

**Garden City
Community Profile
Draft**

CHAPTER 2

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Introduction

Originally founded in 1939, Garden City features a blend of industry and small business, a strong economy, and quality services for its residents. As a full-service municipality, the City provides multiple services from police and fire protection to water/sewer service, solid waste collection, street and drainage maintenance, recreational programs and facilities, code enforcement, and more. Garden City is defined by responsive, visionary leadership through its seven-member City Council.

From its founding in 1939 until 2009, it operated under a mayor-council form of government. The City has since adopted a council-manager form of government, with the mayor, one at-large council member and five district-elected council members. The City operates and funds its municipal services via a combination of property taxes, sales taxes, user fees and other sources.

Population and Growth Projections

This section presents population data for Garden City, and other localities within the Chatham County area, as well as Chatham, Effingham, and Bryan Counties within the Savannah Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

Current Population

Garden City’s population has grown by 21.2% since 2020, comprising 3.5% of the total County population, and is the fourth largest incorporated city in Chatham County.

Population 2020-2024				
County	Jurisdiction	2020	2024	% Change
Chatham County		289,649	300,879	3.9%
	City of Savannah	145,492	149,465	2.7%
	Unincorporated Chatham	93,478	90,834	-2.8%
	City of Pooler	24,575	28,466	15.8%
	Port Wentworth	8,886	12,892	45.1%
	Garden City	8,597	10,426	21.2%
	Tybee Island	3,094	3,123	0.9%
	Bloomington	2,801	3,007	7.4%
	Town of Thunderbolt	2,638	2,533	-4.0%
	Vernonburg	88	133	51.1%
Effingham County		62,241	69,143	11.1%
Bryan County		38,321	48,263	25.9%
Source: 2020 and 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates				

