



C H A T H A M C O U N T Y - S A V A N N A H
METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

Planning the Future - Respecting the Past

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Melanie Wilson

Executive Director

July 27, 2021

Aaron Carpenter
Supervising Senior Planner
Planning & Government Services
Coastal Regional Commission
1181 Coastal Drive SW
Darien, Georgia 31305

Re: Transmittal of the City of Pooler Comprehensive Plan for CRC Review

Dear Mr. Carpenter,

The Chatham County – Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) has prepared an update of the City of Pooler’s Comprehensive Plan (the Plan). As growth and development continues in our region, this Plan provides a shared community vision for the future. The Plan as prepared by the MPC, examines Economic Development, Housing, Transportation, Land Use, and Broadband along with several other matters that impact the quality of life in our area, including Health, Education, Public Safety, Natural Resources, and Historic & Cultural Resources. The Plan includes a detailed listing of Community Goals and a Short-Term Work Program as a guide to the implementation of this vision.

Widespread public engagement and participation efforts were conducted by the MPC to gather the community’s opinions and ideas. The Community Participation Element describes the process used to gather public input and the findings. Additionally, the Plan has been developed in harmony with several other key planning efforts in our region, including the Regional Water Plan and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria. These plans were considered during the development process and a number of the key strategies were included within the Plan.

CRC Transmittal
Pooler Comprehensive Plan
Page 2

A copy of Pooler's Comprehensive Plan has been included for your review and submittal to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Please call me at 912-651-1446 or email me at wilsonm@thempc.org or contact Jackie Jackson at jacksonj@thempc.org or at (912) 651-1479 with any questions or comments regarding this document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Melanie Wilson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Melanie Wilson
Executive Director

cc: Jackie Jackson; Director of Advance Planning & Special Projects
File

Encl: Pooler Plan 2040 Comprehensive Plan



CITY OF POOLER

**100 Southwest Highway 80
Pooler, Georgia 31322
(912) 748-7261
www.pooler-ga.gov**

**Mayor
Rebecca C. Benton**

**CITY COUNCIL
Shannon Black
Aaron C. Higgins
Tom Hutcherson
Stevie E. Wall
John M. Wilcher
Karen L. Williams**

Robert H. Byrd, Jr. - City Manager

Steve Scheer - City Attorney

July 21, 2021

Coastal Regional Commission
1181 Coastal Drive SW
Darien, Georgia 31305

RE: City of Pooler Comprehensive Plan Update Submittal

The City of Pooler has completed an update of its current comprehensive plan and is submitting it with this letter for review by the Coastal Regional Commission (CRC) and the Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

I certify that we have held the required public hearings and have involved the public in development of the plan in a manner appropriate to our community's dynamics and resources. Evidence of this has been included with our submittal. I certify that appropriate staff and decision-makers have reviewed both the Regional Water Plan covering our area and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria (O.C.G.A. 12-2-8) and taken them into consideration in formulating the City's Comprehensive Plan.

If you have any questions concerning our submittal, please contact the Chatham County – Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC), the City's designated planning agency, with specific questions or comments.

Melanie Wilson, Executive Director
Chatham County – Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission
110 East State Street Savannah, Ga. 31401
wilsonw@thempc.org
912-651-1440

Sincerely,

Rebecca C. Benton
Mayor

City of Pooler
Comprehensive Plan



Adoption Dates

Adopted by
~~October 31st, 2021~~

Adopted by
October 31st, 2021



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POOLER
2040

**ADVANCING TOGETHER.
REDEFINING TOMORROW.**

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**RESOLUTION OF TRANSMITTAL
BY THE CITY OF POOLER COUNCIL**

Whereas, the last full Comprehensive Plan was developed in 2006 and then updated in October 2016; and

Whereas, since the issues and challenges facing the community continue to change from when the Goals and Objectives were updated in the last 2016 Comprehensive Plan; and

Whereas, community input was gathered by the Chatham County – Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission through virtual meetings, community events, social media, websites, a public online and written survey, and other channels to gauge the public’s priorities for Savannah; and

Whereas, the Chatham County – Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission updated the Comprehensive Plan to address economic development, land use, transportation, housing, and quality of life elements; and

Whereas, those Goals and Objectives have been incorporated into the Work Program of the Comprehensive Plan for Pooler, Georgia; and

Whereas, the Georgia Coastal Regional Commission (CRC) and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs must review Pooler’s Comprehensive Plan to ensure consistency with neighboring jurisdictions, consistency with Region 12’s adopted regional plan, and verify compliance with Georgia’s Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the City of Pooler Council does authorize the transmittal of the Pooler Comprehensive Plan for review by the Coastal Regional Commission and Department of Community Affairs as required by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

Adopted this 19th day of JULY, 2021

By: Rebecca Benton

Rebecca Benton, Mayor

Date: 7/20/21

Attest: Kiley Fusco

Kiley Fusco, Clerk

Date 07/20/21

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Introduction

Pooler 2040 is the culmination of collaboration over this past year and would not have been possible without the time, knowledge and energy of those persons listed and to the hundreds of community members who came to events, participated in virtual public meetings, attended steering committees, answered our survey and provided their invaluable input.

The Chatham County—Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) would like to thank the city of Pooler City Council for engaging our organization in this important project. The continued support and participation of these community leaders is vital. Our sincere appreciation is expressed to these individuals. The MPC was pleased to have the opportunity to assist and support the community in developing the city of Pooler's Comprehensive Plan update.

City of Pooler's Mayor & Council Members

Rebecca Benton—*Mayor*

Shannon Black—*Council Member*

Aaron Higgins—*Council Member*

Tom Hutcherson—*Council Member*

Stevie Wall—*Council Member*

John Wilcher—*Council Member*

Karen Williams—*Council Member*

Pooler Staff

Robert Byrd, Jr.—*City Manager*

Matt Saxon—*Assistant City Manager*

Phillip Claxton—*Planning Director*

Kimberly Classen—*Zoning Administrator*

Steven E. Scheer—*City Attorney*

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Stakeholder Committee

Rebecca Benton—Mayor
Shannon Black—Council Member
Aaron Higgins—Council Member
Tom Hutcherson—Council Member
Stevie Wall—Council Member
John Wilcher—Council Member
Karen Williams—Council Member

Planning & Zoning Board Stakeholders

Phillip Claxton—Chairman
Kim Classes—Secretary
Ashley Brown—Commission
Shirlenia Daniel—Commission
Chelsea Henneman—Commission
Falgun Patel—Commission
Wade Simmons—Commission
John Winn—Commission
Pete Chaison—(Alternate)

Technical Assistance

Chatham—Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission Staff

Melanie Wilson—Executive Director MPC
Pamela Everett—Assistant Executive Director
Jackie Jackson—Director of Advance Planning
Lara Hall—Director of SAGIS
Marcus Lotson—Director of Development Services
Leah G. Michalak—Director of Historic Preservation
Mark Wilkes—Director of Transportation

David Ramsey—Information Services & Mapping
Debbie Burke—Natural Resource Planner
Nic Fazio—Senior Planner
Kait Morano—Planner
Aislinn Droski—Assistant Planner
Asia Hernton—Assistant Planner
Kiakala Ntemo—Contract Planner

Special Thanks

Patty McIntosh, AICP—Contract Planner



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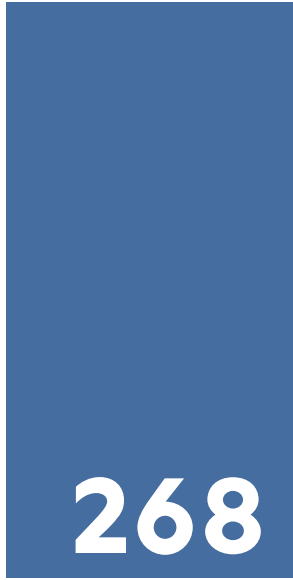
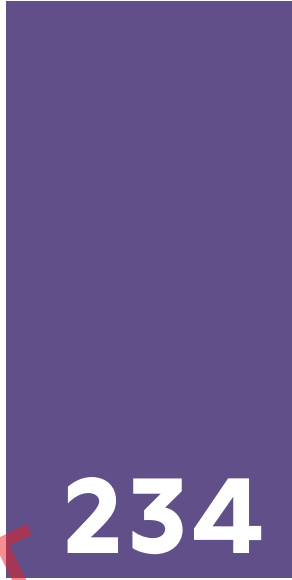
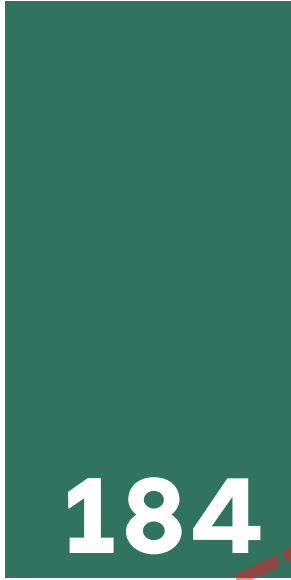
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**NATURAL
RESOURCES**

QUALITY OF LIFE

**SHORT TERM WORK
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WELCOME LETTER

LETTER FROM THE MAYOR



Rebecca Benton, Mayor of Pooler

Rebecca C. Benton

This update is the product of a multitude of different types of public engagement endeavors and careful consideration by City staff and our City Council. An approved update is critically needed to ensure Pooler is able address the challenges and opportunities that we face today.

We recognize that in a time of crisis, such as COVID-19, while tracking and responding to immediate needs, considering the broader goals and vision of the city is challenging. Hence, the Plan 2040 Comprehensive Plan will serve as that reminder and guide, as we all come together to work toward a more equitable and resilient city than ever before.

Public engagement has been a hallmark of the Comprehensive Plan update process. Through various engagement events and venues, the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC), as the agent for this update process, has heard from both residents and stakeholders.

The update that we submit to you today reflects the best analysis, policies, and actions that will prepare Pooler to manage the change ahead with an eye toward equity, resilience, and shared prosperity. On behalf of the entire City Council, I want to express our gratitude and reaffirm our support as we continue to move Pooler forward together.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pooler 2040

Pooler's Comprehensive Plan is the community's principal guiding or "vision" document—designed to formulate a coordinated, long-term planning program to maintain and enhance the health and viability of the jurisdictions. The Comprehensive Plan lays out the desired future for Pooler, and relates how that future is to be achieved. The plan serves as a resource to both the public and private sector by projecting how land will develop, how housing will be made available, how jobs will be attracted and retained, how open space and the environment will be protected, how public services and facilities will be provided, and how transportation facilities will be improved. In short, the Pooler's Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide for consistent policy direction.

The city of Pooler's City Council and local community leaders will use the Pooler 2040 Comprehensive Plan in the following ways:

The Future Land Use Map shall be referenced in making rezoning and capital investment decisions:

It provides a representation of the community's vision helping to guide development based on community preferences and also indicates character areas where various types of land uses should be permitted.

The Comprehensive Plan provides policies that help guide day-to-day decisions:

These policies are reflections of community values identified through public outreach efforts. These policies will be used as guidelines in the analysis of rezoning decisions and other capital investment decisions.

The Comprehensive Plan includes an Implementation Program that will direct public investment and private initiative:

Plan implementation is carried out through the adoption and revision of regulations, including zoning and development codes, and through the completion of projects and programs outlined in the Community Goals and Community Strategic Plan and Work Program. The Comprehensive Plan is a living document and should be updated regularly as conditions change and shifts occur in public policy.

The following pages describe the results of public participation that informed and guided the this planning document.

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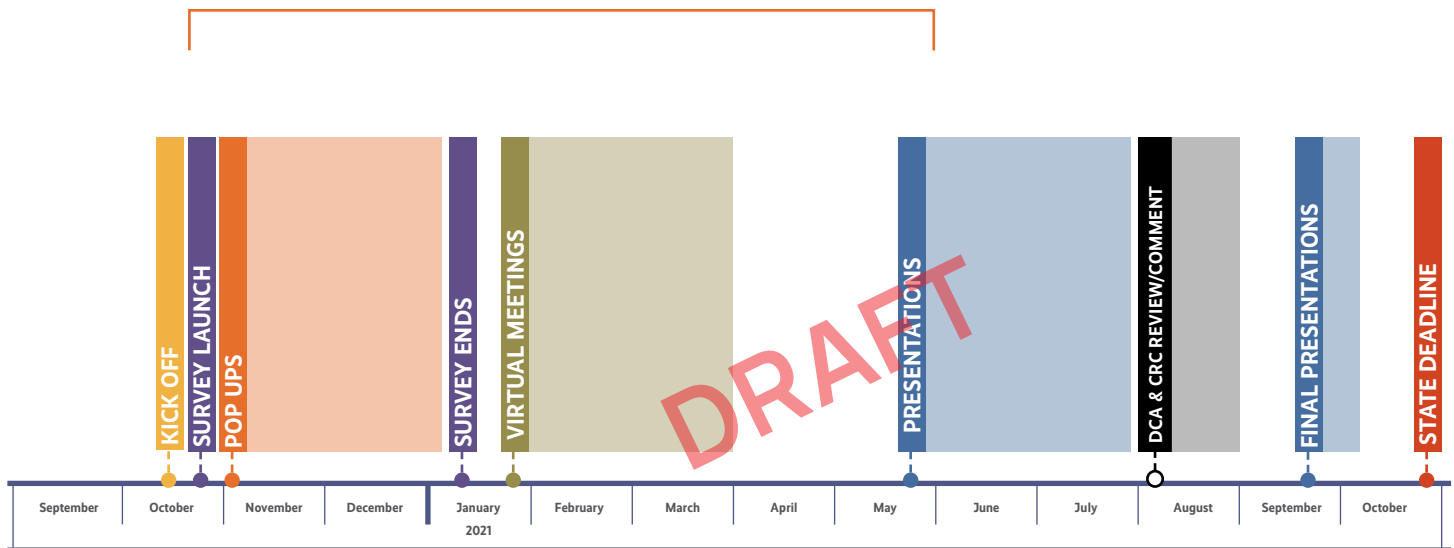


PLAN SCHEDULE

The comprehensive planning process required approximately eighteen months to complete. From March 2020 to October 2021, the MPC worked closely with city planning staff, a city council, and citizens of Pooler to identify issues, share strengths and develop visions, goals, and strategies for this Plan.

City Council along with various stakeholders regularly reviewed planning concepts, and provided feedback on critical issues.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PHASE



UNDERSTAND & EXPLORE

- Project Launch & Work Plan
- Background Review & Research
- Survey Launch
- Comment Mapper Launch
- Pop-ups Begin

ENGAGE & DEVELOP

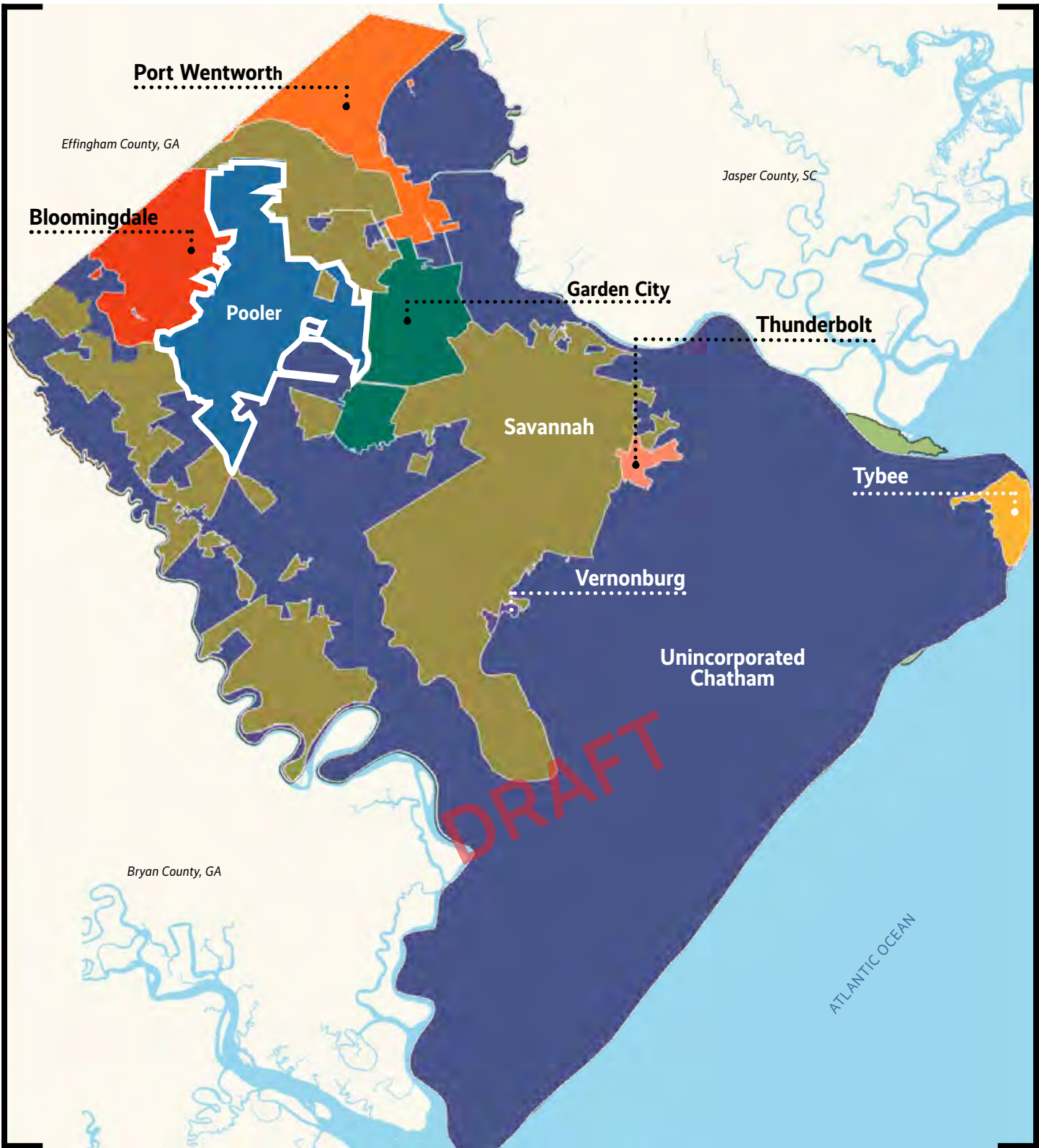
- Draft Element Visions & Goals
- Draft Short Term Work Programs
- Public Engagement Evaluation
- Virtual Meetings
- Subcommittee Meetings

REFINE & FINALIZE

- Draft Plan Development
- Plan Refinement
- Draft Presentations
- DCA & CRC Review
- Final Presentation & Adoption

FINAL PLAN

PLANNING PHASES



WHY DO WE PLAN?

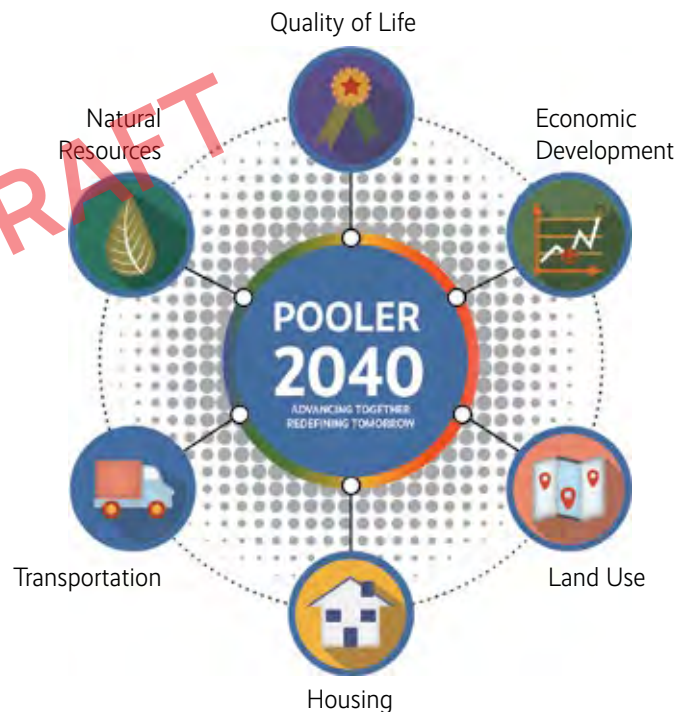
The Georgia Planning Act requires that cities and counties maintain comprehensive plans that help shape future growth. These plans generally recognize the physical, economic, social, political, and aesthetic factors of a community and are developed in a process that includes thoughtful analysis and robust public engagement.

