

# Community Assessment

## Volume 1 Issues and Opportunities

Prepared as an Element of the  
**Joint Comprehensive Plan 2030**  
for  
**Bishop, Bogart, North High Shoals,  
Watkinsville and Oconee County,  
Georgia**

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# Community Assessment

## Volume 1: Issues and Opportunities

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# Introduction

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Oconee County, the 135<sup>th</sup> County formed in Georgia, was created by the legislative act of 1875. It was included in the territory ceded by the Cherokee Indians to the State of Georgia and part of the territory established as Clarke County in 1801, out of Jackson County. The County's early history primarily revolved around the towns and communities. The construction of the Eagle Tavern in 1789 as a blockhouse for the protection of settlers against Indian raids marked the establishment of what is today the City of Watkinsville. The earliest record of the land on which the City of Watkinsville now stands is found in the records of Clarke County in 1791. In 1802, the City of Watkinsville was incorporated as the County seat of Clarke County. Bogart, on the county's northern border, was founded in 1869 and was originally named for Osceola, a Creek-Seminole Indian. The town was renamed Bogart for a railroad agent in 1892. Bishop, originally known as Greenwood Crossing, was named for local resident W. H. Bishop (one of the city's original council members). Bishop was incorporated in 1890. North High Shoals, on the southwestern border, was named for a rapid in the nearby Apalachee River. It was incorporated in 1933.

Oconee County is located fifty-three miles east of Atlanta and six miles south of the City of Athens. Oconee County is part of the Athens-Clarke Metropolitan Statistical Area, which consists of Clarke, Oglethorpe, Jackson, Madison and Oconee Counties. Its borders are contiguous with Athens-Clarke, Barrow, Morgan, Greene, Oglethorpe and Walton Counties. The county seat is in Watkinsville, one of four incorporated cities. The other three cities are Bishop, Bogart and North High Shoals.

In order to maintain their Qualified Local Government status (that is, to remain eligible for a wide range of State grants, assistance and permitting programs), the plan must be updated from time-to-time. Oconee County and the Cities of Bishop, Bogart and North High Shoals, will be updating their full plan in 2007. This current update is characterized by the State as the 'tenth-year update,' which, because of the significant changes that have occurred over the past decade, coupled with the adoption of new planning standards by the State, requires a complete reevaluation, reorganization and rewrite of the Plan elements.

Planning requirements for the preparation and adoption of Comprehensive Plans are adopted and administered by the State's Board of Community Affairs (DCA) pursuant to the Georgia Planning Act. The most recently applicable planning standards took effect May 1, 2005, and establish the minimum standards that must be met for DCA approval.

## ■ Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this Community Assessment report is to present a factual and conceptual foundation upon which the rest of the comprehensive plan is built. In the view of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, preparation of the Community Assessment is largely a staff or professional function of collecting and analyzing data and information about the community and presenting the results in a concise, easily understood format for consideration by the public and deci-

sion-makers involved in subsequent development of the Community Agenda (i.e., the “Plan.”)

This Community Assessment is comprised of two volumes:

- This **Volume 1, Issues and Opportunities** is focused on issues and opportunities facing the County and its four Cities now and anticipated in the future.
- **Volume 2, Technical Analysis** is an ‘addendum’ to the Community Assessment, containing detailed data and analyses that identify the issues and opportunities discussed in Volume 1.

The following topical chapters are included in this Volume:

- Demographics
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Natural Resources
- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Community Facilities and Services
- Transportation
- Intergovernmental Coordination

The purpose of this assessment document is to analyze community data, demographics, land use, natural resources and community facilities to identify issues for further investigation as part of the Community Agenda portion of the Comprehensive Plan. The assessment provides a starting point to guide the community public participation program and provides valuable information for the development of a vision for the County and its Cities.

## ■ Components of the Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan meeting the planning requirements of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs must include the following three components:

### **Community Participation**

The first part of the comprehensive plan is the Community Participation Program (CPP) that is adopted in order to take advantage of ongoing citizen participation activities throughout the planning process. The Community Participation Program describes the strategy for ensuring adequate public and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the Community Agenda portion of the plan.

### **Community Assessment**

This part of the comprehensive plan is an objective and professional assessment of data and information about the unincorporated county and its cities. This following are included in the Community Assessment’s two volumes:

- Overall statistical analysis regarding past, current and future demographics;

- A “snapshot” of where the County is in terms of housing, infrastructure, natural and historic resources and economic development, and what the community will need in the future;
- A list of potential issues and opportunities the unincorporated county and its cities may wish to take action to address;
- Analysis of existing development patterns, including a map of recommended character areas for consideration in developing an overall vision for future development;
- evaluation of current community policies, activities, and development patterns for consistency with DCA’s Quality Community Objectives; and
- Analysis of data and information to check the validity of the above evaluations and the potential issues and opportunities.

## Community Agenda

The third part of the comprehensive plan is the most important, for it includes the community’s Vision for the future as well as its strategy for achieving this vision. The Community Agenda will include three major components:

- Outline of issues and opportunities identified by the assessment, community participation plan, guiding principles and policies to address these issues;
- The Vision is expressed through policy and identification of future physical development of the unincorporated county and its cities, and expressed in unique character areas and strategies, and a map to assist guiding future development patterns to achieve this Vision; and
- An implementation program to achieve the vision for the future and to address the identified issues and opportunities.

In addition to the three components above, and in concert with preparation of the Comprehensive Plan, the unincorporated county and its cities must review and possibly amend and recertify their previously adopted **Services Delivery Strategy**, and update the State-mandated **Solid Waste Management Plan**.

## ■ Community Overview

### Historical Overview

#### County

The earliest known residents of the County were the Creek Indians. By the late 1700’s, both the Creek and Cherokee Indians occupied what is now Oconee County. The Oconee River formed the boundary between the lands of the United States and those controlled by Native Americans. In August 1790, the Creek Chief, Alexander McGillivray, ceded the land west of the Oconee River, allowing the frontier’s development by settlers. In lower Oconee County, stone steps and a D.A.R. marker identify the site of the treaty. In spite of land disputes prior to the signing of the treaty, early settlers established several new settlements. In 1789, the Eagle Tavern was built in what is today Watkinsville and served as a block house for

the protection of settlers against Native-American raids. A strip of Oconee County was a part of the short-lived Trans-Oconee Republic founded by Elijah Clarke, a hero of the Revolutionary War.

In 1801, the Commissioners of Clarke County decided that lands to the south of Call's Creek should be the new county seat location. The land was deeded over by John Cobb in January 1802, and Clarke County was created by an act of the General Assembly of Georgia, incorporating Watkinsville as the County seat.

Although no battles of the Civil War occurred in Oconee County, one event of note took place in Watkinsville— Stoneman's Raid. In July 1864, General Sherman sent Major General George Stoneman's cavalry to Macon to cut the railroad, which supplied Atlanta. On their way to Macon, two brigades of Stoneman's cavalry entered Watkinsville (GA Marker 384) and took supplies from the town.

In 1871, the Clarke County grand jury recommended that the legislature move the county seat of Clarke County from Watkinsville to Athens. Reasons cited for the move included a lack of housing accommodations for Afro-Americans (following the war) in Watkinsville, and the fact that the majority of litigation activity was generated in Athens. In 1875, in response to the dissatisfaction of the citizens of Watkinsville over the move, the General Assembly of Georgia created Oconee County by legislative act with Watkinsville as County Seat. Among the first County officers were: Sheriff Weldon M. Price, Clerk of Superior Court, Jas. M.A. Johnson, Ordinary James R. Lyle, Tax Receiver David M. White, Tax Collector Robert R. Murray Treasurer Thomas Booth, Coroner James Maulden and Surveyor Wm. E. Elder. The name "Oconee" was taken from the Cherokee name of the river, which forms the County's eastern boundary. Robert Watkins, an attorney from Augusta, is thought to be the namesake of Watkinsville.

The developmental histories of the individual towns indicate that the impetus behind the county's early development was waterpower in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and the railroad in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Bishop**

The first settlement on the site of Bishop was in existence between 1800 and 1887, and was known as "Greenwood," named for the large Oak trees that lined the street. The City of Bishop was incorporated in December 1890 and named after a local landowner and one of the original city councilmen. The city grew with the completion of the Central Georgia Railroad in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, influencing its L shape developed around the railroad line. Bishop served as the last stop on the C-line railroad prior to 1895 until a connective spur between Bishop and Athens was completed. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the city existed primarily as a distribution point for cotton grown in the vicinity. The warehouse buildings still exist today that were used for storing cotton for transfer.

The present City of Bishop retains the majority of its historic resources intact and in good condition, with many in the process of repair and restoration. The Bishop Historic District was listed on the National Register in 1996. There are several one story freestanding commercial buildings, one two-story block commercial building, and one group of one story attached commercial buildings. All are simple 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial buildings that are masonry with little or no detailing. The City maintains the present City Hall, built as the City jail in 1939; the Bishop Well and

Well House (circa 1890); and the recently purchased and restored Chandler/Marable House, used for City Hall expansion and community facilities, as historic structures. The residential area contains a collection of the house types and architectural styles popular during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, with a single log cabin. In addition, a new residential subdivision is located on the North side of town.

### **Bogart**

The first settlers came to the area of Bogart, originally known as Osceola, during the land lottery of 1820. The town, located 10 miles northwest of Watkinsville, utilized its proximity to Bear Creek to provide power to grist and saw lumber mill operations. In 1888, a depot was built in town and the Georgia, Carolina and Northern railroads reached the town by 1892. The arrival of the railroad necessitated the change in name to Bogart, as a town already existed in Georgia with the same name of Osceola.

Bogart currently retains most of its historic buildings, both residential and commercial. The overall integrity of these structures is good with physical alterations including window replacement and the use of more maintenance efficient exterior sidings. The eight primary commercial buildings along Main Street consist of one-story detached masonry structures.

### **Eastville Community (unincorporated)**

The community of Eastville currently exists as a crossroads community that includes several historic residential buildings representing a period of growth between 1870 to 1900. In 1907, the town of Eastville was incorporated, although it no longer functions as a separate jurisdiction. The town center is located at the crossroads of Malcom Bridge Road and Hodges Mill Road. The area now is comprised of a combination of historic buildings intermixed with modern infill structures.

### **Farmington Community (unincorporated)**

The community of Farmington, located 5 miles south of Watkinsville, was named in 1837. The Baptist Church, established in 1795 and originally known as Freeman's Creek Church, is one of the oldest churches in the County. The community also retains the historic depot that helped serve the surrounding farms and plantations, and was the backbone of the community's growth and existence. Farmington currently exists as a small crossroads community consisting of 15 historic buildings. Most of the residential buildings have been well maintained and several are under repair. The area west of "Old Farmington Road" also contains some historic buildings, including the Farmington Depot and two abandoned brick buildings associated with the railroad. The area south of the community's center includes bungalow buildings circa 1930's-1940's. The residential/commercial center area is a potential candidate for National Register listing as a historic district.

### **North High Shoals**

High Shoals is located on the Apalachee River in the corner of Walton, Morgan, and Oconee counties. Creek and Cherokee Indians resided in the area and used the shoals to ford the river. The waterfall drew industry to the location, and in 1846, the High Shoals Manufacturing Company was organized for yarn and cloth

production. In addition to the mill, a large mercantile business, ginneries, a gristmill, a lumberyard, a planing mill and a livery stable were operating. In 1910 Georgia Power opened a power plant on Barnett Shoals Road. In 1928, the majority of the manufacturing company was destroyed by fire and the community's population declined.

North High Shoals is presently a small town, which extends in a northerly direction from the Apalachee River to the Walton County line. The town's historic resources, primarily residential structures, are varied in their architectural styles and types, with several of the earliest buildings dating back to 1850-1880, most of which have been retained with a high level of architectural integrity. The town of North High Shoals is potentially eligible for National Register listing as a historic district.

### **Salem Community (unincorporated)**

The land on which the town of Salem was built was originally purchased from the Cherokee Indians in 1800. In 1818, it was the third town incorporated into what was then Clarke County. Although no longer incorporated, the community historically has been, and remains, dependent on agriculture. Until the construction of the railroad in 1830, the town served as a stagecoach stop. Today, nothing remains of the town except for three historic buildings, including the Brown House, the Salem United Church and a cemetery, which may be eligible for listing on the National Register.

### **Watkinsville**

The earliest record of the land on which Watkinsville now stands is found in the records of Clarke County in 1791. The records show that the Governor of Georgia, Edward Telfair, deeded the site of present day Watkinsville and surrounding lands to Rhoderick Easley and Josiah Woods in 1791. Watkinsville's livelihood in the early nineteenth century came not only from being a courthouse town, where everyone had to come for certain life necessities such as marriages, deaths, taxes, jury duty, filing deed and public services, but it was also a hub for agricultural trade where cotton farmers and planters brought their produce. Roads from other nearby county seats like Greensboro and Madison converged here and proceeded north to Athens and Gainesville. These roads brought even more travelers and commerce to town.

By 1849, Watkinsville hosted the courthouse and the jail, two churches, schools, taverns, stores, three groceries, one billiard room, one carpenter, one tailor, two blacksmiths, two tan yards, two wagon makers, one saddler, two shoe shops, two lawyers, one doctor, and one minister – all with a population of 240 people.

The Eagle Tavern (inn, tavern restaurant) served primarily as a stagecoach stop and gathering place in the early 1800s. By 1827, stages from Milledgeville passed through Watkinsville three times a week on the way to Athens and most likely stopped at the Tavern. Before the railroad was completed, much of the overland wagon trade also used this route, and men traveling by wagon, horseback or on foot could, for the price of a drink, spread their bedrolls on the "Front Room" floor. The two upstairs bedrooms were reserved for stage passengers.

Watkinsville contains over 60 historic properties that were identified in a 1976 survey of historic resources. Many of these properties are included in the South

Main Street National register District. Other properties in Watkinsville may be eligible, either individually or as a district, for National Register listing, particularly those that have become historically significant due to age over the past decade. A Preservation Plan prepared in 1990 identifies a residential district, which might be potentially eligible for listing on the National Register.

## **Economic Overview**

Located between such major markets as Atlanta, Augusta, Macon and Greenville, South Carolina Oconee County provides a quality place to live, play, work and conduct business. One of the major advantages of the County is its proximity to an excellent educational institution at the University of Georgia (UGA). Many County residents either are faculty members at UGA or are employed at the University in another capacity. Because of its good schools, quality affordable housing and location, Oconee County has been a prime choice. As the County matures and grows, it has become apparent that a growth focus for the County is to become more sustainable and to target employment opportunities and services within its borders. Oconee County can utilize relationships and UGA's location as a marketing tool when promoting SR 316 as a technical corridor and attracting prospects to the County and its cities.

