



QUALITY OF LIFE ELEMENT

08



QUALITY OF LIFE

Introduction

The Quality of Life element of Garden City 2040 seeks to present goals and recommendations for establishing historic preservation activities within Garden City in order to preserve and recognize its historic, cultural, and archaeological resources.

This element also includes an inventory and assessment of the following quality of life aspects: Historic and Cultural Resources, Education, Health, Public Safety, and Broadband.



Historic Resources



Public Safety



Education



Broadband



Community Health

HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Introduction

Historic preservation, synonymous for many with quality of life, is a valuable planning tool that can be used to protect buildings, objects, landscapes, and other artifacts of historical, cultural, and archaeological significance. Historic preservation work can take many forms; however, the main two ways to preserve buildings locally are through federal registration as a National Landmark or District on the National Register of Historic Places and local protection through establishing historic districts and/or preservation ordinances.

The National Register of Historic Places is a federal program that allows for individual or a group of structures/sites to be officially recognized as historically significant. This provides opportunities for preservation tax incentives, but otherwise may not offer protection of the resource when it comes to demolition or significant alterations. Local historic districts are comprised of a group of historic structures/sites deemed significant to a municipality's cultural fabric and are often protected through a public review process as outlined in a preservation zoning ordinance.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is the United States federal government's official list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects deemed worth of preservation for their historical significance.

Preservation efforts in Garden City have been limited; the last known historic resources survey was conducted in 1993 by Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) staff. The Dotson House was identified as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. However, the house was moved from its original location to the town center and then later demolished in 2020. No major local historic preservation efforts have been pursued.



1993

Year of the last known historic resource survey for Garden City conducted by the MPC



GARDEN CITY HISTORY

The Irene Mounds

The area now known as Garden City began with Indigenous peoples, whose presence is indicated by the Irene Mounds. The site was occupied during the Middle and Late Mississippian period (A.D. 1100–1600) and likely abandoned before the Europeans began to visit the Georgian coast. The Irene Mounds were located on the Savannah River; Pipemaker's Creek served as one boundary and a small ditch served as the other.

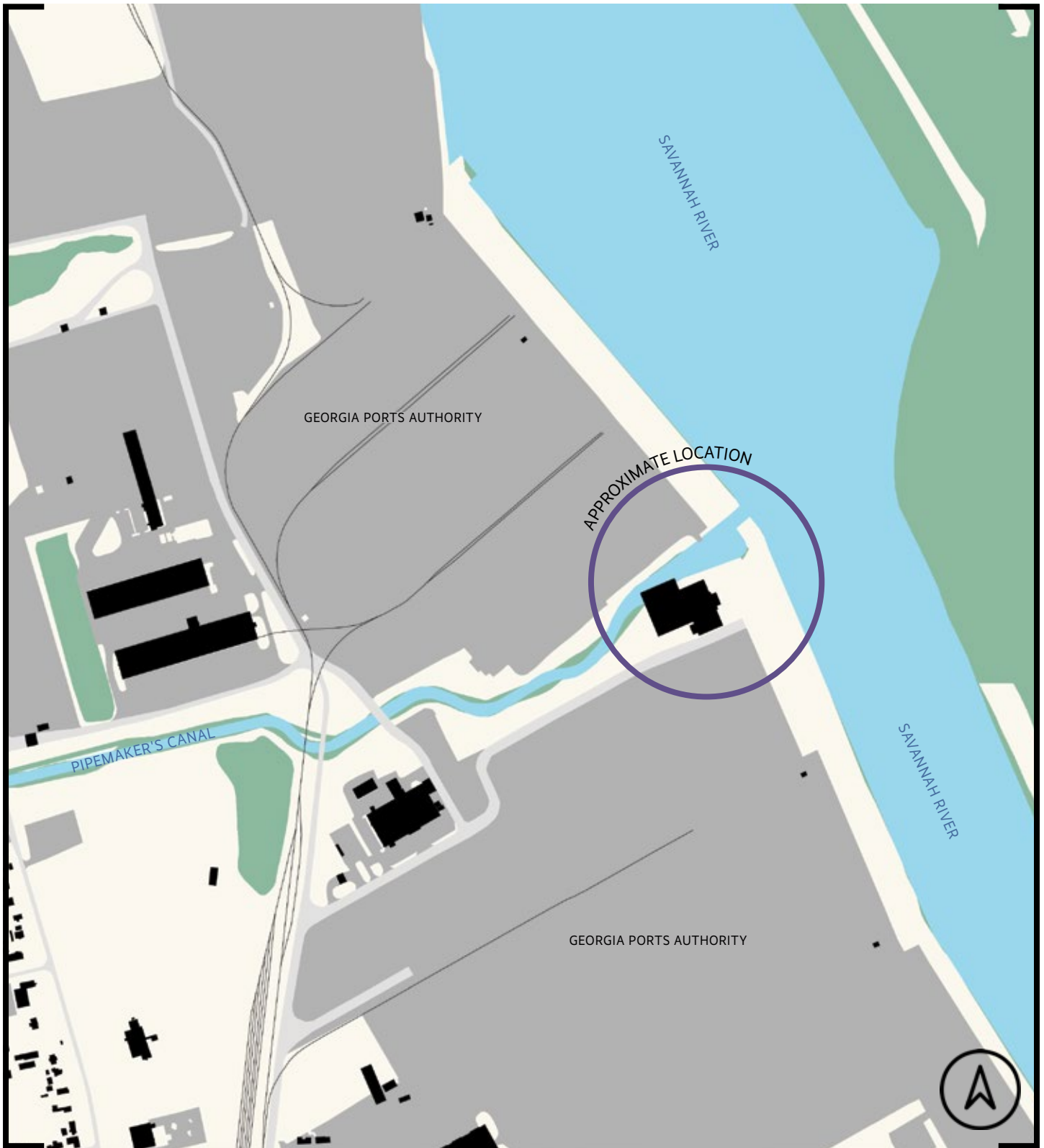
The name Irene comes from the missionary school established by the Morovians (immigrants from modern day Czech-Republic) in the 1700s; remnants of the building remained on the Temple Mound when archaeological excavation began in the 1930s. This archaeological excavation is notable as the most completely excavated mound site in Georgia and as an excavation that was completed almost entirely by women. While the project was run and passed among four men, women made up the majority of the workforce. Between the years of 1937 and 1940, 32 white women and up to 87 Black women were involved in the excavation of the Irene Mounds.

The women were poorly paid, and the Black women were paid even less than their white counterparts. Almost all of the identities of the Black women who worked the site are unknown, though several photographs of the women exist (*Rashid and Grieve, TrowelBlazers*). The major features of the Irene Mounds included “a large rectangular, flat-topped mound called the Temple Mound; a small conical mound with much shell and several burials called the Burial Mound; and a square building and surrounding wall at ground level in the village with many burials named the Mortuary” (*Williams, New Georgia Encyclopedia*).

The site is now interpreted as a Chiefly Compound, meaning that the full-time resident population was around thirty to forty people, consisting of the chief, and his family, wives, and children. The compound also served as a social site for all other families which lived nearby and as a place for meetings. Residents grew corn and beans, and likely relied on coastal resources such as fish and shellfish. The Irene Mounds are now completely destroyed and lie under the ship docks of the Georgia Ports Authority, as shown on the Map 8.1.



PIPEMAKER'S CANAL



Map 8.1—Approximate Location of the Irene Mounds



Garden City Plantations & Pipemakers Canal

Later in the 18th Century, as the European colonists came to the Savannah area, three major plantations were established, encompassing what is now Garden City: Brampton, the Givens (or Whitehall), and Telfair. The Brampton Plantation was situated on the banks of the Savannah River and Jonathan Bryan, a Revolutionary soldier, named and directed the plantation for over two decades. The Givens, or Whitehall, plantation was originally the estate of lawyer and statesman Thomas Gibbons. The estate consisted of land along the Savannah River and the north side of Pipemakers Creek, which was used for rice and cotton cultivation.

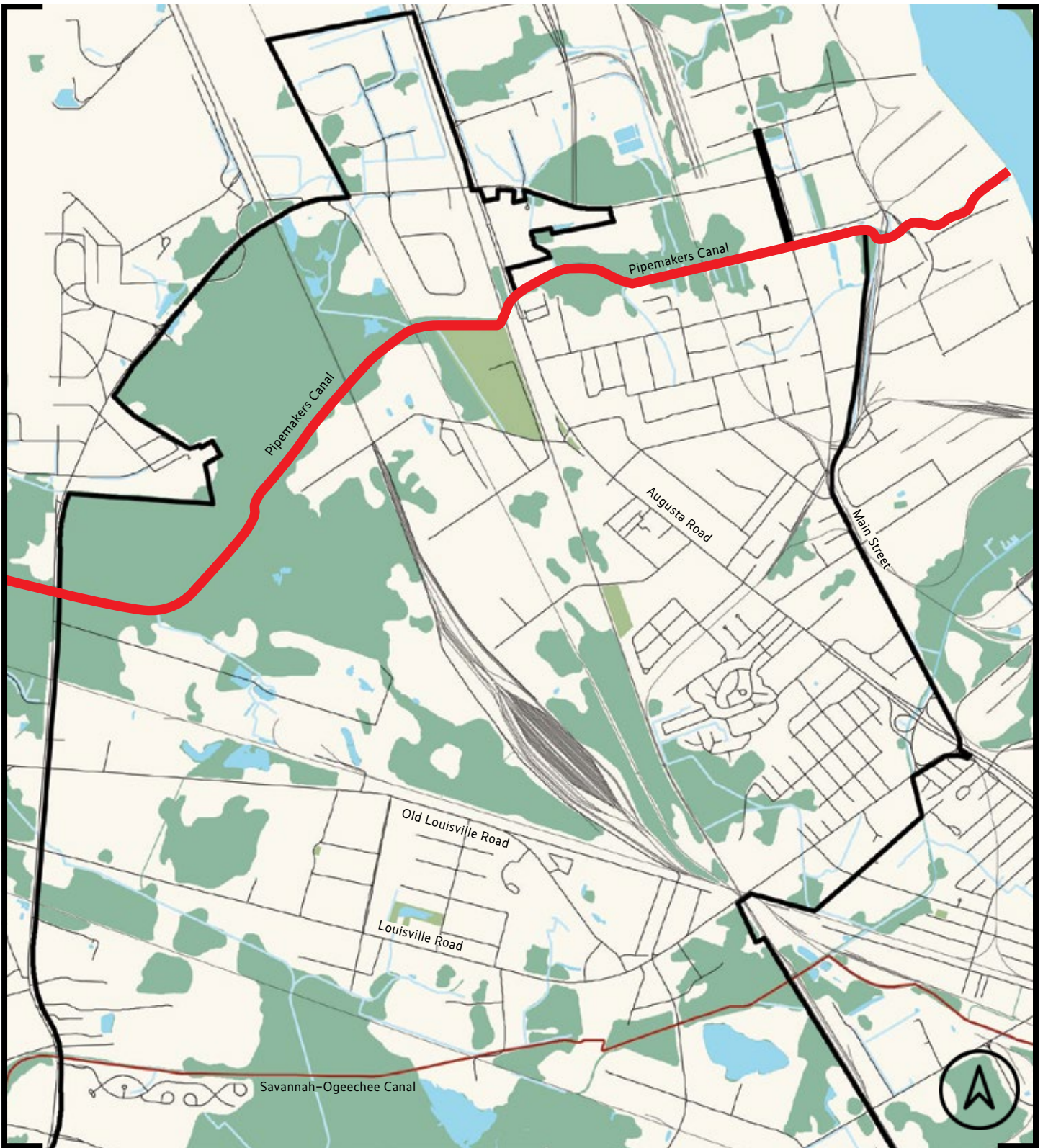
Pipemakers Creek was converted into Pipemakers Canal gradually over the span of about 100 years. The creek originally formed the boundary between the Whitehall plantation and Rae's Hall, which encompassed 450 acres of land that included the Irene Mounds. The first conversion of the creek to a canal was completed by enslaved Africans at the Whitehall plantation in 1834. Conversion did not occur again until between 1896 and 1906, when a significant expansion occurred, likely through municipal and county drainage projects. By the 1920s, the canal was expanded again to its approximate finished length. When suburban development came to West Chatham County, the canal was utilized to drain wet areas to accommodate new development.