Pooler 2040 serves as the comprehensive plan for the city of Pooler. The plan follows the minimum standards and procedures for local government planning set out in O.C.G.A. 50-8-7.1(b), reflecting the principles of partnership and the unique needs, conditions, and aspirations of the community.

To ensure that public participation in the planning process will result in meaningful implementation through zoning and other administrative mechanisms, a policy of "consistency" was discussed at public meetings. This proposed policy was strongly endorsed by the public. The policy of consistency requires that policies adopted in Pooler 2040 will be reviewed and amended prior to amending zoning or other implementing ordinances. In other words, official policy established in Pooler 2040 will become the basis for zoning amendments.

The six planning elements shown below are highlights of Pooler 2040.

- Quality of Life
- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Housing
- Transportation
- Natural Resources



COMPONENTS OF POOLER 2040

Pooler 2040 is to be a tool used in evaluating future proposals and policy changes to ensure consistent decisions are made. Each element is comprised of a vision statement, goals, objectives and strategies to accomplish the vision. These terms, often used to describe policy recommendations are described below:

ELEMENT:

These are the primary elements that must be included, at a minimum, in each community's Comprehensive Plan

VISION:

Each element contains a vision statement that is supported by multiple goals. A vision statement can become a compass, pointing the way to a common direction.

GOAL:

General overarching, broad statements describing the direction that a community wants to go.

OBJECTIVES:

Express the kinds of action that are necessary to achieve the stated goals without assigning responsibility to any specific action.

STRATEGIES:

Statements of specific actions that should be taken, identifying that responsible party/parties, the time frame within which the action should occur, and other details for implementation of occur.



HOUSING

In 2040...

Pooler is a Safe, Family-Oriented and Business Friendly Community.

GOAL:

1. Improve neighborhood stability where all residents, regardless of income, can occupy, maintain and improve their homes without undue financial hardship

Objectives:

- A. Assist households annually avoid eviction, foreclosure, property loss or homelessness

Strategy:

- i. Survey and designate historically significant industrial buildings, complexes, and other at-risk infrastructure.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

For the purpose of these rules, the following words shall have the meaning as contained herein unless the context does not permit such meaning.

Terms not defined in these rules but defined in O.C.G.A. 50-8-1, et seq, shall have the meanings contained therein.

	Definitions
Character Areas	<p>A specific geographic area or district within the community that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has unique or special characteristics to be preserved or enhanced, • Potential to evolve into a unique area with more intentional guidance of future development, • Requires special attention due to unique development issues. <p>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 Goals</p>
Community	Local jurisdiction (county or municipality) or group of local jurisdictions (in the case of a joint plan) that are preparing a local plan
Comprehensive Plan	<p>A plan meeting these Minimum Standards and Procedures. The comprehensive plan must be prepared pursuant to the Minimum Standards and Procedures for preparation of comprehensive plans and for implementation of</p> <p>comprehensive plans, established by the Department in accordance with O.C.G.A. 50-8-7.1(b) and 50-8-7.2</p>
Comprehensive Planning Process	Planning by counties or municipalities in accordance with the Minimum Standards and Procedures in O.C.G.A. 50-8-7.1(b) and 50-8-7.2
Conflict	<p>Any conflict, dispute, or inconsistency arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between or among plans, or components thereof, for any counties or municipalities, as proposed, prepared, proposed to be implemented, or implemented • Between or among plans for any regions, as proposed, prepared, proposed to be implemented, or implemented • Between or among plans, or components thereof, for any counties or municipalities and plans for the region which include such counties or municipalities, as such plan are proposed, prepared, proposed to be implemented, or implemented
Core Elements	<p>Community, Goals, Needs and Opportunities, and Community Work Program.</p> <p>These are the primary elements that must be included, at a minimum, in each community's Comprehensive Plan</p>

	Definitions
Core Elements	<p>Community, Goals, Needs and Opportunities, and Community Work Program.</p> <p>These are the primary elements that must be included, at a minimum, in each community's Comprehensive Plan</p>
County	Any county of this state
Days	Meaning calendar days, unless otherwise specified
Density	An objective measurement of the number of people or residential units allowed per unit of land, such as dwelling units per acre
Department	Department of Community Affairs established under O.C.G.A.50-8-1
Governing Body	Board of Commissioners of a county, sole commissioner or a county, council, commissioners, or other governing authority of a county or municipality
Infrastructure	Man-Made structures which serve the common needs of the population, such as: sewage disposal systems; potable water systems; potable water wells serving a system; solid waste disposal sites or retention areas; stormwater systems; utilities; piers; docks; navigation channels; bridges; roadways
Qualified Local Government	Any county, municipality, or other political subdivision of the state
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization, a federally designated agency created in urban areas containing more than 50,000 people that are charged with conducting comprehensive, coordinated planning processes to determine that transportation needs of their respective constituencies, and prioritizing and programming projects (bicycle and pedestrian projects) for federal funding
Minimum Standards and Procedures	Minimum Standards and Procedures, including the minimum elements which shall be addressed and included, for preparation of comprehensive plans, for implementation of comprehensive plans, for updates of comprehensive plans including update schedules, and for participation in the coordinated and comprehensive planning process

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Definitions



Precedents



PLAN 2040 Survey



Facts

	Definitions
Mediation	The process to be employed by the Department and Regional Commissions for resolving conflicts which may arise from time to time in the comprehensive planning process. Procedures and guidelines to govern mediation are as established by the Department pursuant to O.C.G.A. 50-8-7. I(d)
Municipality	Any municipal corporation of the state and any consolidated government of the state
Plan	The comprehensive plan for any county or municipality
Plan Amendment	A change to the adopted plan that occurs between plan updates. Amendments of the adopted plan are appropriate when the conditions, policies, etc., on which the plan is based, have significantly changed so as to materially detract from the usefulness of the plan as a guide to local decision making, or when required by the Department as a result of changes to the Minimum Standards and Procedures
Plan Update	A more or less complete re-write of the plan, which shall occur approximately every five years, in accordance with the recertification schedule maintained by the Department
Planning	The process of determining actions which state agencies, Regional Commissions, and local governments propose to take
Qualified Local Government	A county or municipality that adopts and maintains a comprehensive plan as defined in these Minimum Standards and Procedures.
Regional Commission	A Regional Commission established under O.C.G.A 50-8-32
Regional Plan	The comprehensive plan for a region prepared by the Regional Commission in accordance with the standards and procedures established by the Department

	Definitions
Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria	Those standards and procedures with respect to natural resources, the environment, and vital areas of the state established and administered by the Department of Natural Resources pursuant to O.C.G.A. 12-2-8, including, but not limited to, criteria for the protection of water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, protected mountains and protected river corridors.
Service Delivery Strategy	The intergovernmental arrangement among municipal governments, the county government, and other affected entities within the same county for delivery of community services, developed in accordance with the Service Delivery Strategy law. To ensure consistency between the plan and the agreed upon strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The services to be provided by the local government, as identified in the plan, cannot exceed those identified in the agreed upon strategy The service areas identified for individual services that will be provided by the local government must be consistent between the plan and Strategy As provided in Code Section 36-70-28 (b)(1), Service Delivery Strategies must be reviewed, and revised if necessary, in conjunction with county comprehensive plan updates
Supplemental Planning Rec.	The supplemental recommendations provided by the Department to assist communities in preparing plans and addressing the Minimum Standards and Procedures. The plan preparers and the community are encouraged to review these recommended best practices where referenced in the Minimum Standards and Procedures and choose those that have applicability or helpfulness to the community and its planning process.
Update Schedule	The schedule or schedules for updating comprehensive plans on an annual or five-year basis as provided for in paragraph (2)(b) of Section 110-12-1-.04 of these Rules. The term "Update Schedule" also means an additional schedule for the review of Service Delivery Strategy agreements by counties and affected municipalities on a ten-year basis in conjunction with comprehensive plan updates

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COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

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COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Introduction

Pooler 2040 ultimately belongs to the citizens of Pooler.

Through the Community Participation Plan Element, the Pooler 2040 team sought to gather the community's opinions, priorities, and visions about the future of the area. An in depth public engagement effort was made in the months leading up to the draft of Pooler 2040, and included a public survey, pop-up events, and virtual meetings.

Specifically, this community participation plan sought to engage the public on issues which are addresses primarily in the comprehensive plan.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

The vision for Pooler 2040 represents the voice of our community. Through the two-year planning process, Pooler community members shared their unique perspectives on what makes their community great and their suggestions for improvements. The goal of the engagement process was to bring as many voices into the planning effort as possible to get a wide range of ideas and perspectives and build a broad base for implementing Pooler 2040.

The Pooler 2040 process collected valuable input from diverse platforms, community members, and stakeholders to shape the Plan's vision and goals. The outreach process involved a variety of different approaches, which are listed below:

- 14 Virtual Public Meetings
- 10 Email Blasts (Over 1,500 Email Recipients)
- 6 Quarterly Newsletters
- 3 MPC Annual Reports
- Press Releases (Traditional Media Interviews)
- City of Pooler Online Promotion
- Online Interactive Comment Mapper (~300 Comments)
- Social Media (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook)
- Utility Bill Messages
- 4 Pop-up events
- Billboard
- Website
- Online Survey (914 Participants)

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POOLER 2040

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COMMUNITY SURVEY

Survey Overview

MPC staff team developed a survey aimed at collecting a wide range of input. The survey was intended to be more in depth than previous comprehensive plan updates and took approximately 25 minutes to complete. The survey aimed to collect a wide range of input and covered various topics including:

- Quality of Life (Historic Preservation)
- Housing
- Land Use
- Natural Resources (Sea Level Rise)
- Transportation
- Economic Development

The 24-question survey consisted of multiple choice and open-ended response questions. The MPC staff participated in the survey development and made suggested changes prior to publication. The survey was available online and in print versions, and was offered in Spanish for communities where English is not the primary language.

The survey was open from October 23, 2020 to January 19, 2021. A total of 914 responses were received from Pooler's residents.

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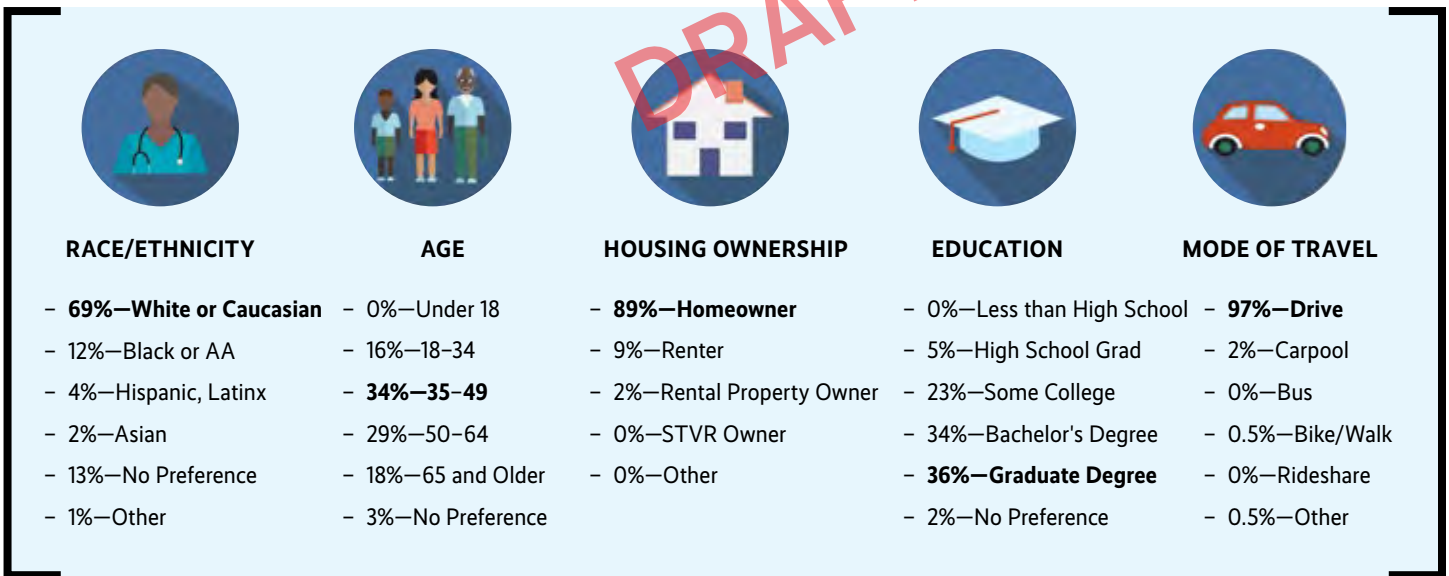
Survey Respondents

To get a better understanding of the citizens that participated in the Plan 2040 Survey, additional information about each respondent was requested.

The survey informational questions included:

- What is your race/ethnicity?
- What is your age?
- Which housing category describes you?
- What is your highest level of education?
- What is your primary mode of travel?

Survey Respondents By The Numbers



SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continual business development and bringing new people into the city (residential and commercial growth) - Convenient location perfectly placed within the county - Public safety presence is strong and well known - Close proximity to Savannah and tourism (both people and dollars brought into the community) - Diversity of businesses. There is a combination of small and large businesses throughout the city - Large amount of well-maintained recreational opportunities, parks, etc., throughout the city - Very low property tax rate - Process of permitting and development is streamlined. Pooler is good at attracting and working with commercial and retail businesses. The city does not create a lot of unnecessary roadblocks and are more willing to work one-on-one with builders, companies, and developers compared to other nearby cities - Available land for developable. This can also be both strength and a threat due to the possibility of land being bought and developed quickly - Family-friendly, although there is a lack of available schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need more people to both work here and live here - Schools: lack of public and private schools. There is also a lack of neutral ground for schools to be built on - Lack of dedicated housing areas or communities for seniors - Age in place housing is needed - Traffic and congestion - Lack of connectivity with regards to sidewalk and trail networks so residents can ride/walk to various areas without having to get in a car. Look at the City Code to ensure that walking and biking networks were connected - Look at adding bike lanes to existing and proposed road systems - The city needs a downtown anchor area or “destination” area possibly with an entertainment focus - Public transit needs to be instituted to employment nodes such as Tanger Outlets, Publix and near City Hall - Affordable, first-time home buyer housing, single family and senior housing should be the city’s top priority over the next 20 years - Lack of community centers, including communal garden & proper nutritional needs met if needed, recreational opportunity, and outdoor recreation creates formidable & matchless community ties
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Broaden housing options for residents both new and existing - Define areas and uses in the Zoning Code to allow film studios to locate in Pooler - Collaborate and work with the Savannah Film and Tourism Office to establish a city film program - Establish collaboration between landowners and film makers - Possibly look at an area where short-term lease housing could be built for housing film crews - Complete a recreation evaluation and Master Plan - Work to expand recreation program to bring in sports tournaments to utilize existing recreation space - Research expanding the number of multi-purpose recreation fields for soccer, etc. - Leverage the growth of the nearby international airport - Create convention center and amphitheater - Code Updates - Create incentives for desired types of development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land zoned R-A can be tax abated easily - Tax abatement activity through Savannah Economic Development Authority (SEDA) - Possible economic downturn: Pooler needs diverse businesses outside of retail and businesses that are sustainable during an economic downturn - Lack of diversity in housing, especially in regard to senior housing - Flooding and traffic due to increased growth in areas directly in and around Pooler - No tax benefit for places with more warehouses, like Pooler, Port Wentworth, and Garden City. Benefits go to Savannah and Chatham County - Increased price for raw land from \$50,000 to \$300,000

PLAN 2040 SURVEY QUESTIONS

Quality of Life

1. How strongly would you agree with the following statements about the quality of life topics?
2. Please rate your satisfaction with the following public amenities and services in your community?
3. In your opinion, what are the most important historic preservation actions?
4. Do you have any additional comments about quality of life?

Housing

5. Which categories describes you?
6. How strongly would you agree with the following statements about housing topics?
7. Please rank the following housing options in order of how they should be prioritized in the next 5 years, with 1 being the highest priority and 5 being the lowest?
8. In your opinion, do we need more, less, or about the same of the following housing types?
9. Do you have any additional comments about housing?

Land Use

10. Compared to recent trends, do you think we should encourage the following types of development more, less, or about the same over the next 10 years?
11. Please rank the following growth scenario in terms of your preference. On each map below, Chatham County's existing populated areas are shown in orange and possible areas of new growth under that scenario are shown in yellow.
12. Do you have any additional comments about land use?

Natural Resources

13. How strongly would you agree with the following statements about natural resources?
14. How important are the following objectives to you?
15. Which of the following strategies would you support to protect resources from hazards related to climate change?

Transportation

16. What is your primary mode of travel?
17. How strongly do you agree with the following statements about transportation?
18. Do you have any additional comments about transportation?

Economic Development

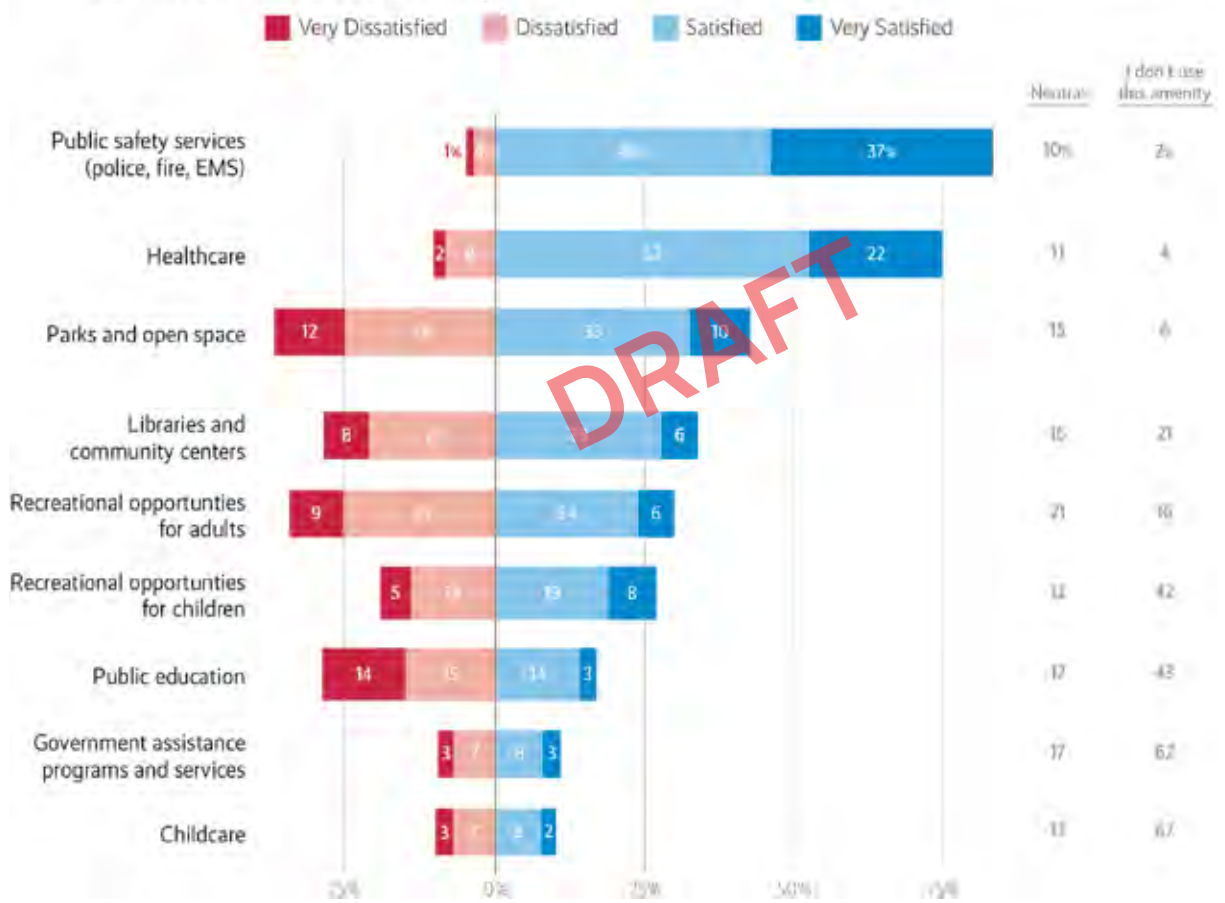
19. On a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most negative and 5 being the most positive, how would you rate the general growth in the past 5 years?
20. How strongly would you agree with the following statements about economic development?
21. How important are the following objectives to you?
22. Do you have any additional comments about economic development?
23. Are there other priorities or issues not covered in this survey that you think are important to consider as part of the Comprehensive Plan?