For decades, economic development has been considered the hallmark of a successful community. Oconee County has benefited from its proximity to the diversified economic base of its neighboring counties, particularly Clarke County and the University of Georgia, the region's economic engine. Oconee County is relatively early in its growth and development cycle, as evidenced by recent increases in population. Today the population of Oconee County, when compared with the state and nation is younger, is less racially and ethnically diverse, and resides in a less dense but fast growing setting. Recent growth is also changing the County's economic and employment base. While farming and agriculture were once the predominant employment sectors, the trade/transportation/utilities, government, professional/business services and education/health service sectors have grown significantly in recent years. Even so, farming and agriculture remain strong and are an important part of the local economy.

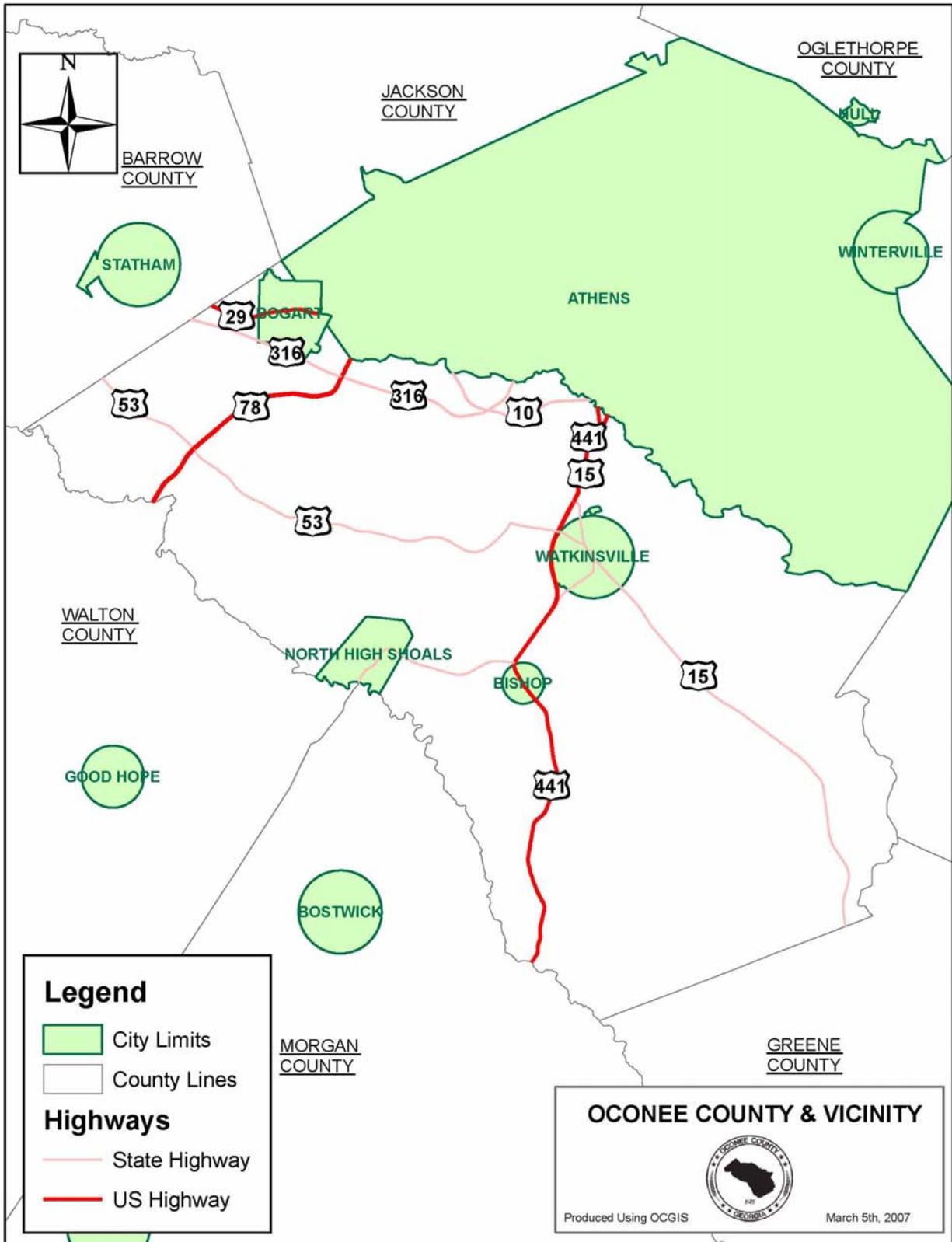
A few economic opportunities and strengths present in Oconee County include:

- In 2000, 25.7 percent of the population had four or more years of college compared to 24.3 statewide. 10.9 percent of the population had graduate or professional degrees compared with the states 8.3 percent. 2004 average SAT Scores of 1101.3 were well above the averages for the nation, state and region.
- 98.1 percent of Ocoee's 2003 estimated labor force of 14,554 is gainfully employed. The largest category of employment is professional and technical (29%). When combined with the fact that almost 52% of this labor force commutes to Clarke County, it would seem that the primary draw is the University of Georgia.
- Oconee County's average private sector wage of \$520 per week is slightly greater than the regions \$517 per week. Household income of \$55,000 outpaced that of the state.

- The region tends to outpace the state in terms of productivity and income. This is particularly true in the areas of Educational Services and Health Care. The County tends to outpace the state in the area of Retail Trade and Manufacturing.
- There are abundant land resources that have the appropriate infrastructure in place.
- There is community support for increasing economic opportunities.
- Oconee County provides superb housing options and a high quality of life.

Recently the County completed *A Comprehensive Economic Development Plan, 2005*, to develop and focus an emphasis on creating a more balanced community. The primary concepts for this plan are:

- Develop along strong economic principles;
- Capitalize on being a place rich in ideas and talent;
- Attract educated people;
- Physical and cultural amenities are key in attracting knowledge workers;
- Regions prosper if organized and individuals have the ability to learn and adapt; and
- Only bold partnerships among business, government and nonprofit sector can bring about change.



# Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats

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Oconee County has a long history of public involvement that has guided its path into the future. Although the process set forth in the official Community Participation Program has not begun, it was felt that past participation efforts provide invaluable information on issues facing the community. Following is a list of comments gathered at citizen's forums and other public participation efforts that have taken place in the recent past. This input helps us to gain insight to issues that are on the public's mind, and acts as a starting point for the Plan's Community Participation Program.

## ■ Strengths

- Pastoral beauty of the County;
- Excellence of both the public and private K-12 education system (high SAT scores and graduation rates)
- The presence of several major thoroughfares through Oconee County: SR 316, US 441, and US 78, all of which are high traffic routes;
- Property along SR 316 that is particularly attractive for business use due to transportation accessibility;
- Current and future transportation capacity available in the northern part of the County;
- County pursuit of strategies to increase its capacity to provide treated water and waste water treatment capacity;
- A critical mass of well-educated men and women, many of who possess advanced degrees and wealth of untapped potential and experiences;
- Proximity to a world class educational institution—the University of Georgia—and a first rate community college—Athens Technical College, in addition to branches of Gainesville College, Piedmont College and Old Dominion University;
- A good quality of life characterized by a thriving and prominent artistic community, the cultural and educational opportunities of the University of Georgia and proximity to the City of Athens “music scene;”
- A relatively low cost of living making Oconee County an attractive and affordable community;
- Access to state-of-the-art medical facilities in Athens – Athens Regional Medical Center, a 300 bed facility serving Northeast Georgia; St. Mary's Hospital, a 196-bed acute care facility with a substantial presence in Oconee County; Regional First Care and Family Life Enrichment Center Inc., one of four skilled nursing facilities and assisted care entities providing healthcare to the elderly;
- A strategic location between the major markets of Atlanta, Augusta, Macon and Greenville, South Carolina;

- Rail service provided by CSX and Norfolk Southern railroads;
- Air service nearby in Athens at Ben Epps Field and Atlanta Regional Airport;
- A Future Land Use Plan that allows a variety of developed uses in the northern part of the County;
- Close proximity to Athens, which creates opportunities for economic development in specific sectors;
- Availability of land suitable for development;
- Lack of physical obstacles to development;
- Internationalization of the local economy and County recognition of the international reach of UGA's student populace and faculty interests;
- Value added agricultural products, services and technologies fostered by the prominence of UGA's College of Agriculture in the region and throughout the state;
- The increasing number of technology-oriented businesses within the local economy, including the establishment of high tech incubator at UGA, and construction of a new Information Technology building to spur an increasing emphasis on the commercialization of applied science and technology research and development activities along the University Parkway;
- The plans by the Georgia Research Alliance to develop SR 316 as a center of high technology along the lines of North Carolina's Research Triangle, Stanford's Silicon Valley and Harvard-MIT's Route 128;
- Oconee County's location within one hour driving time east of Atlanta, between two major interstate travel corridors and immediately south of one of the top four state and regional destinations for college sports activities and student/family activities;
- Demonstration of the high potential that exists for increasing day trip visitors into the County from restaurant and studio art tourism; and
- A long history of zoning (1960s), planning and public participation.

## ■ Weaknesses

- Limited demographic diversity and participation by ethnic minorities in Oconee County's civic and economic life;
- A **perception** of Oconee County as a bedroom community where people live and buy consumer products, but work and buy cultural and recreational amenities elsewhere, usually in Athens;
- The perception by many citizens that the development of retail trade, restaurants, and housing should be the prime focus of economic development;
- The lack of understanding by some citizens that economic development must be multifaceted and consist of the development, expansion, and retention of

small business, development of a skilled workforce and pursuit of key industries with creative and innovative financing;

- Need for a long-range plan to further capitalize on the potential market and the existing reputation of restaurant and studio art tourism;
- A muted food and beverage business climate created by the lack of availability of liquor by the drink in Oconee County, and a lack of consensus as to whether there are significant benefits of not having such;
- The need for future upgrades to SR 316 to improve the County's mobility;
- The need for continued expansion of water/sewer capacity to meet anticipated growth;
- Both of the County's landfills have reached capacity. The lifespan of the operating landfills in the region are nearing capacity, with only 5 to 6 years remaining. A regional approach is being considered, although no sites have been determined;
- Sprawl pressures emanating from nearby Athens, pressures for retaining prime farmland and limited use of agricultural conservation easements to preserve the land even if it sold;
- A regional labor force quality issue, as evidenced by the large number of services and manufacturing employers that have reported difficulty obtaining employees with even minimal skills;
- Limits on tourism activities and development due to lack of official government signage to specific visitor opportunities, and from competition from the state and from surrounding counties that have developed interactive websites as well as a variety of complementary and full service opportunities that draw visitors away; and
- Challenges associated with coordinating intergovernmental agencies that may go in different directions.

The County and its cities have identified its rural roots as its overall character, complemented by a series of integrated villages within the cities and northern part of the county where residents can live, work and play, and where recreational land uses are accessible in throughout. The community promotes a mix of uses and infrastructure that highly integrated with land use goals and policies. Oconee County and its cities are continuing to develop and define itself as population, demographic and land use changes occur. Today, Oconee County continues to evolve away from a primarily bedroom community for the City of Athens, to a sustainable community that provides quality of life amenities, recreation and culture, retail and service establishments and economic development opportunities. The community is also looking to encourage more sustainable and innovative residential developments in the future.

- Integrated land uses that help direct market forces;
- Increased concentration and integration of various housing types to accommodate diverse life cycle and life styles in appropriate locations;
- Possibly, higher densities in appropriate locations;
- The preservation of a rural lifestyle in the southern part of the county;
- Protected and enhanced a sense of history and heritage;
- Build on its historic downtowns as a major strength to bind the community together;
- Accessibility for retail services in linked locations that offer local and regional economic development opportunities;
- Employment opportunities within its industrial parks and adjacent to 316;
- A diversity of economic development opportunities;
- Preserved and enhance open space and trail connectivity as a total development vision;
- Compatibility between historic resources and new development, emphasizing Oconee's past as a roadmap to the future;
- Efficient public services that concentrate resources on focal points and communities, and that is linked directly to growth; and
- Increase reliance on urban design and land use compatibility.

### ■ Existing Land Use

Oconee County measures 186 square miles and is 143<sup>rd</sup> in size in Georgia. Oconee County was 76<sup>th</sup> in population in 1990 with 17,618 people and 56<sup>th</sup> in population in 2000 with 26,225 people.

Oconee County is similar to many counties in the Northeast Georgia Region in its rural and agricultural roots. The County has much undeveloped land suitable for development. The majority of the land use within the county is agricultural. This category typically contains active agricultural and forestry, large lot single-family housing and undeveloped land. During the Agenda portion of this assessment, the County will look more closely at this category to capture its true character. The second largest land use is residential.

The following land use categories were used in the last plan update for the existing land use map:

- **Agricultural:** active crop production including nursery stock, agribusiness, and/or forests used for harvesting.
- **Residential:** single, duplex, and multi-family dwelling units, manufactured housing.
- **Commercial:** retail sales, office, and service facilities.
- **Industrial:** manufacturing, processing plants, factories, warehousing, or other similar uses.
- **Parks/Recreation/Conservation:** park or recreation use or designated as open space.
- **Public/Institutional:** includes a local government's community facilities, general government, and institutional land uses. Examples of land uses in this category include schools, general government administrative facilities (e.g., city hall, county courthouse, etc.), landfills, health facilities, churches, cemeteries, libraries, police and fire stations, and similar uses.
- **Transportation/Communication/Utilities:** includes such uses as power generation plants, sewage and water treatment facilities, railroad facilities, radio towers, public transit stations, telephone switching stations, airports, port facilities, or similar uses.
- **Undeveloped:** applies to land that has never been developed for a specific use and is used as general pastureland, forestland, or land that was developed for a particular use but has been abandoned by the property owner or land not otherwise categorized.