Industrial City Gardens to Garden City

In 1863, freed enslaved families relocated from the plantations and established settlements in the land along what is now Augusta Road from Rossignol Hill to Pipemakers Canal. The major trades in the area at the time were farming and milling.

The descendants of these first families were there to witness the new residential development spurred by Lewis Hampton Smith in the 1930s. During this time, Smith began to develop Industrial City Gardens, as it was first called, in a triangular wooded area bounded by what is now Smith Avenue, Georgia Highway 21 and U.S. 17. His intention was to provide affordable lots that were large enough for a vegetable garden and livestock. In the beginning, many residents kept cows, chickens, and goats on their property. The gates that welcomed residents into Industrial City Gardens were identified in a 1992 historic resources survey as being located at 30 Main Street.

On February 8, 1939, the residents of Industrial City Gardens were granted a charter of municipal incorporation by the Superior Court of Chatham County. Two years later, a new charter was enacted changing the name to Garden City, as many residents felt that the name was too long and implied a mill town.



Map 8.2-Pipemakers Canal



EXISTING HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY

A historic resources survey collects and records information about historic buildings, structures, sites, landscapes, and objects, collectively known as resources, within a given area and provides detailed information through photographs and field notes. Historic resources surveys are vital to the planning and preservation process and promotes awareness of a community's historic and cultural resources.

The last known historic resources survey was conducted in 1992/1993, in which 36 resources were surveyed and considered for National Register eligibility. Only one building, which has been since demolished, was identified as being potentially eligible for registration in the National Register of Historic Places. The following chart lists the 36 resources that were surveyed in Garden City:

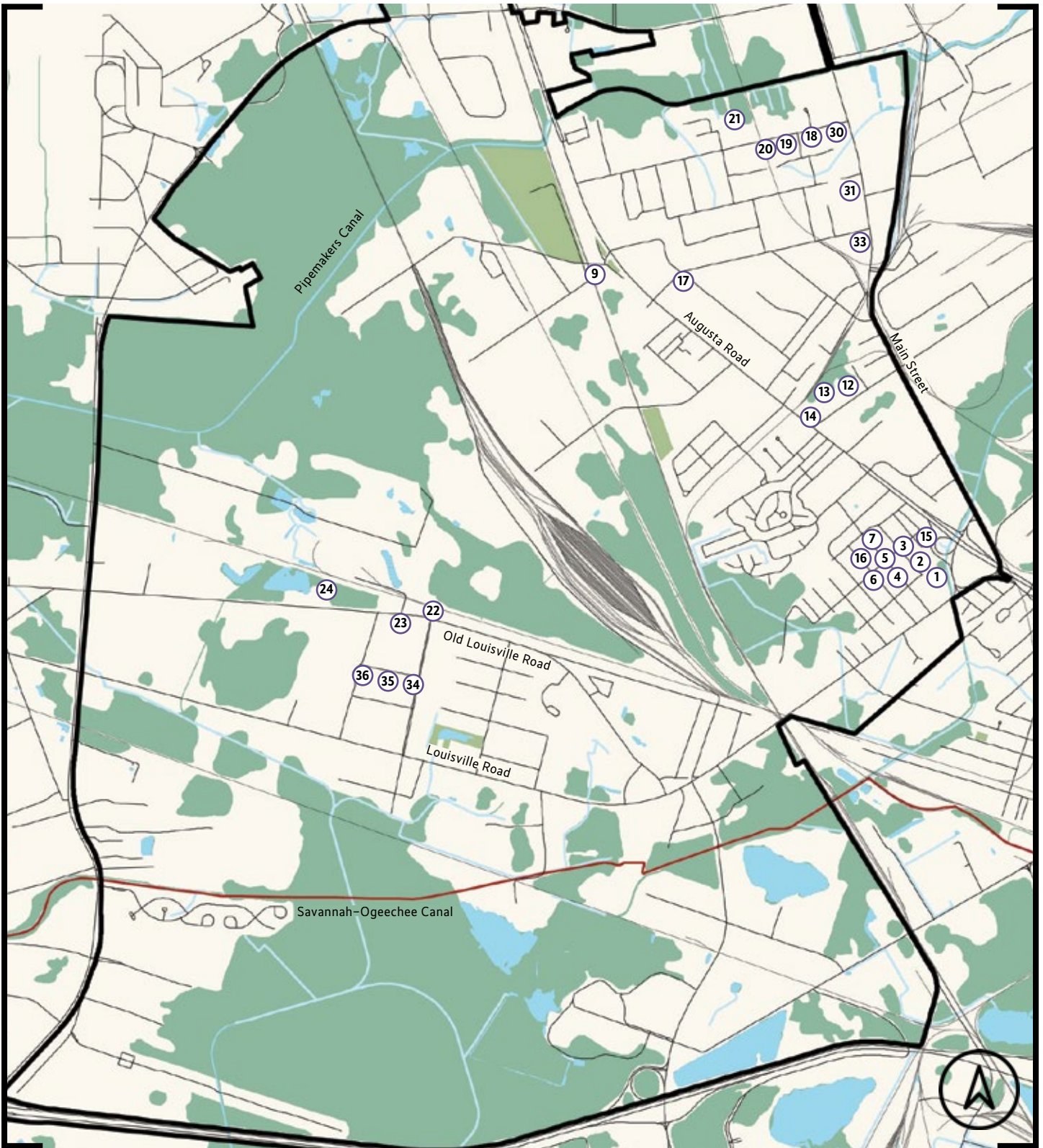
Historic Places: National Register Eligibility—Garden City

	Address	Year Built
1	4016–18 1st Street	1920
2	4022 1st Street	1910
3	4024 1st Street	1910
4	4019 3rd Street	1910
5	4025 3rd Street	1900
6	Rossignol–Minis House—4026 3rd Street	1890
7	4106 3rd Street	1910
8	George Dotson House—4912 Augusta Road	1850
9	Clifton Baptist Church—100 Big Hill Road	1914
10	Oak Grove Brampton Road	1840
11	Brampton Cemetery—2 Brampton Road	1783
12	52 Brampton Road	1930
13	64 Brampton Road	1929
14	68 Brampton Road	1928
15	216 Davis Avenue	1930
16	413 Davis Avenue	1940
17	Frank F. Baker Masonic Lodge—131 Rommel Avenue	1941
18	11 Smith Avenue	1920

	Address	Year Built
19	39 Smith Avenue	1935
20	51 Smith Avenue	1935
21	80 Smith Avenue	1939
22	4602 Old Louisville Road	1860
23	Oak Grove Baptist Church—4617 Old Louisville Road	1915
24	4806 Old Louisville Road	1870
25	4906 Old Louisville Road	1900
26	Thompsons' Tourist Home—28 Main Street	1937
27	Industrial City Garden Subdivision Gate—30 Main Street	1932
28	33 Main Street	1925
29	35 Main Street	1935
30	Good Shepherd Lutheran Church—41 Main Street	1937
31	Chapel in the Gardens Presbyterian—93 Main Street	1941
32	120 Main Street	1910
33	125 Main Street	1930
34	2607 13th Street	1915
35	Live Oak Grove—2613 13th Street	1800
36	2617 13th Street	1920

Figure 8.1—Historic Places—Garden City

DEMOLISHED OR UNDER REVIEW; THIS IDENTIFICATION IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE



Map 8.3-Historic Places



RECOMMENDED HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY

Updating and expanding the historic resources survey ensures that those resources which are vital to the history of Garden City are known and potentially protected. Without this knowledge, further preservation efforts cannot be pursued. Moving forward, areas of Garden City that would be appropriate for a new or updated historic resources survey must be identified. Neighborhoods and other areas over 50 years old, which maintain a high level of integrity, should be evaluated based on interest from the community, threat of loss, and size of area to identify places that may benefit from historic resources surveys.