Quality of Life

1. How strongly would you agree with the following statements about the quality of life topics?
2. **Please rate your satisfaction with the following public amenities and services in your community?** (Results Below)
3. In your opinion, what are the most important historic preservation actions?
4. Do you have any additional comments about quality of life?

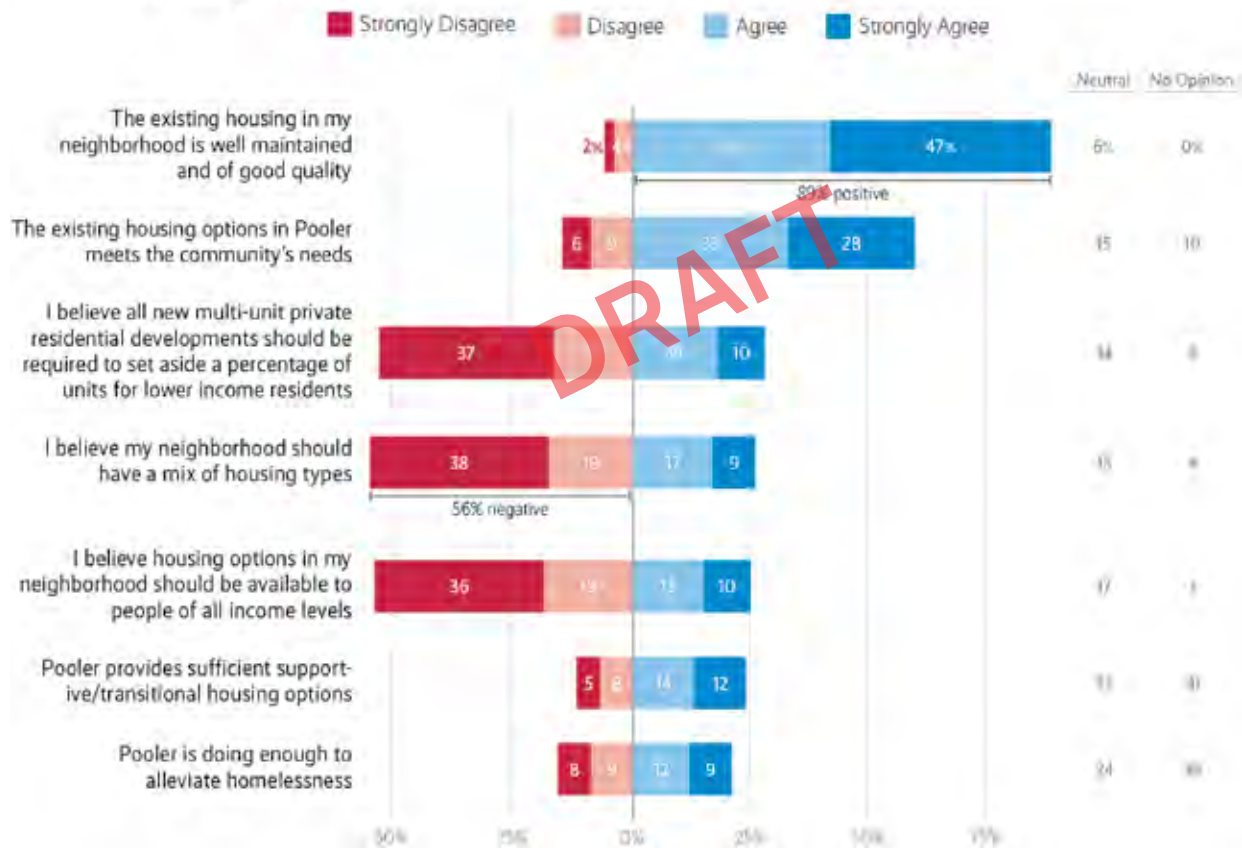
% of survey respondents who are _____ with the following public amenities and services in their community.



Housing

1. Which categories describes you?
2. **How strongly would you agree with the following statements about housing topics?** (Results Below)
3. Please rank the following housing options in order of how they should be prioritized in the next 5 years, with 1 being the highest priority and 5 being the lowest?
4. In your opinion, do we need more, less, or about the same of the following housing types?
5. Do you have any additional comments about housing?

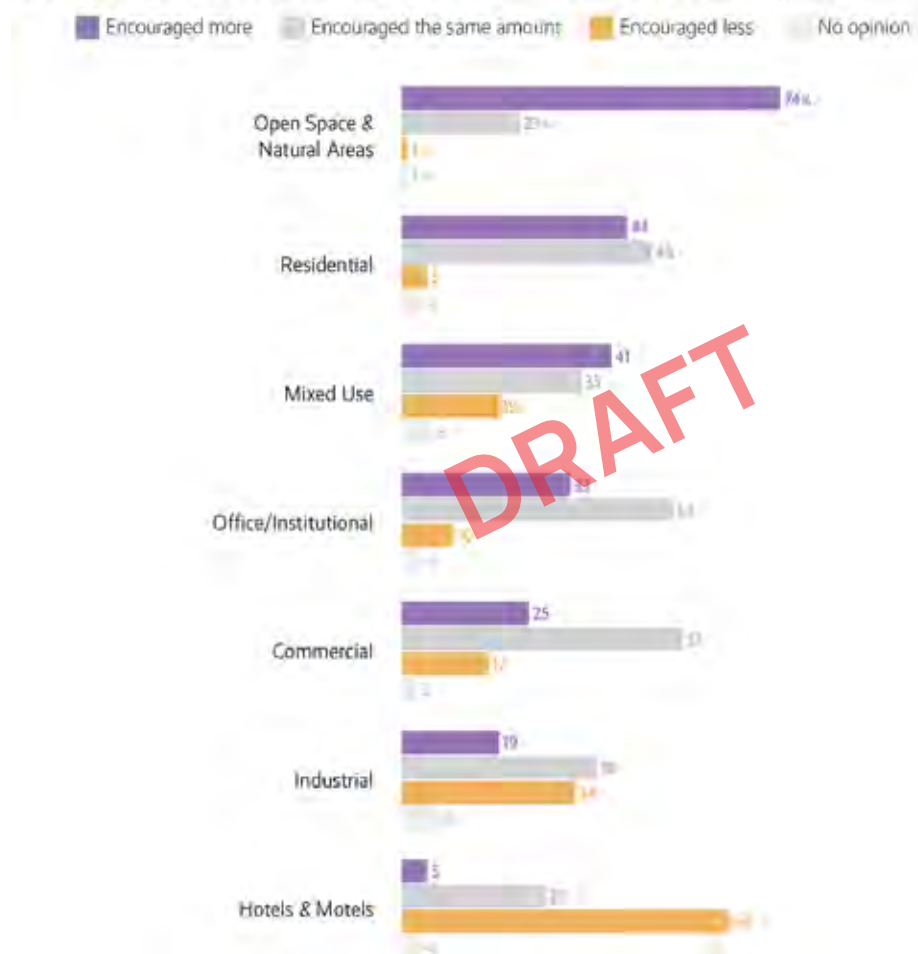
% of survey respondents who _____ with the following statements about housing in Pooler.



Land Use

1. Compared to recent trends, do you think we should encourage the following types of development more, less, or about the same over the next 10 years? (Results Below)
2. Please rank the following growth scenario in terms of your preference. On each map below, Chatham County's existing populated areas are shown in orange and possible areas of new growth under that scenario are shown in yellow.
3. Do you have any additional comments about land use?

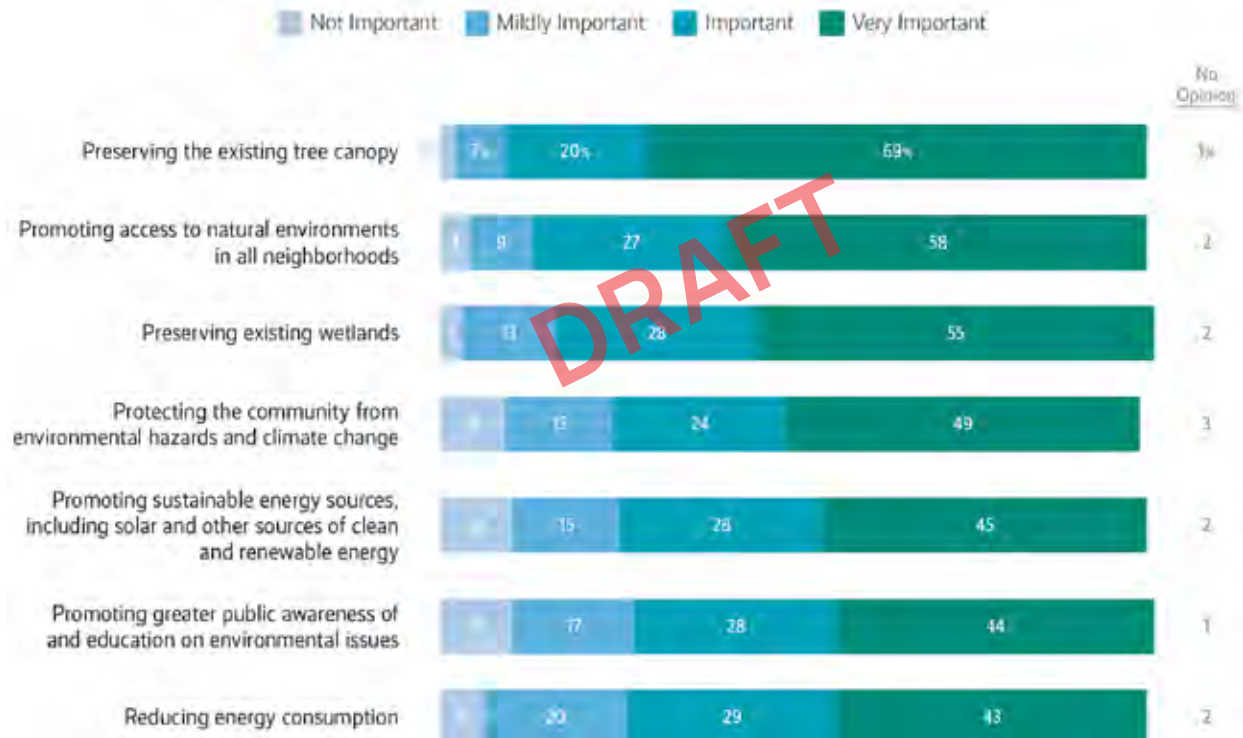
% of survey respondents who think the following types of development should be encouraged more, less, or about the same over the next 10 years.



Natural Resources

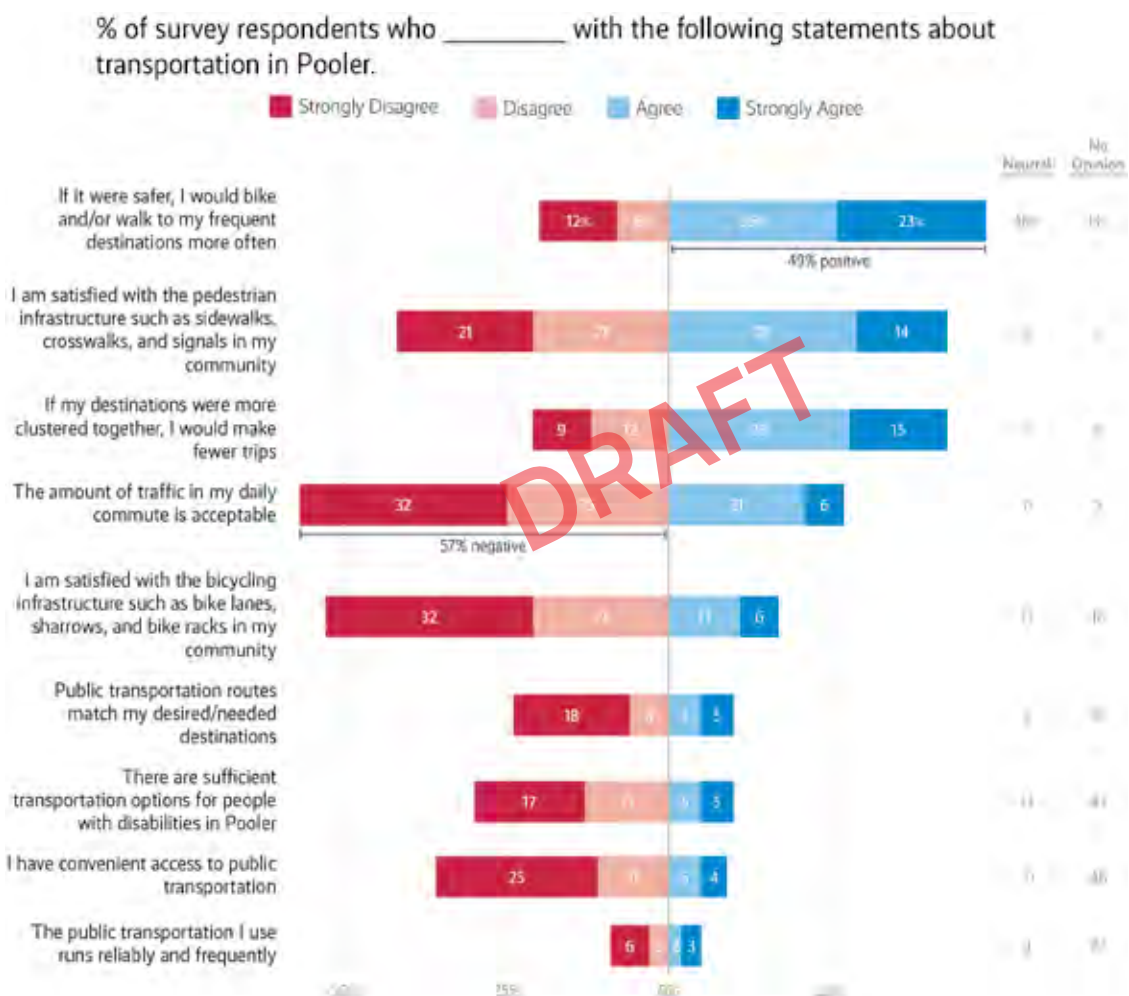
1. How strongly would you agree with the following statements about natural resources? (Results Below)
2. How important are the following objectives to you?
3. Which of the following strategies would you support to protect resources from hazards related to climate change?

% of survey respondents who say the following natural resource objectives are _____.



Transportation

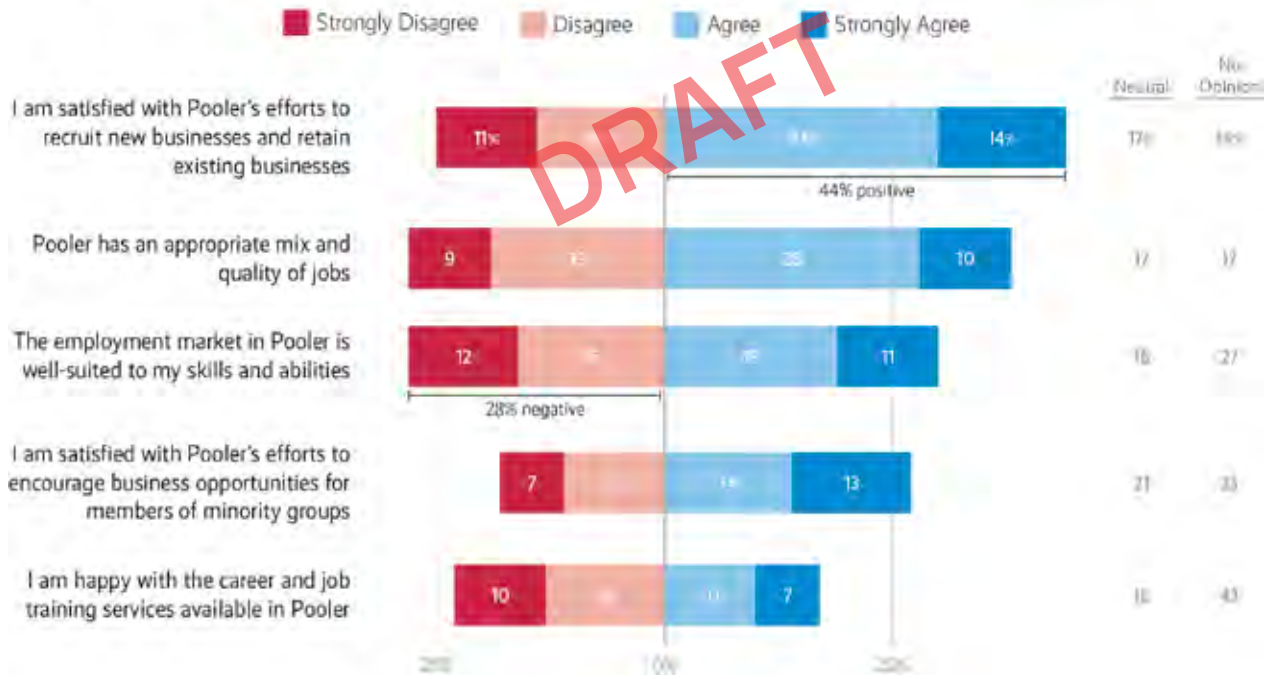
1. What is your primary mode of travel?
2. How strongly do you agree with the following statements about transportation? (Results Below)
3. Do you have any additional comments about transportation?



Economic Development

1. On a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most negative and 5 being the most positive, how would you rate the general growth in the past 5 years?
2. **How strongly would you agree with the following statements about economic development?** (Results Below)
3. How important are the following objectives to you?
4. Do you have any additional comments about economic development?
5. Are there other priorities or issues not covered in this survey that you think are important to consider as part of the Comprehensive Plan?

% of survey respondents who _____ with the following statements about economic development in Pooler.



WEB PAGE

Web Page Overview

To engage the community further, Pooler 2040 team designed and maintained a web page to be a platform for all planning, public outreach and social media information.

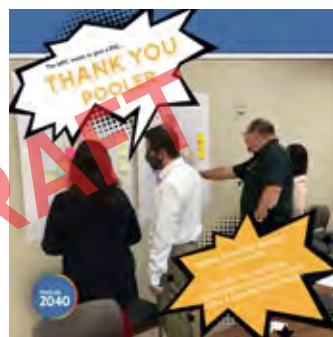
The web page was set up designed to be user friendly, easily read and interactive for all users. The page included a diverse mix of information including a project summary, history, a virtual meeting library, comment mapper, draft elements, and bulletin board of upcoming events.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media Overview

While the web page served as a platform for all of the planning documents, the social media page served as an advertising platform to engage the public on upcoming events, meetings, pop-up events and announcements. The social media platforms used to advertise Pooler 2040 included Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.