Oconee County Land Use		
Category	Acreage	%
Agricultural	87,589.04	73.49%
Residential	21,949.38	18.42%
Commercial	2,119.54	1.78%
Industrial	789.29	0.66%
Parks/Rec/Con	944.23	0.79%
Public/Institutional	930.73	0.78%
TCU	4,754.19	3.99%
Undeveloped*	109.42	0.09%
<b>Total County Acreage</b>	<b>119,185.82</b>	<b>100%</b>
*land not otherwise categorized		
Source: NE GA RDC, November 2004		

The two predominant land use within the County is agricultural, 73.49%, and residential, 18.42%. The western and southern portions of Oconee County are still overwhelmingly rural with most of the land classified as agricultural or undeveloped. Residential development is mainly found in the northern part of the county. The heaviest concentrations of residential development occur along Mars Hill

Road, U.S. 441, Whitehall Road and Hodges Mill Road. Many residential sites are large acreages, and are increasingly being converted to subdivision residential land use. Commercial and industrial development in the county is limited; however, a sizable tract of land adjacent to the GA 316 and Mars Hill Road intersection is currently designated as commercial. Additionally, some large-scale commercial development has and is in the process of being developed along Epps Bridge Road, Mars Hill Road and U.S. 441. The GA 316 corridor is considered a transitional area, and the County expects a shift in this area from its current rural character to more of a major commercial center. In an effort to contain growth and mitigate incompatible land uses, the County's wetlands, recharge areas and prime agricultural soils in the more rural parts of the county must be protected.

Much of the County's developable land is currently zoned for agricultural uses. The northern part of the County County's current adopted Future Land Use Plan Map shows much of this land is intended to be used for future office/professional, retail, residential or industrial uses.

### **Watkinsville**

Except in the urban core, land use in Watkinsville is devoted almost entirely to agriculture, low and medium density residential and the undeveloped land use classifications. Nearly all of the residential development is found north of the railroad tracks that bisect the city. Medium-density subdivisions are located near Whitehall, High Shoals, Experiment Station and Harden Hill Roads. Some commercial development is located within the residential areas near U.S. 441 and Experiment Station Road, although the primary commercial center is the historic downtown. This area has a mixture of commerce, retail, and entertainment uses. All of the city's industrial land is found near the intersection of GA 15 and U.S. 129.

### **Bishop**

Bishop is a small, rural town. Most of the city is bounded by large tracts of agricultural land. Agricultural land use accounts for the largest amount of acreage in the City, followed by residential land use. The majority of residential land use is low-density, single-family with some medium density development. Much of the development is found along U.S. 441 and Price Mill Road. There are some transitional uses along these roads from residential to commercial uses. Undeveloped land accounts for approximately 5% of the total acreage. Commercial, Industrial and Parks/Recreation/conservation land comprise less than 2% of the city's total.

### **Bogart**

Residential land is found throughout Bogart, with the exception of the northwest corner. The majority of residential development is located near Bogart Road, North and South Bruson Avenues, and Westwood Avenue. Low-density development is most prevalent throughout the city, although a few medium-density developments are located near U.S. 29. The majority of commercial development is located near U.S. Old 29 and GA 8. There are several large industrial areas existing

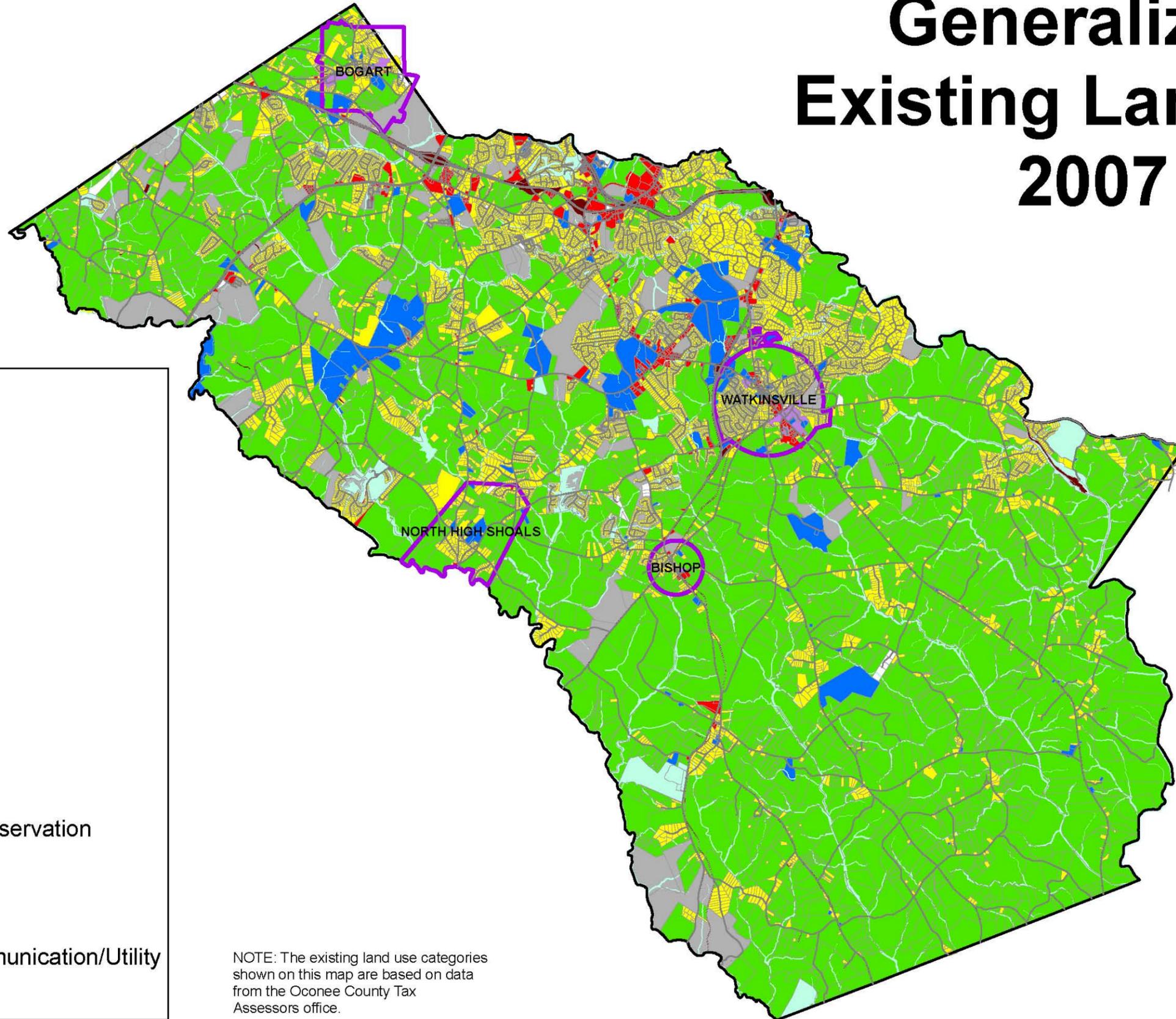
in the southeast portion of the city. This is part of a larger industrial development in Oconee County.

### **North High Shoals**

North High Shoals is largely agricultural and undeveloped. Residential development is mainly contained to areas near Cole Springs, Jefferson, Plantation and Elder Roads and GA 186. Most of this development is low-density with a few medium density lots found within each development area. There are no commercial, industrial or high-density land uses.



# Generalized Existing Land Use 2007



## Legend

- County Outline
- Road Centerlines
- Parcel Lines
- City Limits

## Existing Land Use

### ELU Description

- Agriculture/Forestry
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Park/Recreation/Conservation
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Transportation/Communication/Utility
- Undeveloped/Vacant

NOTE: The existing land use categories shown on this map are based on data from the Oconee County Tax Assessors office.

1 inch equals 10,000 feet  
Produced Using OCGIS  
June 11th, 2007

## ■ Quality Growth

Many well-educated professionals work near Athens, but choose to enjoy the predominantly suburban or rural quality of living in Oconee County. In fact, Progressive Farmer magazine, a publication of Time, Inc., recently performed an exhaustive study of over 600 non-urban communities around the country. The Company, OnBoard, LLC, a statistical research group, compared statistics such as population density, income levels, health care, education, climate, pollution, crime, and taxes as well as intangibles such as quality of life, leisure and cultural pursuits, scenery and interviews with people in the community. Oconee County came in as the number two place in America to live. Only four other communities in Georgia made the top 100 list.

Two ways to influence quality growth are through regulation and services. The County has recently completed a complete overhaul to its development regulations, and has included regulations on signs, landscaping, trees and design in order to capture quality in the development process. A major goal of the community is the use of existing infrastructure and to minimize the conversion of undeveloped land in the rural areas of the County. Infrastructure availability should be a major guide in where new residential and nonresidential developments are located.

A special concern is the need to develop land use patterns that are sensitive to concerns about the impact of economic development on the overall quality of life, community culture and identity. Issues such as transportation congestion and strategies to encourage the growth of business and other employment centers are two very important factors, followed by concerns to hold onto an existing pace of life.

### Issues

- The County and its cities need to monitor the quality of development that the County and its Cities' Vision is trying to achieve;
- Facilities and services need to be provided in a cost effective manner to keep taxes low;
- Seek to balance residential and nonresidential growth to achieve and balance tax base;
- Develop guiding principles and policies to guide new development to achieve the County's Vision for residential and non-residential developments;
- There is a need for quality incentives to further achieve the County's goals.
- The community needs to further identify future land use and transportation linkages;
- There is a need to protect and enhance established neighborhoods from negative growth impacts and blight;
- There is a need to develop sustainable villages that are interconnected with the total community;

- Promote art, culture, history and recreation activities as a way to create a common focus among residents and business; and
- Growth needs to be guided towards areas where infrastructure is provided and planned and away from the rural areas of the county.

## ■ **Growth Patterns**

The current development patterns of Oconee County and its cities are a result of historic events, natural features, the University of Georgia, its outstanding school system and the location of its two the major transportation components: rail line and highway system.

Geographically, growth should be encouraged on sites in the northern section of the county, along with residential and neighborhood services, economic development opportunities in the center of the county and along 316, mixed use designations within the cities, and the preservation of a rural and agricultural environment in the southern portion of the county. Farmland preservation strategies should be enacted to maintain quality of life and to provide appropriate green-space and agricultural space.

A major goal of County is to increase and diversify economic development opportunities. The County wants to encourage business uses such as offices, business parks, distribution centers and light industrial. These uses require less public resources than manufacturing and heavy industrial uses. Further economic development opportunities should only be pursued in existing employment areas and along key transportation corridors. Future transportation and public infrastructure should be developed with these geographic guidelines in order to focus economic growth to where it is most desirable.

The County should also be focused on the types of nonresidential development that it is trying to attract. With a focus on specific areas for the development of economic opportunities, choices that move towards implementing the County's Vision should be pursued. Big box retail is already present along 316 in addition to strip shopping malls. Further stand-alone strip and big box development is perhaps not the most beneficial for of retail development for the County. The community should strive to create retail village centers. Smaller retail uses should be encouraged in other areas, which are not directly adjacent to SR 316. Sufficient areas exist in the northern portion of the county and in around the Cities of Watkinsville, Bogart, Bishop and at within village centers to support additional small scale retail uses.

Residents of Oconee County are in favor of keeping the southern portion mostly agricultural to preserve green space. In order to accomplish this goal, Oconee County should encourage only limited industrial, shipping, warehouse plus additional agricultural uses south of the City of Watkinsville. Adequate space exists in the southern portion of the county to support very low density residential use while maintaining the quality of life and green space that the County residents' desire.

The County should limit facilities larger than neighborhood commercial centers (50,000 sf or less) south of Watkinsville. While close shopping to residents in the

central and southern portion of the County would mitigate traffic flowing into the more developed northern portion of the County, such facilities would spur additional growth, including more residential projects. For the County to maintain its economic development focus on northern portion of the County and to most cost-effectively trigger economic growth, no projects likely to cause sprawl should be encouraged.

The County should continue to encourage university-affiliated research and technology. Research parks serve as locations where universities, communities and private companies can interact. Georgia currently lacks a university-affiliated research park of the scope required to be competitive. University-affiliated research parks are unique resources that allow a shared risk/return proposition for universities, private enterprises and public sector. Georgia has had several high profile economic development prospects that have shown a strong interest in research parks. Research parks are attractive to companies because they offer the following location attributes:

- University partnership opportunities;
- Unique labor resources;
- Specialized resources and capabilities;
- Quality of life; and
- Industrial cluster (talent and support).

## Issues

- There are areas in the county that have developed as continuous strip commercial corridors;
- Neighborhood commercial centers should be close to the residential neighborhoods they serve, and be built at a neighborhood scale.
- Keep the southern portion mostly agricultural to preserve greenspace, active agricultural and sensitive natural resources areas;
- Economic promotional activities need to be focused on sites that are adequately served by infrastructure.
- Dispersed nonresidential development may take away the importance of the downtown cores.
- The current land development and permit process are unclear within the cities.

## ■ Infrastructure and Land Use

One of the four target industry clusters focuses on farming, refrigerated warehouses and food/production/purchasing technologies. Rail service can and does benefit such industries, as well as forestry/logging. The County should carefully identify its rural based industries and examine how new technologies can make them more competitive but also how/if enhanced rail serviced could lead to job

generation. In many cases this means helping natural resourced-based industries develop new products and adopt new production processes

The County should take advantage of its proximity to several airports in the region. Promoting air service in the vicinity of Oconee County should be highlighted when attracting potential businesses reliant on such services (i.e., businesses that focus on perishable items—fruit, flowers, vegetables, etc). The County should also demonstrate to potential businesses how air service can be combined with the area rail service and the County’s access to major highways to promote productivity and profit.

## ■ **Potential Growth Areas**

Potential growth areas include infill opportunities, opportunities for mixed use, and redevelopment areas and large vacant parcels that are prime development areas. Overall, it is expected that the county will see major growth in the northern section of the County, within the cities and along the SR 316 Spine.

### **SR 316 Spine**

The County should focus its economic development and growth strategies along the SR 316 corridor and properties easily accessible to this highway. Some of these sites will require infrastructure improvements. These sites should target businesses in the advanced materials, agriculture, building materials and knowledge sectors. Smaller parcels scattered along SR 316 are particularly attractive for business uses including commercial, office, retail and industrial due to transportation accessibility. Several sites have been primarily identified as growth areas:

#### **Site #1—77 acre property at the crux of Loop 10 and SR 316**

Currently this property is zoned for agriculture, public/institutional, transportation/communications/utilities, residential, and is underdeveloped. Excellent access exists to the property from the Oconee Connector, Virgil Langford Road, SR 316 and Jennings Mill Road. The County has the continuation of the Oconee Connector in the MACORTS long-range plan, which enhances property accessibility. The 77 acre property is currently served by a 12” water line located in the center of the property and an 8” water line, located to the east and north of the property. No other utilities have been identified on the site but sewer service is close by. This property would be appropriate for light industrial, an office park or a retail shopping center (725,000 square feet).