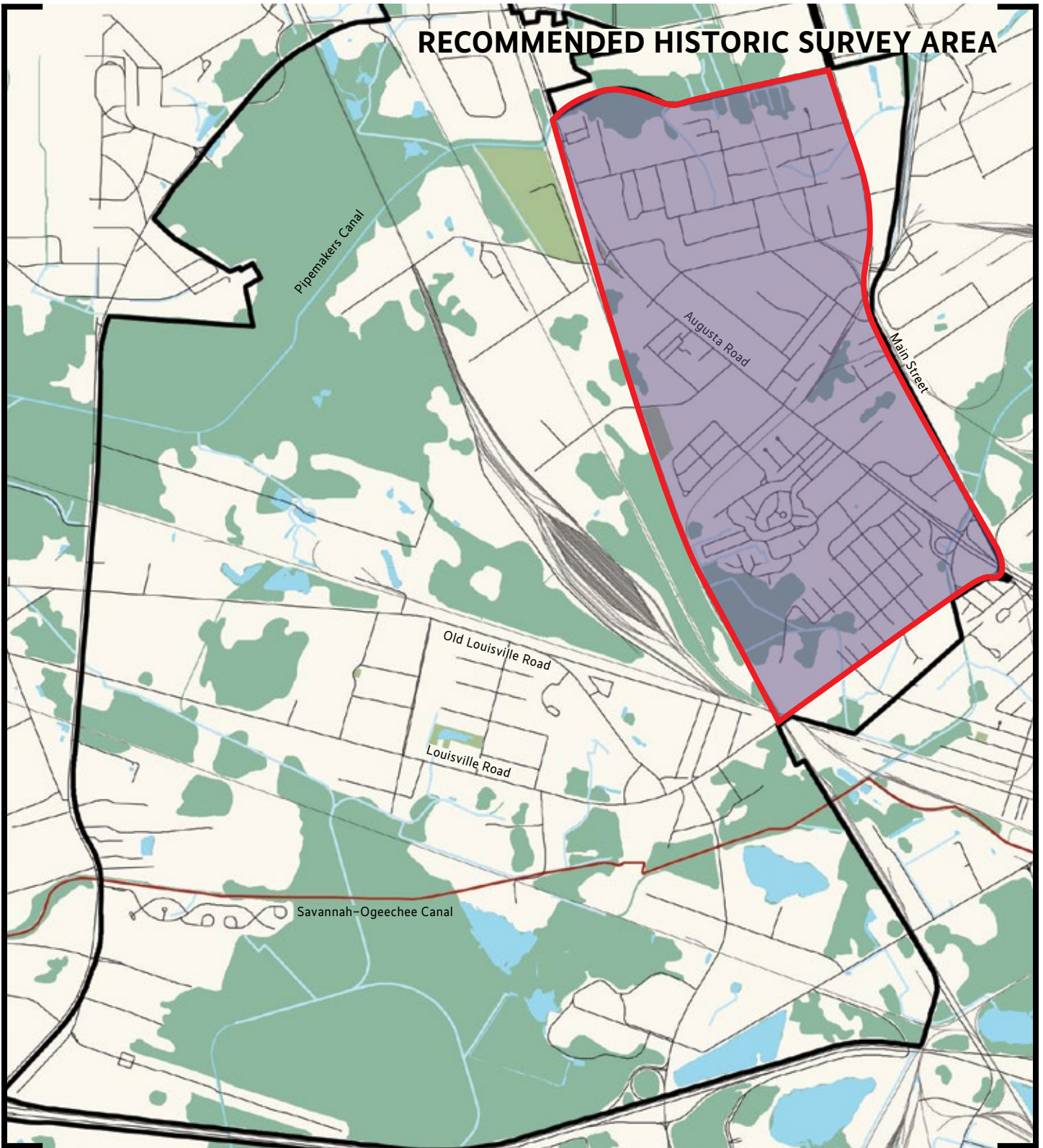


RECOMMENDED HISTORIC SURVEY AREA

The 1992/1993 survey area, roughly bounded by U.S. Highway 80 to the east and south, Pipemakers Canal to the west, and Main Street to the north, should be utilized to create updated boundaries for new and renewed historic resources survey efforts.

The following map is a recommendation for the boundaries for a historic resources survey area based on the previous 1992/1993 survey.





Map 8.4-Recommended Historic Resources Survey Area

EDUCATION

Education is the key to attracting residents to a community to live; education is key in building and sustaining an advancing workforce; and education is key in ushering in future generations of well informed, respectful, and engaging residents.

Public schools throughout Chatham County are managed and operated by the Savannah—Chatham County Public School System (SCCPSS). As of 2020, the school system consists of twenty-four elementary schools, seven K-8 schools, eight middle schools, eleven high schools, and five charter schools. In 2018 the school district had 37,576 students enrolled with a 14:1 student to teacher ratio. In Garden City there are three schools, Garden City Elementary, Gould Elementary, and Groves High School. The College and Career Ready Performance Index scores have been provided below for each school in Garden for the 2018–2019 school year.

- Garden City Elementary received a CCRPI score of 78.1, or C grading for the 2018–2019 school year.
- Gould Elementary received a CCRPI score of 70.8, or C grading for the 2018–2019 school year.
- Groves High received a CCRPI score of 64.4, or D grading for the 2018–2019 school year.

GARDEN CITY ELEMENTARY
GOULD ELEMENTARY
GROVES HIGH

GEORGIA
CHATHAM COUNTY

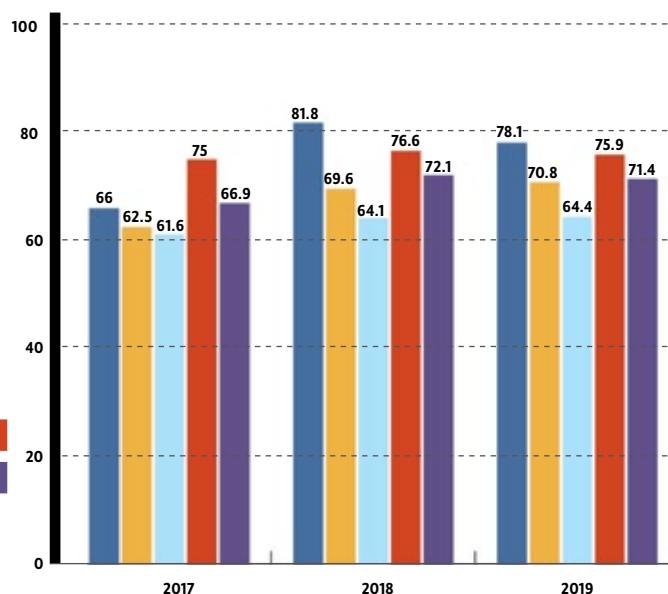


Figure 8.2–CCRPI Single Score Average 2017–2019
Georgia Department of Education

CCRPI

The College and Career Ready Performance Index is a comprehensive school improvement, accountability, and communication platform for all education stakeholders that helps to promote college and career readiness for all Georgia public school students.

—CCRPI



The SCCPSS reports that 40% of students who attend the SCCPSS are economically disadvantaged, meaning that they either live in a family unit receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits, or have been identified as homeless, unaccompanied youth, foster, or migrant. Thirty-three (33) of the SCCPSS's schools are defined as Title 1 Schools in which children from low-income families make up 40% of enrollment. Being economically disadvantaged can prove to be a large obstacle for students on the academic, mental, and social challenges.

A current trend that is aiding in the development of focus and improved behavior in students is mindfulness. Across the nation, many school boards have been introducing mindfulness to students. Mindfulness is a state of being that teaches one to live in the present and how to experience enjoyment with what is going on in the current moment. This can be taught through different measures such as: conscious breathing, sensory stimulation, guided imagery/meditation, and mindfulness through body movement. Schools in SCCPSS (Woodville Tompkins) have introduced yoga and mindfulness courses into their curriculums.

With the challenges and stressors many SCCPSS students may be facing stemming from their family lives at home, mindfulness can serve as a remedy teaching students to handle their lives in a healthy, constructive manner which can ultimately improve school performance. In addition to mindfulness, there are a number of things that can be taught to students to help them better navigate through life now and moving forward into the future.



TITLE 1 SCHOOLS

Schools in which children from low-income families make up at least 40% of enrollment are eligible to use Title 1 funds to operate schoolwide programs that serve all children in the school in order to raise the achievement of the lowest-achieving students.

—Department of Education

Teaching mindfulness to grade school children is a new trend that has shown to improve behavior and self-esteem



Education Beyond K-12

Life after high school presents many avenues to opportunity. Some may choose college or the military, many choose trade and tech schools, and some go straight into the work world. Whatever route a new graduate, or any adult wants to take, Chatham County—Savannah has several options to choose from in preparing one for their career moves. Keeping an eye on growing industries in the area, such as manufacturing, logistics, and film production may prove to be a effective in fostering a local workforce to support such industries in the near future.

Regarding countywide public high school graduation rates and educational attainment for students in Garden City, there has been a gradual improvement in performance. Figure 8.3 shows that the high school graduation rate in the county has increased over 6% in the past five years; this calculation only reflects the students who graduated within four years.

Graduation Rate Trends, 2015–2019

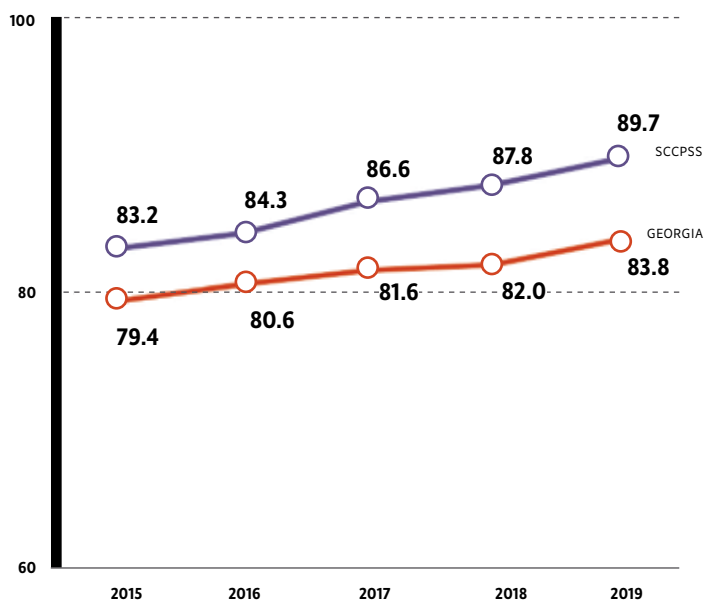


Figure 8.3—Graduation Rate Trend Chart 2015–2019
Savannah—Chatham County Public School System

In Garden City, most residents over age 25 held a high school diploma (including high school equivalency degree) or higher in 2018 (82.7%), while 12.7% held a bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree. These are roughly the same proportions as 2009–2013. Of note, however, is the increase in the share of residents who had some college experience but did not obtain a degree, which rose from 19.4% in 2013 to 26.6% in 2018. Figure 8.4 illustrates the breakdown of educational attainment in Garden City.