Figure 2.1 – Population Savannah MSA 2020-2024

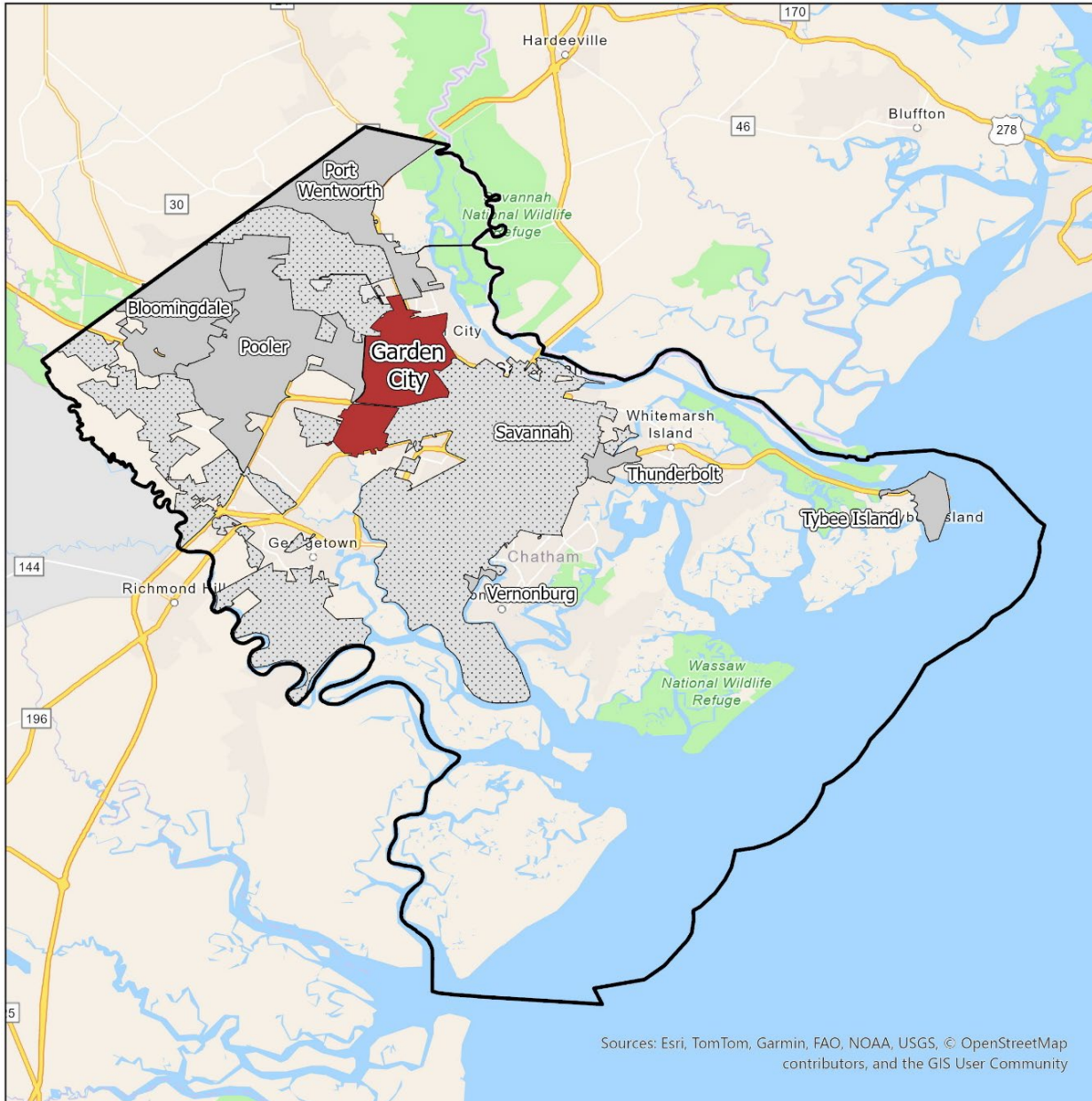


Exhibit 2.1 – Garden City Location in Chatham County

Population Projections

Figure 2.2 illustrates the future projections for each County in the Savannah MSA from 2025 to the end of the Comprehensive Plan 2040 Update period in 2045. While Chatham County is expected to retain its status as the largest population center in the metropolitan area, its neighboring counties are forecast to experience a greater rate of growth in the coming years. This equates to a population increase of approximately 14.2% in Chatham County over a 20-year period and an increase of approximately 25.3% in the Savannah MSA overall.

Population projections were prepared using a standard cohort component demographic methodology. This approach models population change as a function of initial population estimates broken down by age and sex, fertility, mortality, and migration.

Savannah MSA Population Projections				
County	2025	2040	2045	% Change 2025-2045
Chatham County	310,554	346,708	354,532	14.2%
Effingham County	64,769	97,004	104,577	61.5%
Bryan County	52,262	70,188	76,838	34.3%
Total	427,585	513,900	535,947	25.3%
Source: Georgia Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget (OPB)				

Figure 2.2 –Savannah MSA Population Projections

Population Characteristics

Population By Age and Gender

Garden City has a median age of 35.7 years compared to Chatham County and Georgia, at 37.1 and 37.4 years old respectively. It also has a reverse gender distribution with 52% male and 48% female residents compared to Chatham County overall, which has a 52% female and 48% male gender distribution.

The largest age cohort in Garden City is 35-54 years, at almost 30% of the total population, with a higher proportion of females, followed closely by almost 29% of residents in the 19 years and under age cohort. This 35–54 age bracket covers the prime years for raising children who are in school, as well as representing a significant portion of the working age population which may contribute to the close correlation. National trends also indicate a rise in delayed parenting and later marriage.

The population in the 20-34 age bracket is more heavily male, potentially reflecting the type of employment opportunities associated with port and distribution facilities in the vicinity. This distribution is mirrored in the 55-64 age bracket, reversing as the population ages in the above 65 year cohorts, supported by national level research which indicates that the ratio of males to females declines significantly with age. The proportion of residents over age 65 in Garden City at 11.3% is lower than in Chatham County overall at 17.5%. This divergence may be partially attributed to the fact that there are no large, dedicated, branded 55+ active adult active adult retirement communities located directly within the Garden City, with options located in Savannah, Pooler and areas like Wilmington and Skidaway Island, which are known as popular retirement communities.