COMMENT MAP

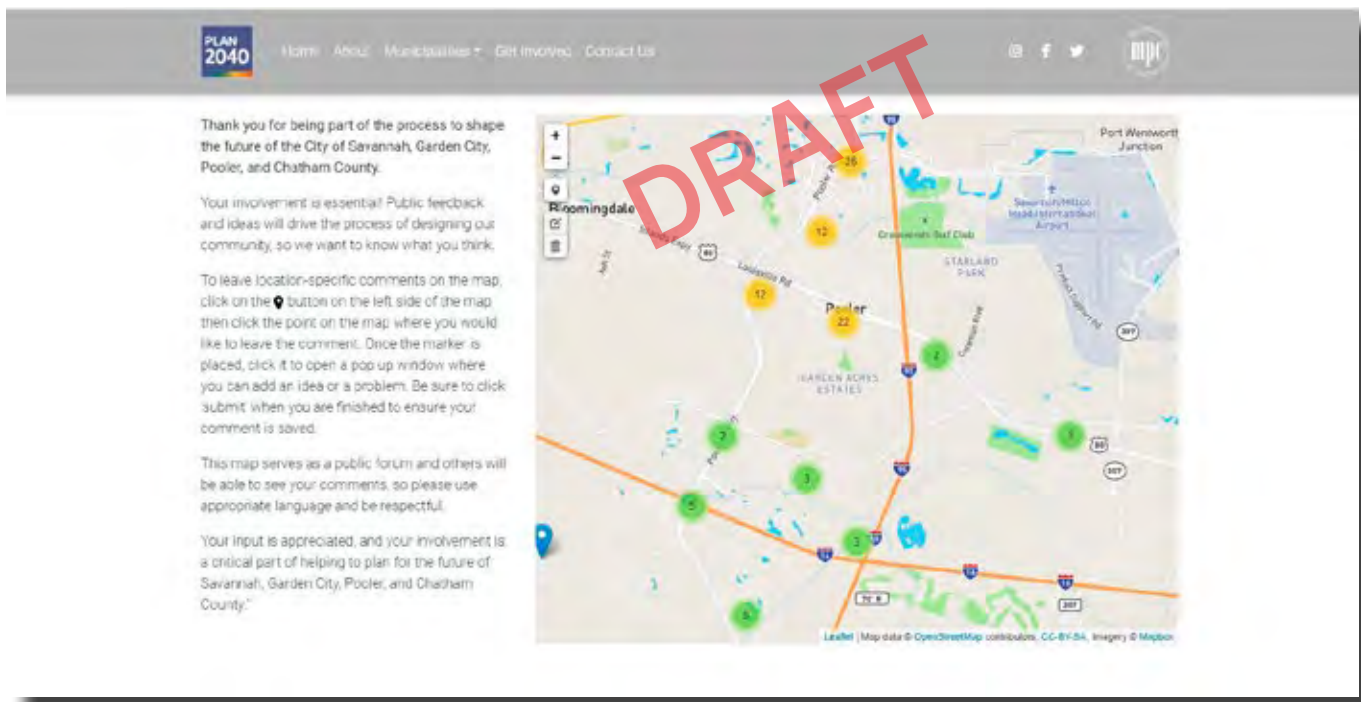
Comment Map Overview

To ensure that the Pooler 2040 public outreach methods were widespread and equitable, the Pooler 2040 team created a comment mapping tool to collect additional feedback. This technique was a new tool that allowed the community members to geolocate "Ideas" and "Problems" in their community.

The collection process revealed opportunities in the community and provided insights into where future neighborhood plans and corridor studies might be needed. It also served as a starting point for future public outreach.

The major "Ideas" and "Problems" that were uncovered with the comment mapper revealed that food insecurity, neighborhood trash/maintenance, and walkability are hindering the quality of life of the citizens of Pooler.

The data represented is from October 23, 2020 to June 10, 2021. This resource will remain active and will be used as an additional method of public comment for future Pooler 2040 engagement opportunities.



Response Locations



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What We Heard

IDEAS
- Grocery Store
- Community Center
- More Sidewalk Connections
- Mixed Use Housing
- Street Lighting
- Dog Park
- Bike Lanes
- Movie Studio
- Pocket Parks
- Community Beautification Projects

PROBLEMS
- CAT Bus Stops
- Traffic Congestion
- Public Restrooms Needed
- Flooding
- Excess Trash & Litter
- Lack of Housing Options
- Incomplete Sidewalk Connections
- More Tree Canopy
- Major Ditch & Canal Drainage Improvements Needed



COMMUNITY OUTREACH POP-UPS

Community Outreach Overview

The Pooler 2040 team conducted a series of nine community pop-up events throughout Pooler. The pop-up events were held at various times to reach as many residents as possible across the County.

Following CDC recommended COVID-19 safety measures, the Pooler 2040 team also offered virtual meetings to supplement the community outreach effort.

There were three rounds of virtual meetings that included an overview of Pooler 2040, polls, and opportunities for community feedback on progress.

These events were advertised and offered to community or faith-based organization responding to email blasts and other communications.

- Chatham Recycles—"Haunted Recycling" (October 24, 2020)
- Starland Yard—"Mini-Market" (October 28, 2020)
- Forsyth Park—"Farmer's Market" (November 21, 2020)
- Forsyth Park—"Farmer's Market" (December 21, 2020)

Over 100 residents attended these pop-ups and provided over 500 comments.



MEETINGS

Internal Meetings & Committee Meetings

- Georgia Coastal Indicators Coalition—(August 19, 2020)
- TCC & CAC—(August 20, 2020)
- ACAT—(August 24, 2020)
- CORE MPO—(August 26, 2020)
- Georgia Coastal Indicators Coalition—(October 7, 2020)
- Pooler City Council Meeting—(October 10, 2020)
- UGA Graduate Studies Class—(October 14, 2020)
- TCC & CAC—(December 3, 2020)
- ACAT—(December 7, 2020)
- CORE MPO—(December 9, 2020)
- Pooler City Council Meeting—(January 22)
- TCC—(February 18)
- CORE MPO—(February 24)
- Georgia Coastal Indicators Coalition—(March 5)
- Georgia Coastal Indicators Coalition—(June 2)
- PLAN 2040 Subcommittee—(June 3)
- County Commission Meeting—(June 11)
- MPC Board—(June 29)
- Pooler City Council Meeting—(July 12)
- Pooler City Council Meeting—(July 19)

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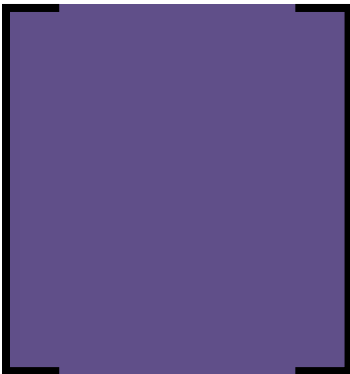
Public Meetings

- Virtual Meeting Round 1—(January 26)
- Virtual Meeting—(January 27)
- Virtual Meeting Round 2—(February 22)
- Virtual Meeting—(February 23)
- Virtual Meeting Round 3—(March 30)
- Virtual Meeting—(April 9)



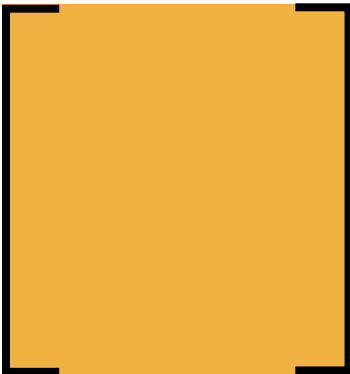
KEY TAKEAWAYS

VIRTUAL MEETINGS



QUALITY OF LIFE

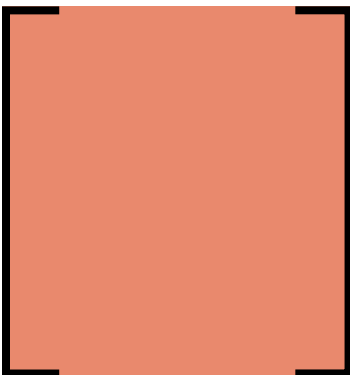
- Poor Quality of Education
- Little Interest in Historic Preservation
- We Need More Schools
- Areas Where Crime Needs More Attention
- More Places for Children & Youth
- Noise from Planes
- More Transparency with Upcoming Development
- No Unified Vision for Pooler (Design Guidelines)
- Redevelopment of Historic Area
- Billboards & Advertising are an Eyesore
- A Better Library is Needed
- More Government Transparency



HOUSING

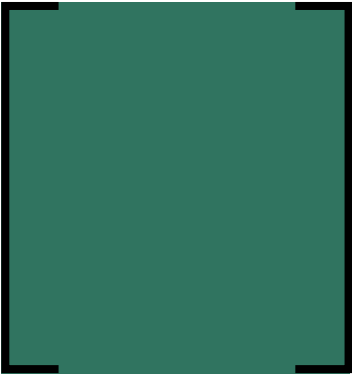
- Lack of Workforce and Lower Income Housing
- People are Being Priced Out
- No Desire for Apartments and Low-Income Families
- More Single-Family Housing
- More Gated Communities

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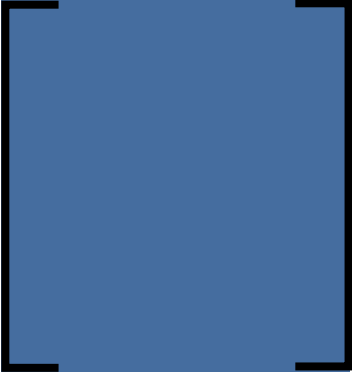
LAND USE

- Creation of Pocket Parks
- Pooler Attracts the Wrong Types of Business
- Too Much Development in Pooler
- Not Enough Green Space
- More Interest in High-End Retail vs. Outlet
- Pooler Bike/Walking Trail
- Dog Park
- More RV Resorts
- Less Chains and More Local Business
- Entertainment Industry in a Priority
- Too Many Chains
- Limit Hotels & Strip Malls
- A Master Plan for the City



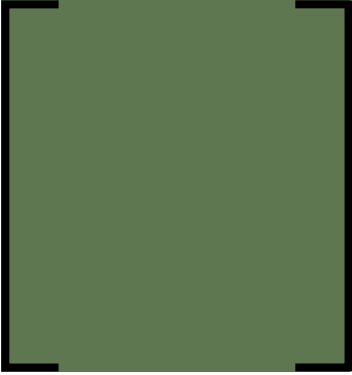
NATURAL RESOURCES

- Creation of Pocket Parks
- Restrict Development in Flood Zones
- Pipemakers Canal is a Critical Area
- Drainage Issues
- Noise Levels from Cutting Tree Buffers
- More Protection of Tree Canopy
- Issues with Water & Air Quality
- We Need Mosquito Control



TRANSPORTATION

- Light Rail
- Targeted Public Transport for Seniors
- Public Transit only at Certain Nodes and Employment Centers
- Too Much Roadway Congestion
- Traffic
- Sound Barriers from Roadways
- Build & Upgrade Roadways



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Adult Education & Training



**COMMUNITY
PROFILE
ELEMENT**

DRAFT

01



COMMUNITY PROFILE

Introduction

Pooler is located in Chatham County, just northwest of Savannah with direct access to Interstates 95 and 16. Due to its proximity to historic Savannah, regional transportation, and the beaches of Tybee Island, there has been tremendous growth in the city over the past 10 years. As part of the Savannah Metropolitan Statistical Area, Pooler's commercial and residential growth will continue to have significant impacts on current residents, natural and cultural resources, community services and facilities, and infrastructure.

Pooler has come a long way since its shy beginnings as a rail connection to Savannah and the Lowcountry. The now thriving Pooler started out as a railroad stop before Savannah. Named for Robert W. Pooler, an area resident who had a plan for a Georgia railroad route, the railroad station soon evolved into an actual town.

Aside from the many things to do in Pooler, the community's good quality-of-life has also influenced population growth. Low crime and a small-town community atmosphere have all been factors in its explosive growth. Pooler is now one of Georgia's fastest-growing cities.

CITY OF POOLER

Population

As of 2018, the city of Pooler had an estimated population of 23,102 with a population density of 835 people per square mile. U.S. Census records show the population was slowly but steadily increasing between 1970 and 2000 but grew by over 200% between 2000 and 2010. In the past two decades, Pooler has been the fastest growing municipality in Chatham County.

By comparison, the city of Savannah grew by 15% and unincorporated Chatham grew by 46% over the same period.

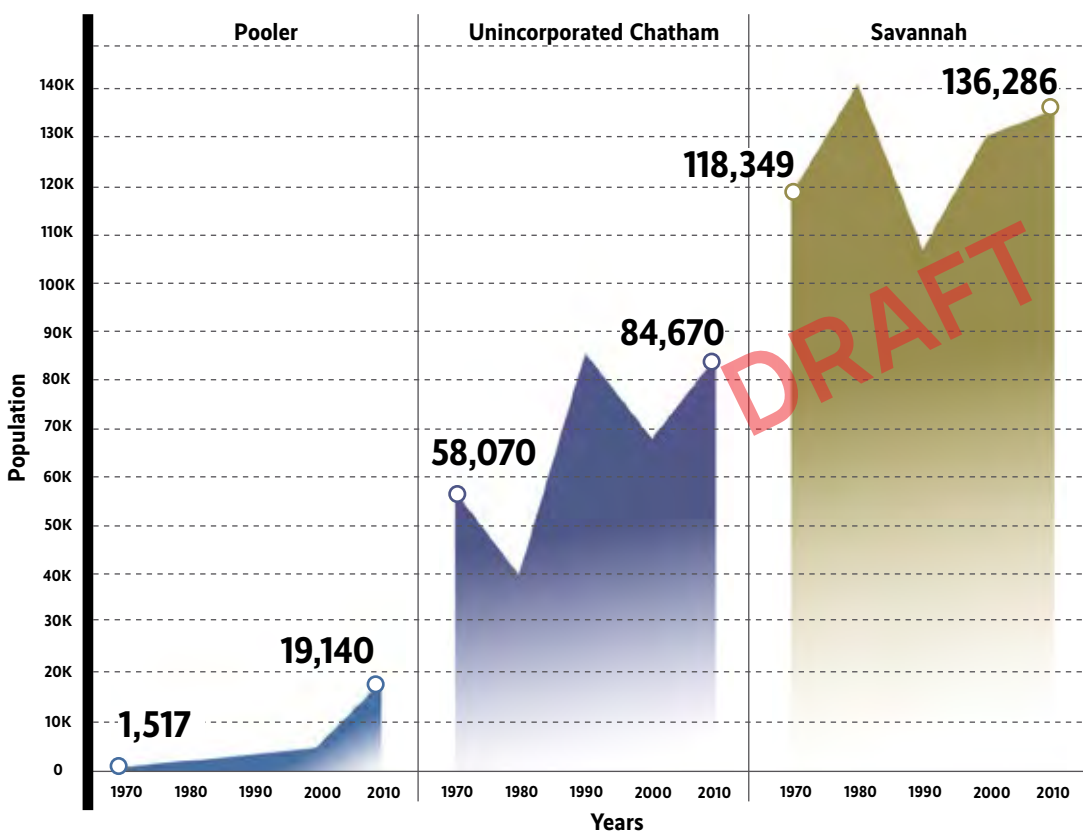


Figure 1.1—Population Comparison, 1970–2010, Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Population Growth, 1970–2018

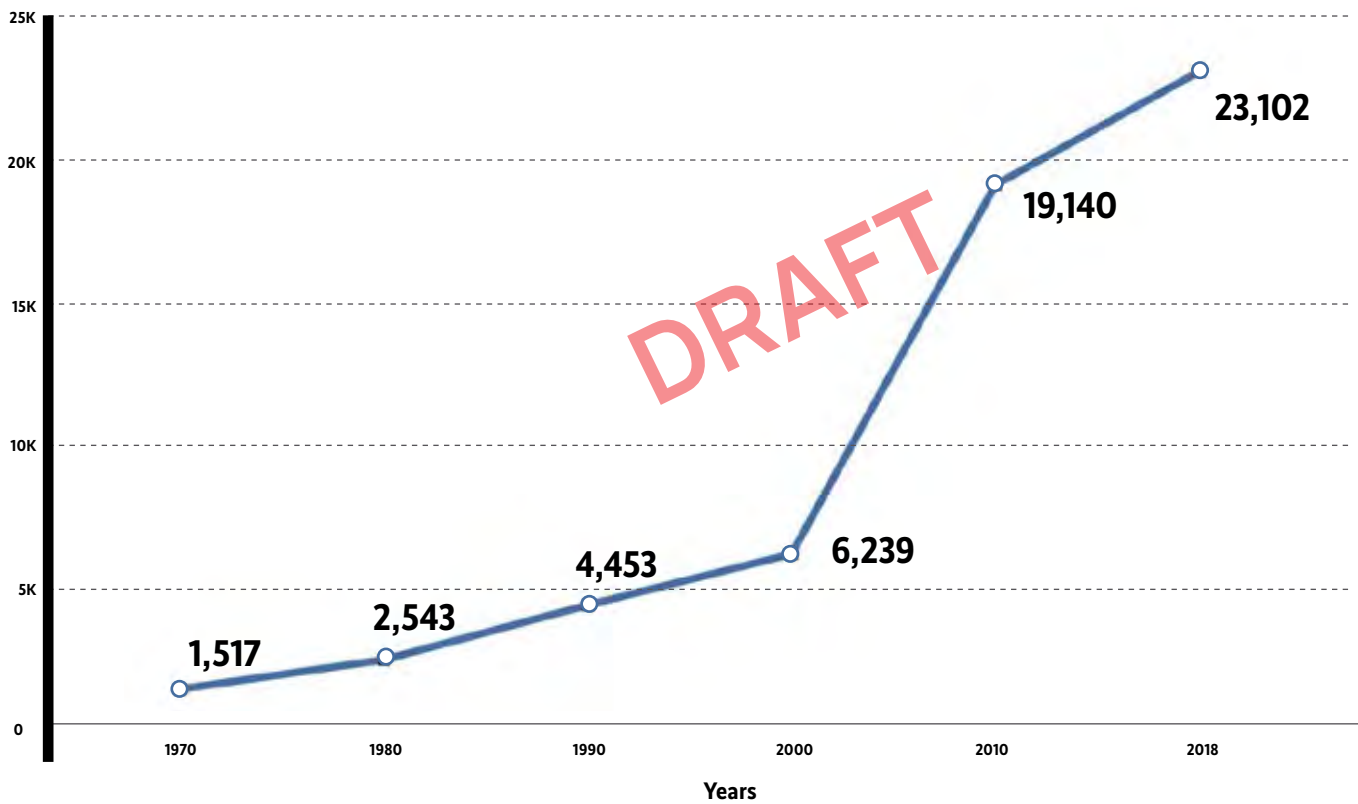


Figure 1.2–Population Growth, Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Sex & Age

Of the 23,102 people living in Pooler in 2014–2018, 52.1% were female, and 47.9% were male. Residents of Pooler had a median age of 37.3 years, which is in line with the median age nationally (37.9 years).

Pooler's has gotten significantly older since the 2009–2013 period, when the median age was 33.3 years. Possible reasons for this could be that younger people are moving out of the city, older people are moving into the city, existing older residents are staying in Pooler longer, or residents are postponing having children and/or having fewer children overall. In particular, Pooler saw a sizable decrease in the proportion of children under age 10 as well as 25–34 year olds, while the number of people aged 45–59 increased substantially. By 2018, residents who were 45–59 years old made up nearly one quarter of Pooler's total population.

Sex Characteristics, 2014–2018



Median Age Characteristics, 2014–2018

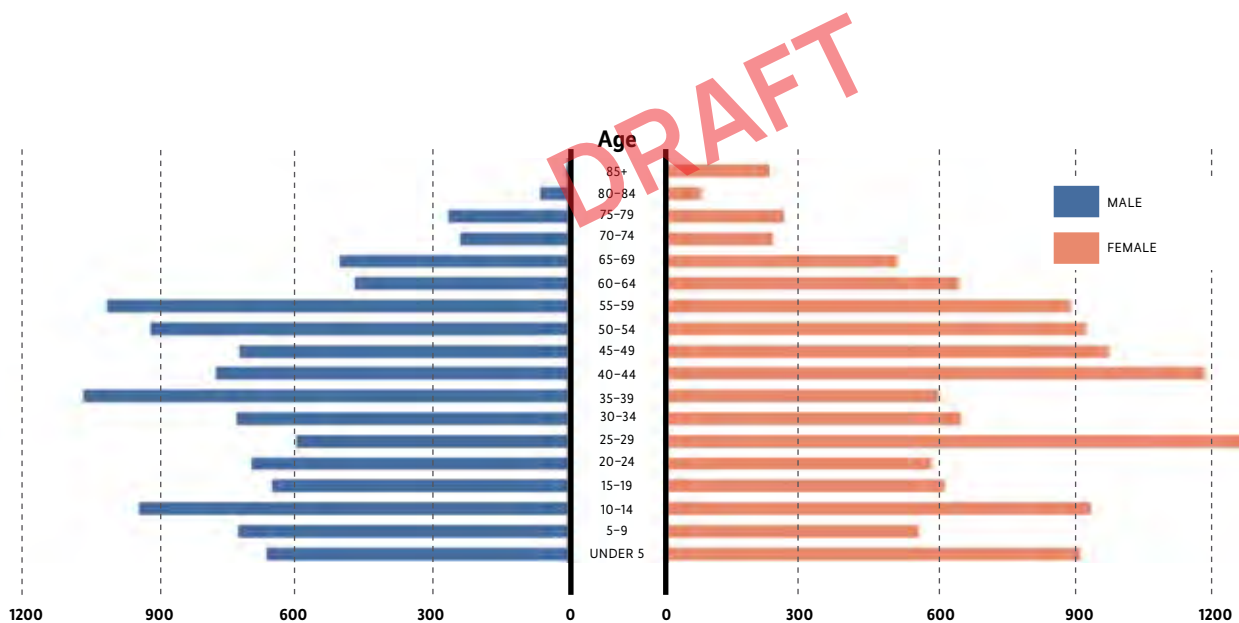
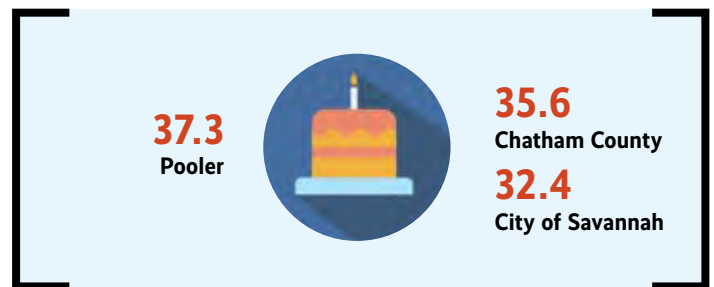


Figure 1.3–Population Pyramid, Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Race & Ethnicity

In 2014–2018, the majority of Pooler’s population identified as white alone (68.0%), while an estimated 24.1% of residents were black or African American and 3.8% identified as being of two or more races. These racial breakdowns represent people who reported only one race (aside from the “two or more races” category). Roughly 1 in 20 residents in Pooler were Hispanic or Latino (5.8 percent) (those who identified as Hispanic origin may be any race(s)).