Educational Attainment, 2014–2018

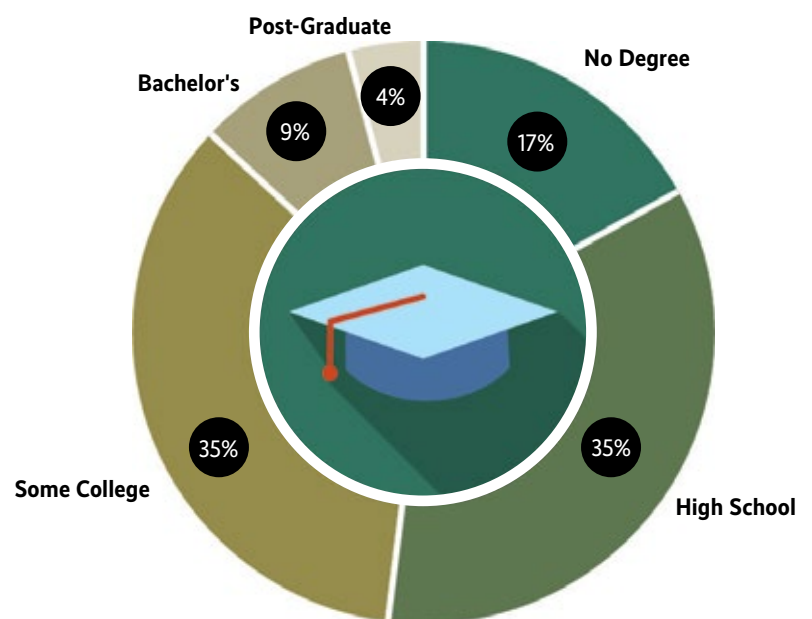
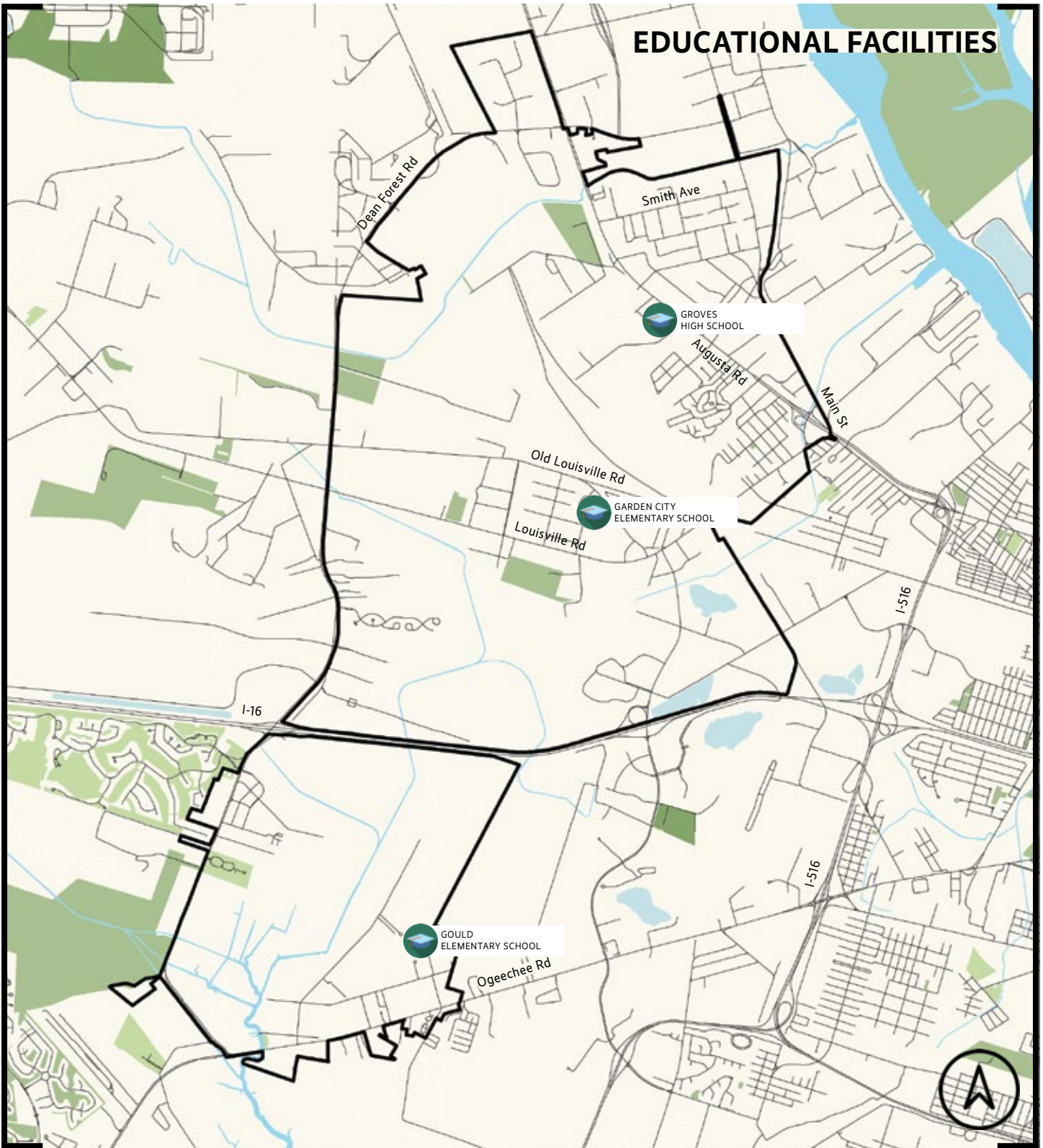


Figure 8.4—Educational Attainment, Garden City
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Map 8.5-Educational Facilities, Garden City

Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD)

SCAD is a private, nonprofit institution founded in 1978 in Savannah. Currently the school has numerous buildings and facilities located in different areas throughout the city serving its 15,000 students. SCAD has more than 40 majors and 75 minors, more than any other art and design university in the country. Degrees offered are: Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Master of Architecture, Master of Arts, Master of Fine Arts, and a Master of Urban Design. The most highly enrolled majors in Fall 2017 were animation, fashion, film and television, illustration and interior design.



SCAD

SCAD celebrates cinematic creativity from both award-winning professionals and emerging student filmmakers. Each year, more than 63,000 people attend the eight-day SCAD Savannah Film Festival. The festival is host to a wide variety of competition film screenings, special screenings, workshops, panels, and lectures.



Savannah State University (SSU)

Known as the oldest historically black college or university (HBCU) in Georgia, Savannah State was founded in 1890. This public university is located in Savannah on a 201-acre campus, and offers 30 baccalaureate majors and degrees and five graduate degrees to its approximate 4,500 students. These majors are housed within four colleges: College of Business Administration, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, College of Science and Technology, and the College of Education. SSU's Marine Science Program is the number one producer of both Master of Science and Bachelor of Science African American recipients in Marine Science. Also, SSU is home to the nation's first Homeland Security and Emergency Management program at an HBCU. The program is the only bachelor's degree program for homeland security/emergency management offered in the state of Georgia and in the region. Additionally, SSU boasts a broad athletic program which is part of SIAC, Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

Georgia Southern University (GSU)

This public university, once known as Armstrong State University, recently consolidated with Georgia Southern University based in Statesboro, to become the Armstrong Campus of Georgia Southern University. The campus is located in the southside of Savannah, is attended by nearly 6,500 students, and offers over 50 majors at undergraduates and graduate levels. The university's Waters College of Health Professions is one of the school's premier programs, having long been the largest producer of undergraduate health professionals in Georgia.

Georgia Tech-Savannah

In 2003, the Georgia Institute of Technology opened its satellite branch in the city of Savannah. The campus offers courses tailored to furthering the education and skills of established professionals. Programs consist of the Georgia Film Academy, K-12 programs, Leadership Training, and Military programs. In addition to providing opportunities for career advancement and education for professionals, Georgia Tech-Savannah has numerous partnerships within the region providing assistance to budding tech-entrepreneurs and manufacturing and logistics guidance for large corporations, to name a few.

South University

South University was founded in Savannah in 1899 originally as Draughan's Practical Business College. Throughout the years the school has transformed into a larger university developing satellite locations spanning across several states as well as offering online courses to over 3,500 students. South University offers nine programs that awards degrees at the associate, undergraduate, and graduate levels in areas such as nursing, pharmacy, public health, and more.

Savannah Technical College

Founded in 1929, this Savannah-based public technical college serves more than 5,700 students and is a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia. The college offers both credit and non-credit programs designed to provide a skilled workforce to area employers. It awards certificate, diploma, and associate degrees in five academic divisions: Aviation Technology, Business and Professional Services, General Studies, Health Sciences, and Industrial Technology. The college's Economic Development division provides non-credit programs such as high school equivalency preparation, English as a Second Language (ESL), various workforce development programs for individuals, and corporate contract training. Savannah Tech has been ranked as the best community/technical college for active-duty military, their spouses, and veterans for many years.



Live Oak Public Libraries

Live Oak Public Libraries provides programs and services in Chatham, Effingham, and Liberty Counties through 16 library locations and community outreach. There are 12 libraries in Chatham County, with two of those located in Garden City.

The Library's mission is to provide excellent, responsive service to enrich people's lives, support lifelong learning and build and enhance communities. Live Oak is creating tomorrow's library today to educate, inform, entertain and enrich the community. The Library is always open online at www.liveoakpl.org.

Live Oak Public Libraries is focused on increasing access, community engagement, and organizational excellence and sustainability. The network believes that libraries are at the heart of every community, and strong libraries help create and sustain strong communities. Library services support early learning/literacy, educational success, economic opportunity and quality of life.

Live Oak Public Libraries is a member of PINES, the statewide network of public library systems serving Georgia. PINES (Public Information Network for Electronic Services), connects more than 300 public libraries in 54 partner library systems across 146 counties and gives library card holders access to more than 11 million books and materials plus online resources such as the GALILEO system, Georgia's virtual library. The portal gives users access to thousands of resources such as periodicals, scholarly journals, government publications, and encyclopedias amongst several other resources.

The aim of GALILEO is to provide equal access to information for all Georgia's residents —Live Oak Public Libraries



COVID-19 PANDEMIC EFFECTS

In calendar year 2020, with complications due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the library system saw reduced statistics compared to normal times but libraries still saw active use and patron engagement both in-person and online.

Libraries were closed briefly but then reopened to the public with safety measures in place to protect visitors and staff. Customers were able to browse and borrow items, use computers and internet, and enjoy virtual programs. The year 2020 saw an increase in the use of digital resources, such as e-books, and an increase in library card sign-ups.



Benefits of the Library System

- Libraries are open to everyone
- Libraries support lifelong learning
- Libraries offer access to technology
- Libraries are community spaces
- Libraries are wherever you are
- Libraries are community partners

Public Library Visits

Locations	2018	2019	2020
Bull Street Library	222,799	210,171	144,833
Carnegie Library	40,470	22,319	17,125
Forest City Library	17,486	16,654	10,521
Garden City Library	54,676	48,420	30,507
Islands Library	124,863	111,133	42,993
Oglethorpe Mall Library	134,877	110,791	74,207
Pooler Library	68,422	73,835	55,970
Port City Library	37,649	35,983	22,607
Southwest Chatham Library	183,372	133,178	93,165
Tybee Library	18,521	19,529	16,972
W.W. Law Library	52,143	42,666	23,729
West Broad Library	22,225	15,484	14,642
Total	977,503	840,163	547,271

Figure 8.5—Library Visit Trends

Live Oak Public Library

Public Library Wireless Internet Use

Locations	2018	2019	2020
Bull Street Library	14,166	85,440	78,884
Carnegie Library	3,557	14,300	13,077
Forest City Library	1,680	2,628	4,482
Garden City Library	5,833	12,940	10,963
Islands Library	7,742	23,380	5,521
Oglethorpe Mall Library	11,309	9,032	22,093
Pooler Library	4,979	14,312	9,281
Port City Library	2,352	2,832	8,767
Southwest Chatham Library	22,632	39,684	28,618
Tybee Library	1,376	956	2,708
W.W. Law Library	1	1,708	1,796
West Broad Library	249	336	2,448
Total	75,876	207,548	188,638

Figure 8.6—Wireless Internet Usage Trends

Live Oak Public Library

In 2020, the impacts of COVID-19 were seen in the libraries' in-person engagement and use of digital resources

”

COMMUNITY HEALTH

Health

Health is a term that is often associated with an individual and their lack of sickness or disease; the same thought concept can be carried over to a large grouping or area of people within their neighborhoods.