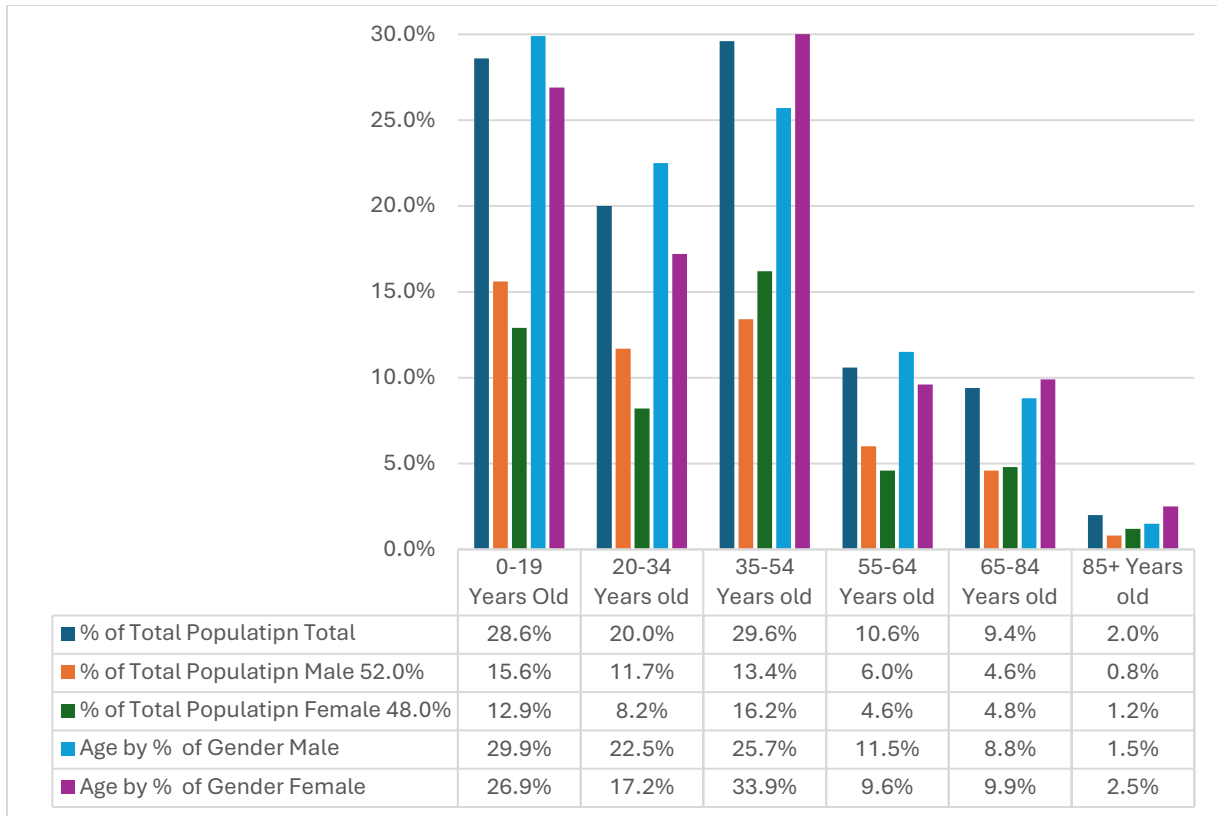


Figure 2.3 – Garden City Age and Gender

Household Size and Composition

According to the US Census Bureau, “Household” refers to all persons occupying a housing unit while “Family” refers to a group of two or more people related by birth, marriage, or adoption, and residing together. Garden City has an average household size of 2.36 and family size of 3.11 persons, similar to the City of Savannah but lower than the overall County. Nearly one-third of households in Garden City contain children, correlating with the larger age cohorts of residents in the prime family years and children, both higher than in Chatham County and the City of Savannah.

Household Size and Presence of Children			
Jurisdiction	Average Household Size	Average Family Size	Households with Children
Georgia	2.64	3.25	32.1%
Garden City	2.36	3.11	31.0%
Chatham County	2.41	3.05	26.0%
City of Savannah	2.35	3.12	24.5%

Figure 2.4 – Household Size and Presence of Children

Family households predominate household composition. More than one-half of family households are “other family” types, consisting of single householders with no spouse present, typically single parent units, with a greater representation of female headed single parent households. Nearly 45% of household units are nonfamily, consisting primarily of persons living alone, with a small component of households in shared dwelling arrangements.

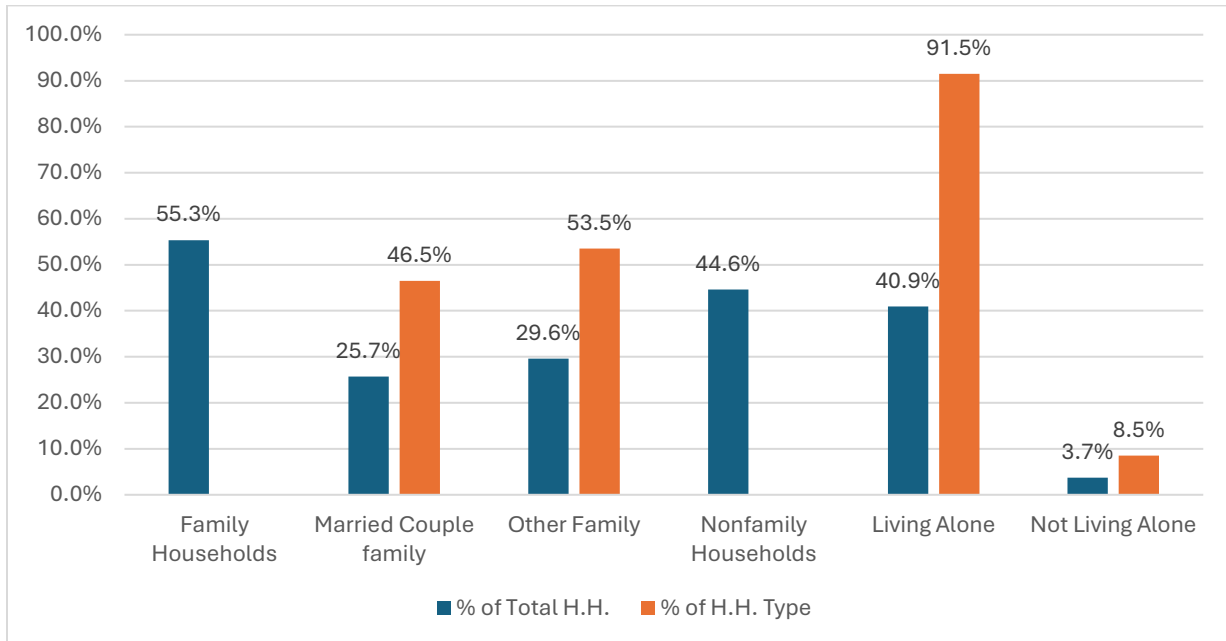


Figure 2.5 – Household and Family Composition

Housing Tenure

In Chatham County, the majority of dwelling units are owner-occupied, whereas in Garden City 43.7% of households own their home. The majority of households in Garden City are renter-occupied, similar to the tenure distribution in the City of Savannah. Of those households, over one-half are non-family units living alone, followed by married-couple households. Of the renter households, a higher proportion are other family units, typically comprised of a single parent, followed by nonfamily households living alone. Married-couple family units comprise only 22% of the total renter households. These statistics suggest that the greater share of residents in Garden City are more non-traditional unit types of nonfamily households living alone and non-married household family units. In those circumstances, the majority of heads of households fall within the 35 to 64 year old cohort, followed by the 65 and over age bracket.