#### **Site #2—21 acre property east of the intersection of SR 316 and US 78**

This property is currently undeveloped/vacant and has over 2,000 feet of frontage on SR 316 exit ramp. The property can be accessed from Bell Road. US 78 can be used as an additional access road. A 12” gravity sewer line currently serves the property. No other utility services have been identified. This property would be appropriate for light industrial, and office park, or a 200,000 square foot retail shopping center.

**Site #3—72 acres on SR 316**

This 72-acre site covers several underdeveloped/vacant parcels and has over 3,000 feet of frontage on SR 316. The property can be accessed off of the SR 316, Jones Road and Mars Hill Roads. A 12" water line currently serves the property on the south end of the property. No other utility services have been identified. This property would be appropriate for light industrial, an office park or a 675,000 square foot retail shopping center.

**Site #4—108 acres on the north side of SR 316, bounded on the west by Pete Dickens Road and on the east by McNutt Creek Road**

This 108-acre site is located on two parcels and is adjacent to the western side of the City of Bogart city limits. The parcel has over 4,000 feet of SR 316 frontage and is currently zoned agricultural. SR 316, Pete Dickens Road, McNutt Creek Road and Aiken Road are access routes to the properties. Water or sewer lines do not directly serve the properties, but a 12" water line is approximately 160 feet north of the property. This site is appropriate for light industrial, an office park or retail shopping centers of 620,928 and 536,358 square feet.

**Site #5—357-acre parcel located on the northwestern side of SR 317 and US 78.**

This parcel has nearly 5,000 feet of frontage along SR 316, as well as nearly 1,000 feet of frontage along US Highway 78. The parcel is serviced by a 12" waterline to the east side of the property. Power, natural gas and sewer is also close. This site is also known as the Orkin site; approximately 920 acres of land associated with this site is located between Oconee and Athens-Clarke County. Appropriate development would be light industrial, office park or a 355,560 square foot retail shopping center.

**Site #6—14 acre parcel located on the southwestern side of US78/Mars Hill Road at SR 316**

This parcel has nearly 1,500 feet of frontage along Mars Hill Road and US 78. The parcel is zoned for transportation/communication/utilities (TCU) and is serviced by a 12" waterline to the north of the property. Appropriate uses would be light industrial, an office park or a 130,000 square foot retail shopping center.

**Site #7—67-acre parcel located on the southwest side of US 78 acres from SR 316 and Mars Hill Road.**

This parcel has nearly 6,500 feet of frontage along SR 316. Access to the property is from Mars Hill Road and SR 316. The property is directly serviced by two 12" water lines with an 8" forced sewer line in close proximity. Appropriate uses would be light industrial, an office park, or a 630,000 square foot retail shopping center.

**Site #8—202 acres located on the northeast side of the intersection of Mars Hill Road and Burson Avenue south across from SR 316.**

This 202-acre parcel has 8,000 feet of frontage along SR 316, Burson Avenue and Mars Hill Road. All of these routes can access the property easily. The property is directly serviced by unknown pipelines, but is surrounded by two 12" water lines

and a 12" gravity sewer line. This location is known as the Oconee Gateway Business site. This property would be appropriate for light industrial, and office park or a 1,900,609 square foot retail shopping center.

**Site #9—38 acres located on the southwest side of the intersection of SR 316 and Jimmy Daniel Road.**

This 38-acre parcel has nearly 1,700 feet of frontage along SR 316 and US 441/129. Jones Road crosses through the property at the south end. The parcels are zoned agricultural. There is an 8" water line and an 8" forced main located 12' north of the property. This property would be appropriate for light industrial, an office park or a 350,000 square foot retail shopping center.

**Site #10—313 acres located on the southwest side of the intersection of SR 53 and Union Church Road.**

This parcel has 2,500 feet of frontage along SR 53 and Union Church Road. Union Church Road and Whippoorwill Road can access the property. The property is serviced by a 12" and 10" water line to the north. Appropriate land uses would be light industrial, an office park or a 2,950,000 square foot retail shopping center.

■ **Natural and Cultural Resources**

**Areas of significant natural or cultural resources**

There are two significant areas as identified by the Freshwater Wetlands and Natural Heritage Inventory (FWNHI), the Oconee River and Apalachee River. Both of these significant areas are regulated by the Development Codes within Oconee County. Other sensitive areas and areas of historic and cultural resources are also currently protected and regulated within the County's Development Codes.

**Part V Environmental Ordinance Compliance**

The county has recently adopted a Unified Development Code. Article 9 of the 2006 UDC update contains standards, regulations, and development policies, which guide the protection of the County's significant environmental resources in adherence with DNR Article 5 Minimum Standards. The City of Bogart has adopted the appropriate Part 5 standards for wetlands, groundwater recharge and watersheds. Watkinsville has adopted the appropriate wetland Part 5 Standards. Bishop does not have any applicable sensitive resources. North High Shoals, is currently reviewing environmental protection ordinances with regard to wetlands and river corridor and will adopt necessary ordinances prior to comprehensive plan adoption.

■ **Areas in need of redevelopment and/or significant improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness**

As a young residential community, there are no areas that are in need of redevelopment.

■ **Large abandoned structures or sites**

There are no large abandoned structures or sites within the county.

■ **Areas with significant infill development opportunities**

Except for the City of Watkinsville, there are no areas of potential infill development or redevelopment. The City of Watkinsville has developed a concept plan to guide infill opportunities within the City. The City's concept plan will form the basis for character area development within the City.

■ **Areas of significant disinvestment, levels of poverty, and/or unemployment**

There are no areas within the county or its cities that have significant disinvestment, levels of poverty, and or unemployment.

■ **Areas where development outpaces infrastructure**

Oconee County is very proactive in the coordination of public facilities and future development. Business expansion is recommended in the northeast and northwest portions of the County. Adequate infrastructure including water and sewer capacity will be necessary. It is recommended that the County be pro-active and expand its water and sewer capacity with particular focus on the northern portions.

With changing patterns of land use and the demographic composition of the community, the County faces challenges and opportunities to position itself to take advantage of these changes and determine its path. It is essential that the qualities that form the sense of place of each jurisdiction in current day Oconee be protected and enhanced in the future. Enhancing the rural community while managing growth in the county, and protecting the small town feel of the cities, form the backbone of the City's planning efforts.

A number of critical issues relating to development and land use patterns were identified during the assessment phase. The following issues surfaced as a repetitive theme.

## ■ Demographics

- Have infrastructure systems, public facilities and commercial/services kept pace with the 4% annual rate of growth over the past several decades?
- What approach will the County employ to meet housing and service demands of an almost doubled population during the planning horizon?
- Will current densities and land use patterns be altered to meet these demands?

## ■ Housing

- Housing suitable for accommodating the “workforce” population – those with incomes of less than 50 percent of the County median, is in limited supply.
- There will be a numerical increase in the County's elderly population, primarily attributed to the aging of the existing resident population. Typically, those that are relocating to the county seek housing locations that are close to service providers, such as near the city of Watkinsville. The County needs to look at the need for suitable housing for the elderly population in appropriate price ranges, including lower cost rental product types, as well as active adult communities with ownership potential.
- The increase in the County's minority populations are not a significant issue, although the ethnic populations represent a disproportionate share of the workforce income group, and they tend to concentrate in locations close to job sites and service provider agencies. Overall, there is a need for more affordable housing choices for the County's workforce population.
- The fact that a significant portion of the County's housing stock (37%) was constructed prior to 1980, with a higher proportion in the cities approaching an average of 45 percent of the total units over 25 years in age. This is the point where a unit may become substandard due to age and lack of adequate repair by homeowners. There is a need for housing rehabilitation in areas of the county, and in particular the cities, where the units are showing signs of disrepair. The elderly are particularly relevant, as they may have owned the

same home for 50 years or longer. The county currently does not participate in any senior rehabilitation, or other rehabilitation programs, with the exception of any state or federal program that an individual homeowner may apply.

## ■ **Economic Development**

- The majority residential workforce of Oconee County is commuting to Athens-Clarke County for employment.
- In the past, a lack of a consolidated approach to economic development has hindered the attraction of economic opportunities in the county and its cities.
- The county needs to focus its economic efforts in areas that are most likely to succeed.
- Funding mechanisms and marketing efforts are needed to increase destination tourism within the county.
- Unique tourism opportunities that the county and its cities offer should receive attention, including culinary opportunities and local crafts.
- Encourage expanded alliances within the artist's community and with such organizations as OCAF to design and showcase opportunities for the area arts.
- There is a need for increased and improved lodging choices within the community.
- The use and knowledge of technology are extremely important to ensure that Oconee County attracts new technology focused businesses. Ensure that teachers are well trained in how to effectively use technology in the classroom and integrate it into their teaching.
- Education levels and skill levels of the available workforce in northeast Georgia do not match current businesses and potential clusters. There needs to be an educational and training focus on targeted industries.
- Employment, housing and transportation linkages need to be further coordinated.
- There is not sufficient community based employment that would connect business to the community at large.
- There are no programs to encourage and assist small business entrepreneurs to foster community investment.
- Oconee County lacks a single organization dedicated to economic development.

## ■ **Historic Resources**

- Currently historic, archaeological and rural resources in Oconee County have limited protection. Only those resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places have formal protection. However, this protection is minimal and only relates to impacts of state or federally funded projects.

- The Mayor and Council of Bishop, using legal zoning and subdivision regulations, strive to ensure that incompatible land uses or other activities are precluded from adversely affecting the historic nature of the City. However, these measures do not offer permanent protection of these resources, particularly in light of the recent and projected growth of the County and the area surrounding Bishop in particular.
- A number of the resources identified on the 1976 survey in Bogart have been lost through new development or reuse of the property. Efforts to save these properties were initiated on each of these properties individually. However, efforts to retain these historic properties have been unsuccessful and they have for the most part been lost to commercial development.
- North High Shoals does not have any management measures in place to protect their historic resources.

## ■ **Natural Resources**

- Greenspace needs to be preserved in the developing areas.
- All developments should set aside greenspace.
- The environment needs to be protected more during the pre-development phase.
- The County should identify targeted areas for conservation proactively, and not just react to their disposition when faced with a development request.

## ■ **Water & Sewer**

- There is a shortfall between land use expectations and sewer and water expansions.
- Expansion of the sewer and water system is important to community's tax base. A service expansion plan should be developed to increase the current base, and therefore the County's revenue stream.
- Ensure capacity upgrades to the sewer system to meet future needs.
- Sewer and water expansions should be based on the adopted population and employment forecasts.
- Another source of raw water needs to be developed to sustain the County's expected growth.

## ■ **Community Facilities**

- Growth needs to be in line with the community's ability to provide infrastructure: water & sewer, transportation, connectivity and services.
- Continual monitoring of population growth, new home starts and other indicators by the Oconee County School System to plan for new facilities, expansions and other improvements to ensure that capacity and the current excellent stu-

dent/teacher ratio is maintained through 2030 with an almost doubled student population.

- The community must continue to anticipate the needs of potential commercial/industrial businesses by expanding existing infrastructure relative to industrial development and exploring avenues for the development of new or additional infrastructure designed to make the community more attractive to corporate citizens.
- Funding sources need to be identified for necessary infrastructure improvements.
- Parks and Recreation should be continually monitored to address the needs and desires of residents.
- A mixing of uses and an increased emphasis on non-residential development will stabilize funding and school capacity issues.

## ■ **Transportation**

- Encourage and support upgrade of SR 316 to a limited access highway with or without tolls.
- Proceed with the prioritized planned improvements in the MACORTS Transportation Plan.
- The County may wish to conduct a special “Toll Road Community Forum” to review toll road research and decide whether to support paying for new road capacity with user charges.
- The County should press the State to examine a wide array of applications, including building “HOT Lanes” and to institute Intelligent Transportation Systems to manage and operate surface transportation.

## ■ **Intergovernmental Cooperation**

- Boundary and service coordination are very important during this 10<sup>th</sup> year update, of the Joint Comprehensive Plan.
- Transportation, annexation borders and utility provision are issues that need to be addressed.

# Community Quality Objectives

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The following is a description of how Oconee County currently meets the Department of Community Affairs' "Community Quality Objectives (CQO)." This assessment includes an evaluation of the community's current policies, activities and development patterns for consistency with the CQOs contained in the State Planning Goals and Objectives.

This initial assessment is meant to provide an overall view of the community'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 governments undergo the comprehensive planning process.

<b><i>Development Patterns</i></b>			
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comment
If we have a zoning code, it does not separate commercial, residential and retail uses in every district.	X		
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		MPD District
We have a street tree ordinance that requires new development to plant shade-bearing trees appropriate to our climate.	X		
Our community has an organized tree-planting campaign in public areas that will make walking more comfortable in the summer.		X	
We have a program to keep our public areas (commercial, retail districts, parks) clean and safe.	X		
Our community maintains its sidewalks and vegetation well so that walking is an option some would choose.	X		Particularly in the downtown and historic districts of the cities.
In some areas, several errands can be made on foot, if so desired.	X		Particularly in the historic downtown area.
Some of our children can and do walk to school safely.	X		Increased connections between the schools and neighborhoods are a major goal of this plan.