Community health is determined by the wellness of the residents of a particular area along with the aptitude of the environment to promote health and necessary resources. Most urban areas consist of a diverse population of residents, which results in a stratified spectrum of community health. The following sections are all factors that make up or determine community health.

Obesity Rate

Obesity is the condition when an individual has excessive body fat that presents itself as a risk to their health. This condition has been shown to lead to more chronic ailments such as heart disease and stroke, the leading causes of death in Garden City and worldwide (*Plan4healthus*).

The prevalence of obesity has continued to rise due to an increasing sedentary lifestyle, lack of nutritional health understanding, and oversaturating of fast-foods and processed foods, which numerous studies have shown are related to numerous health issues including obesity.

To help reduce the risk of being obese and developing diabetes, stroke, heart disease, and various other diseases associated with a sedentary lifestyle, investments in transportation infrastructure, parks and recreation, and healthy food retail can positively impact the community's ability to increase physical activity through the built environment.



HEALTHY SAVANNAH

In November of 2018, Healthy Savannah and the YMCA of Coastal Georgia, was awarded a five year, \$3.4 million grant to undertake a REACH project from the Center for Disease Control. REACH (Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health).

The primary goal of the REACH grant is to reduce health disparities among African American and Hispanic/Latino Americans in low-income Chatham County neighborhoods.



Mapping areas with a lack of pedestrian mobility (such as sidewalks), access to parks and recreation, and locating food deserts can begin the process to creating more equitable and healthier communities.



Mental Wellness

Although a controversial topic, mental illness is a common reality many people live with. Mental illness can simply be defined as a wide range of conditions that affect mood, thinking, and behavior.

Numerous factors contribute to mental illness such as genetics, societal influences, and physical environment. A SAMHSA (Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration) survey conducted between 2009 and 2013 revealed that nearly 40% of adults in the state of Georgia were living with some form of mental illness. In response to this figure and other health related matters, Chatham County partnered with the Coastal Georgia Indicators Coalition (CGIC) and developed strategic pathways to address community health issues, mental health being included, further ensuring that communities in Chatham County foster wellness.

It is a common occurrence for an individual suffering with a mental health condition to be confronted by law enforcement when their condition presents a challenge.

Instead of mental health workers addressing the matter, law enforcement, many of whom are not properly trained for mental health situations, often intervene in these scenes. In events like this, it is common for law enforcement officers to arrest the individual and bring them to an emergency room (ER). This creates a strain not only on the individual suffering through their mental health crisis, but also on the system of law enforcement and emergency medical service workers. The number of officers dispatched and number of ER rooms available to those in need are greatly impacted by the lack of structure and guidance regarding the process to assisting those in need of mental health services.

This Continuum of Care (CoC) process is in need of improvement to ensure patients are being tracked and provided the services needed. This secures better outcomes for the patients over time while adapting to their changing needs.

According to a SAMHSA survey, conducted between 2009 and 2013, nearly 40% of adults in the State of Georgia were living with some form of mental illness



Food Access & Nutritional Education

The foods available to a community have a direct impact on its overall health. When an area is devoid of fresh and healthy foods it is considered a “food desert.” Contrarily, the term “food swamp” is used to describe areas that are over saturated with options of fast foods, processed foods, and junk foods. These days the majority of people reside in urban areas and do not grow their own food; this leads many to depend on external sources for their food.

Given the county's widespread development pattern, it becomes clear that there are not enough grocery stores and markets to accommodate each community. This is a strain particularly for the elderly and those with limited access to personal vehicles and public transit.

According to Federal Reserve Economic Data, 40,098 residents in Chatham County received SNAP benefits in 2018, a number that has notably dropped from previous years. Although this figure has decreased, it shows that a significant number of residents, nearly 14% of residents in Chatham County, still need assistance in providing foods for their households, 5% higher than the national average. In alignment with food access, food nutrition is just as important. If someone is gifted the option to choose between a monthly supply of sweets and potato chips or a monthly supply of dry beans, rice, and vegetables; their knowledge of food nutrition, or lack of, will usually be the driving force behind their decision. Having access to affordable healthy food is paramount; however, so is the ability to recognize the value in it.



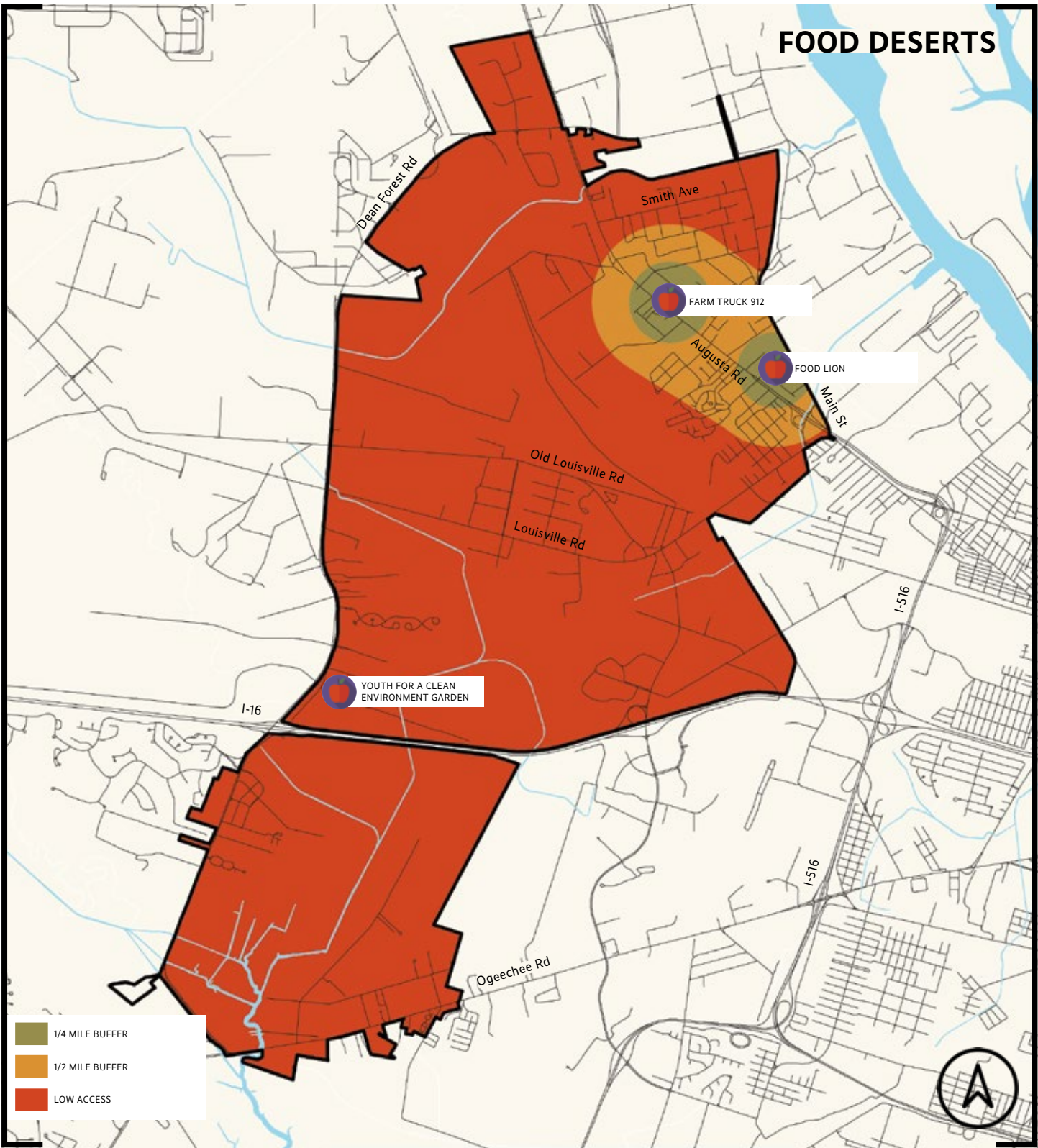
FARM TRUCK 912

In an effort to increase the access to healthy and affordable foods, Farm Truck 912 is stationed at Sheppard's Gas & Food Mart on Thursdays in the City offering local and fresh produce for to the public most in need of healthy foods.



An evaluation of areas in Garden City not having a grocery store within 1/2 mile radius reveals that, for the most part, Garden City is a food desert with an extremely limited range of healthy food options. While Farm Truck 912 has expanded its operations along Augusta Road on a temporary basis in the north section of Garden City, there is still a gap in coverage.

These areas allow for an opportunity for a farmer's market or additional Farm Truck 912 service to help provide healthy food options to residents.



Map 8.6—Food Deserts, Garden City

Dilapidated Housing

Dilapidation occurs in a neighborhood when homes or empty lots are abandoned and begin to show signs of disrepair and neglect. This is not only a visual effect on the neighborhood, but often times an unspoken invitation for unlawful activities.

Dilapidated properties are known to bring down the property value in their neighborhoods, discourage the desire to invest, and decrease the perceived safety of the area. Neighborhoods that are well lit, have well-kept properties, and functional communal amenities such as parks, walking paths, and benches encourage physical activity and social connections among residents.

A 2016 Housing Survey indicated that the Rossignol Hill Community had a large number of homes in need of repair, as shown in Map 8.7. While these homes are in need of repair and rehabilitation, it is important to note that this community also has a greater concentration of homes that are National Register Eligible.



LAND BANK

The Chatham County Land Bank Authority was created to acquire vacant, abandoned, tax delinquent properties in the County to assist in the return of the properties to a productive use.