Pooler’s population has been grown increasingly more diverse in the past thirty years, particularly since the turn of the century. Since 2000, the non-white share of Pooler’s population has more than doubled, from 13.3% to an estimated 32.0% 2018. In 2014–2018, the likelihood that two people randomly chosen from Pooler were from a different racial or ethnic group was 48.6% (compared to 57.8% for Chatham County as a whole).

Population by Race, 2014–2018

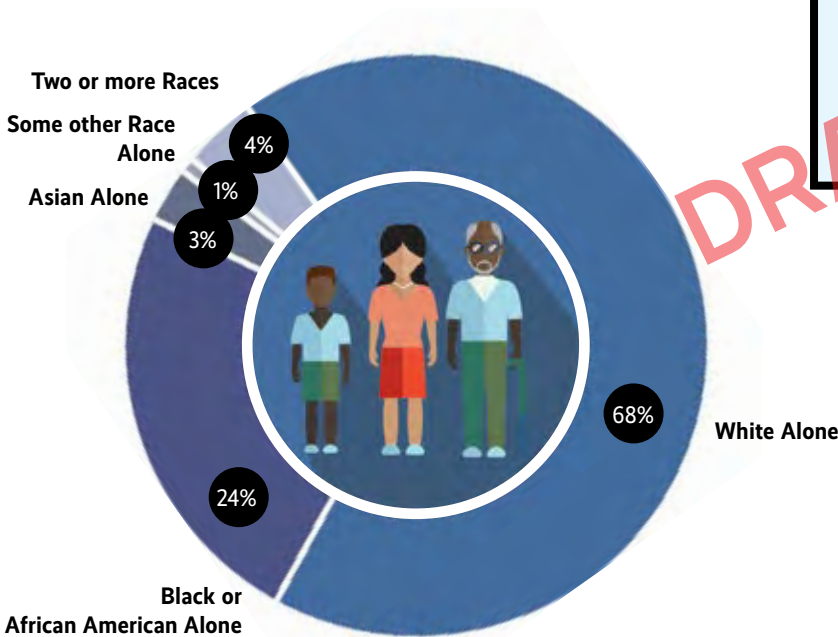
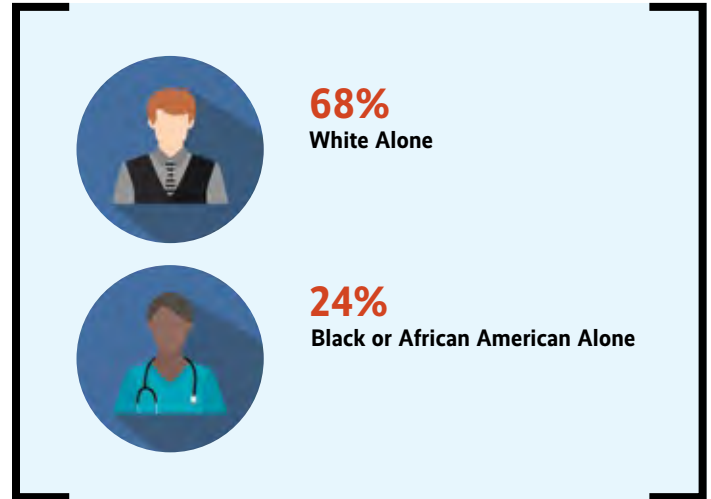
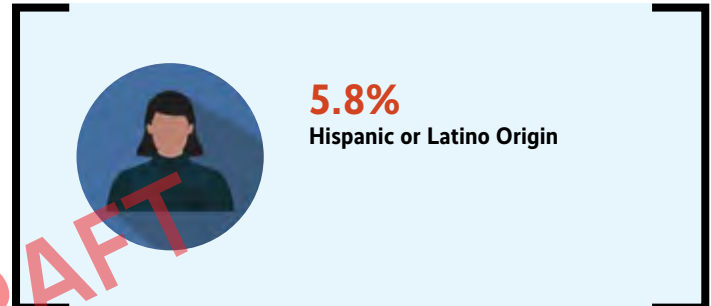


Figure 1.4–Population by Race, Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Racial Majority Characteristics, 2014–2018



Ethnicity, 2014–2018



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.

On Map 1.1, block groups with high racial and ethnic diversity index scores are shown in blue. These calculations are based on the methodology described in “Mapping the USA’s diversity from 1960 to 2060” in USA TODAY.

Race & Ethnicity Changes, 1970–2010

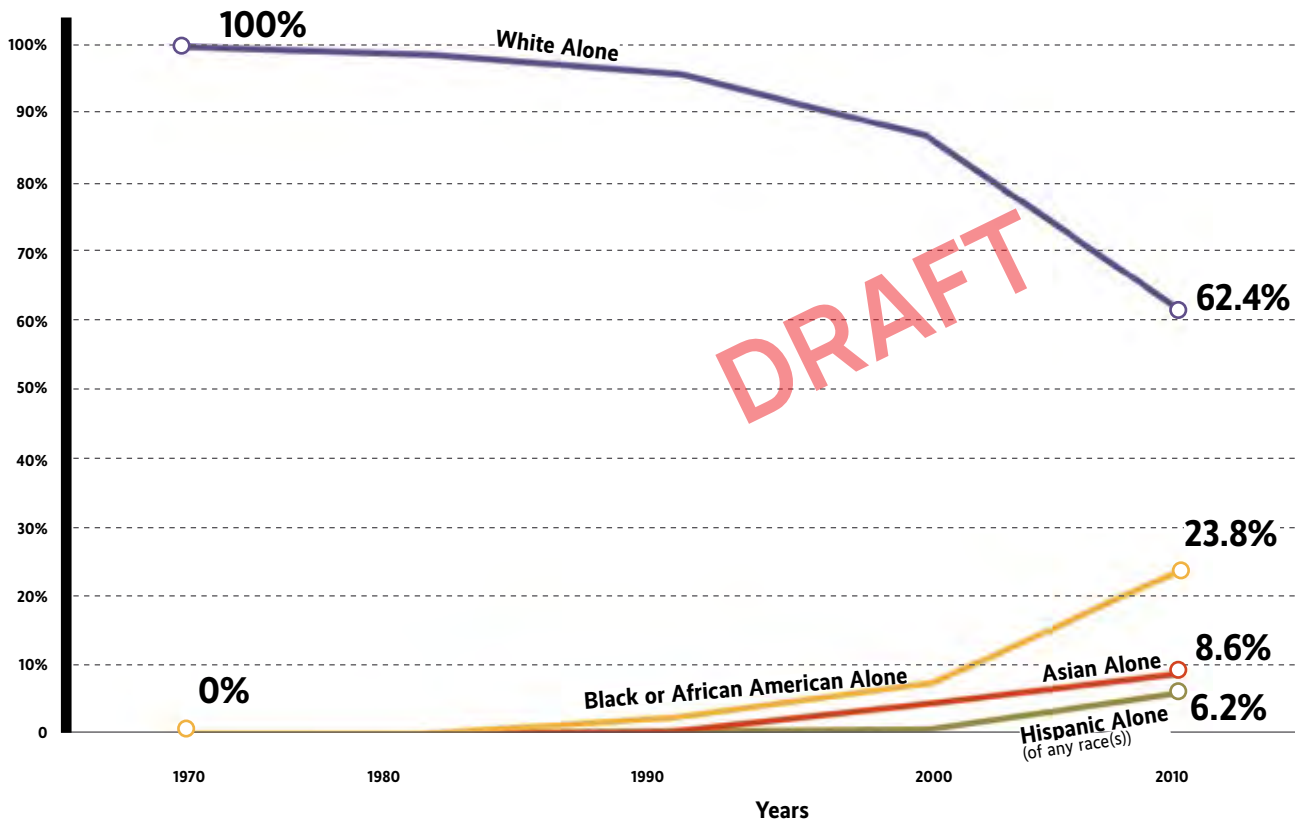
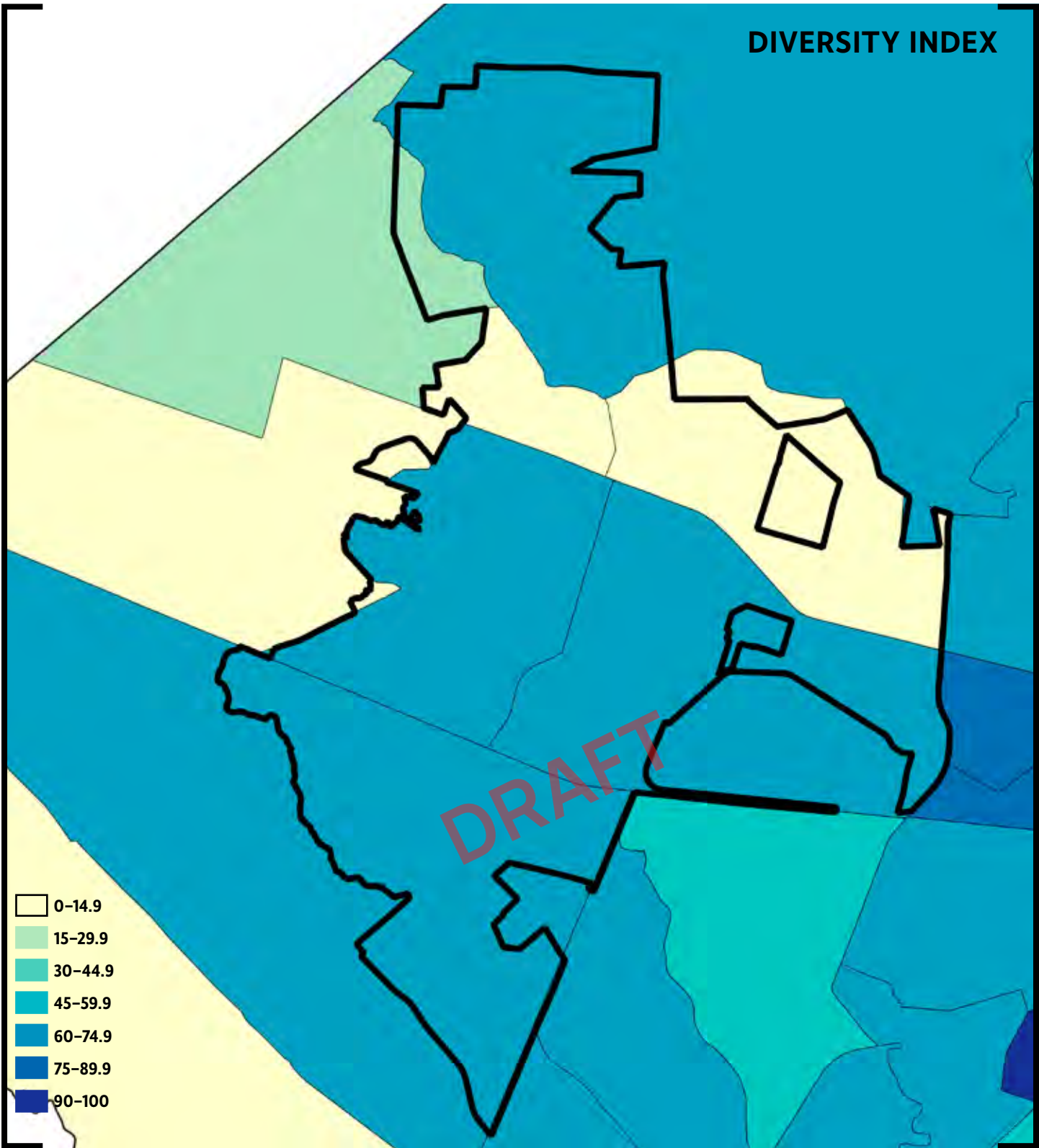


Figure 1.5–Race & Ethnicity Over Time, Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Map 1.1-Diversity Index by Block Group, Pooler
 U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Employment

In 2014–2018, 67.0% of people 16 years and older were employed in the civilian labor force and 4.8% were unemployed; 27.3% of residents over 16 were not in the labor force. There was a significant decline in residents employed in the armed forces, from 3.3% in the 2009–2013 period to 0.9% in 2014–2018. An estimated 77.4% of employed people in Pooler were private wage and salary workers in 2018; 17.6% worked in federal, state, or local government; 4.7% were self-employed in their own (not incorporated) business, and 0.3% were unpaid family workers.

The unemployment rate in Chatham County had been declining steadily from mid-2011 until March 2020, when the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were felt across the country. In April 2020, the monthly unemployment rate skyrocketed to 16.5%, higher than the rates of both Georgia (12.2%) and the United States (14.8%).

Unemployment Rate, 1992–2019

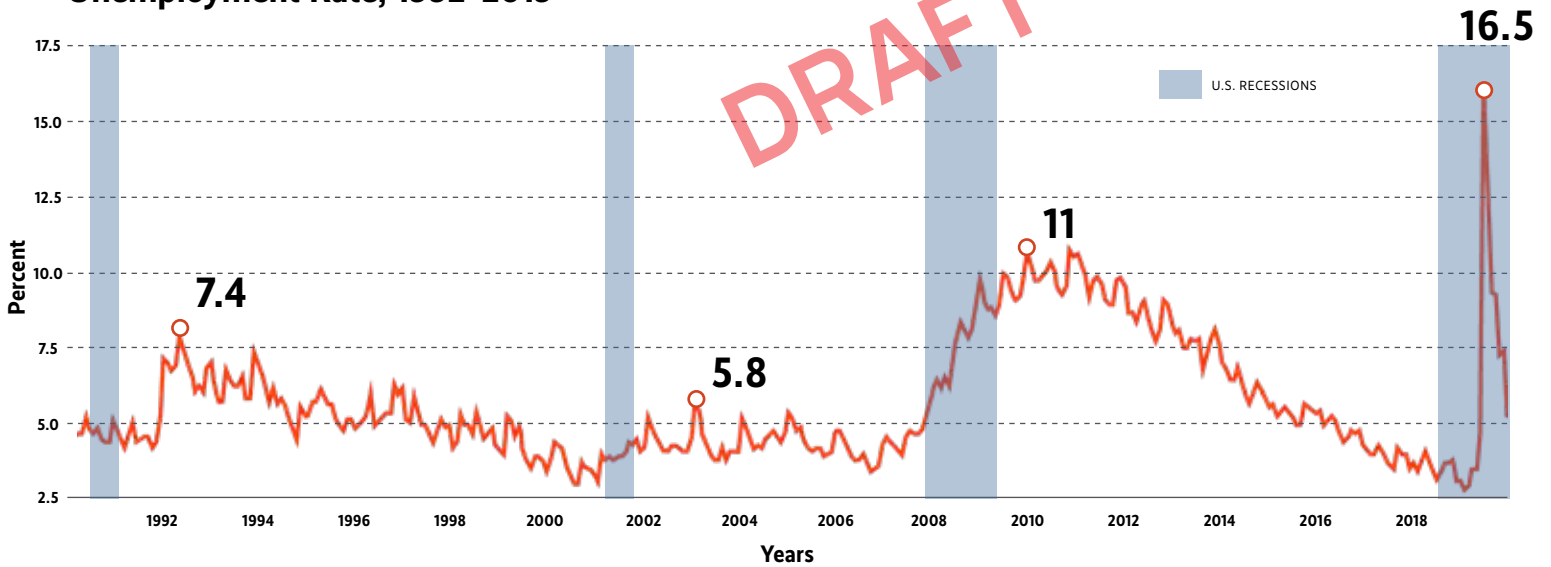


Figure 1.6–Unemployment Rate , Chatham County
Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED)

Industry

In Pooler, the three largest industries by employment in 2018 were educational services, health care, and social assistance (2,289 employees); manufacturing (1,817); and retail trade (1,696). Collectively, these industries added nearly 1,300 jobs since 2009–2013 period, over half of which were in the retail trade industry. This industry also saw the greatest growth in employment during that time, increasing by 4.8% points.

Location quotient (LQ) is a measurement of how concentrated a particular industry is in an area relative to the nation as a whole. It compares the industry's share of local employment to the U.S. average. A LQ of 1 indicates an industry is providing the same share of jobs locally as it is nationally, a LQ above 1 indicates a higher-than-average concentration locally, and a LQ below 1 indicates jobs in that industry are less concentrated locally than the national average. The LQ for industries in the city of Pooler is shown below.

The transportation, warehousing, and utilities industry was nearly two times more concentrated in Pooler than the national average in 2018—approximately one in ten residents were employed in the sector that year. The public administration and manufacturing industries were also more concentrated locally than the country as a whole, despite both decreasing in their share of local employment between 2013 and 2018.

Largest Industries by Employment, 2014–2018



Industry Concentration, 2014–2018

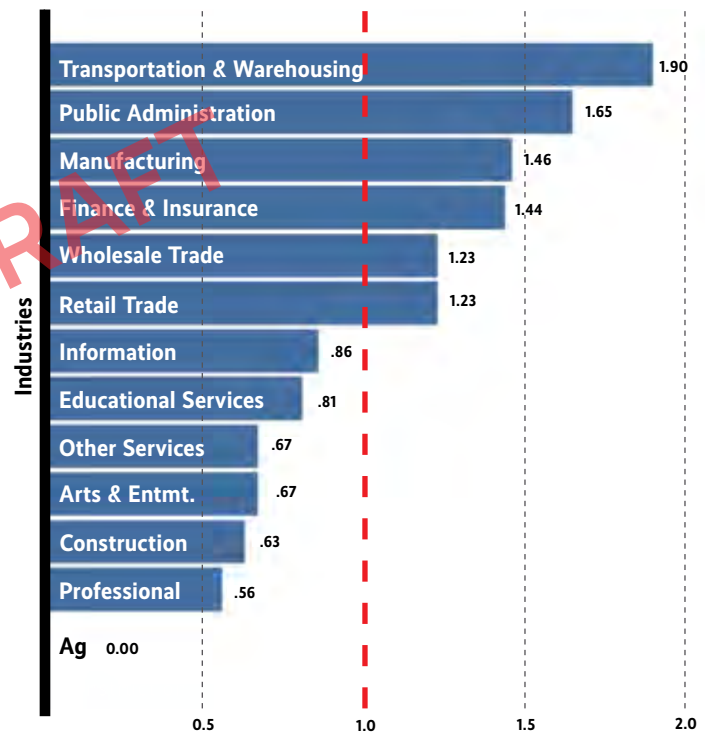


Figure 1.7—Industry Concentration, Pooler

U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Income & Poverty

In 2014–2018, the median income of households in Pooler was \$78,102. In general, household incomes in Pooler have increased in recent years: the average household income increased nearly \$10,000 from \$85,031 in 2009–2013 to \$94,698 in 2014–2018. The distribution of household incomes in 2009–2013 and 2014–2018 is shown in Figure 1.8. The recent rise in average household income was driven by both a significant decrease in the share of households making less than \$10,000 and an increase in the share of households making \$100,000 or more annually. By 2018, nearly four out of every ten households fell into the latter income category.

