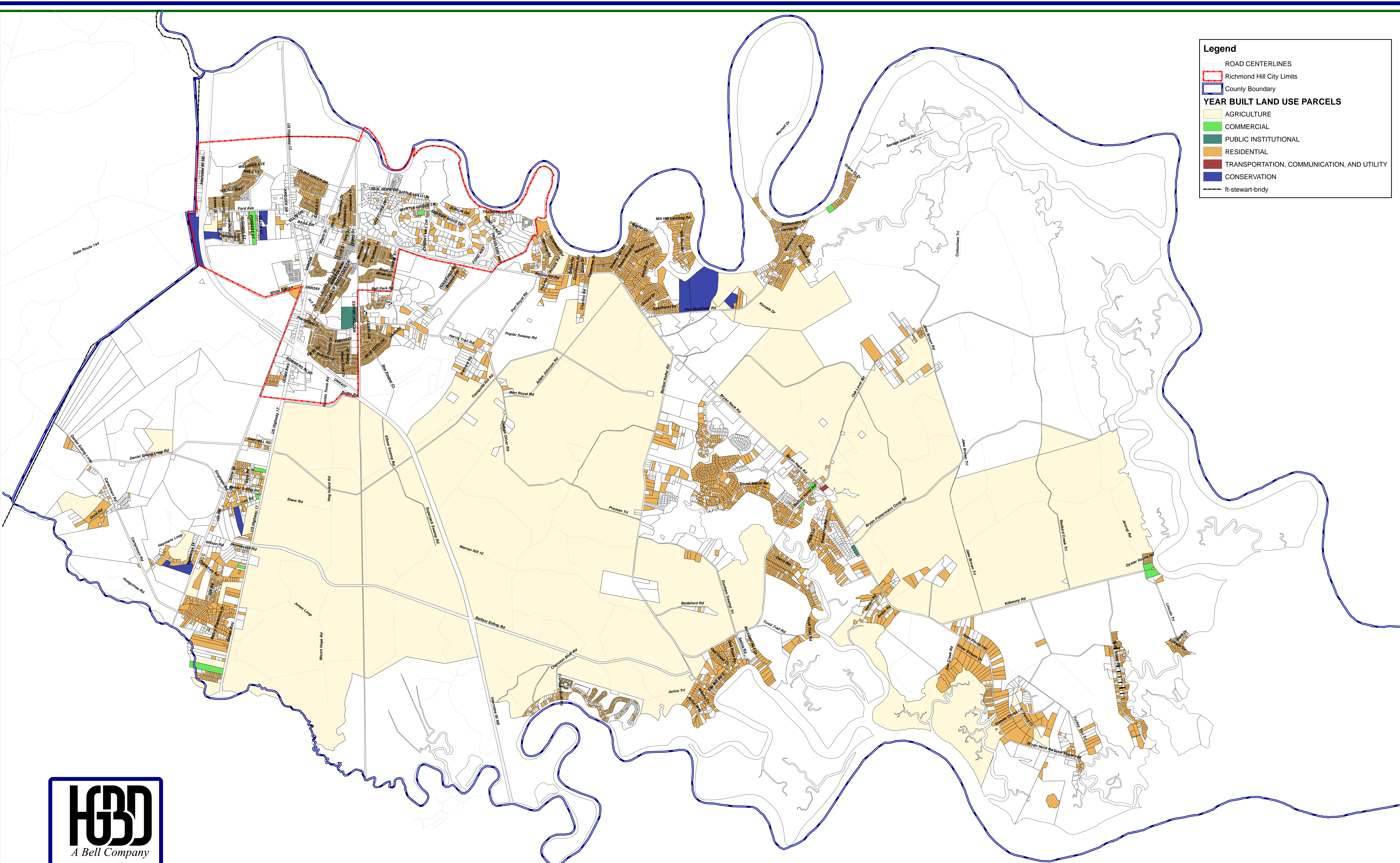
OCTOBER, 2005 SCALE: 1" = 3000'

Legend

- ROAD CENTERLINES
- Richmond Hill City Limits
- County Boundary

YEAR BUILT LAND USE PARCELS

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- PUBLIC INSTITUTIONAL
- RESIDENTIAL
- TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATION, AND UTILITY
- CONSERVATION
- ft-stewart-bndy