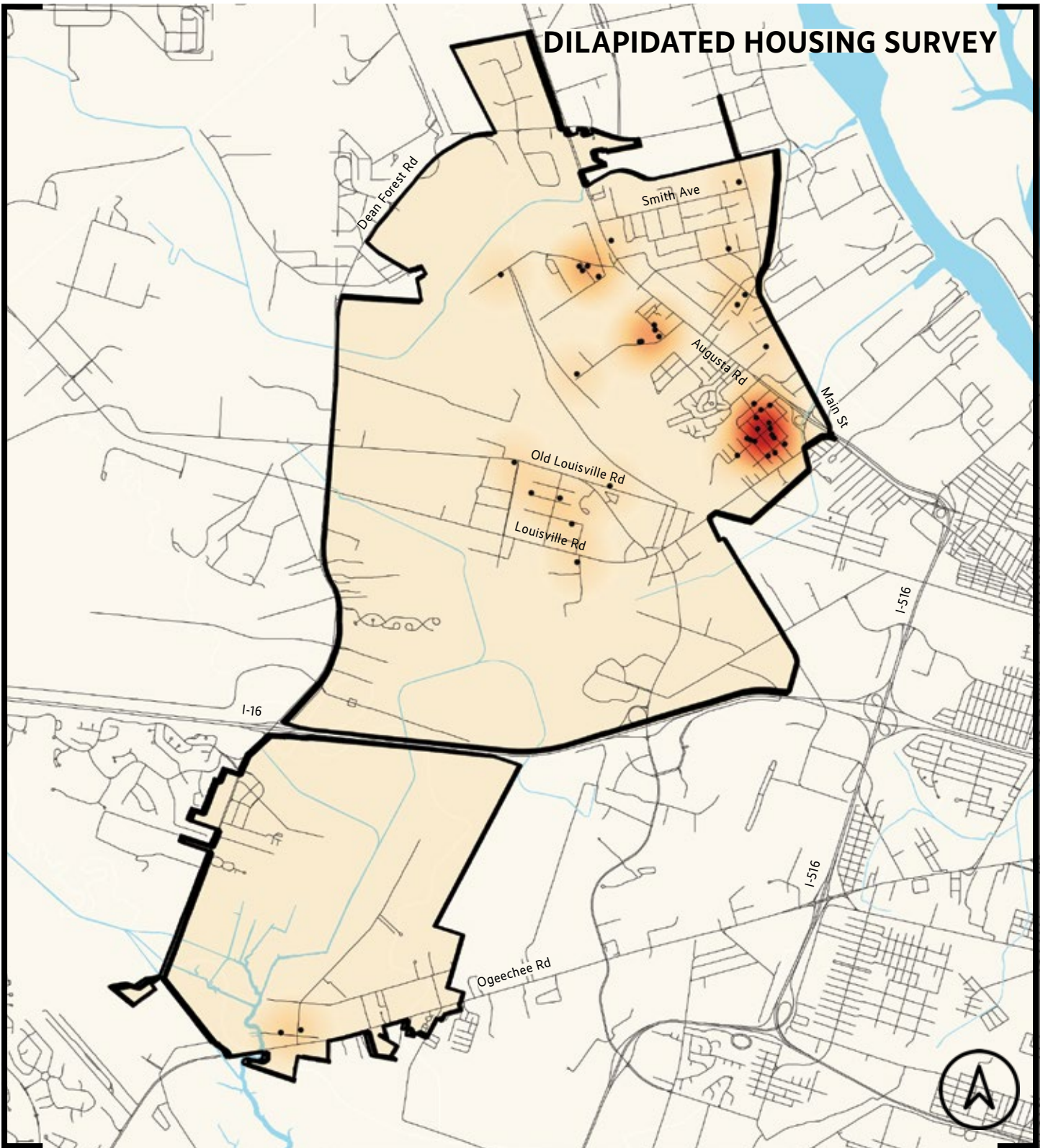
ARE YOU LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION?

In the Housing Element of Garden City 2040, you can find more information about blighted homes.

Check it out on page 172!



DILAPIDATED HOUSING SURVEY



Map 8.7—Dilapidated Properties 2016 Housing Survey, Garden City



Unemployment & Poverty

Unemployment does not merely mean 'one without a job'. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, unemployed citizens are individuals who are jobless and actively seeking work. Those who are not working and not seeking work are not considered to be in the labor force. When individuals struggle to find work, it puts a strain on myriad areas in life including finances, mental wellness, safety, and food security.

Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show that the unemployment rate for Garden City was on a gradual decline until 2020 when the pandemic occurred.

Unemployment Rates 2016–2020

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Chatham County	5.3	4.5	3.8	3.4	7.6
Garden City	6.2	5.0	4.3	3.9	8.5

Figure 8.7—County & City Unemployment Rates

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey

Climate Change

As the nation continues to experience drastic changes in weather patterns due to climate change, the consequences will be felt by individuals, economies, and governments alike.

More frequent and intense heat episodes have increased the number of emergency room visits for strokes, dehydration, and other heat-related illnesses. Studies have also revealed the correlation between excessive heat and violent crimes, which are especially linked in low-income areas (*The Urban Crime and Heat Gradient in High and Low Poverty Areas* | NBER).

It is known that renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar, help to reduce the human impact on climate change by reducing noxious emissions from coal-fired power plants. Research also shows that implementing renewable energy policies have the added benefit of improving public health as well. A concentrated local effort must be made to help reduce the impacts of emissions and other pollutants on Garden City's population.

Labor Force Participation, 2020 (Annual Average)

Year	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Rate (%)
2010	4,028	3,479	549	13.6
2011	4,027	3,494	533	13.2
2012	4,027	3,537	490	12.2
2013	3,917	3,524	393	10.0
2014	3,897	3,540	357	9.2
2015	3,826	3,556	270	7.1
2016	3,871	3,631	240	6.2
2017	3,982	3,781	201	5.0
2018	3,947	3,777	170	4.3
2019	3,911	3,759	152	3.9
2020	3,910	3,579	331	8.5

Figure 8.8—Labor Force Participation, Garden City

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey

COVID-19

As a nation, we were unaware of the dire impacts that COVID-19 would have on us all. As cases and fatalities continued to increase in 2020, many went into a state of paranoia and panic. Questions such as, “what exactly is this virus”, “how can I properly protect myself and family from it” and “how long will it last” came across the minds of virtually every person in this country. As of April 2021, Chatham County had more than 20,000 cases and 417 deaths due to COVID-19. In response to the pandemic, virtually every public and private space had to alter how human activity existed within their vicinities and the need for more accessible open and open outdoor spaces became evident. The virus has proven to be an incident that will have lasting effects moving well into the future.

Unemployment began to see an increase from COVID-19 starting in March of 2020 as it reached its peak at rate of 15.3% in April. It tapered down slowly until it reached a rate of 5.6% by the end of 2020. Concerns with facing grave fears of death, eviction/foreclosure due to loss of income, drastic changes to household dynamics, and shortages of food, heightened the mental health challenges many were already suffering with and created a large splinter of anxiety for others.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION?

For more information about unemployment please check our Economic Development Element.

Check it out on page 76!



OPERATION FEED THE CITY

Organized by Savannah Feed the Hungry, a nonprofit dedicated to assisting the area's homeless and low-income communities, planned a food giveaway to help locals who are experiencing financial difficulties during the coronavirus crisis. Garden City Council members participated in "Operation Feed the City" and distributed over 600 meals to people and families in need.



PUBLIC SAFETY

Public Safety

It is the responsibility of local government to serve and protect the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens and businesses. The safety of a community is fundamental to the wellbeing and longevity of its residents and economy.

In today's world, there are critical threats that communities must continuously monitor: domestic and international terrorism, drastic shifts in weather patterns, rising sea levels, and pandemics such as COVID-19. In response to these threats, a successful government employs departments and passes ordinances to sustain the safety and health of its community. Even in less intense moments of day-to-day life, it is the responsibility of the local government to aid in incidents such as criminal activity, car accidents, house fires, and downed power lines. Generally, for municipalities and local governments, public safety includes fire protection, emergency management services, and law enforcement.

HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING

Hazard mitigation planning reduces loss of life and property by minimizing the impact of disasters. Mitigation plans are key to breaking the cycle of disaster damage and reconstruction.

—FEMA



Emergency Management

Chatham County Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) services all of Chatham County and its municipalities and is responsible for the welfare of the county in the midst and aftermath of major disasters and emergencies.

CEMA has developed a Disaster Recovery Plan, Emergency Operations Plan, and Hazard Mitigation Plan to proactively provide protection and courses of action in response to a number of different hazards and emergencies. In the Hazard Mitigation Plan, CEMA has listed severe weather, extreme heat, and flooding as the most likely hazards to impact the county.





Law Enforcement

Law Enforcement in Garden City provides full service public safety and law enforcement services to its citizens and visitors. Garden City's Police Department employs 35 sworn officers supported by seven civilian staff.

The Garden City Police Department is Nationally Accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc (CALEA). Garden City is one of only 20 city police departments in the State of Georgia to possess this prestigious award. Since the initial accreditation in 2003, the Garden City Police Department has maintained reaccreditation status confirmed by on-site assessments in 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2019. The department is only one of 43 police departments in Georgia to receive national accreditation.

The Garden City Police Department is also State Certified by the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police (GACP). The State Certification is a program designed to improve the administrative practices of the department and strengthen the service delivery to the community. Currently there are only 140 law enforcement agencies that are state certified.

Garden City Police Department is one of only 43 law enforcement agencies in Georgia that are both Nationally (CALEA) accredited and State certified.



CHAT WITH A COP INITIATIVE

To help better connect with the community and to build transparency with its Public Safety Officers, the Garden City Police Department scheduled a series of informal events throughout the city to assist in curbing criminal activity.

Police Statistics and Trends

Crime Records

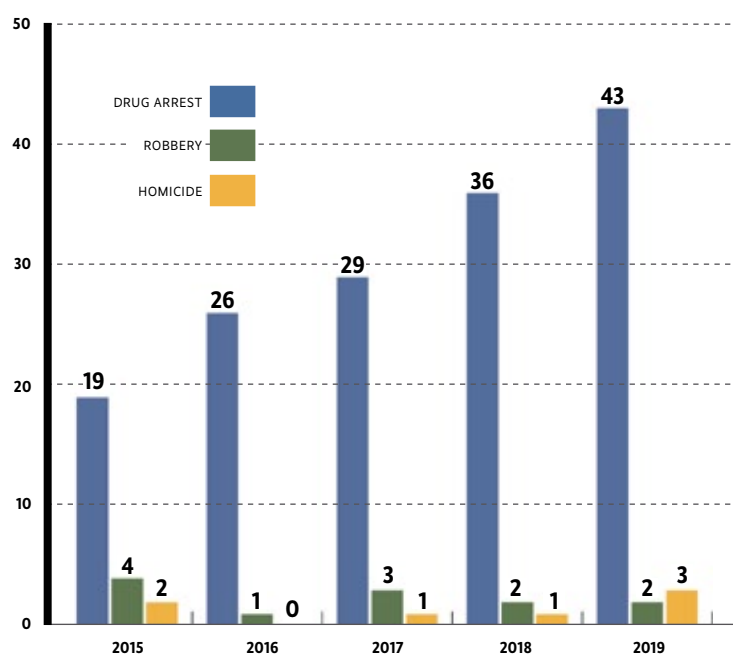


Figure 8.9—Reported Crime Records, Garden City
Garden City Police Department



Fire

The Garden City Fire Department and Emergency Service Department provide fire protection and emergency response services to the businesses and residences within Garden City's limits.