Some of our children can and do bike to school safely.	X		Increased connections between the schools and neighborhoods are a major goal of this plan.
Schools are located in or near neighborhoods in our community.	X		
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comment
Our community has an inventory of vacant sites and buildings that are available for redevelopment and/or infill development.	X		
Our community is actively working to promote brownfield redevelopment.	X		
Our community is actively working to promote greyfield redevelopment.	X		
We have areas of our community that are planned for nodal development (compacted near intersections rather than spread along a major road).	X		Us 78
Our community allows small lot development (5,000 square feet or less) for some uses.	X		
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comment
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		The Community has a distinctive rural/agricultural feel and identity that they wish to preserve, enhance and protect. Each downtown has a unique sense of place.
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		The county has taken steps to emphasize, enhance and protect its historic areas.
We have ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas.	X		Historic Districts and the Main Street Overlay
We have ordinances to regulate the size and type of signage in our community.	X		
We offer a development guidebook that illustrates the type of new development we want in our community.		X	

If applicable, our community has a plan to protect designated farmland.		X	The Future Development Map will guide new growth to the northern part of the county and to its cities and away from active farming. The community also participates in the Farmland Preservation Program
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comment
We have public transportation in our community.		X	There is limited public transportation from Athens Clark County.
We require that new development connect with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit.		X	
We have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.	X		
We have a sidewalk ordinance in our community that requires all new development to provide user-friendly sidewalks.	X		
We require that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks wherever possible.		X	
We have a plan for bicycle routes through our community.	X		MACORTS Bike Plan
We allow commercial and retail development to share parking areas wherever possible.	X		
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
Our community is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage.	X		
Our community is connected to the surrounding region for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.	X		We have an active farming community and close economic ties to UGA's Agricultural programs.
Our community encourages businesses that create products that draw on our regional heritage (mountain, agricultural, metropolitan, coastal, etc.).	X		We are actively promoting the artist community, and locally produced goods.
Our community participates in the Georgia Department of Economic Development's regional tourism partnership.	X		The County has a strong objective to maximize tourism opportunities and utilizes available resources to achieve that objective.
Our community promotes tourism opportunities based on the unique characteristics of our region.	X		

Our community contributes to the region, and draws from the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment and education.	X		
<b>Resource Conservation</b>			
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
We have designated historic districts in our community.	X		
We have an active historic preservation commission.	X		
We want new development to complement our historic development, and we have ordinances in place to ensure this.	X		
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
Our community has a greenspace plan.	X		
Our community is actively preserving greenspace, either through direct purchase or by encouraging set-asides in new development.	X		
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		
We have a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development that is widely used and protects open space in perpetuity.	X		
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
Our community has a comprehensive natural resources inventory.	X		We currently map natural and sensitive natural resources. The development of character based Future Development Map will further the integration of natural resource protection during the development process.

We use this resource inventory to steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas.		X	It is recommended that subsequent to the creation of a resource inventory, it be used as a preliminary step of the planning process.
We have identified our defining natural resources and taken steps to protect them.	X		
Our community has passed the necessary "Part V" environmental ordinances, and we enforce them.	X		
Our community has a tree preservation ordinance that is actively enforced.		X	
Our community has a tree-replanting ordinance for new development.	X		
We are using stormwater best management practices for all new development.	X		
We have land use measures that will protect the natural resources in our community (steep slope regulations, floodplain or marsh protection, etc.).	X		
<b>Social and Economic Development</b>			
<b>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 (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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
We have population projections for the next 20 years that we refer to when making infrastructure decisions.	X		
Our local governments, the local school board and other decision-making entities use the same population projections.	X		The community assessment has provided new forecasts for the County and its Cities that have been distributed to decision makers. A major goal of this plan update is to further coordinate infrastructure, land use and a single set of projections.
Our elected officials understand the land-development process in our community.	X		
We have reviewed our development regulations and/or zoning code recently, and believe that our ordinances will help us achieve our QCO goals.	X		A UDC was developed in 2006.
We have a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.	X		
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		The county has already has identified existing growth areas.

We have clearly understandable guidelines for new development.	X		Additional guidelines will be developed in conjunction with the Character Areas.
We have a citizen-education campaign to allow all interested parties to learn about development processes in our community.	X		The City's website provides the most updated information base.
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		The City's website provides the most updated information base.
We have a public-awareness element in our comprehensive planning process.	X		City Council has adopted an inclusive Community Participation Plan.
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
Our economic development organization has considered our community's strengths, assets and weaknesses, and has created a business development strategy based on them.	X		
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		
We recruit firms that provide or create sustainable products.	X		Much of our economy is based on agriculture.
We have a diverse jobs base, so that one employer leaving would not cripple our economy.	X		A goal of this plan is to provide avenues for economic opportunity diversification.
<b>Employment Options - A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
Our economic development program has an entrepreneur support program.	X		
Our community has jobs for skilled labor.	X		
Our community has jobs for unskilled labor.	X		
Our community has professional and managerial jobs.	X		
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments

Our community allows accessory units like garage apartments or mother-in-law units.	X		
People who work in our community can also afford to live in the community.	X		Within the Northwest Georgia region, Cartersville is a relatively inexpensive place to own and rent a home.
Our community has enough housing for each income level (low, moderate and above average).	X		Yes, but there needs to be an expansion of workforce housing.
We encourage new residential development to follow the pattern of our original town, continuing the existing street design and maintaining small setbacks.	X		
We have options available for loft living, downtown living, or “neo-traditional” development.	X		The zoning code and downtown development guidelines establish standards and zones where such product types are permitted in Watkinsville.
We have vacant and developable land available for multifamily housing.	X		Higher density housing is allowable in areas within the county that have adequate infrastructure to support it, and as part of an MPD.
We allow multifamily housing to be developed in our community.	X		
We support community development corporations that build housing for lower-income households.	X		
We have housing programs that focus on households with special needs.	X		
We allow small houses built on small lots (less than 5,000 square feet) in appropriate areas.	X		
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
Our community provides workforce-training options for its citizens.	X		An on-going partnership between local government, business, and industry and area educational institutions reflects our flexible commitment to employee training. These progressive collaborations help create seamless educational opportunities for the County workforce, now and in the future.
Our workforce training programs provide citizens with skills for jobs that are available in our community.	X		
Our community has higher education opportunities, or is close to a community that does.	X		The county is closely aligned economically and culturally with UGA.

Our community has job opportunities for college graduates, so that our children may live and work here if they choose.	X		We do have professional opportunities within the community, although many returning graduates still find opportunities at UGA. We view employment opportunities from a regional perspective to be built upon.
<b>Governmental Relations</b>			
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
We participate in regional economic development organizations.	X		
We participate in regional environmental organizations and initiatives, especially regarding water quality and quantity issues.	X		
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		
Our community thinks regionally, especially in terms of issues like land use, transportation and housing, understanding that these go beyond local government borders.	X		
<b>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.</b>			
	Yes	No	Comments
We plan jointly with our cities and county for comprehensive planning purposes.	X		
We are satisfied with our Service Delivery Strategy.	X		
We initiate contact with other local governments and institutions in our region in order to find solutions to common problems, or to craft region wide strategies.	X		
We meet regularly with neighboring jurisdictions to maintain contact, build connections and discuss issues of regional concern.	X		

# Preliminary Policies

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Below is a list of preliminary guiding principles and policies that have emerged during the comprehensive plan process to date. These policies will be further refined during the Community Agenda portion of this Comprehensive Plan.

## ■ **Expand and Diversify the Economic Base of Oconee County in order to achieve a Balanced Tax Base That Offers Diverse Economic Opportunities**

### **Policies**

#### **Countywide**

- Step up efforts, programs and incentives to attract greater economic development opportunities.
- Utilize downtown areas, as well as “village centers,” as economic “engines” for small business development. Ensure that the proper infrastructure is in place.
- Encourage the expansion of tourism and cultural opportunities throughout the county and within each city.
- Protect and enhance agricultural business.
- Create a balance between residential and nonresidential development in order to balance the tax base and provide quality services, including education.
- Encourage a variety of economic opportunities, in appropriate places, from neighborhood services, professional offices, live/work units, small businesses, regional retail, major office complexes, light industrial and manufacturing. The office stock serves a range from home occupations to conventional office buildings. The retail stock includes a range from the corner store to regional retail destinations.
- Outline areas on the Future Development Map to accommodate the amount and types of economic development opportunities that are desired and projected.

#### **City of Bishop**

- Attract and retain local-serving professional and retail businesses; expand our tourism and cultural offerings and attract and protect businesses that relate to our rural heritage, such as horticulture, nurseries and tourism farming.
- Protect existing agricultural and farming concerns within the city.

#### **City of Bogart**

- Attract and support good retail businesses downtown.
- Develop the Orkin Tract into a good business park.
- Encourage light industry, especially in the medical fields.
- Encourage the development of restaurants, high tech businesses and master planned communities.

### **City of Watkinsville**

- Attract a wide array of employment and business opportunities that enhance the local and regional economies and maintain a positive balance between commercial and residential tax revenues.
- Develop an appropriate balance between available jobs and housing to provide residents with increased local employment options reducing the impact of commuting on the city's transportation network.
- Increase employment activity within a mixed-use environment focusing on appropriate business growth within, and adjacent to, the central business district that will attract both local and non-local populations.
- Promote Watkinsville as a destination for arts, crafts and cultural activities.

## **■ Accommodate Growth While Creating a Sustainable Community That Implements the Community's Vision**

### **Policies**

#### **Countywide**

- Ensure that future land use and development decisions are consistent with the Future Development Map and long range planning goals and policies, and that such decisions promote the Vision of the Community.
- Encourage growth through land use plan consistency and infrastructure investment in areas where it will be the most beneficial to the County and its cities as outlined on the Future Development Map (FDM).
- Manage neighborhood environmental factors such as traffic flow, school locations, parks and open spaces, and other public uses to stabilize and upgrade neighborhoods and dwellings.
- Ensure that natural resources are protected and that greenspace is abundant throughout the county.
- Where appropriate, promote a compact development pattern that is pedestrian-oriented, community-centered and minimizes vehicular trips by encouraging other modes of transportation, such as walking or bicycling.
- Integrate and create mixed-use and village environments with employment opportunities to lessen the reliance on the automobile and commuting outside of the county.
- Ensure that adequate public services and community facilities are provided in an efficient and cost-effective manner by a capital improvement program that ensures that new development pays for its proportionate share of the cost of new facilities at the time of development.
- Enhance the overall quality and attractiveness of Oconee County by increasing cultural amenities, striving to strengthen service provision, protecting and enhancing the education system, providing adequate and timely installation of infrastructure, maintaining the structural integrity of structures and the physical environment, and protecting our historical resources.
- Create an intergovernmental mechanism to provide coordination between departments involved in sewer and water expansion, transportation improvements, new school development, public

safety, and parks and recreation planning, to share information regarding the pace and location of new residential development and nonresidential development trends.

### **City of Bogart**

- Provide city water and sewer for all areas in the city.
- Place utilities underground in the downtown section and in all new developments.
- Provide sidewalks and trails that are safe for the citizens.
- Develop the Gateway with infrastructure so business can locate there.
- Provide full time staffing at the fire station.

### **City of North High Shoals**

- Pave the remaining dirt roads.
- Provide an adequate fire station facility.
- Provide for a new or expanded city park.
- Provide an adequate library facility.
- Manage the development of quality housing using Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.
- Adopt new land use policies and ordinances as may be identified by the Mayor and Council or required by State and Federal statutes.

### **City of Watkinsville**

- Develop complete neighborhoods that include the provision of usable parkland and open space, walkable access to community facilities and neighborhood-scale commercial uses, and adequate access to a variety of transportation modes that serve the neighborhood.
- Create an appropriate mix of compatible uses that increase the convenience of residents' day-to-day lives.
- Continue to enhance and expand public facilities and services in order to adequately accommodate future growth.
- Promote development patterns that efficiently utilize land in proximity to existing facilities and services.
- Continue to work with Oconee County in assessing the service delivery strategy and mitigate inefficiencies through strategic planning and cooperative aid agreements.
- Provide an adequate transition between land uses of varying intensities and protect environmentally sensitive areas; vegetative buffers should be retained or planted.
- Modify existing Zoning and Subdivision Regulations as needed to address future development, public health, safety and welfare.
- Maintain and encourage the existing residential/agricultural land use trend through adopted Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.
- Incorporate the new Land Use Map into the zoning amendment procedures when reviewing re-zones.
- Promote Watkinsville as a day-trip destination for regional tourism and conventions.

## ■ **Protect Our Rural Character and Agricultural Heritage**

### **Policies**

#### **Countywide**

- Preserve rural character by directing development where appropriate and establishing design and development guidelines to implement desired character.
- Commercial development as identified on the Future Development Map in the south end of the county should be designated to encompass the rural and agricultural heritage of that area.
- Roadways should be developed to promote the rural character of the community, such as the use of swales and ditches and other rural roadway characteristics in the south end of the county.
- Sewer and water expansion and other infrastructure and services should reflect a rural Level of Service within the appropriate character areas.
- Using the Future Development Map as a guide, focus new growth into appropriate Character Areas, thereby lifting development pressure from farming and rural communities.
- Permanent open space should surround developments in rural areas in order to retain the feeling of open vistas and the county's pastoral heritage. Specific conservation areas and greenways should be predetermined and identified so that ultimately new development will interconnect to form a network of protected lands. Scenic corridors and vistas should be protected and enhanced.
- Preserve and protect prime agricultural and forestlands with incentives, land use regulation and other means of preservation.
- Plan cooperatively with the Board of Education in locating new schools that will avoid generating unwanted growth in rural and agricultural areas.

#### **City of North High Shoals**

- Encourage preservation of prime agricultural soils.

## ■ **Preserve Our Sense of Place**

### **Policies**

#### **Countywide**

- Protect the overall single-family character of the community while providing other housing options for the growing senior and workforce segments of the population in appropriate places.
- All new public buildings, institutional buildings, residential and nonresidential private developments, should be characterized by high-quality architectural design and construction, should include appropriate civic spaces and should reflect the Community's unique image and character. These types of improvements help create an identity or sense of place that will ultimately set Oconee County apart from other communities by providing our residents and businesses a reason for investing in Oconee County.
- Sustainable communities contain civic spaces, which ensure social interactions and personal connections. Civic spaces include open space/conservation areas; greenways, parks, greens,

squares and plazas; as well as special sites reserved for civic buildings. All of these types of spaces serve as symbols of the community, thus enhancing community identity.

- Ensure the feeling of “open ness” and space by keeping residential densities low within the majority of the unincorporated area.
- Community roadways should be designed for lower speeds to encourage urban life and community interaction.
- Focus on the streetscape in commercial areas, with landscaping along roads and with parking areas located beside and behind the buildings. Where appropriate in urbanized areas, bring the buildings to the sidewalk to create a more traditional shopping environment.
- Protect and enhance the historical assets of the community, through regulation, assistance and reuse.
- Continue to work at the Oconee Heritage Park to preserve our heritage and promote tourism within the county.

### **City of Bishop**

- Target, promote and encourage historically compatible infill, redevelopment and reuse.
- Create a pedestrian friendly downtown and an interconnected series of paths within the city.
- The primary residential character of the city is high quality, large lot single family detached housing.
- Encourage a limited amount of housing diversity utilizing innovative practices, such as residential lofts above small businesses, adaptation of existing historical properties and historically compatible infill development.

### **City of Bogart**

- Encourage and maintain a wide range of well built attractive homes, including some cluster homes.
- Assure adequate recreation facilities for our children.
- Expand the library.
- Discourage and eventually eliminate billboards.