Housing Tenure by Household Type		
Household Formation	% of Total H.H.	% of Tenure
Owner-Occupied Households	43.7%	100%
Married-Couple Family Households	13.1%	30.0%
Other Family Households	7.2%	16.4%
Nonfamily Households Living Alone	23.3%	53.3%
Nonfamily Households Other Arrangements	0.1%	0.4%
Renter-Occupied Households	56.3%	100%
Married-Couple Family Households	12.6%	22.4%
Other Family Households	22.4%	40.0%
Nonfamily Households Living Alone	17.6%	31.2%
Nonfamily Households Other Arrangements	3.6%	6.3%

Figure 2.6 – Housing Tenure by Household Type

Household Income and Poverty Rate

According to data from the 2023 ACS 5-Year estimates, Garden City has a median income of \$41,735. This is much lower compared to Chatham County, which has a median household income of \$69,575 and the State of Georgia as a whole, with a median household income of nearly \$75,000.

Median Household Income and Poverty			
	Median Household Income	% of Population in Poverty	% of Families in Poverty
Georgia	\$74,664	13.50%	9.90%
Chatham County	\$69,575	14.50%	9.80%
Savannah	\$56,782	19.50%	13.20%
Garden City	\$41,735	15.0%	12.3%
Source: 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates (S2503, S1701, S1702)			

Figure 2.7 – Median Household Income and Poverty

In Garden City, 15% of the population lives in poverty, lower than in Savannah, but higher than county and statewide. Overall, the proportion of individuals living below the poverty level is higher than the proportion of families in poverty, inclusive of married-couple and single parent headed households with children, although remaining higher than occurrence in Chatham County and the State. Individuals living alone or with non-relatives often have lower median incomes compared to family household units which often are comprised of two income earners, therefore exhibiting a higher frequency of individuals falling below the poverty line.