Through a fire fee, Garden City's Fire Department collects revenue that can only be used for fire response and protection services to customers. The fire fee is a financing option that provides an equitable, stable, and dedicated revenue source to support a portion of fire services. The fire fee helps the City to accomplish the following goals:

- Ensure that Garden City residents and business owners receive fire fighting services at the desired service level
- Continue to fund full time firefighter positions
- Ensure that there is adequate funding for operational and training expenditures
- Enable the City to work to maintain or exceed the ISO rating of 3
- Protect the lives and property of all citizens through emergency response, education and fire prevention



Fire Calls 2015–2019

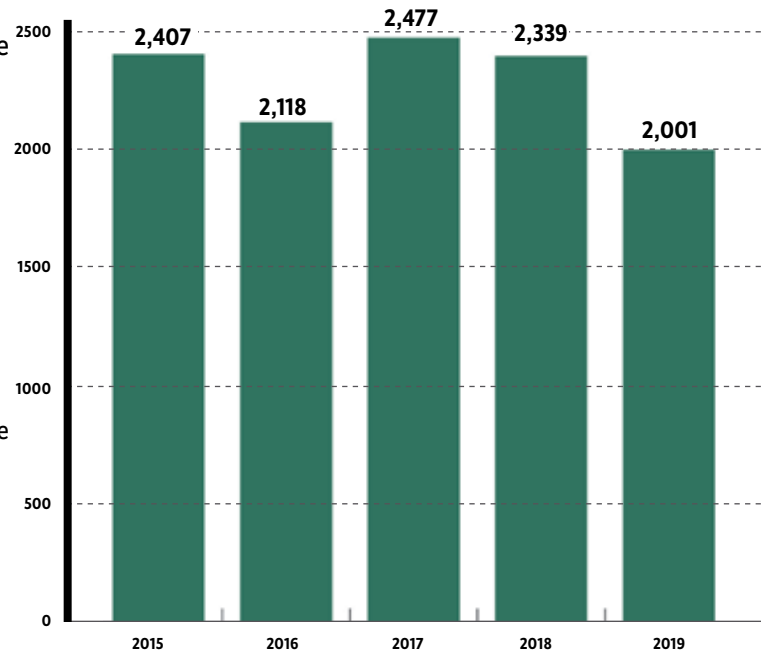


Figure 8.10–Total Fire Calls, Garden City

Structure Fires

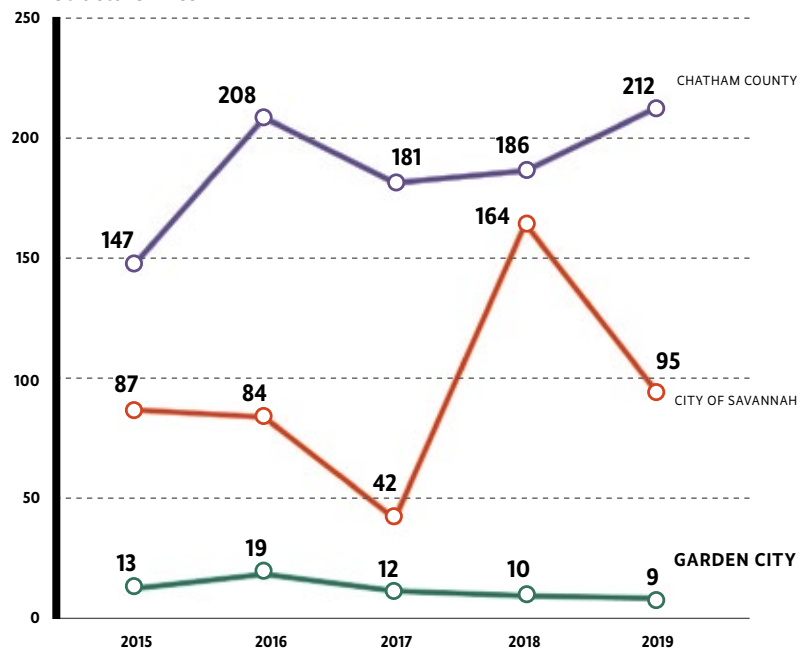


Figure 8.11–Structure Fires, Garden City



FIRE ENGINE DONATION

To continue efforts to establish partnerships and communication between fire safety officers and the community, Garden City donated a retired Fire Engine to help the education of Fire Science Students. Savannah Technical College's Fire Science students will have the equipment for hands-on training opportunities that will enhance their learning experience for years to come.



BROADBAND & FIBER OPTICS

The citizens of Chatham County understand the value of future planning, as evident by the County's numerous tree-lined squares, parks, and boulevards. Chatham County's fiber optic feasibility study completed in 2017 was another contribution to the community's tradition of forethought.

In the past, housing, public spaces, transportation, and water were critical for community viability. Today, competitiveness, prosperity, and quality of life are determined by bits and bytes, code and data, networks, "smart" systems, and software applications. Indeed, digital technology has become the key to effectively managing and using conventional resources. It is creating new possibilities for business, commerce, education, healthcare, governance, public safety, and recreation. All of this depends on bandwidth and internet connectivity—the ability to move information quickly and flexibly from and to most anywhere.

The vast array of devices that permeates Chatham County is only going to increase in volume moving forward. Those devices enable people to greatly improve and transform how they live, work, and play by connecting them to each other and giving them access to valuable information. Citizens can and will continue to use digital technology to interact with each other in unprecedented, highly informed, easier, and more dynamic ways.

Broadband has become essential to business, education, healthcare, and overall quality of life. Unfortunately, high-speed internet access remains out of reach for Georgians in many communities. Local governments are responding with new investments in technology. Building, running, and even using fiber-optic infrastructure is not a short-term endeavor. These activities demand a clear vision for current and future

citizens' expectations and requirements, require substantial input from local business and civic leaders, and benefit from principled thinking about the role of local government.

In summary, digital infrastructure can be used to deliver essential community services, enable a modern, connected economy, and support a higher quality of life.

Broadband has become essential to business, education, healthcare, and overall quality of life. Unfortunately, high-speed internet access remains out of reach for Georgians in many communities.

”





Network Technology

Broadband refers to high-speed internet services, which provide online content—websites, television shows, video conferencing, cloud services, or voice conversations, for example—to be accessed and shared via computers, smartphones, and other devices. The Federal Communications Commission defines broadband to be at least 25 megabits per second (Mbps) downstream to the device, and 3 Mbps upstream, though demands are increasing. There are multiple broadband delivery systems, though mainly cable, DSL, fiber, and wireless connect devices to the internet.

Fiber-optic cables—or just “fiber”—are considered the gold standard for supporting broadband, and are essential for fast, reliable connections. Fiber is a strand of glass the diameter of a human hair that carries waves of light. Using photons across glass, as opposed to traditional electrons across copper wire, fiber has the capacity to carry nearly unlimited amounts of data across long distances, literally at the speed of light.

Broadband is deployed throughout communities as wires that carry digital signals to and from users. The content comes into the local community from around the world via global, national, and regional networks. The local infrastructure is built, connected, and operated by internet and telecommunications companies that own the physical wires to each household.

Infrastructure that is aging and built on older technologies result in slower, less reliable access to internet content. Due to capacity limits of this infrastructure, companies



INTERNET ACCESS

The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of having reliable internet access at home. Many Chatham County residents depend on the internet to work and learn remotely, purchase essential items, access telehealth services, and connect with friends and family from afar.

cannot reliably provide high speeds, and often limit the amount of data consumers can use. Fiber provides the robust infrastructure that connects telephone and cable infrastructure between communities and around the world. It was originally used by telecommunication utilities for their core infrastructure, to connect their major switching centers, and was only available to their biggest corporate and institutional customers. Today, fiber is in homes and businesses throughout the world providing telephone and television as well as internet services.

In summary, digital infrastructure can be used to deliver essential community services, enable a modern, connected economy, and support a higher quality of life. The end goal is for all of Chatham County to help its citizens achieve better connectivity and increased bandwidth, while meeting its internal technology needs. Every jurisdiction in Chatham County should invest in fiber-optic infrastructure and related facilities to better serve its citizens, enhance quality of life and quality of place, and spur sustainable economic growth all while ensuring it is economically feasible, fiscally responsible, and practical.



Barriers to Household Internet Subscribership

A 2017 survey found that 1.7% of households in Chatham County reported not subscribing to internet services. It is important to understand the reasons why households do not subscribe to the internet, as the survey found strong support for the idea that internet access is essential: across all surveyed households, none reported that they chose not to subscribe because they do not need the internet.

Among non-subscribing households in Chatham County, an overwhelming 76.5% said the main reason they chose not to subscribe to internet service is because it is too expensive. Nearly one in five households (17.6%) that do not subscribe to broadband said that broadband is not available at their home.

From a quality of service perspective, 5.9% of non-subscribing households say that available services are too slow or unreliable, perhaps dropping service from poor previous experience. However, every household responding to a 2016 survey recognized a need for the internet.



Nearly 1 out of 5 non-subscribing households in Chatham County said broadband is not available at their home