In 2014–2018, roughly 5.1% of people in Pooler lived below poverty level. An estimated 5.1% of children under 18 lived in poverty at that time, down significantly from 15.5% in 2009–2013. Of all ages, adults aged 18–64 were most likely to be living in poverty (5.4%), with seniors aged 65 and older being least likely (2.6%).

Median Household Income Change

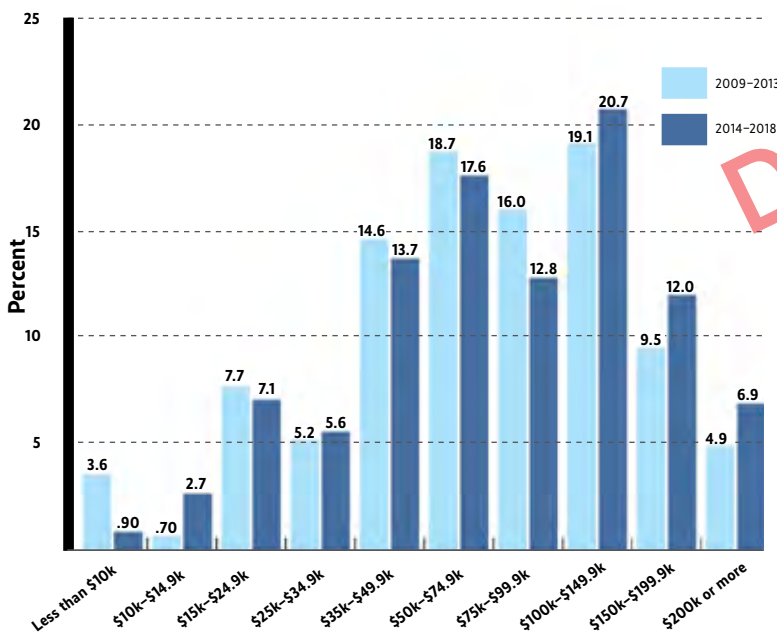
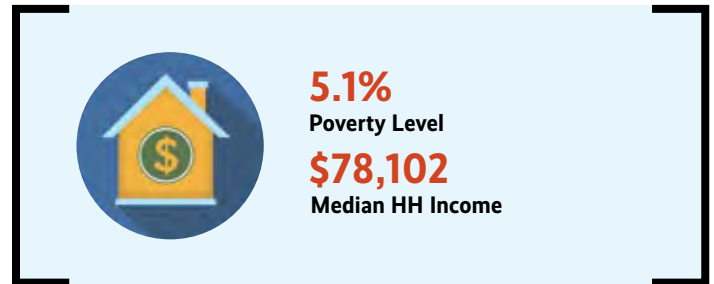


Figure 1.8–Household Income Change, Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Poverty & Income Characteristics, 2014–2018



Likewise, females were overrepresented in the population living below poverty level in the city of Pooler: while females made up only 51.8% of the total population, they made up 63.4 % of the population living in poverty.

Status of Poverty by Age, 2014–2018

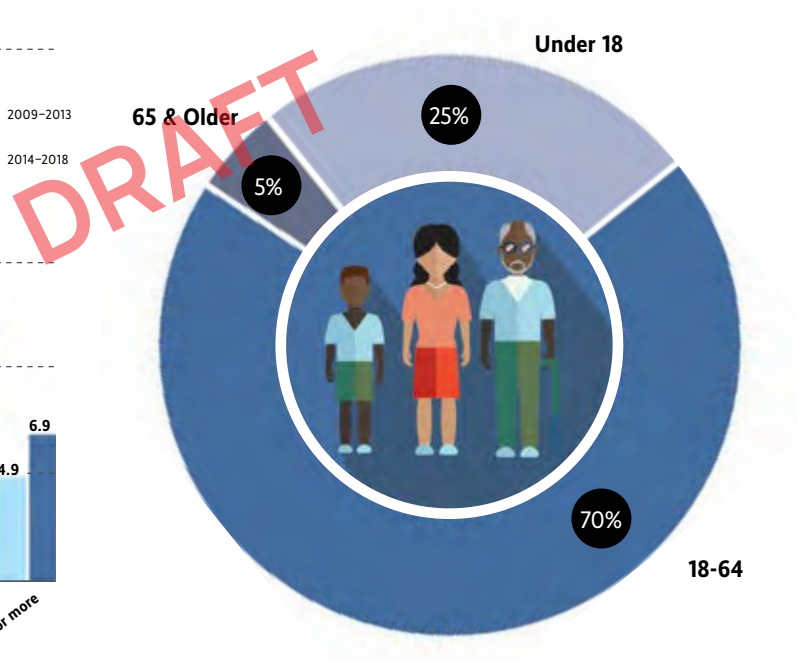
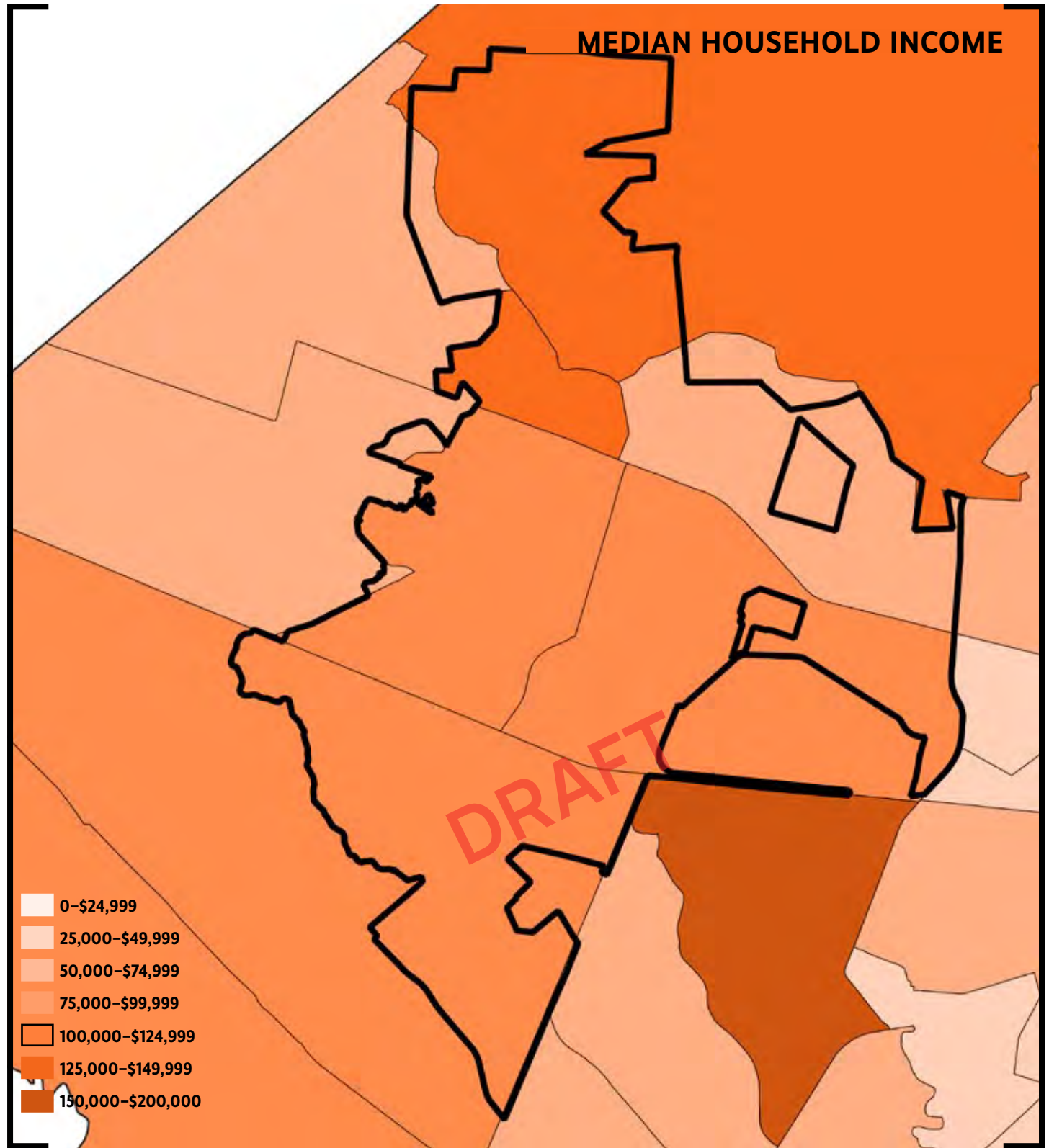


Figure 1.9–Poverty Age Status, Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Map 1.2—Median Household Income by Block Group, Pooler
 U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Households & Families

In 2014–2018, there were an estimated 8,655 households in Pooler. Families made up 67.0% of households, while 33.0% were people living alone or with other non-family members. National trends throughout the 20th Century, which saw a long-term decline in household size as families had fewer and fewer children over time, began to reverse in the 21st Century. This is mirrored in the change in average household size in Pooler: from 2000 to 2010, average household size decreased from 2.74 people to 2.61 people. By 2014–2018, the average household size had increased slightly to 2.70 people. This rise is likely driven by changes in household composition in recent years; although families are postponing childbearing and having fewer children overall—the share of married family households without children under 18 dropped significantly from 27.9% in 2009–2013 to 21.1% in 2014–2018—the share of young adults living with their parents has increased as has the share of multigenerational households.

Household by Type, 2014–2018

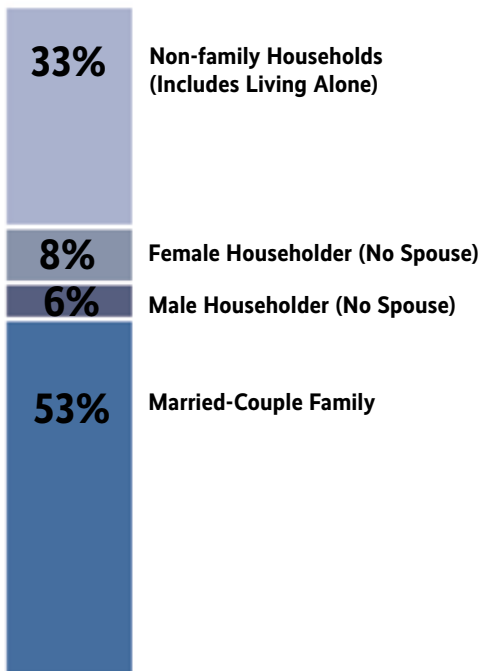
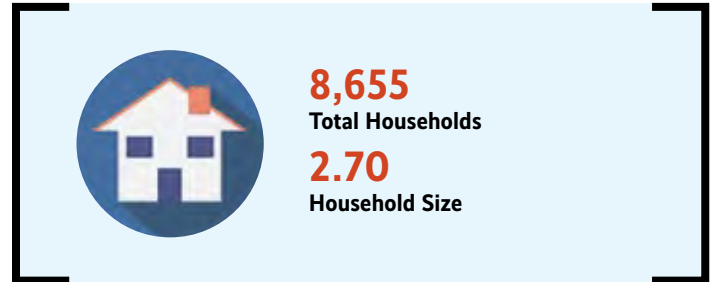


Figure 1.10—Household by Type, Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Household & Size Characteristics, 2014–2018



Additionally, people living in households with non relatives has nearly doubled in the same time period from 3.9% in 2009–2013 to 7.0% in 2014–2018.

Marital Status, 2014–2018

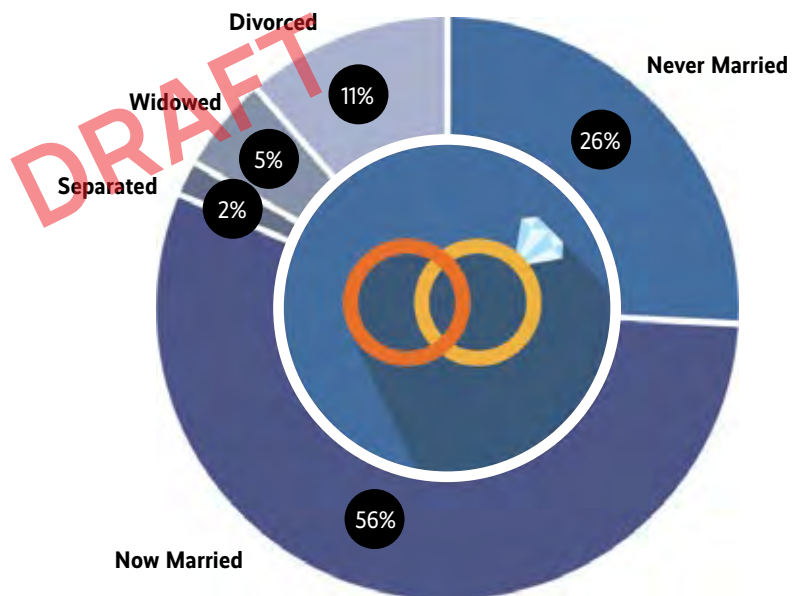


Figure 1.11—Marital Status Population 15 Years and Over, Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Housing Units, Ownership & Tenure

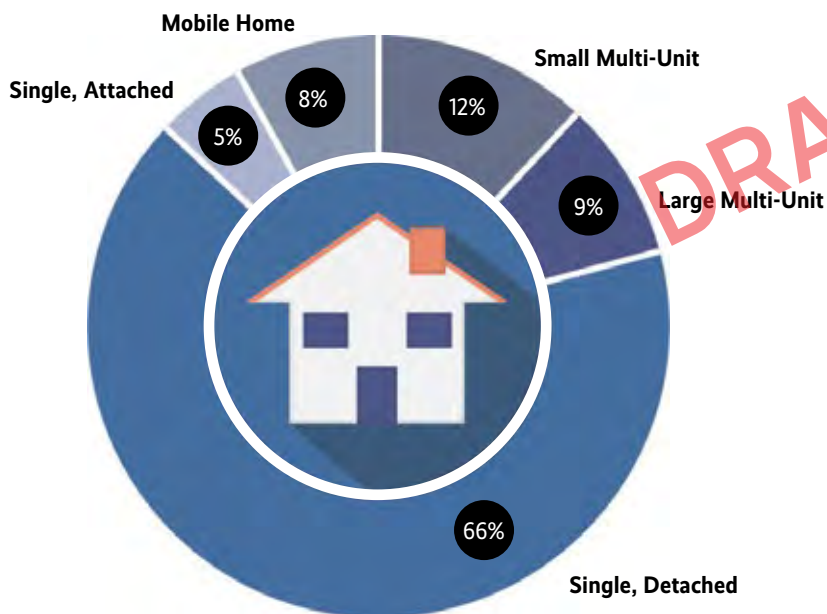
There were an estimated 8,985 housing units in the city of Pooler in 2014–2018, the majority of which were single-unit structures (71.0%), which includes both detached and attached residences (i.e., townhomes). Notably, 96.3% of units were occupied (up from 87.9% in 2009–2013), primarily by homeowners (61.8%), with renters inhabiting roughly four out of every ten occupied housing units (38.2%).

According to American Community Survey estimates, the estimated rental vacancy rate, or amount of rental stock that is vacant for rent, was 4.0% while the homeowner vacancy rate was 0.0% (with a margin of error of (+/0.7)). By comparison, the national rental and homeowner vacancy rates for the same time period were 6.0% and 1.7%, respectively.

Housing Characteristics, 2014–2018



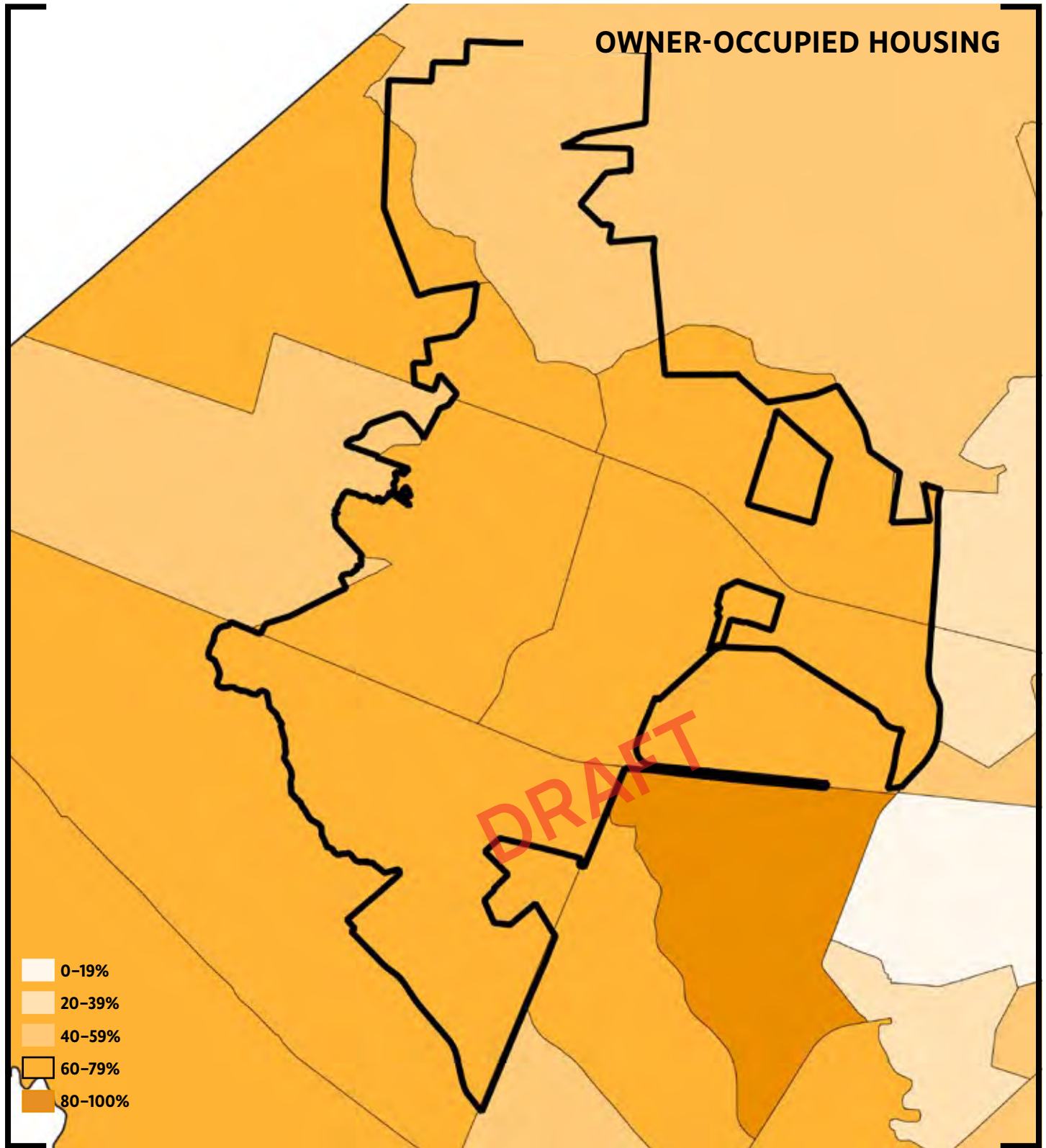
Housing Types, 2014–2018



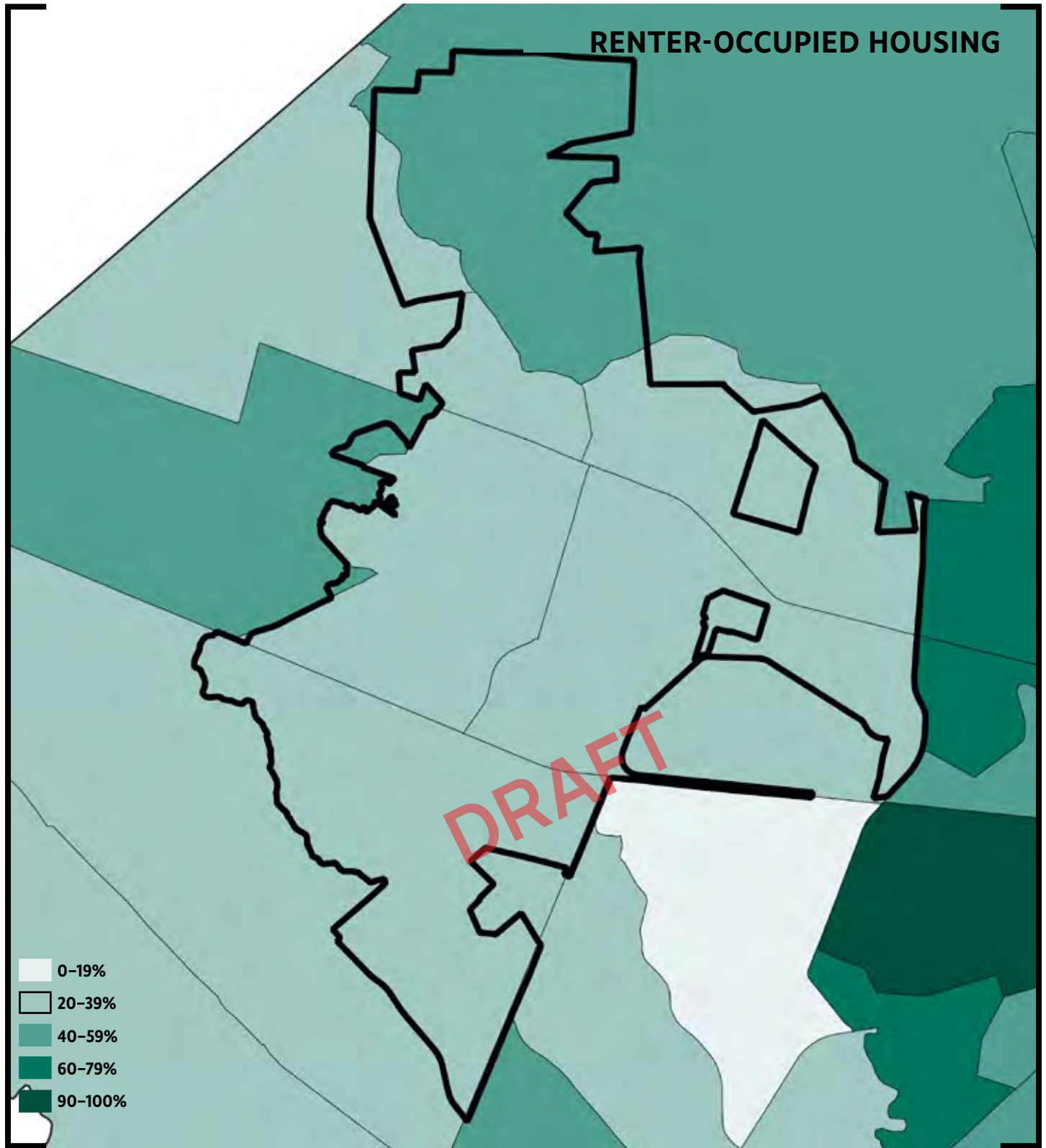
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Figure 1.12–Housing Type, Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates