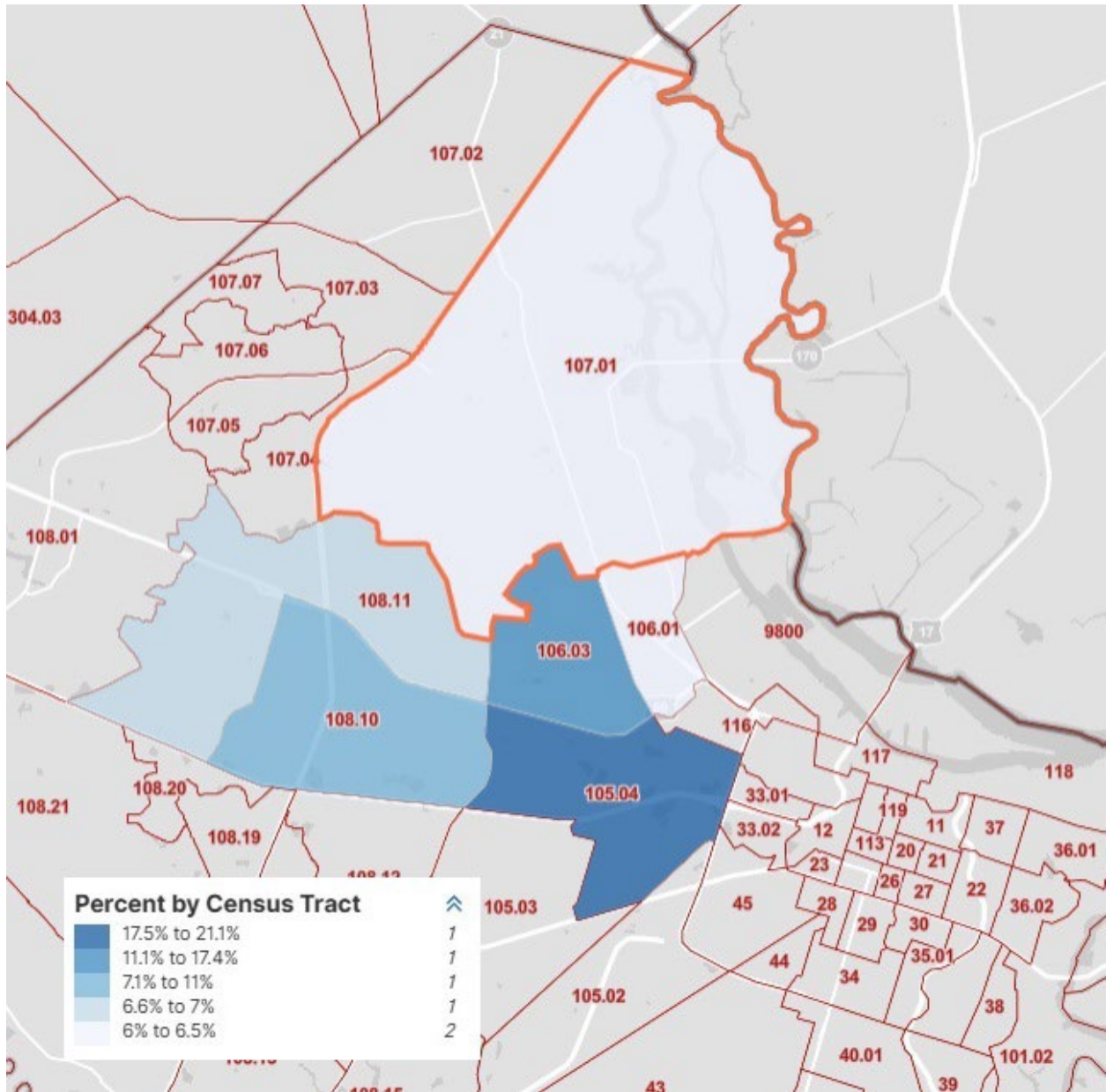


Exhibit 2.2 – Garden City: Poverty Status 2024

Race and Ethnicity

Nativity

According to data from the 2023 ACS 5-Year estimates 8% of the population in Chatham County was born outside of the United States. A higher percentage of the population of Garden City was foreign-born, at 13.7%.

Population By Race

Overall, Garden City is racially and ethnically diverse and has been changing in composition during the Plan 2040 period. The largest plurality of the population by racial group is now Black or African American, reflecting a 6.2% increase over the Plan period. The White population, which had been predominant in 2020, has decreased by 3.6%, and currently is slightly less representative than the Black population. The residents identifying as Some Other Race and Two or More Race populations have notably increased over the prior Plan period. This might be partially attributed to individuals of mixed races previously identifying as either White or Black only and now choosing to respond as a more blended racial identity. As well, individuals who identify as Hispanic, which is not classified as a race but as an ethnic group and not included separately in this Census table, may have responded as one of these categories, thereby contributing to the large increase. There were no residents identifying as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, and American Indian/Alaska Native in the City. These changes in racial composition are furthering the racial diversity of Garden City.

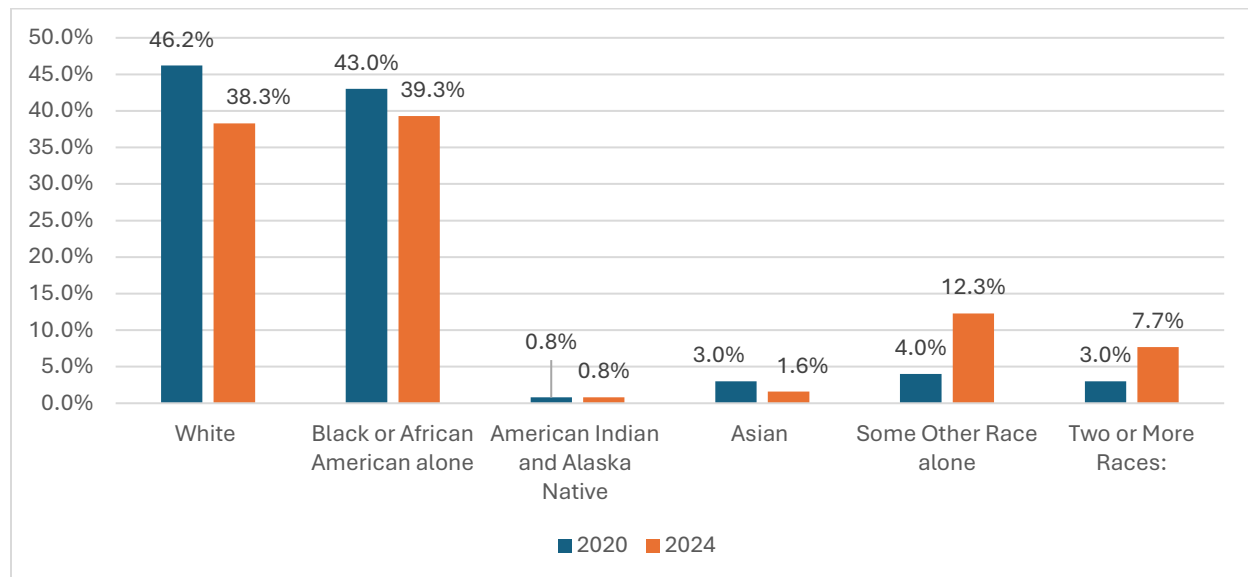


Figure 2.8 – Garden City: Race

The census tracts west of the Amtrak rail line and Bud Brown Dr. and north of the intersection of Augusta Rd. and Main St. in which the built environment is primarily established single-family residential exhibit a predominant White population; whereas the neighborhoods in the eastern side of the rail lines south of the intersection of Augusta Rd. and Main St. along Augusta Rd./W Bay St. and along Louisville Rd., and between Old Louisville Rd. and US Highway 80, which are a combination of older single-family

residential and varying intensity multifamily units, are predominantly Black/African American. However, while one race may be proportionally greater in a specific locality, the magnitude of the gap between the two largest racial categories is not great, reflecting fairly well integrated neighborhoods.