### **City of North High Shoals**

- Encourage the identification, preservation and utilization of historic structures.
- Promote and encourage low-density large lots, with single-family homes, which are compatible with the historic district.

### **City of Watkinsville**

- Preserve and enhance the unique qualities and characteristics of the city as it grows to ensure that Watkinsville retains its high quality of life.
- Create a thoughtfully structured community that preserves Watkinsville’s significant characteristics and establishes a flexible framework for innovative development enhancing the residents’ quality of life.

- Incorporate the city's historic resources, to the extent possible, into the new community form. New development should be compatible with the community's existing scale and design and should build on the character and identity that has been established.
- Standardize historic preservation procedures and design guidelines to retain and enhance the scale and character of the city.
- Incorporate locally significant historic landmarks into the design of new development, where applicable.
- The downtown serves as a mixed-use community center that provides a wide variety of employment, shopping, cultural and social opportunities.
- The focus of downtown is primarily commercial in nature; however, a mix of compatible residential uses would complement the area's businesses.
- Continue to improve downtown's pedestrian friendly environment with landscaping, signage and street furniture built to human scale.
- Increase the aesthetic appeal of the community through the placement of public art displays taking advantage of Watkinsville's expanding art community.
- Provide a diverse mix of housing choice accommodating the demographic and economic needs of the city's residents within quality, well-designed neighborhoods.
- Expand the existing community park, and develop two additional community parks to provide recreation opportunities within walking distance of existing and future residents.
- Redevelop Rocket Field from its existing use as a baseball diamond to a community square available for passive recreation and civic uses.
- Small greens and playgrounds should be encouraged within new residential developments.
- Encourage the rehabilitation and reuse of existing structures for residential or mixed-use development to maintain a mix of housing types and retain the city's historic character.
- Promote clustered residential development that preserves and enhances natural systems and resources.
- Utilize housing and property maintenance codes to protect the community's character and retain and enhance property values.
- Improve the aesthetics along major entry and exit points in the city, including GA highway 15, Old 441 Highway, GA highway 53 and Simonton Bridge Road.
- Enhance the aesthetic qualities of commercial development along gateway corridors and key entry points into the city.

## ■ **Create Land Use Patterns that Promote Connectivity and Mobility**

### **Policies**

#### **Countywide**

- Promote development in appropriate areas that is pedestrian-oriented, community-centered and minimizes vehicular trips with increased internal connectivity.

- Developments should not be built in isolation; developments should connect with the existing transportation network and adjacent properties.
- All roadways should be designed to be context sensitive and integrated with adjacent land use.
- Promote clustering of uses and compact site development to provide a wide range of goods and services that are accessible by alternative modes of transportation in appropriate places.
- Encourage neighborhood-serving retail and services convenient to all new neighborhoods where negative impacts can be avoided.
- Distribute services and facilities in appropriate locations to provide residents with convenient access.
- Focus denser levels of growth within the cities and targeted growth areas within the county where there is adequate infrastructure.
- Encourage mixed-use village areas to provide for a diversity of economic opportunities and housing in a walkable environment in appropriate locations.
- Protect the capacity of major thoroughfares through village development techniques.
- Continue working through MACORTS to develop a regional solution to transportation congestion, and to lobby for DOT transportation projects.
- Consolidate county governmental functions and services into a centrally located and accessible facility or campus.

#### **City of Bishop**

- Work to reactivate the 441 Bypass project around Bishop.
- Increase connectivity and pedestrian orientation in the city.

#### **City of Bogart**

- Provide sidewalks to main street shops and walking trails throughout the city.
- Help get Rail to the Athens Area from Atlanta and have a stop in Bogart.

#### **City of Watkinsville**

- Develop and maintain a safe, convenient and efficient transportation system that recognizes existing needs, reflects the needs of future development patterns, provides a balance of transportation modes, and respects the integrity of environmentally sensitive areas.
- Improve the road network to accommodate increased traffic volumes. The improved transportation system should be an interconnected, grid pattern street system designed to accommodate multiple forms of transportation.
- Develop a multi-modal master plan that includes greenway trails, bicycle lanes and sidewalks that coordinates new development with the construction of new facilities.
- Develop a multi-use greenway system utilizing stream and river corridors as well as the rail line that traverses Watkinsville.
- Slow traffic through the downtown and provide on and off street parking to increase downtown patronage.
- Encourage a mix of uses that can lead to pedestrian convenience and accessibility in order to reduce the need for automobile traffic.

- Invest in the necessary infrastructure (sidewalks, bicycle lanes, greenways and trails, signalization and signage) to accommodate alternative forms of transportation and increase mobility options.
- Plan an efficient street system using a variety of street types that provide adequate routes for travel by all modes and preserve adequate right-of-way to address future transportation needs.
- Develop public/private partnerships and require shared parking lots within new Central Business District development to increase the amount of public parking space.
- Continue to address transportation safety issues that enhance the safety of all users.

## ■ **Provide For Services, Facilities and Housing That Will Allow Aging in Place**

### **Policies**

#### **Countywide**

- Encourage senior housing in areas that have good access to services, medical and shopping facilities, and that are walkable.
- Support innovative public, private and non-profit efforts in the development of housing for seniors with limited incomes.
- Promote mixed housing within developments in order to influence a multi-aged community.
- Encourage senior preferred housing such as cottages, ranch-style small-lot single-family, and attached ranch-style within planned developments.
- Encourage small-lot and attached housing in existing and future activity centers.

#### **City of Bishop**

- Encourage the development of ADA single-family homes.

## ■ **Designing With the Environment**

### **Policies**

#### **Countywide**

- Proactively preserve Oconee County's rural resources and character.
- Greenspace, open space and protection of sensitive areas should be incorporated in all new developments.

#### **City of Bishop**

- In order to provide for a sustainable future, integrate environmental stewardship within our vision.
- Protect the headwaters of Freeman Creek.
- Protect water supply with wellhead protection zones.
- Maintain surface water quality.

**City of North High Shoals**

- Protect water supply with wellhead protection zones.
- Maintain surface water quality.
- Avoid development on steep slopes.
- Prevent septic systems in areas of high water tables, shallow bedrock, steep slopes and unsuitable soils.

**City of Watkinsville**

- Create a linked network of community greenspace through the integration of parks within new development and along environmentally sensitive corridors.
- Reduce levels of impervious surface through the implementation of tree protection and planting programs.
- Enforce Best Management Practices during construction to mitigate the adverse environmental impacts associated with new development.

# Potential Character Areas

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The Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) requires the identification of character areas covering the entire community including areas requiring special attention, and existing community sub-areas for which plans have already been prepared. A list of recommended character areas are provided in the State Planning Recommendations for suggestions. The recommended character areas may be presented wither as a separate map or as an overlay on the Existing Land Use Map. The "Local Planning Requirements," dated May 1, 2005 describes what a character area is in Chapter 110-12-.09.

"Character Area" means a specific geographic area within the community that:

- Has unique or special characteristics to be prepared or enhanced (such as a downtown, a historic deistrict, a neighborhood, or a transportation corridor);
- Has 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
- Requires special attention due to unique development issues (rapid change of development patterns, economic decline, etc.).

Each character area is a planning sub-area within the community where more detailed small-area planning and implementation of certain policies, investments, incentives, or regulations may be applied in order to preserve, improve, or otherwise influence its future development patterns in a manner consistent with the community vision.

The following is a list of potential character areas, all of which include public and instutional uses. Many of these have been preliminary mapped, although several will have to be further developed during the Community Agenda portion of the Plan.

- **Agricultural Preservation**  
Areas where active agricultural and very low density residential in large-lot subdivisions will be preserved.
- **Rural Places**  
Areas that will retain their rural heritage and very low density residenetial character.
- **Country Estates**  
Large lot homesteads dispersed with "gentlemen and estate" farms, comptible agricultural activities.
- **Suburban Living**  
Low density residential areas, primarily single family detached.
- **Neighborhood Village Center**

Small scaled local serving retail and services geared to meeting the convenience needs of nearby neighborhoods.

- Community Village Center

Larger scaled retail and services geared to meeting the convenience needs of several neighborhoods or portions of the county. Housing may be an accessory use within this character area.

- Cities—Watkinsville, Bishop Bagart, North High Shoals

A mix of uses that address the unique aspects of each city.

- Civic Center

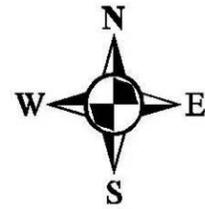
The mixed use area within the unincorporated county that includes many of the county's institutional uses and major shopping facilities, and potentially higher-density housing.

- Technology Gateway

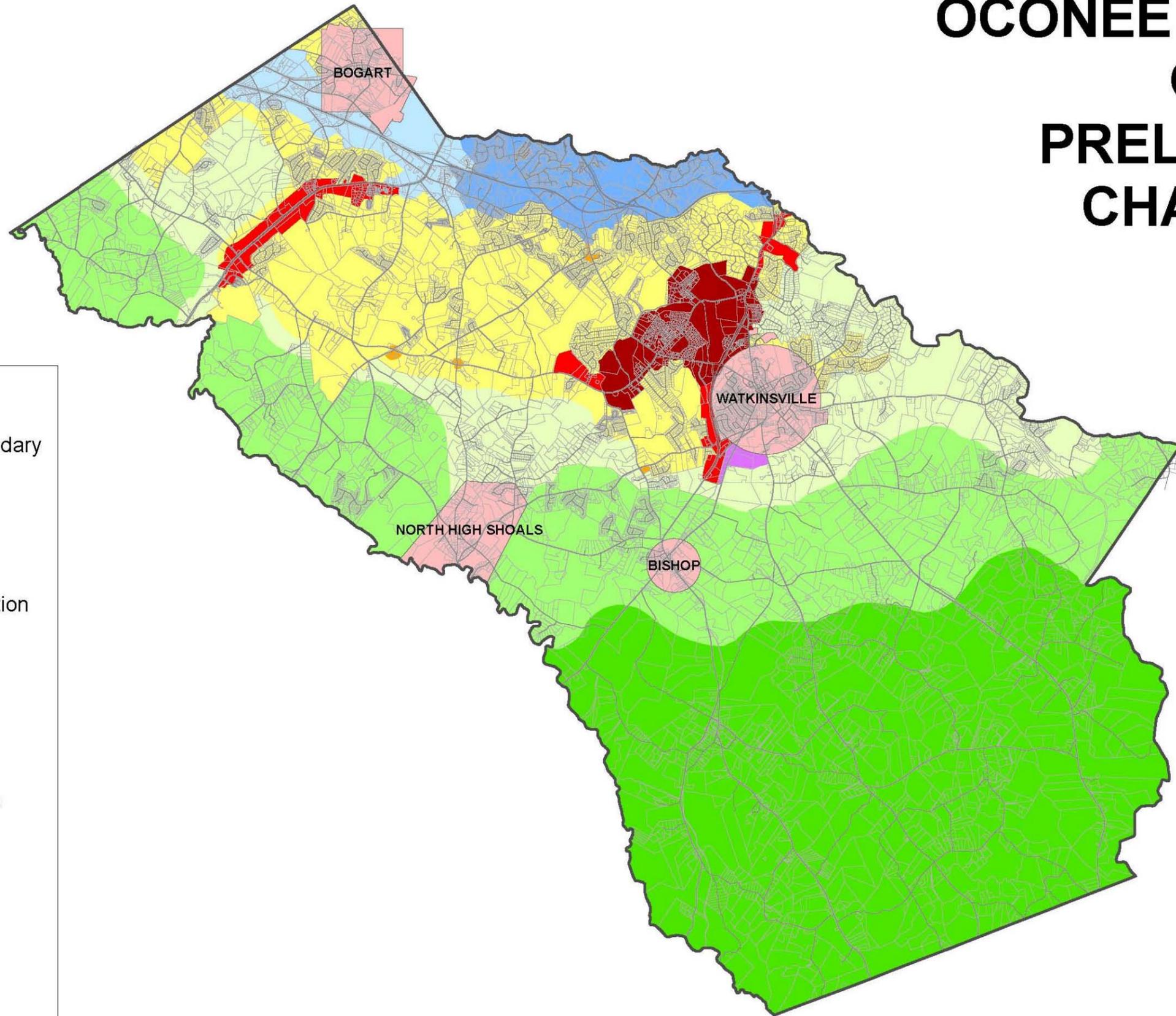
A mixed use area primarily office with research and development businesses in nature that capitalizes on its major transportation assets and market location. Housing may be an accessory use within this character area.

- Workplace Center

Large scaled employment generators, such as office, distribution and industrial. Housing may be an accessory use within this character area.



# OCONEE COUNTY, GEORGIA PRELIMINARY CHARACTER AREAS



## Legend

— Oconee County Boundary

□ Parcel Lines

— Roads Centerlines

## Character Areas

Agricultural Preservation

Rural Places

Country Estates

Suburban Living

City Center

Neighborhood Village

Community Village

Civic Center

Technology Gateway

Regional Center

Workplace Center

1 inch equals 2 miles

Produced Using OCGIS

March 27th, 2007

# Implementation Activities

An integral part of a Comprehensive Plan is a long-range implementation strategy and a Short Term Work Program of specific activities to be undertaken over the coming five years.

Short Term Work Programs (STWPs) are updated at least every five years. The most recent STWP for Oconee County covers the period 2003—2007. In preparation for updating a STWP, an “accomplishments report” is prepared as a review of progress made or changes that have occurred on specific projects listed in the STWP.