Map 1.3—Percent Owner-Occupied Housing by Block Group, Pooler
 U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Map 1.4—Percent Renter-Occupied Housing by Block Group, Pooler
 U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Housing Value & Costs

In 2014–2018, the median property value of owner-occupied residences in Pooler was \$215,500. The 80.7% of owner-occupied units that had a mortgage typically spent an estimated \$1,597 per month on housing costs, while those without a mortgage (19.3%) spent an estimated \$424 per month. Of households with a mortgage, 26.4% were considered cost-burdened, paying at least 30% of their monthly income toward housing expenses.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, cost-burdened households “may have difficulty affording [other] necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.” This is a decrease from 2006–2010, when 32.1% of households with a mortgage were cost-burdened.

Housing Characteristics, 2014–2018



\$215,500
Median Housing Value

\$1,217
Median Gross Rent

For renters in Pooler, the median gross rent was \$1,217 in 2018 and 44.4% of rental households were cost-burdened, up 4.4% points from the share of cost-burdened renters in 2006–2010.

Significantly, one in five rental households (20.5%) were severely cost-burdened in 2018, paying at least half of their monthly income towards housing.

Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income, 2014–2018

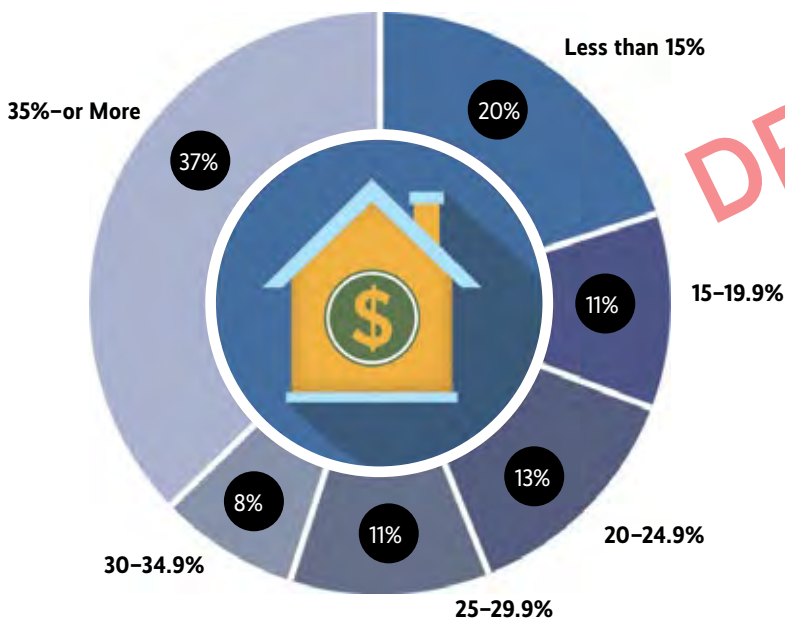
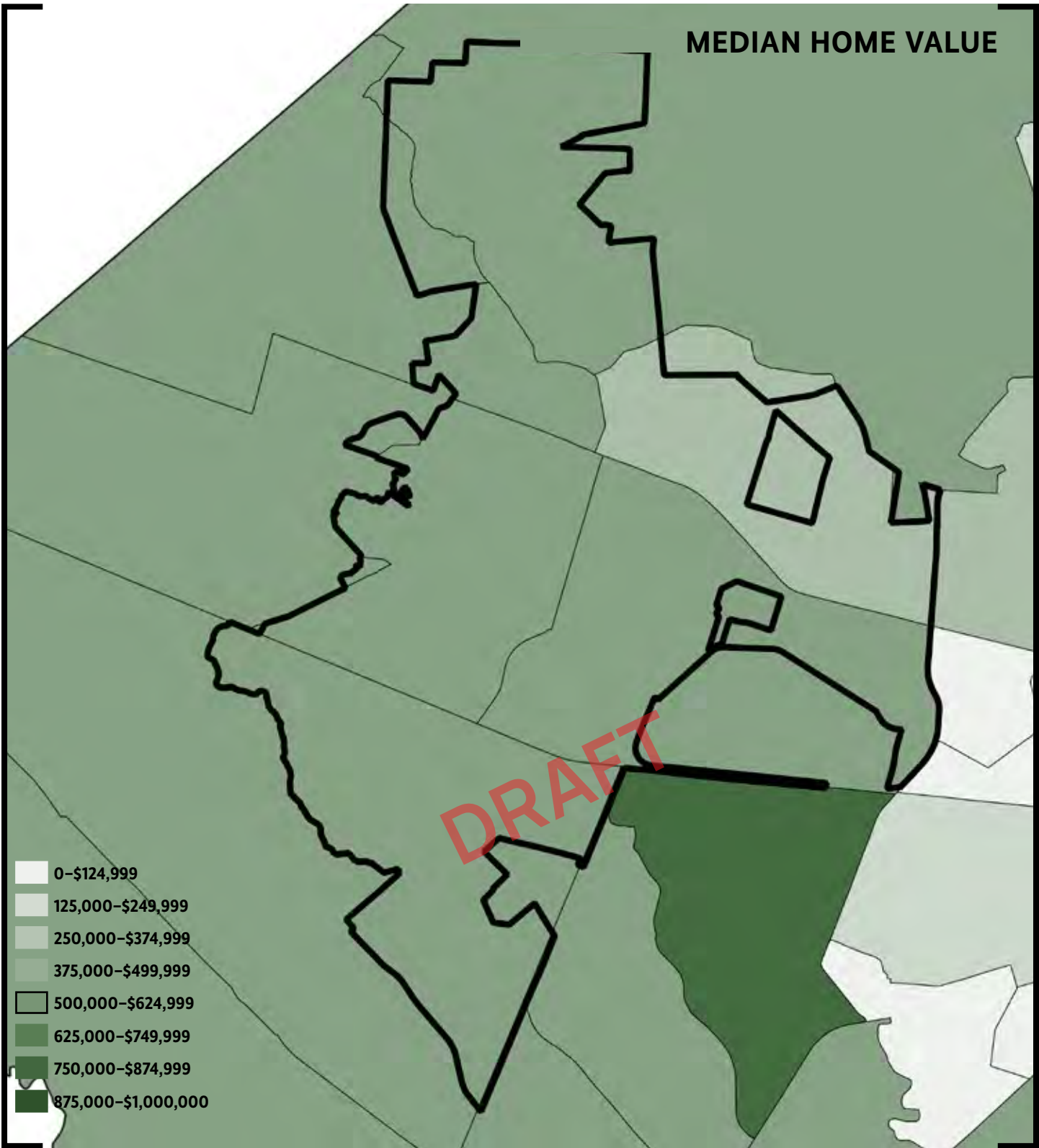


Figure 1.13–Cost–Burdened Renter, Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Map 1.5—Median Home Value by Block Group, Pooler
 U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

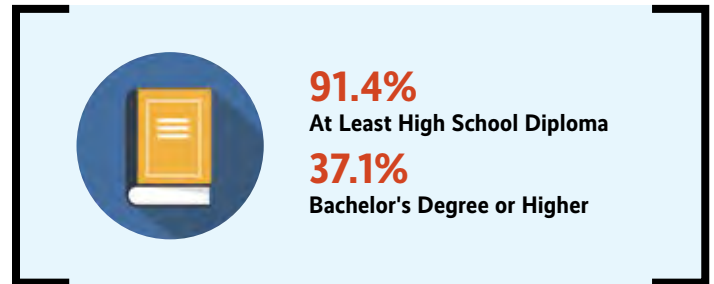


Educational Attainment

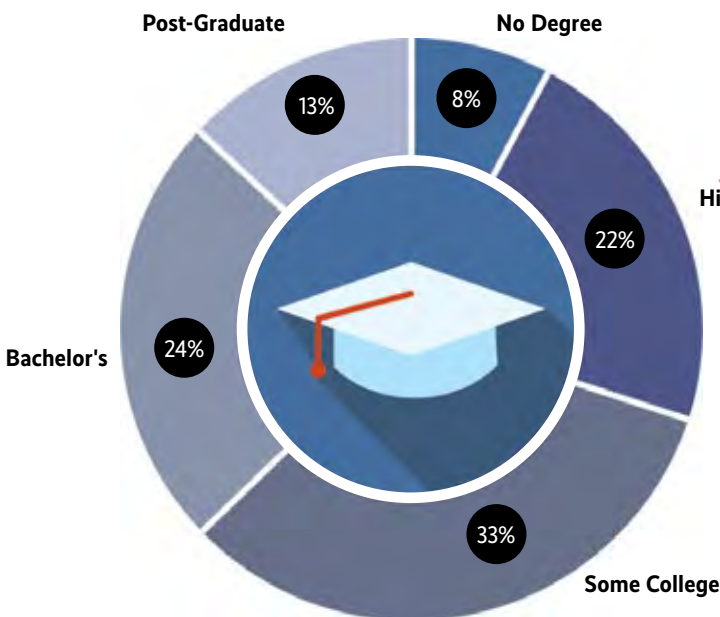
In Pooler, most people over age 25 held a high school diploma (including high school equivalency degree) or higher in 2018 (91.4%), while 37.1% held a bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree.

These are down slightly from 2009–2013, when an estimated 94.2% of residents had at least a high school diploma and an estimated 39.4% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Figure 1.14 illustrates the breakdown of educational attainment in Pooler.

Educational Characteristics, 2014–2018



Educational Attainment, 2014–2018



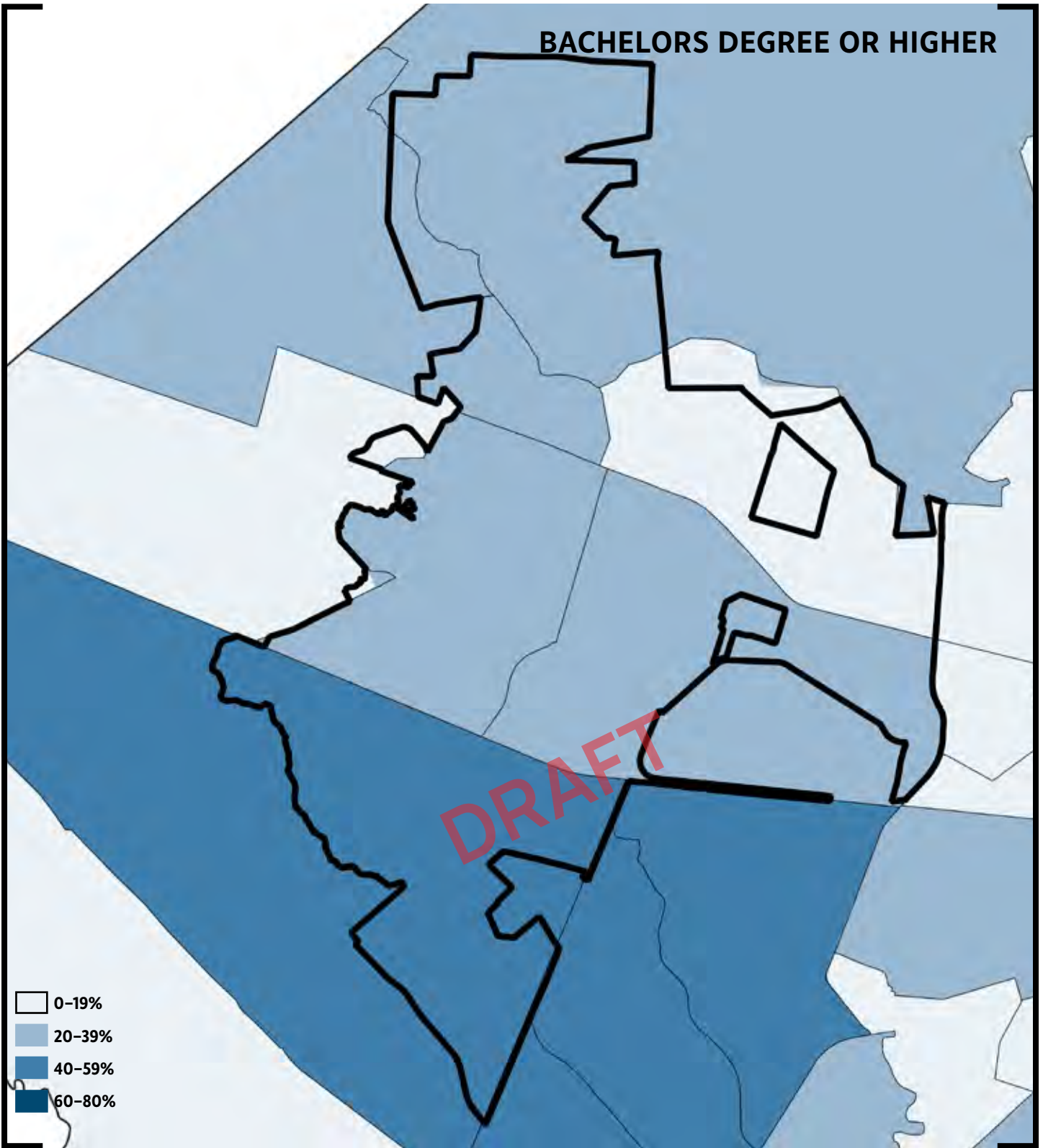
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Figure 1.14–Educational Attainment, Pooler

U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

BACHELORS DEGREE OR HIGHER



Map 1.6—Percent Bachelors Degree or Higher by Block Group, Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Nativity

In 2014–2018, 93.3% of the population in Pooler were U.S. natives and 6.7% were foreign-born, the latter of which decreased 3.8% points from the 2009–2013 period. Of those residents born outside the United States, 83.1% came from Latin America (including the Caribbean, Central America, and South America) and Asia. In particular, the percentage of residents born in Latin America increased significantly from an estimated 17.8% in 2009–2013 to an estimated 48.4% in 2014–2018.

Veteran Status

In 2014–2018, approximately 16.6% of adults living in Pooler were veterans, which is over twice the proportion in state of Georgia (8.2%) and the country as a whole (7.5%). Most veterans served during and after the Vietnam war, with only approximately 150 out of 2,869 veterans serving before then. The period of military service for veterans living in Pooler is shown below. Please note that some veterans may have served in more than one of the periods listed, so percentages in the graph may not sum to 100%.

Veteran Characteristics, 2014–2018



Military Service for Adult Veterans

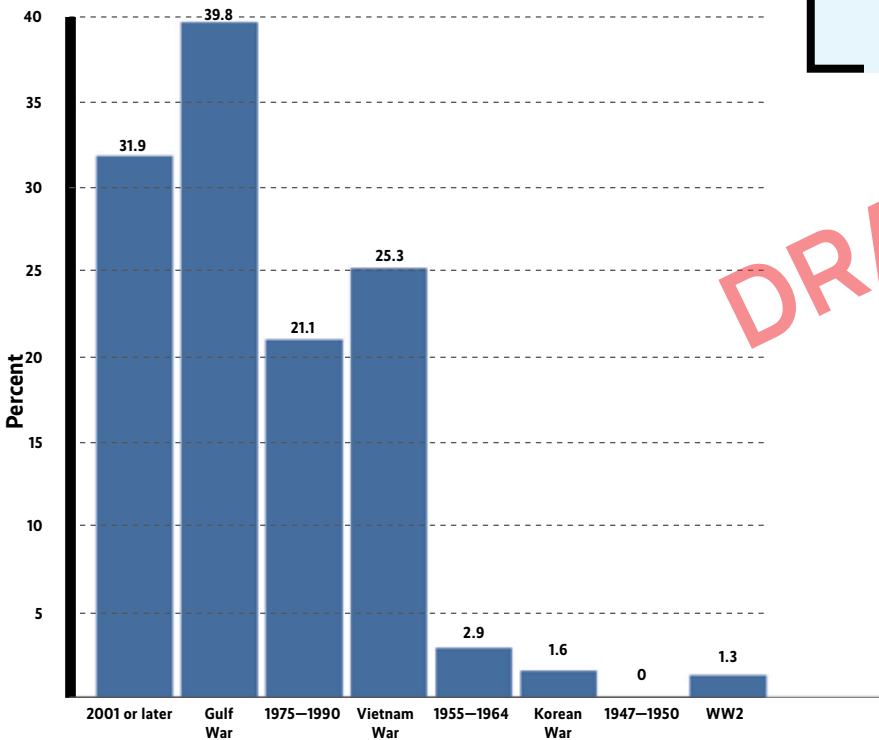


Figure 1.15–Period of Military Service for Adult Veterans, Pooler

U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

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Construction

The construction of residential buildings is generally a good indicator of a community's growth. There has been a substantial increase in building activity in Pooler in recent years, with the majority of new construction being single-family detached homes.

Figure 1.16 shows the recent residential construction trends for the city of Pooler. Estimating the population based on the number of building permits is useful in planning for roads and utilities because a residential dwelling unit represents the potential for population regardless of the occupant's official residence.