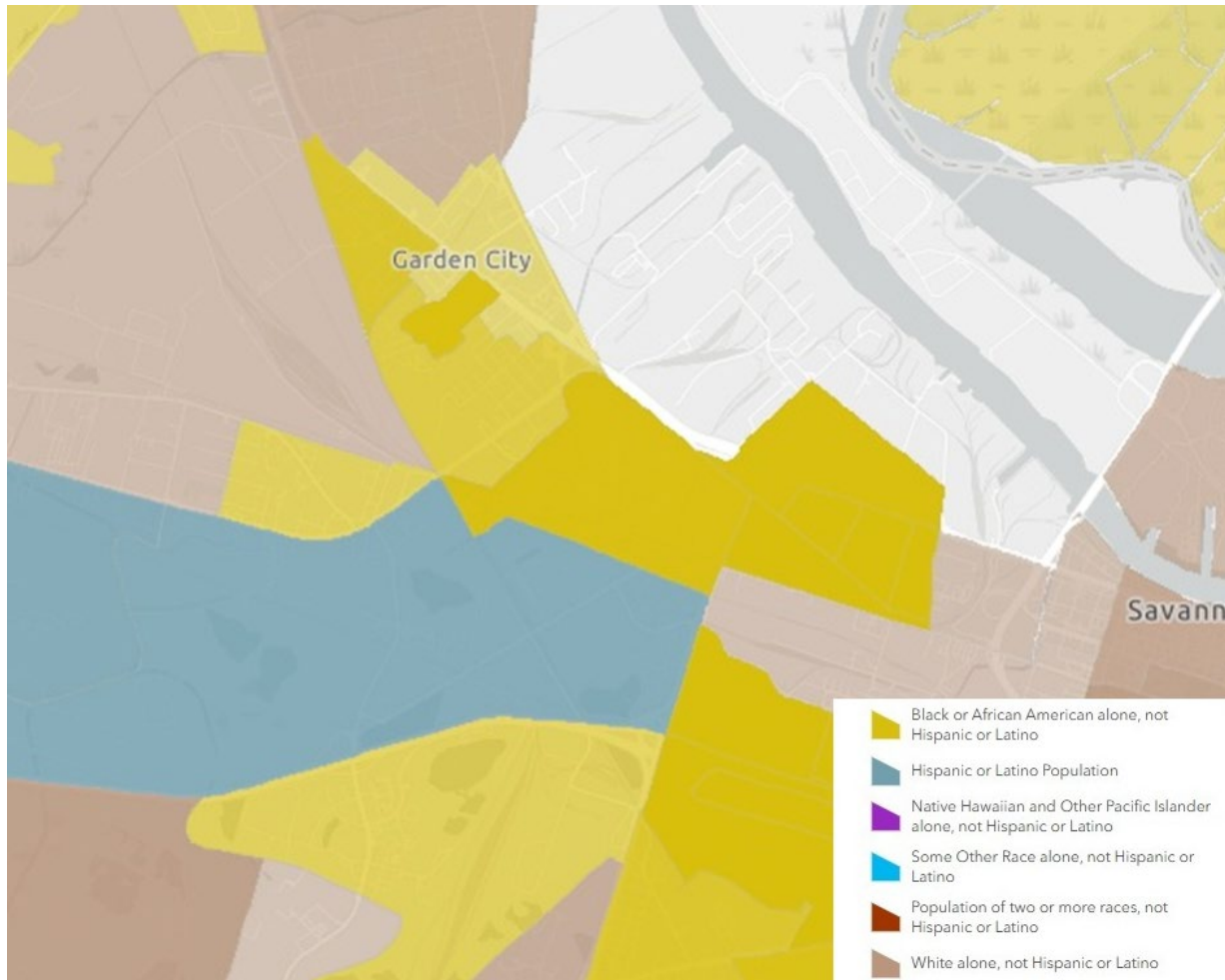


Exhibit 2.3 – Garden City: Race and Ethnicity

The distribution of residents identifying as Hispanic or Latino has increased over the Plan 2040 period. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 3.9 supports the prior evaluation of Figure 3.8. The data reveals that persons identifying as Hispanic or Latino in 2020 generally selected White as their race, whereas in 2024 they responded as Some Other Race or Two or More Races, resulting in a marked decrease in the White category and concurrent significant increases in the blended race categories. A small portion of Census Tract 105.4 is included in the City, in which the most prevalent race/ethnicity of the residents is reported as Hispanic/Latino – Other Race.

Hispanic or Latino by Race				
Hispanic or Latino:	2020	% of Total	2024	% of Total
Total:	8,957	100%	10,426	100%
Hispanic or Latino:	1,353	15.1%	1,941	18.6%
White	847	62.6%	223	11.5%
Black or African American	21	1.6%	0	0.0%
American Indian/Alaska Native	67	5.0%	76	3.9%
Asian	10	0.7%	0	0.0%
Some other race	359	26.5%	1,259	64.9%
Two or more races:	49	3.6%	383	19.7%

Source: ACS 2020 and 2024 5-Year Estimates B03002

Figure 2.9 – Hispanic or Latino by Race

Diversity Index

The diversity index determines the likelihood that two people chosen at random from a given area will be from different racial or ethnic groups. Higher values indicate more diversity in an area, and lower values indicate less diversity. Overall, Chatham County has a diversity index of 63.1%, meaning that if one were to pick two people at random in the county, there is over a 60% chance that those two people would be of a different race or ethnicity. The majority of Garden City is within the highest diversity index category, reflecting the mix of races throughout the City.