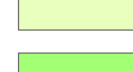



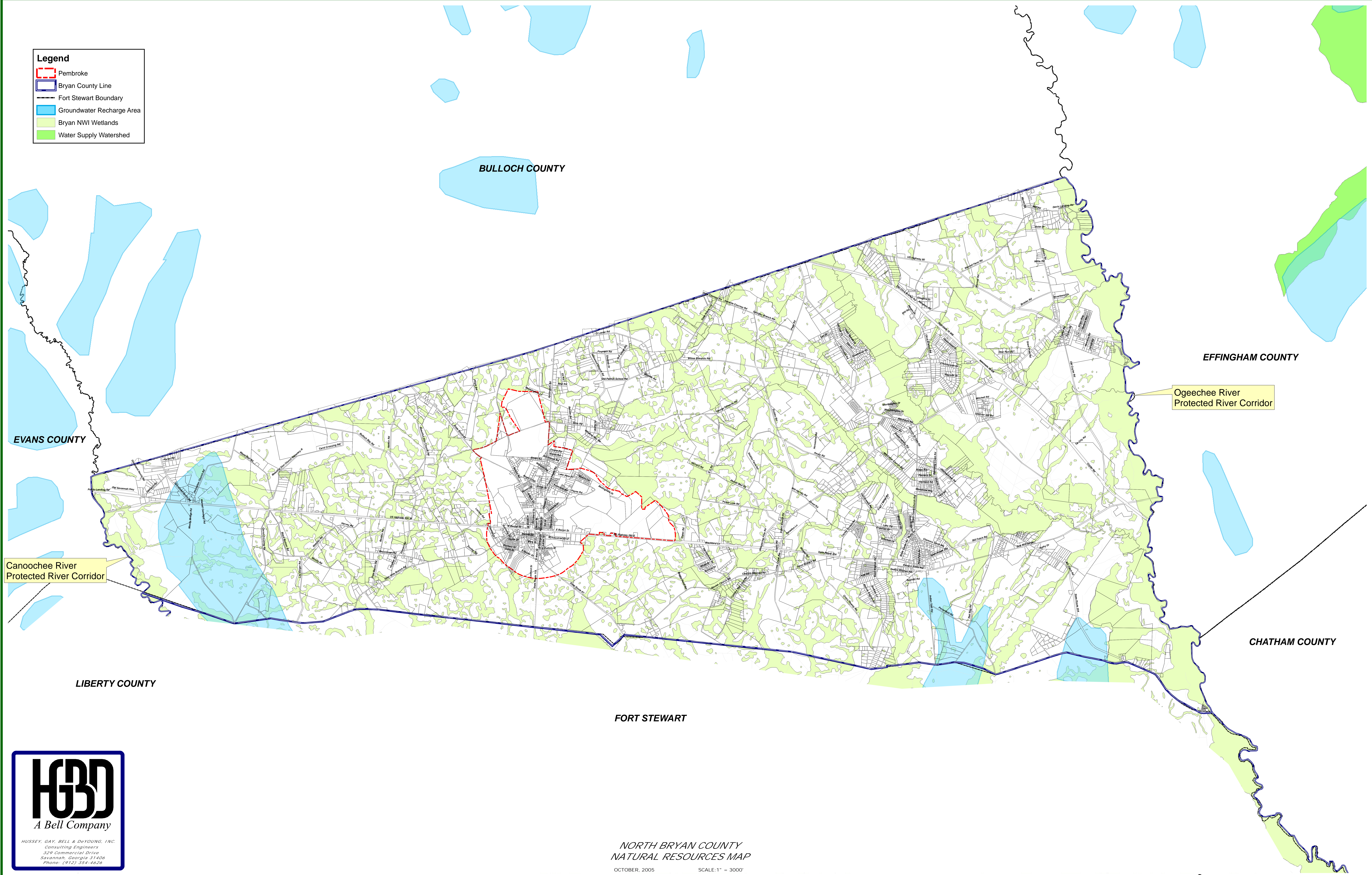
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 Consulting Engineers
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 Savannah, Georgia 31406
 Phone: (912) 354-4626

**SOUTH BRYAN COUNTY
 LAND USE EXHIBIT
 DEVELOPED PARCELS ONLY**

OCTOBER, 2005 SCALE: 1" = 2000'

Legend

-  Pembroke
-  Bryan County Line
-  Fort Stewart Boundary
-  Groundwater Recharge Area
-  Bryan NWI Wetlands
-  Water Supply Watershed



Canoochee River Protected River Corridor

Ogeechee River Protected River Corridor

EVANS COUNTY

BULLOCH COUNTY

EFFINGHAM COUNTY

LIBERTY COUNTY

FORT STEWART

CHATHAM COUNTY



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Savannah, Georgia 31406
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NORTH BRYAN COUNTY
NATURAL RESOURCES MAP
OCTOBER, 2005 SCALE: 1" = 3000'