Top Reasons for Non-Subscribership

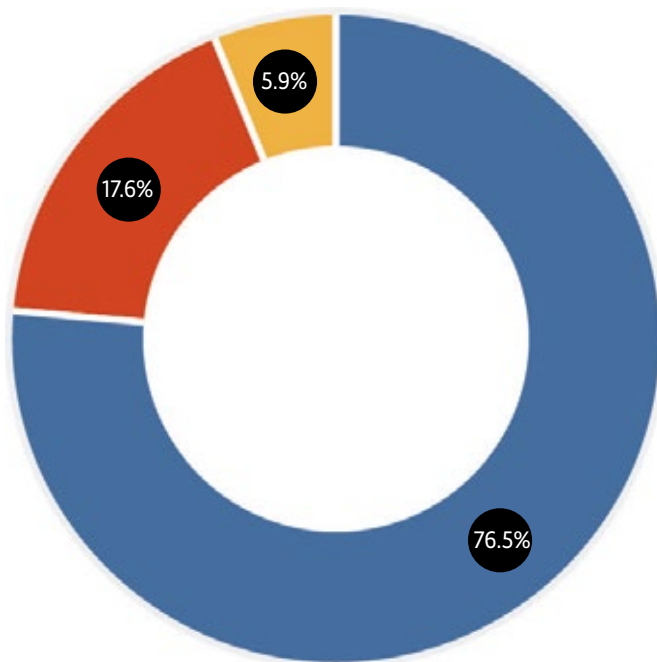
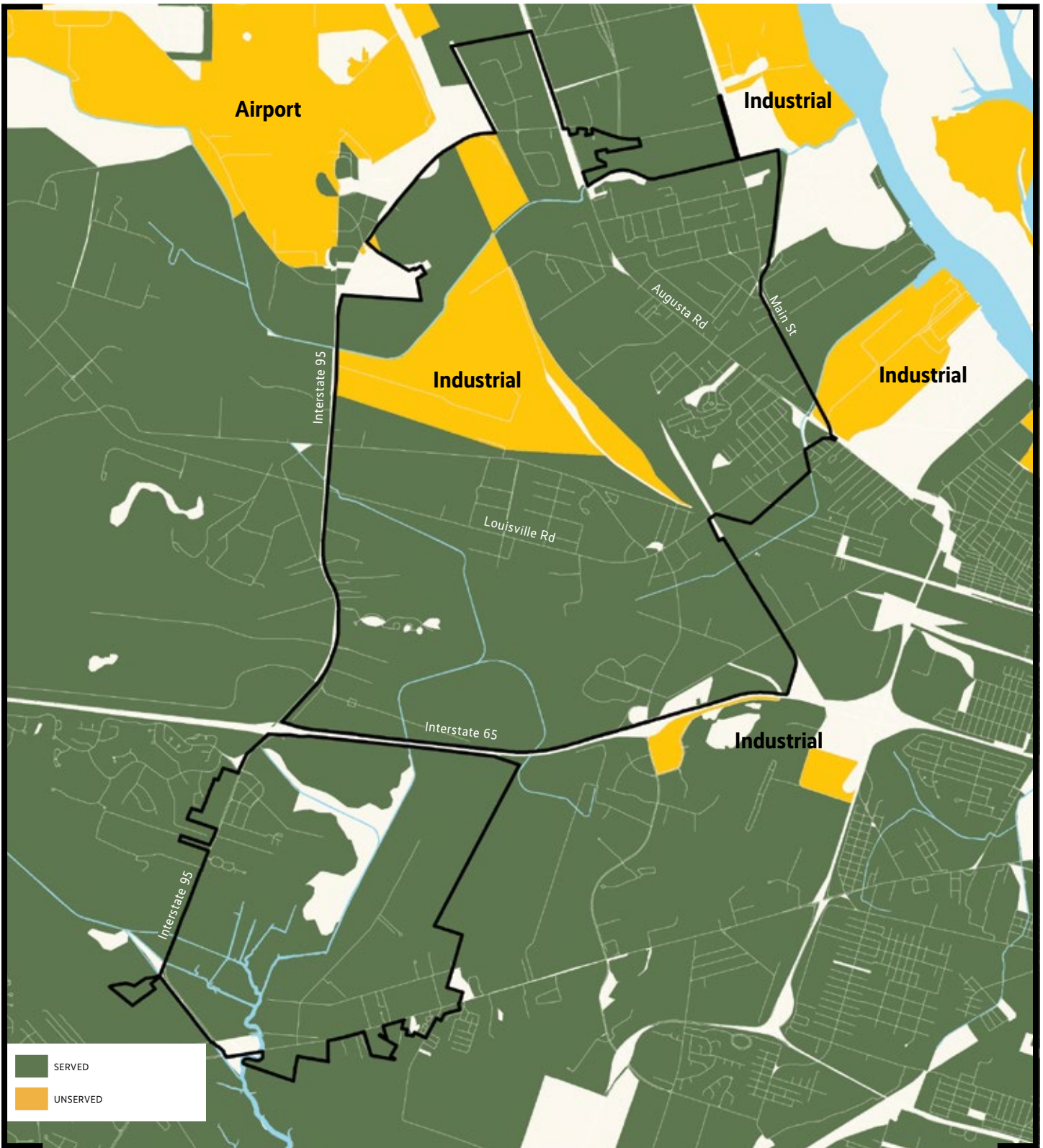


Figure 8.12–Most Important Reason for Not Subscribing to Internet

■ SERVICE TOO EXPENSIVE ■ NOT AVAILABLE AT MY HOME ■ TOO SLOW OR UNRELIABLE

While these percentages are very telling of local broadband market conditions, both Chatham County's findings contradict national household averages. Recent U.S. Department of Commerce research found "no internet availability" as the primary barrier in 48% of non-subscribing households nationally and "expensive service" as the primary barrier in 28% of non-subscribing households. These findings illuminate issues beyond simply having access to the internet and reveal the digital divide in Chatham County is based more on cost of services rather than availability.

This could be an indication that current service providers are charging too much for service, but may also be the result of poor economic conditions of some households in the county. Indeed, the threshold for a good or service being "too expensive" is relative, as what is out of financial reach for some households and income levels could be considered discretionary spending for others.



Map 8.8–Broadband Availability Map, Garden City

Still, survey responses show that Chatham County households recognize a need for the internet. When asked why the household did not subscribe to household internet services, an overwhelming number of households report that services are too expensive (76.5%), roughly a third (35.3%) rely on their mobile devices, while the same percentage (35.3%) rely on access to the internet outside the home. Outside the home could mean at work or school, the library, or even public Wi-Fi locations around town. Lastly, and not insignificantly, 17.6% of county households report that the internet is not available at their home.

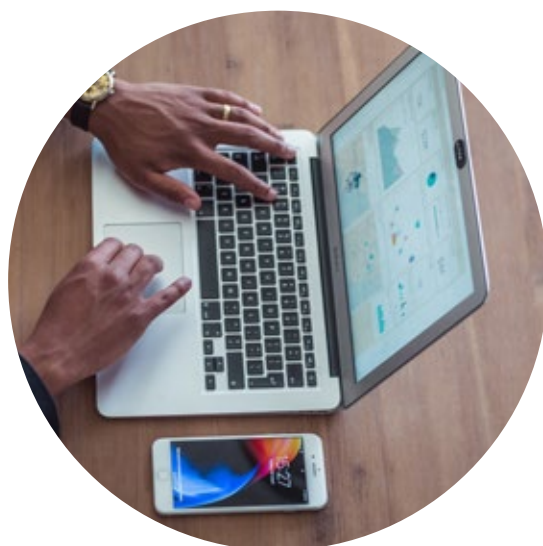
Some important observations can be drawn from this data. First, given high cost of service is the result of market conditions in Chatham County, two additional reasons for non-subscribership hint at possible workaround solutions for households that need internet access: "access internet with mobile phone" and "access internet elsewhere."

Reflecting a national trend, internet-enabled mobile devices are emerging as a necessary substitute for home internet access. A remarkable 35.3% of non-subscribing households report their mobile phone as a reason their household does not subscribe to internet services. These homes do not willingly choose mobile over wired connections; they use their mobile phones out of necessity because wired residential service is too expensive. Where cost is an issue, if given the choice between wired home internet access or inferior and costly mobile internet access, most will choose mobile wireless because of the voice and mobility aspects. Likewise, no non-subscribing Chatham County households say they do not subscribe to services because they access internet elsewhere. Yet when given the opportunity for multiple responses, that response increases to 23.5% of households that access the internet outside the home, possibly at work, school, or a public place such as a library or a restaurant likely because they have no affordable choice for their household.

To get an idea of how many non-subscribing Chatham County households would subscribe to services if given the opportunity, a series of questions in the same 2017 survey gauged how much the internet is a part of their household functions.

Overall, the survey of non-subscribing households clearly indicates that Chatham County residents recognize the importance of the internet to their household and would likely adopt services if available at an affordable price.

Summarized from Chatham County, Georgia Fiber-Optic Feasibility Study (May 2017 Magellan Advisors), as well as the City of Savannah Municipal Fiber Feasibility Study (May 2017 Magellan Advisors)



Next Steps

Drawing on recommendations from the local study, the next steps move Chatham County toward developing and realizing countywide fiber-optic infrastructure goals. Many of these recommendations center around forming local collaborations to aggregate demand and formalize broadband-friendly policies across the county. Many of the next steps are low-cost, organizational, and policy-oriented measures that will lead to a broader fiber-optic partnership and countywide fiber-optic deployment.

These findings shine a light on issues beyond access to the internet and reveal the digital divide in Chatham County is based more on cost of services.



AN ISSUE INTENSIFIED BY COVID-19

All learning, services, commerce, most workplaces and daily interactions online require a high-speed connection to the internet. As communities around the world adapted to a world with COVID-19, broadband connectivity and access became more critical than ever before.

Chatham County was forced to find new ways to work, go to school, communicate, and connect. In the United States alone, state and local directives urged millions of Americans to stay in and, when possible, work from home.

It is possible that at the end of the COVID-19 crisis, the future will look different from the world we left when the crisis began in 2019.

Household Survey Findings

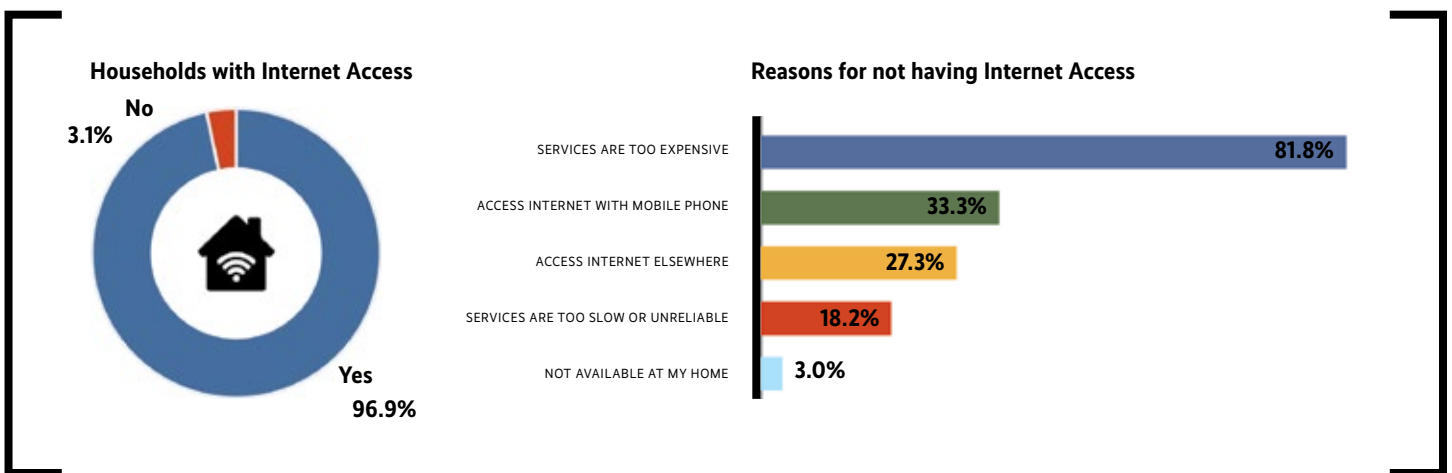


Figure 8.13–Household Survey Findings