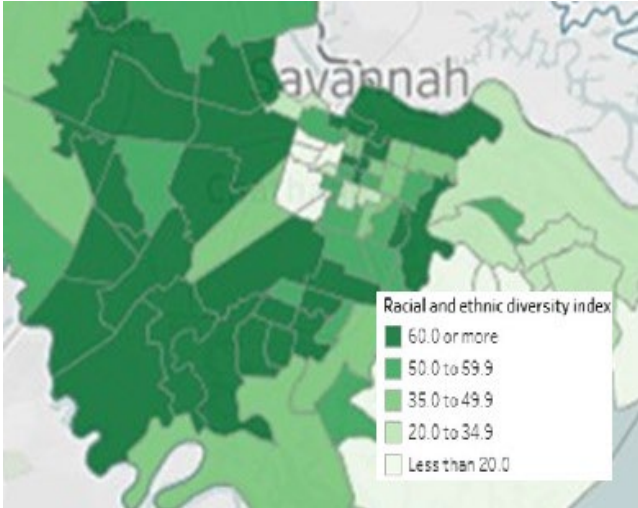


Exhibit 2.4 – Diversity Index

Population Density

Chatham County has a population density of approximately 2,379 per square mile, with the highest densities being in the City of Savannah. Garden City has a much lower population density at an average of 796 people per square mile. However, in Census Tract 106.01, closest to the port and major industrial activity node, the density is over 2,000 persons per square mile. In comparison, western and northern portions of the City show densities generally below 500 persons per square mile, with a few small portions close to the citywide average south of SR 26.

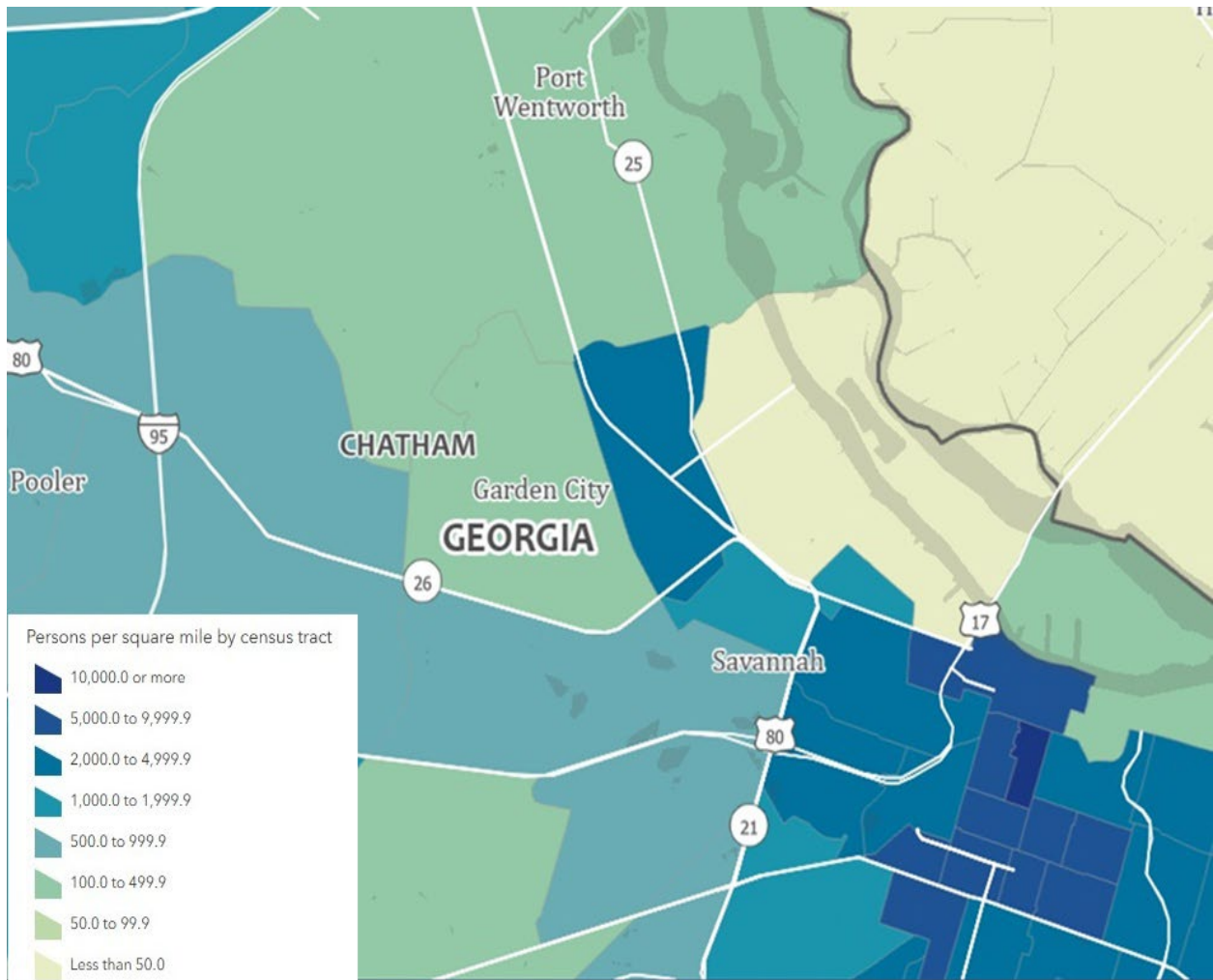


Exhibit 2.5 – Population Density

Economics and Workforce

The statistics in this section show the educational attainment of residents, percentage of people in the labor force, and the percentage of people working in certain fields.