CHATHAM COUNTY

Legend

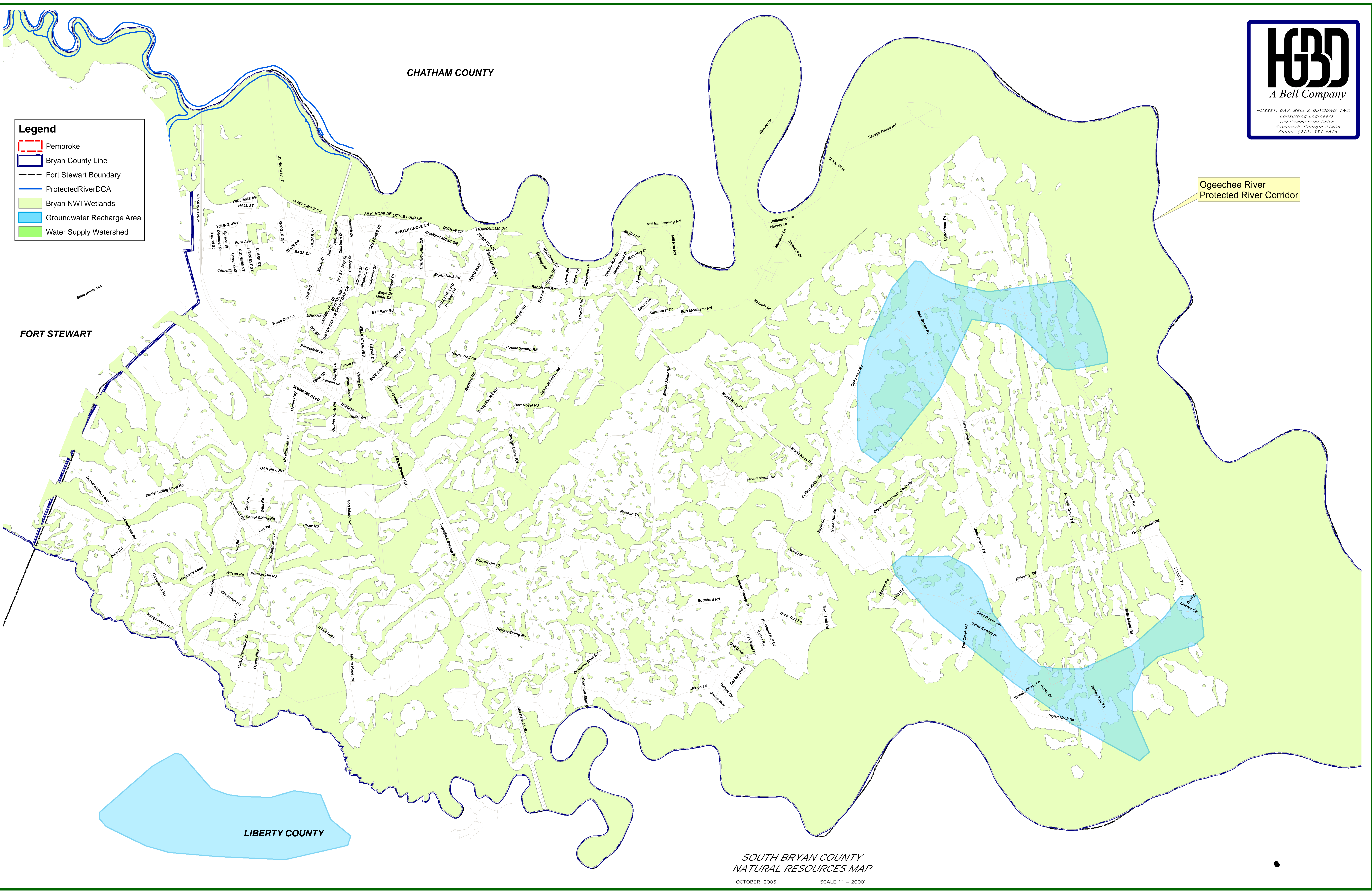
- Pembroke
- Bryan County Line
- Fort Stewart Boundary
- ProtectedRiverDCA
- Bryan NWI Wetlands
- Groundwater Recharge Area
- Water Supply Watershed

Ogeechee River Protected River Corridor





FORT STEWART

LIBERTY COUNTY




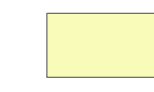


SOUTH BRYAN COUNTY
NATURAL RESOURCES MAP
OCTOBER, 2005 SCALE: 1" = 2000'



Legend

-  Pembroke
-  Richmond Hill City Limits
-  Bryan County Line
-  Fort Stewart Boundary

SERVICE AREAS

-  Bryan County/ Pembroke Development Authority Service Area
-  North Bryan County Service Area
-  Pembroke Service Area
-  Richmond Hill Service Area
-  South Bryan County Service Area
-  Waterford Landing Service Area (Pvt)

BULLOCH COUNTY

EFFINGHAM COUNTY

EVANS COUNTY

BRYAN COUNTY/PEMBROKE
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
SERVICE AREA

PEMBROKE
SERVICE AREA

NORTH BRYAN COUNTY
SERVICE AREA

CHATHAM COUNTY

LIBERTY COUNTY

FORT STEWART



*NORTH BRYAN COUNTY
WATER AND SEWER SERVICE AREAS*

OCTOBER, 2005

SCALE: 1" = 3000'

CHATHAM COUNTY

FORT STEWART

RICHMOND HILL SERVICE AREA

SOUTH BRYAN COUNTY SERVICE AREA


Waterford Landing Service Area (Pvt)

LIBERTY COUNTY


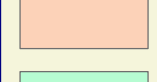
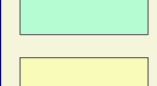
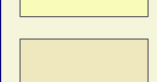


SOUTH BRYAN COUNTY

WATER AND SEWER SERVICE AREAS

Legend

-  Pembroke
-  Richmond Hill City Limits
-  Bryan County Line
-  Fort Stewart Boundary

SERVICE AREAS

-  Bryan County/ Pembroke Development Authority Service Area
-  North Bryan County Service Area
-  Pembroke Service Area
-  Richmond Hill Service Area
-  South Bryan County Service Area
-  Waterford Landing Service Area (Pvt)