## ■ Plan Accomplishments—2003-2007

Project	Implementation				Status
	Complete	On-going	Pending	Dropped	

<b>Economic Development</b>					
Retain a consultant to conduct a Comprehensive Economic Development Plan	2004	X			Plan complete in 2005.
Continue support for Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation including planning of cultural arts facility at Heritage Park.		X			Next round of funding may be in next SPLOST.
Continue to support agribusiness through support of county's extension service and other agribusiness organizations.		X			Farmland Preservation Program participation in annual budget.
Proceed with development of Gateway Industrial Park.					
Continue to market commercial/business nodes of SR53/Mars Hill Rd.; SR 316 to the Oconee Connector; the US 78 and SR 53 corridors		X			
Bishop - Continue to encourage and promote local businesses that appeal to the existing tourist traffic.		X			
Bishop - Continue to encourage and promote existing businesses compatible with historic character.		X			
Bogart - Participate in joint training and partnership with other local municipalities, RDC and Oconee County BOC.		X			
Bogart - Improve and enhance annual/seasonal lighting and displays.		X			

Project	Implementation				Status
	Complete	On-going	Pending	Dropped	

Bogart - The beautification of the downtown area through landscaping of public property with trees and planting beds.		X			
Bogart - Encourage and promote business to participate in annual events/festivals.		X			
Bogart - Continue improvements and preservation of downtown historical businesses.		X			
Bogart - Develop a comprehensive information and marketing package for Bogart.	2007				
Bogart - Establish a reliable communication system with the citizens.	2007				
Bogart - Continue cooperative effort to market Gateway Business Park.		X			
Bogart - Encourage the marketability of the IBM/Orkin commercial tract on Hwy. 78 and GA 316.		X			
Watkinsville - Participate in the Oconee Development Authority, Industrial Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce for promotion of commercial development		X			

**Natural and Historic Resources**

Update Article 9 of the UDC to contain standards, regulations and development policies, which guide the protection of the County's significant environmental resources in adherence with DNR Article V Minimum Standards.	2006				County implements guidelines and has adopted streambed protection measures for the Oconee River. Wetlands Protection ordinance, Watershed Protection and the Aquifer Recharge Area Protection Ordinance, as well as Natural Resource and Conservation Areas and Easements also adopted.
Adoption of the minimum DNR standards where specific ordinances have not been adopted will ensure the protection of these important features within the County.	Standards adopted in 2006	X			In addition, Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance has been updated and Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance has been updated in 2006
Aim to preserve 450 acres of open space annually		X	X		Target has not been met but County has almost 2,200 acres in preserved open space. The promotion of conservation subdivisions and conservation easements is an important factor.
Study potential for industry monitoring program for classified materials by EMA or other agency. Additional inspector may be needed in future.	2005				
Study requiring dumpsters or roll off containers on construction sites. Continue to monitor and consider code revision if it becomes necessary.	2005				Code revised to require roll off containers on construction sites.

Project	Implementation				Status
	Complete	On-going	Pending	Dropped	
Continue maintenance and operation of Eagle Tavern Visitor's Center.		X			
Promote historic sites through the "Cultural Affairs & Recreation Committee".		X			
Monitor historic sites for protection.		X			Old Central Schoolhouse relocated and restored.
Renovation of the upper story of the Old Elder Mill (the lower floor has already been restored into living quarters) and listing of the structure on the National Register.		X			The Historic Resources Committee undertook this renovation in 2006 and it is nearing completion in 2007/2008. Not yet nominated on Historic Register.
Accept donations and public participation to identify and recognize historic properties		X			Old Schoolhouse and Plumb Creek Cabin.
Continue Conservation Use Exemption Program.		X			
Continue to review tax assessments on a case by case basis.		X			
Conduct periodic countywide re-evaluation of tax digest.		X			
Continue financing the maintenance, depreciation and expansion costs of water and sewer system with user fees.		X			
Encourage and participate in regional efforts to protect Bear Creek, Oconee River, Apalachee River and other significant watersheds in the county and region.		X			RDC/DRI process and Upper Oconee Basin Authority activities and EPD coordination.
Investigate and implement additional methods to conserve water.		X			
Watkinsville - Adopt protection regulations for steep slopes.				X	Utilize County regs which meet DNR Part V requirements
Watkinsville - Promote the utilization and preservation of historic structures by adopting a policy to help owners retain use of structures.	2007				
Work with FEMA to complete comprehensive update of FIRM maps in unincorporated County including Base Flood Elevations on all major stream corridors		X			Anticipate 2007 to 2008 completion.
Bishop - Maintain present city hall as historic structure (built as city jail in 1939).		X			
Bishop - Maintain scenic area of pedestrian garden and gazebo.		X			

Project	Implementation				Status
	Complete	On-going	Pending	Dropped	
Bishop - Continue with a proactive plan of historic preservation; i.e., restoration of Chandler/Marable House, promote the Bishop history book that documents historic sites, erect new city limit signs that promote the historic district.		X			
Bishop - Maintain Bishop Well and Well House (circa 1890).		X			
Bishop - Encourage use of state and federal tax-incentive programs.		X			
Bishop - Update zoning regulations and ordinances to protect historic resources.		X			
Bishop - Continue preservation and restoration of recently purchased Chandler/Marable House for city hall expansion and community facilities.		X			
Bogart - Identify and protect headwaters of Little Bear Creek as a perennial stream through a process of local ordinances.		X			
Bogart – Pursue nomination of Bogart Historic District			X		Committee working toward nomination – targeted in 2008-12 STWP
North High Shoals - Pursue adoption of ordinance to protect Apalachee River corridor and watershed.	2007				
North High Shoals - Investigate feasibility of updating historic sites survey through matching grant.	2003				
North High Shoals - Nominate North High Shoals Historic District to National Register of Historic Places.	2003				
Watkinsville - Continue enforcement of wellhead protection ordinance.		X			
Watkinsville - Provide support to County and Citizens' Committees for historic preservation.		X			
<b>Community Facilities</b>					
Water - Proceed with planning for the Apalachee Regional Water Reservoir and Treatment facility and service delivery lines		X			Planning for Apalachee Regional Reservoir has been replaced by participation in the Walton County Regional Project.
Water - Proceed with EPD withdrawal permit on Apalachee River. (Bracewell Agreement)	2003				Have permit for 2.25 MGD
Water - Complete waterline extension, Rocky Branch & Malcolm Bridge Roads.	2003				
Water - Water line extension Hodges Mill Road from Hwy. 53 to Mars Mill Road.	2004				

Project	Implementation				Status
	Complete	On-going	Pending	Dropped	
Water - Water line extension at Hwy. 53 from Hwy. 78 to the Barrow County Line.	2005				Targeted for 2003, completed in 2005
Water - Water line extension Elder Road from Hwy. 53 to Herman C. Michael Recreation Center.	2003				
Water – Dials Mill Rd. water line extension	2006				
Water – SR 186. water line extension	2006				
Water - Complete 24" water transmission line from Bear Creek to Old Hwy. 29		X			Phase 1 complete. Phase 2 under construction.
Water - Investigate and implement additional methods to conserve water		X			
Water/Wastewater-Continue to finance maintenance, depreciation, and expansion costs for provision of water/sewer system with user fees		X			
Bogart - The extension of water lines to service new landscaping.	2005				
North High Shoals - Install water line & hydrants on Plantation Rd. & Jefferson Rd.	2003				Completed by County
North High Shoals - Develop plans, schedule & budget for citywide water system.	2006				Water mains installed on Cole Springs Rd.
Sewer - Complete Bogart sanitary sewer line from Mars Hill Road to Gateway Business Park.	2002				
Sewer - Addition of a wastewater collection system, including a force main and a pump station at McNutt Creek	2002				
Sewer - Construct gravity sewer line system from Barber Creek to Daniels Bridge Road with lift station and force main to Mars Hill Road.	2002				
Sewer - Construct force main from Jimmy Daniel Rd. at McNutt Creek to LAS Site.	2002				
Sewer - Extend Malcom Bridge gravity sewer line	2006				
Sewer - Installed a force main and gravity system on Highway 53 for the new County park	2007				Underway -- will complete in 2007.
Sewer - Extend sewer force main to Benson's Bakery from Gateway Industrial Park.	2002				
Sewer - Complete upgrade of Calls Creek WWTP.	2007				Additional membranes will be added in 2007 which will increase capacity to 1 MGD

Project	Implementation				Status
	Complete	On-going	Pending	Dropped	

Bogart - Determine whether to proceed with development of city sewerage system.			X		
Waste Management - Continue to require recycling services by private solid waste collectors through solid waste ordinance enforcement.		X			Also applicable to Natural Resources
Waste Management - Continue participation in regional solid waste management and disposal planning.		X			Also applicable to Natural Resources
Waste Management - Continue to promote recycling by private citizens.		X			Also applicable to Natural Resources
Bogart - Promote recycling through private hauler and city franchise.		X			
Stormwater Division - develop a Stormwater Management Ordinance.	2004				
Stormwater Division - The Division is in the process of conducting a survey of the drainage systems in the northern portion of the Count, covering 22.5 square miles generally north of (and including) Watkinsville and Bogart, in the vicinity of the Athens-Clarke County line.		X			
Stormwater Division - Work with FEMA to complete comprehensive update of FIRM maps in unincorporated County including Base Flood Elevations on all major stream corridors.		X			Anticipated completion date 2007 to 2008. (Duplicate item—see under Natural and Historic Resources.)
EMT- The division, including EMS and 911 functions will move into new 5,800 sq.ft. facility on Experiment Station Rd.	2007				
Sheriff- Construct new detention center	2007				
Watkinsville - Develop plans and build new police department offices.	2003				
Parks and Rec - Support changes in state law which would make impact fees more practical for medium sized local governments.	2007				
Parks and Rec - Schedule acquisition of new parcels for recreation facilities.	2003				Negotiations are complete for the Oconee Community Complex.
Parks and Rec - Acquisition of land, construction, equipping and installation costs for the new 196-acre Oconee Community Complex.	2007				Improvements are underway, will complete in 2007.
Parks and Rec - Continue the development of Heritage Park (300 acre recreational, cultural, agricultural facility).	2007				

Project	Implementation				Status
	Complete	On-going	Pending	Dropped	
Parks and Rec - Acquire property and begin development of new recreation facility.		X			Will continue as county grows.
Parks and Rec - Continue to expand recreation planning horizon (20 year period).		X			
Continue to expand Senior Citizen Center programs and health programs as needed.		X			
Bogart - Continue cooperative development of recreation facilities through county.		X			
Bishop - Use of abandoned rail lines as bicycle and hiking trails		X			In process
North High Shoals - Continue city plans to convert old fire station to a city recreation facility and park.	2007				Complete
North High Shoals - Continue development of city park.	2007				Complete
Watkinsville - Improve Harris Shoals Park landscape and facilities.	2007				
Watkinsville - Implement downtown streetscape	2007				Also applicable to Economic Development.
Watkinsville - Secure, locate and build street department shop.	2005				
Watkinsville - Investigate feasibility of City Hall remodeling.	2004				
School System – Construct North Oconee High School	2004				
School System - purchase 12 modular classrooms (six doublewide trailers), budget for 28 additional teachers and identified other classroom space.	2006-2007	X			To meet current and future capacity needs.
School System – Facilities improvements including: Music Suite addition and roof replacement at Oconee Middle School; fire alarms at Colham Ferry and Oconee elementary; purchase and install technology at all schools	2003-2007				
School System – Purchase land for new elementary school				X	In process. Will be complete by end of 2007/2008
<b>Circulation/Infrastructure</b>					
Continue active participation in MA-CORTS (Athens/Clarke-Oconee Regional Transportation Study).		X			
Proceed with all transportation projects currently in the TIP (4 year) & the long range plan (20 year).		X			

Project	Implementation				Status
	Complete	On-going	Pending	Dropped	
Complete Old Farmington Road culvert.	2003				
Complete Phase II Jennings Mill Parkway, Lowes to Oconee Connector with interchange at Loop 10.		X			ROW acquisition will be completed in 2007. Will let contract in 2008 with 2-year construction schedule.
Plan commercial development on US 441 & other major transportation corridors in such a manner as to preserve the capacity of these through roads by requiring interconnection between new developments.		X			
Continue implementing local transportation projects outside of the TIP and TP through consultants, county staff & county contract.	2007				
Complete 4 lane project (widening of Mars Hill/Experiment Station Road).		X			Should let contract in 2010.
Continue to improve and upgrade streets (resurfacing).		X			
Intersection & improvements to Rocky Branch, Snows Mill Roads and Hwy. 53 (re: new public school campus).	2006				
Continue infrastructure development on US 441 North, connector between US 441 and SR 15, Mars Hill/US 78 corridor, and US 78 from McNutt Creek to SR 53.		X			
Continue to improve and signalize intersections. Investigate other methods to improve intersection safety.		X			
Continue to implement bridge maintenance and improvement program		X			
Bishop - Continue planning dialogue with GA DOT and local county BOC for future Bishop By-pass on Hwy 441.		X			
Bogart - Continue to improve and upgrade streets.		X			
Bogart - Establish sidewalks, bike trails, pedestrian crossings, etc. to make accessible facilities to residents.		X			
North High Shoals - Continue to improve & upgrade city streets.		X			
North High Shoals - Develop a plan & budget for installing street lights in areas not currently covered.	2005				
Watkinsville - Perform traffic study of area surrounding Christian Lake Subdivision and dangerous intersections.	2007				

Project	Implementation				Status
	Complete	On-going	Pending	Dropped	

<b>Housing</b>					
Expand inspection staff as needed to keep pace with growth and thoroughly inspect all new structures.	2007				
Continue present policies which promote affordable housing including PUD zoning, conservation subdivisions and manufactured housing regulations.		X			
<b>Land Use</b>					
Codify development regulations including sign regulations.	2006				
Conduct seminar(s) for developers & consultants.	2007				
Continue staff training (continuing education)		X			
Expand staff as needed (Planning & Engineering)		X			
Implement new zoning districts for low density residential developments. (Consider AR4 & AR3 Districts)	2002				
Bishop - Continue cooperative development review through Oconee Co. Planning Commission and Planning staff.		X			
Bogart - Continue cooperative development review through Oconee County Planning Commission and staff to identify any needed changes to regulations.		X			
Bogart - Continue cooperative agreement with county BOC and Planning staff for development procedures.		X			
Bogart - Enforce all existing zoning ordinances to bring city into compliance.		X			
Bogart - Review inventory of records and update plat compilations, land maps, R-O-W, easements.	2007				
Bogart - Initiate a Yard of the Month program	2007				
Bogart - Review of all ordinances, codes, regulations and then reconcile any differences with the Charter.	2007				
Bogart - Initiate a Clean-Up Bogart weekend to become an annual event.	2007				

Project	Implementation				Status
	Complete	On-going	Pending	Dropped	
North High Shoals - Continue cooperative agreement with county BOC and Planning staff for development procedures.		X			
North High Shoals - Continue cooperative development review through Oconee Co. Planning Commission and Planning staff to identify any needed changes to Zoning Regulations (also applies to Housing).		X			
North High Shoals - Develop Fire-arms Discharge Ordinance to protect residential character of town.	2003				
North High Shoals - Develop & adopt Sidewalk Ordinance for residential subdivisions.	2005				
Watkinsville - Continue cooperative agreement with county BOC and Planning staff for development procedures.		X			
Watkinsville - Continue cooperative development review through Oconee Co. Planning Commission and Planning staff to identify any needed changes to regulations.		X			

## ■ Preliminary Short Term Work Program—2008-2012

Note: “Ongoing” and “pending” projects listed on the Plan Accomplishments—2003-2007 report that will continue throughout the 2008-2012 period are not repeated on the Preliminary Short Term Work Program in order to clearly identify new projects or ongoing/pending projects that are proposed in the Comprehensive Plan Update. Such ongoing and pending projects carried forward from the Plan Accomplishments—2003-2007 report will be inserted prior to adoption of the STWP for a complete listing of all projects.