Educational Attainment

Chatham County and Garden City vary in educational attainment. The proportion of individuals in Garden City who have obtained a high school diploma, and at the next level a bachelor’s degree is below Chatham County. More than double the share of residents within Chatham County have obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher, at almost 37%, compared to 16% in Garden City, with almost twice the percentage of residents in Garden City with no high school completion than in Chatham County overall. It is likely that there is a relationship between educational level and type of employment opportunities in Garden

City, as manual labor-based jobs, which comprise a significant share of the City’s employment sectors, do not always require a high school education.

Educational Attainment		
Educational Attainment	Chatham County	Garden City
Population 25 years and over	%	%
Less than 9th grade	2.9%	5.4%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	5.8%	9.6%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	24.6%	38.1%
Some college, no degree	22.4%	25.4%
Associate's degree	7.4%	5.4%
Bachelor's degree	22.0%	11.4%
Graduate or professional degree	14.7%	4.7%
High school graduate or higher	91.2%	85.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher	36.8%	16.1%

Source: ACS 2023 5-Year Estimates (S1501)

Figure 3.10 – Educational Attainment Garden City and Chatham County

Labor Force Participation

According to the ACS 2023 Five-Year Estimates, 64.0% of people 16 years and older were employed in the civilian labor force and 1.5% of people were in the armed forces in Chatham County; 36.0% of residents over 16 were not in the labor force, with an unemployment rate of 6.1%. Similarly, in Garden City, around 64.4% of working age people are participating in the labor force while 35.6% are not. Garden City’s unemployment rate is slightly higher than Chatham County’s at 7.0%, potentially reflecting the more transient nature of the industrial and logistics-based job market in the City.

Employment Status		
Employment Status	Chatham County	Garden City
Population 16 years and over		
In labor force	64.0%	64.4%
Civilian labor force	62.5%	63.9%
Employed	58.9%	59.5%
Unemployed	3.6%	4.4%
Armed Forces	1.5%	0.4%
Not in labor force	36.0%	35.6%
Unemployment Rate	6.1%	7.0%

Source: ACS 2023 5-Year Estimates (DP05)

Figure 2.11 – Employment Status Garden City and Chatham County

Industry Participation

In Garden City, the largest industries in which residents are employed as of 2024 are: construction; professional, scientific, management, and administrative and waste management services; retail trade; transportation and warehousing, and utilities and Retail trade. Employment in these four sectors represents 58% of the employed workforce in Garden City compared to Chatham County at 39.5%, which depends more heavily on education, health care and social assistance; and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services industries, in addition to retail trade and professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services similar to Garden City.

The higher incidence of the workforce participation in the construction and transportation and warehousing sectors in Garden City driven by proximity to the Port of Savannah, which are generally more hands-on labor intensive, further suggest a correlation with the lower secondary education degrees. Studies have found that approximately 78% of the logistics workforce do not require education above, or in many cases equivalent to, a high school education. The reliance on industrial and freight-supported sectors in Garden City provides high-wage opportunities for high school graduates in positions that do not typically require post-secondary educational completion.

Workforce Participation by Industry		
Industry	Chatham County %	Garden City %
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	144,351	4,765
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining	0.4%	0.0%
Construction	5.5%	15.9%
Manufacturing	7.8%	8.1%
Wholesale trade	2.0%	0.5%
Retail trade	13.0%	14.9%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	8.2%	12.0%
Information	1.5%	2.6%
Finance and insurance, real estate and rental and leasing	5.1%	3.0%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	12.8%	15.6%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	22.5%	9.2%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	12.3%	8.8%
Other services, except public administration	4.5%	5.7%
Public administration	4.4%	3.7%
Source: ACS 2024 5-Year Estimates (DP03)		

Figure 2.12 - Workforce Participation by Industry

Building Permits

The table below displays the number of residential building permits that were processed in in City by housing type.

Garden City Residential Building Permits				
Unit Type	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Units	9	9	67	11
Units in Single Family	9	9	8	11
Units in 2-Unit Multifamily	0	0	59	0
Units in 3 - 40 Unit Multifamily	0	0	0	0
Units in 5+ Unit Multi-Family	0	0	0	0
Source: US Department of Housing and Urban Development SOCDS Building Permits				

Figure 2.13 – Garden City: Building Permits

Housing unit growth in the City has been slow, with an annual average of roughly 9 units per year, and one townhome complex, further substantiating the need for the City to facilitate the provision of housing units for all income levels in a mix of dwelling unit types.

Data & Calculations

All data presented in the Community Profile are for Garden City, Chatham County, unincorporated Chatham County, and the City of Savannah unless otherwise noted. Most of these data are from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) multiyear estimates covering the January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2023 or December 31, 2024 period (the most current publicly available ACS multiyear data at the time of access). ACS 5-year estimates represent data collected over a period of 60 months, and describe the general social, economic, housing, and demographic characteristics of a geographic area over that entire period of time. These multiyear estimates offer the additional benefit of having smaller margins of error and being more statistically reliable than the single-year estimates also published by the ACS.

The population projections were prepared by the Georgia Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) using a standard cohort component demographic methodology. This approach models population change as a function of initial population estimates broken down by age and sex, fertility, mortality, and migration.