### Preliminary

Project Description	08	09	10	11	12	Funding	Responsible Party
<b>Economic Development</b>							
Continue to actively market the potential for development of the undeveloped “Industrial and Technology Business” zoned sites in northwestern Oconee County (includes Gateway Industrial Park).	X	X	X	X	X		Economic Development Department
Outline areas on the Future Development Map to accommodate the amount and types of economic development opportunities that are desired and projected.	X						Economic Development Department, Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Step up efforts, programs and incentives to attract greater economic development opportunities.	X	X	X	X	X		Economic Development Department
Ensure that adequate infrastructure is in place to support and attract new businesses and industries.	X	X	X	X	X		Economic Development Department, Public Works Department, Utilities Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Bogart - Develop the Gateway Industrial Park (Orkin Tract) into a good business park.	X	X	X	X	X		City of Bogart
North High Shoals – Pave remaining dirt roadways.	X	X	X	X	X		City of North High Shoals
Bogart – Prioritize the installation of infrastructure at the Gateway to attract businesses.	X	X	X	X	X		City of Bogart
Watkinsville – Promote Watkinsville as a day trip destination for arts, crafts and cultural activities, as well as regional tourism and conventions.	X	X	X	X	X		City of Watkinsville
Watkinsville - Increase the aesthetic appeal of the community through the placement of public art displays taking advantage of Watkinsville’s expanding art community.	X	X	X	X	X		City of Watkinsville
<b>Natural and Historic Resources</b>							
Conduct a study of tools, programs, approaches, administration and funding sources that would meaningfully and effectively provide protection for designated agricultural and rural areas of the county.	X						Strategic & Long Range Planning Department

## Preliminary

Project Description	08	09	10	11	12	Funding	Responsible Party
Create an enhanced program for Farmland Preservation and rural area conservation.		X					Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Continue to utilize tax incentives, land use regulation and other means to preserve and protect prime agricultural farmlands and forest lands.	X	X	X	X	X		Tax Commissioner, Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Predetermine and identify specific conservation areas and greenways so that retained areas will ultimately form an interconnected network of protected lands.		X					Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department All Cities
Prepare a Historic Preservation Ordinance or Overlay, including property disposition, to protect and enhance the historical assets of the community, through regulation, assistance and reuse.	X	X					Historic Sites and Tourism Subcommittee, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
In conjunction with the Cities, seek funding for the conduct of an updated Historic Resources Survey.	X	X					Historic Sites and Tourism Subcommittee County, All Cities
Pursue the nomination of the Farmington Historic District, in conjunction with the old depot and the Freeman Creek Church to the National Register listing.			X				Historic Sites and Tourism Subcommittee, Planning Department
Complete the renovation of the upper story of the Old Elder Mill (the lower floor has already been restored into living quarters) and listing of the structure on the National Register.	X						Historic Sites and Tourism Subcommittee
Continue to utilize Oconee Heritage Park to preserve our heritage and promote tourism within the county.	X	X	X	X	X		Parks and Recreation Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Review the locations of existing historic resources and rezone appropriate properties to the Scenic Preservation District designation.	X						Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Consider revisions to the UDC that require that greenspace, open space and protected sensitive natural areas be incorporated within all new developments.	X						Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Enforce Best Management Practices during construction to mitigate the adverse environmental impacts associated with new development.	X	X	X	X	X		Planning Department, Code Enforcement Department <b>All Cities</b>
Bishop – Establish wellhead protection zones to protect water supply.	X						City of Bishop
Bogart – Nominate the Bogart Residential and Commercial Historic District to the National Register.			X				City of Bogart
North High Shoals - nominate the North High Shoals Historic District to the National Register, and the potential to conduct an updated Historic Resources Survey utilizing a matching grant from the HPD of DNR or other potential sources of funding.							City of North High Shoals, Historic Sites and Tourism Subcommittee
North High Shoals - Establish wellhead protection zones to protect water supply.	X						City of North High Shoals

## Preliminary

Project Description	08	09	10	11	12	Funding	Responsible Party
North High Shoals - Adopt County standards and regulations, or develop restrictions specific to North High Shoals to prevent septic systems in areas of high water tables, shallow bedrock, steep slopes and unsuitable soils.	X	X					City of North High Shoals
Watkinsville - Standardize historic preservation procedures and design guidelines to retain and enhance the scale and character of the city.	X	X					City of Watkinsville
Watkinsville - Incorporate locally significant historic landmarks into the design of new development, where applicable.	X	X	X	X	X		City of Watkinsville
Watkinsville - Reduce levels of impervious surface through the implementation of tree protection and planting programs.	X	X	X	X	X		City of Watkinsville
<b>Community Facilities</b>							
Consider consolidate of county governmental functions and services into a centrally located and accessible facility or campus.				X	X		Oconee County
Work with FEMA to complete comprehensive update of FIRM maps in unincorporated County including Base Flood Elevations on all major stream corridors.	X						Planning and Public Works Departments
Parks – Improvements to Oconee Community Complex (complete Phase I improvements and begin Phase II – swimming pool, nature center, playgrounds, dog park); Oconee Heritage Park (museum, amphitheatre, school relocation, historic structures, trails, detention pond); Herman C. Michael Park (Brown Bldg renovations and playground equipment); Bogart Recreation Complex (maintenance and replacement of existing facilities).	X	X	X	X			Parks and Recreation Department
Solid Waste – The County's Clean and Beautiful Commission shall continue to participate in discussions to ascertain locations for new regional landfill.	X	X					Public Works
Senior Services - New Senior Center facility in the Oconee Community complex on Highway 53.	X						Senior Services
School System – Purchase additional trailers and contract additional teachers.	X	X	X	X	X		Oconee County School System
School System – Purchase land for future schools.	X	X	X	X	X		Oconee County School System
School System - Construct a new elementary school in North High Shoals.					X		Oconee County School System
School System – Build and equip classroom additions and renovations at existing facilities, to include: Classroom additions for Oconee County Middle School, Rocky Branch Elementary School and Malcomb Bridge Middle School; athletic facilities; road improvements on the campuses; technology infrastructure; administrative suite for Oconee County Middle School; general renovations system-wide.	X	X	X	X	X		Oconee County School System

## Preliminary

Project Description	08	09	10	11	12	Funding	Responsible Party
School System - If funds are available, develop additional new schools and administrative facilities.				X	X		Oconee County School System
Water and Sewer – Develop Master Plan for Water and Wastewater Facilities.	X						Utility Department, Finance Department, Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Wastewater - Upgrade the Rocky Branch LAS to a 1 MGD Membrane Filtration Plant.	X						Utility Department
Wastewater – Expand the Rocky Branch W.R.F. as needed.	X	X	X	X	X		Utility Department
Wastewater – Install screens to Upgrade Calls Creek Wastewater Reclamation Facility to 1.5 MGD.			X	X			Utility Department
Wastewater - Extend the 441 sewer line to the county line with a master lift station.				X	X		Utility Department
Water - Complete 24" water transmission line from Bear Creek to Old Hwy. 29.	X						Utility Department
Water - Construction of a new 1 MG storage tank.	X						Utility Department
Water - Extension of a 24 inch water line along Mars Hill Road from Old SR 29 to the water storage tank.	X						Utility Department
Water - Extension of a waterline from Elder Road – Herman C. Michael to the Steeple Chase subdivision.					X		Utility Department
Water - Line size upgrades, fire hydrant installations.	X	X	X	X	X		Utility Department
Water – Acquire permits for Barnett Shoals reservoir and treatment facility.					X		Utility Department
Water - Make determination to participate in a multi-jurisdictional water reservoir with Walton County and the City of Winder at Hard Labor Creek in Walton County.	X						Utility Department
Stormwater – Complete survey assessment and mapping of drainage systems in the northern portion of the County.	X						Stormwater Division
Fire Department – Acquire land for new station in the vicinity of North High Shoals, construct station, and acquire associated equipment.	X	X	X				Fire Department
Fire Department – Acquire land for new station in Eastville area.				X	X		Fire Department
EMS – Transition EMT personnel from volunteer to compensated positions.				X			EMS
Bogart – Expand City water and sewer system to provide water and sewer service to all areas of the City.	X	X	X	X	X		City of Bogart
Bogart. – provide full time staffing at the Fire Station.							City of Bogart

## Preliminary

Project Description	08	09	10	11	12	Funding	Responsible Party
North High Shoals – Identify funding resources and plan for the following community facilities: a branch library; a new park or expansion of the existing park.		X	X				City of North High Shoals
Watkinsville – Maintenance items.	X	X	X				City of Watkinsville
Watkinsville – Redevelop Rocket Field from its existing use as a baseball diamond to a community square available for passive recreation and civic uses.				X	X		City of Watkinsville
Watkinsville - Expand the existing community park, and develop two additional community parks to provide recreation opportunities within walking distance of existing and future residents.				X	X		City of Watkinsville
Watkinsville – Three additional patrol staff.				X			Watkinsville Police Department
<b>Circulation/Traffic Facilities</b>							
Construction of the Epps Bridge Connector.	X	X	X	X	X		Roads Division
Widening of Mars Hill Road.	X	X	X	X	X		Roads Division
Widening of Daniels Bridge Road.	X	X	X	X	X		Roads Division
Widening of Hog Mountain Road.	X	X	X	X	X		Roads Division
Several new or improved interchanges along SR 316.	X	X	X	X	X		Roads Division
Widening or reconstructing of SR 316 to a limited access facility (with or without a toll).	X	X	X	X	X		Roads Division
Construction of Jennings Mill Parkway flyover.	X	X	X	X	X		Roads Division
Jennings Mill Parkway Extension Project (from Epps Bridge Parkway over loop 10 to the Oconee Connector).	X	X	X			Federal TEA, State, Local	Roads Division
Mars Hill/Experiment Station Road widening project (from the Oconee Connector to Watkinsville).			X	X	X	Federal TEA, State, Local	Roads Division
Simonton Bridge Road Widening Project, (from Watkinsville to the Athens/Clarke County line).					X	Federal TEA, State, Local	Roads Division
Require sidewalks in all new subdivisions.	X	X	X	X	X		Roads Division, Planning Department
Consider alternative modes of transportation to link existing and developing areas of the county.	X	X	X	X	X		Roads Division, Planning Department
Continue planning for the Athens to Atlanta Passenger Rail Program. A station of this commuter line is designated in the City of Bogart.		X	X	X			Roads Division, Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department City of Bogart
Continue working through MACORTS to develop a regional solution to transportation congestion, and to lobby for DOT transportation projects.	X	X	X	X	X		Roads Division, Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department

## Preliminary

Project Description	08	09	10	11	12	Funding	Responsible Party
Bishop - Reactivate the 441 Bypass project around Bishop.							City of Bishop
Watkinsville - Improve the aesthetics along major entry and exit points in the city, including GA highway 15, Old 441 Highway, GA highway 53 and Simonton Bridge Road.	X	X	X	X	X		City of Watkinsville
Watkinsville- Develop a multi-modal master plan that includes greenway trails, bicycle lanes and sidewalks that coordinates new development with the construction of new facilities.	X	X	X				City of Watkinsville
Watkinsville - Develop a multi-use greenway system utilizing stream and river corridors as well as the rail line that traverses Watkinsville.	X	X	X	X	X		City of Watkinsville
Watkinsville - Develop public/private partnerships and require shared parking lots within new Central Business District development to increase the amount of public parking space.	X	X	X	X	X		City of Watkinsville
<b>Housing</b>							
Develop incentive programs and provide assistance to developers and non-profit organizations to promote mixed housing types within developments to accommodate seniors within a multi-aged community.	X	X					Finance Department, Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Develop standards and guidelines to implement the potential for mixed-use, small lot and attached housing in appropriate Character Areas.	X	X					Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Manage the development of quality housing using Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.	X	X	X	X	X		All Cities
<b>Land Use</b>							
Encourage growth through land use plan consistency and infrastructure investment in areas where it will be the most beneficial to the County and its cities as outlined on the Future Development Map (FDM).	X	X	X	X	X		Planning, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Establish a capital improvement program that ensures that new development pays for its proportionate share of the cost of new facilities at the time of development.	X	X	X				Finance Department, Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Create an intergovernmental mechanism to provide coordination between departments involved in sewer and water expansion, transportation improvements, new school development, public safety, and parks and recreation planning, to share information regarding the pace and location of new residential development and nonresidential development trends.	X	X	X	X	X		Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Preserve rural character by directing development where appropriate and establishing design and development guidelines to implement desired character.	X	X	X	X	X		Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department

## Preliminary

Project Description	08	09	10	11	12	Funding	Responsible Party
Any commercial development to be identified on the Future Development Map in the south end of the county should be designated to encompass the rural and agricultural heritage of that area.	X	X	X	X	X		Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Using the Future Development Map as a guide, focus new growth into appropriate Character Areas, thereby lifting development pressure from farming and rural communities.	X	X	X	X	X		Planning Department, Strategic & Long Range Planning Department
Plan cooperatively with the Board of Education in locating new schools that will avoid generating unwanted growth in rural and agricultural areas.	X	X	X	X	X		
Bogart - Place utilities underground in the downtown section and in all new developments.	X	X	X	X	X		City of Bogart
Bogart – Revise development requirements to require sidewalks for all new development and roadways.							City of Bogart
North High Shoals - Adopt new land use policies and ordinances as may be identified by the Mayor and Council or required by State and Federal statutes.	X	X	X	X	X		City of North High Shoals
Watkinsville - Continue to work with Oconee County in assessing the service delivery strategy and mitigate inefficiencies through strategic planning and cooperative aid agreements.	X	X	X	X	X		City of Watkinsville
Watkinsville - Modify existing Zoning and Subdivision Regulations as needed to address future development, public health, safety and welfare.	X	X	X	X	X		City of Watkinsville
Watkinsville - Incorporate the new Land Use Map into the zoning amendment procedures when reviewing rezones.	X	X	X	X	X		City of Watkinsville