Construction Permits, 2018–2020

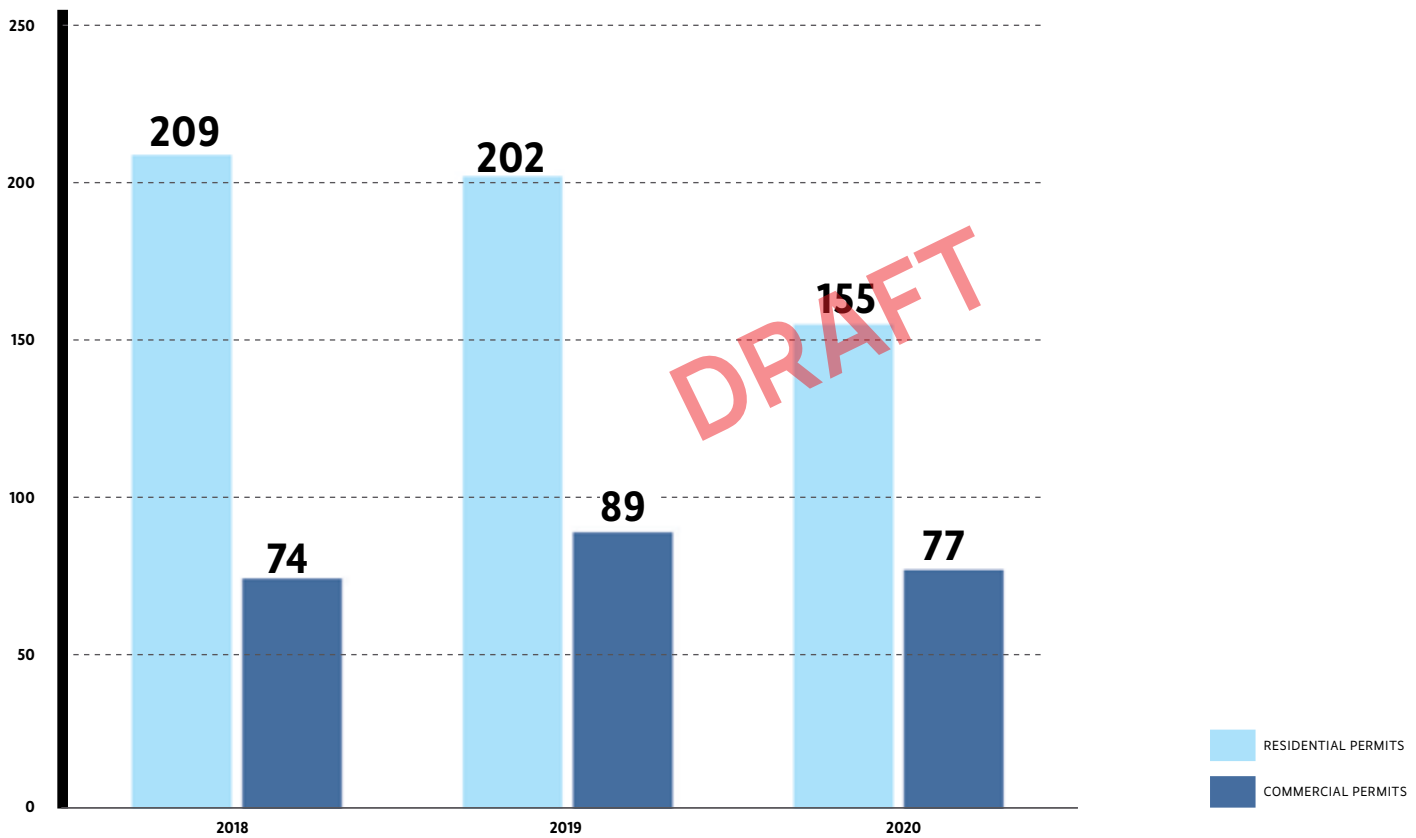


Figure 1.16–Construction Permits, Pooler
Chatham County Building Safety & Regulatory Services



COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 has touched nearly every aspect of the community and the lives of citizens in the past year. Chatham County, like every county in the country, suffered the economic, social, educational, and health consequences of the pandemic that, at the time of this writing, has killed over 569,000 Americans. As of April 5, 2021, Chatham County had a total of 19,608 confirmed COVID-19 cases, 394 confirmed deaths, and 1,561 hospitalizations due to COVID-19. At the time these data were acquired, there were an additional 24 probable deaths due to COVID-19 in Chatham County as well.

At the time of writing, the world is still seeing the impacts of COVID-19. Although Pooler-specific data is unavailable, limited data is available at the County-level and is represented here. As of February 2021, the employment rate in the county had decreased 5.8 percent compared to January 2020. These job losses have been concentrated primarily in low and middle wage jobs; in fact, the employment rate among workers in the top wage quartile has been above January 2020 levels since statewide stay at home orders were lifted on April 30, 2020. Workers in the bottom wage quartile, however, have remained hardest hit since last March, when the employment rate for low wage jobs dropped nearly 45 percent by mid-April 2020.

Unemployment claims in the county reached their peak the first full week of April 2020, when roughly 14,500 people filed an initial claim for unemployment benefits. This corresponds to a rate of 10.4 claims per 100 people in the labor force. The number of unemployment claims has generally been decreasing since then—as of the week ending October 31, 2020, there were 0.88 unemployment claims per 100 people in the County’s labor force.

Small businesses have also been negatively impacted. As of February 2021, 33 percent fewer small businesses were open in Chatham County compared with January 2020, and total small business revenue had decreased by 38.5%. By mid-March 2021, however, total consumer spending in Chatham County had nearly rebounded back to January 2020 levels.

Overall, Chatham County residents spent 5% less time away from home in April 2021 compared with the start of 2020 when the pandemic began. When people did leave their residence during this time, the average amount of time spent elsewhere varied significantly depending on their destination.

- The total time spent at grocery stores in Chatham increased 2.9%
- Total time spent in parks increased 64.7%
- Total time spent at retail and restaurant locations increased 1.6%
- Total time spent at transit locations decreased 24%
- Total time spent in the workplace decreased 29.6%



Percent Change in Employment

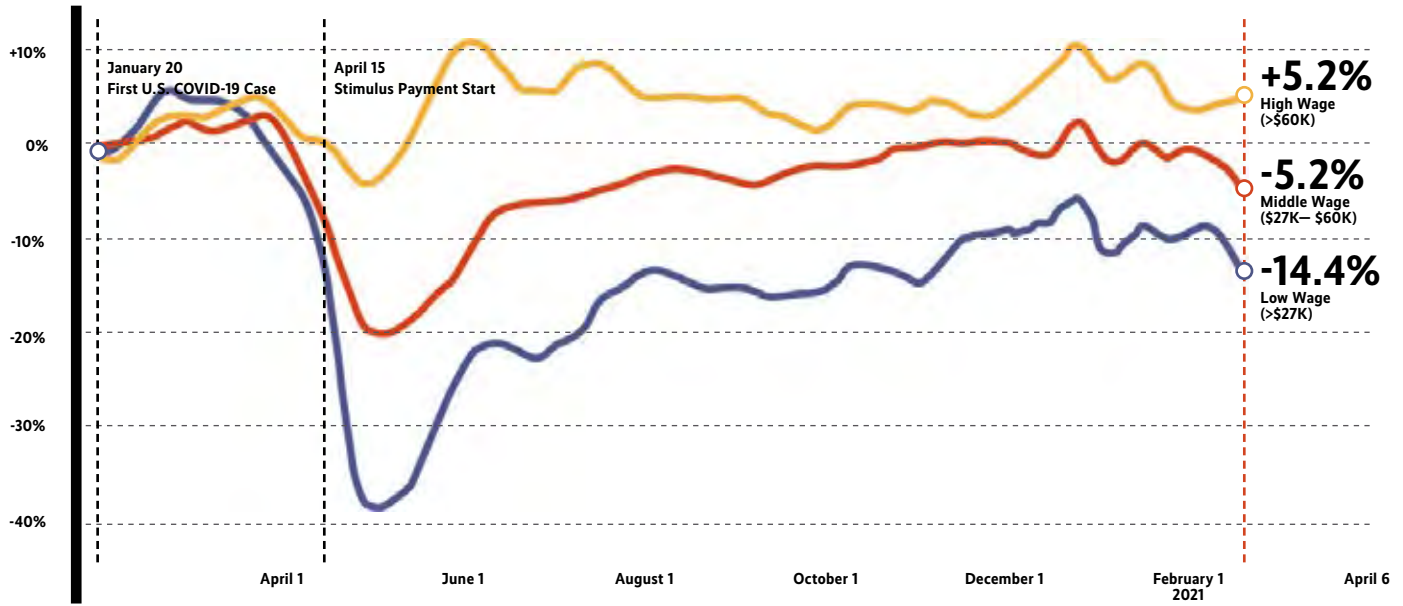


Figure 1.17-Percent Change in Employment, Chatham County

Time Spent Outside Home Chatham County

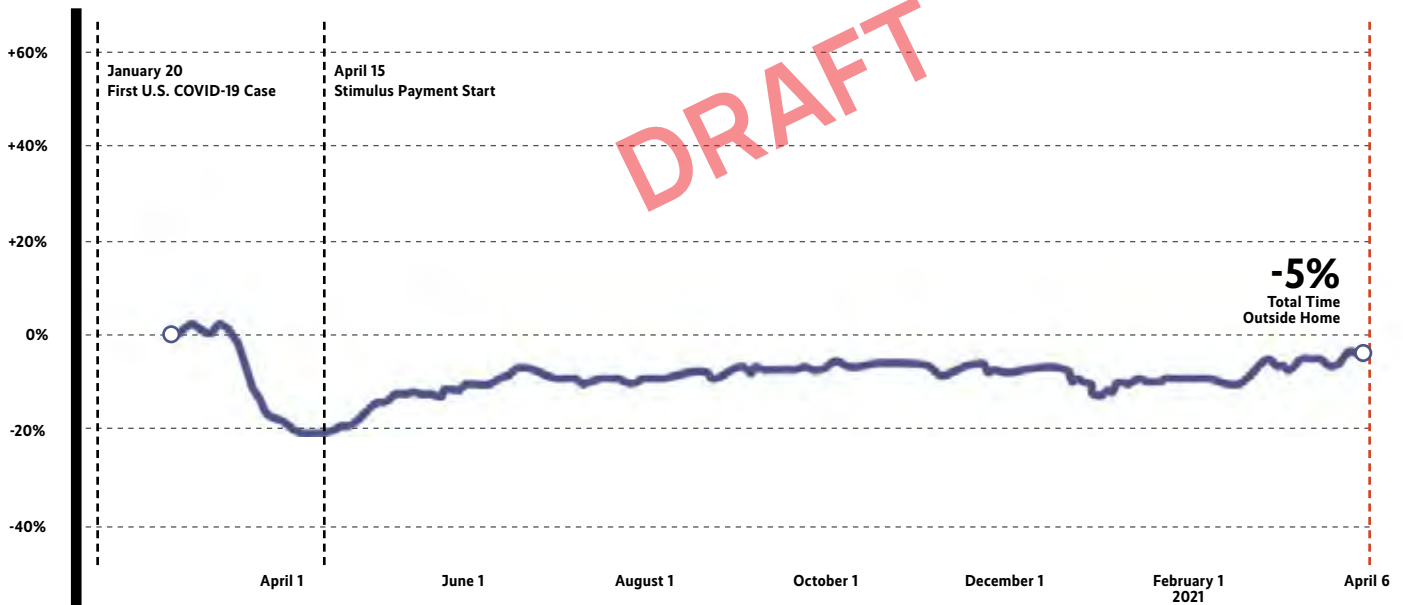


Figure 1.18-Percent Change in Time Spent Outside Home, Chatham County



COMMUNITY GOALS ELEMENT

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02



COMMUNITY GOALS

Introduction

The visions and goals that emerged through the Pooler 2040 comprehensive planning process represent the voices of the community as expressed in virtual meetings, pop-up events and a survey conducted during 2020 and 2021.

The following results describe our community vision, goals and objectives for the next twenty years.

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POOLER 2040 VISION & GOALS

Introduction

The Vision and Priority Goals identify Pooler's direction for the future and are intended to serve as a guide to Pooler officials in day-to-day decision making. They are the product of public involvement and the following components:

- The Vision
- Goals
- Objectives

Each of these components was previously established in the city's prior Comprehensive Plan. Through the Pooler Plan Update process community members were given opportunity to revisit and update each component.

The Vision

The Vision paints a picture of what Pooler desires to become. The Vision statement offered below was refined through discussion with City Council, Stakeholders, and Participants. The Vision is supported by the Goals created to help shape Pooler's Future Development.

A growing, prosperous community with a diverse population, offering a balanced range of residential settings and a thriving business community set on continually improving the community's quality of life

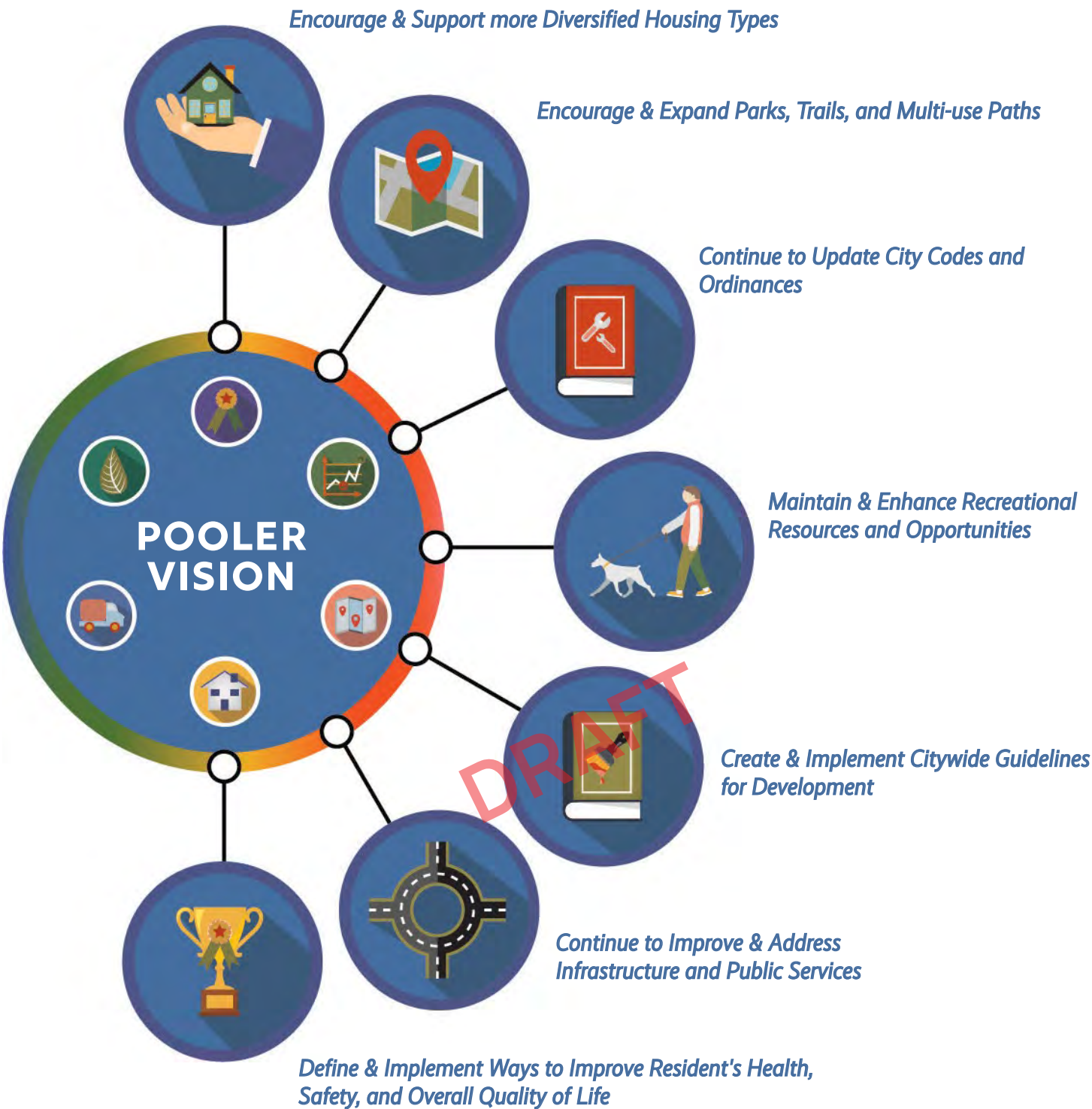


Goals

Goals are long-term outcomes the city hopes to achieve by implementing the Comprehensive Plan. They are aspirational, expressing Pooler's collective desires and values.

The community identified a number of goals to achieve in order to make Pooler's Vision a continuing reality. The following goals represent the recurring themes, and like the Vision Statement, were derived from a review process involving City staff, stakeholders, and members of the community.





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Encourage & Support more Diversified Housing Types

Objectives:

- The city shall ensure that zoning and other regulatory tools will encourage or require the diversity of housing types in areas where new housing is anticipated or planned for



Encourage & Expand Parks, Trails, and Multi-Use Paths

Objectives:

- The city shall provide parks, trails, bike lanes, and multi-use paths to meet the community's growing needs
- The city will ensure design allows access to each type of experience for people of all abilities to the maximum extent possible
- The city will develop parks, trails, and bike lanes, and multi-use paths in an environmentally sensitive manner
- The city shall create a trail network and where feasible, develop interconnected trails and multi-use paths with bike lanes

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Continue to Update City Codes & Ordinances

Objectives:

- The city will continue to update their ordinances to be user-friendly and easy to understand and illustrated with graphics, diagrams, and concise tables
- The city's ordinances will allow for a streamlined development review process
- The city's code update will be created so as to foster the desired type of redevelopment and future development with design standards and specific building material to change the aesthetics of the corridor
- The city will promote environmental protection, education, and preservation of local natural resources in order to promote the area as an ecotourism center
- The city will implement programs to comply with Environmental Protection Division requirements
- The city will update its transportation policy to guide growth to safe locations



Maintain & Enhance Recreational Resources and Opportunities

Objectives:

- The city shall provide quality recreation facilities and programs that improve community image and livability
- In the design of recreational resources, the city shall consider providing features, facilities and services that also promote tourism and make Pooler an attractive location for economic development as well as serve its residents
- The city of Pooler will provide amenities such as community centers, sport fields, dog parks, and community gardens





Create & Implement Citywide Guidelines for Development

Objectives:

- The city will create and adopt design guidelines that define key elements and determine patterns and standards that should be adhered to when developing site or building projects to include infrastructure projects and commercial structures



Continue to Improve & Address Infrastructure and Public Services

Objectives:

- Ensure transportation road systems are designed for both current capacity and future changes in use and patterns
- Expand Public Safety services relative to expanding needs

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Define & Implement Ways to Improve Resident's Health, Safety, and Overall Quality of Life

Objectives:

- Participate in local and regional collaborative efforts among similar organizations working to improve the delivery of social services and expansion of continuum wraparound social services
- Increase access to healthy food for populations most likely to experience food insecurity through community gardens and alternative distribution methods (i.e., farmer's markets, mobile farmers' markets)
- Effectively address mental health by educating the public and reducing stigma, increasing early intervention programs, removing gaps and barriers, and increasing access to treatment particularly as it impacts incarcerated individuals, children, and adolescents
- Organize, promote, and ensure access to community health services, recreational opportunities, and fitness programs to accommodate the special needs of families, the obese, the elderly, and disabled citizens to adopt healthy lifestyle behaviors
- Reduce crime, by building trust between law enforcement and residents, focusing enforcement, and expanding the visibility of police to ensure all residents feel safe

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**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
ELEMENT**

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03



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

The Economic Development Element of Plan 2040 is an inventory and assessment of the community's economic base, labor force characteristics, and economic development opportunities and resources. The goal of this element is to explain the foundation of the Pooler's economy, and the city's relationship to the Savannah Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) to provide a complete picture of the area's employees, the largest industries, and the possible future direction of the economy. It attempts to determine the community's needs and goals in light of population trends, natural resources, housing, and land use in order to develop a strategy for the economic well-being of the community.

REGIONAL ECONOMY

Savannah MSA

According to the US Census Bureau, a metropolitan statistical area (MSA) refers to cities where adjacent communities are socially and economically interconnected. The city of Savannah acts as an anchor to other communities throughout Chatham, Effingham, and Bryan Counties. The jurisdictions, employees, and employers within the MSA all have an impact on each other. For example, many residents live in Pooler and work in Savannah and vice versa. Being the third largest MSA in Georgia (behind the Atlanta MSA and Augusta MSA), the Savannah Metropolitan Statistical Area is home to a variety of industries and an estimated population of over 400,000 people. The economic development element will not only discuss the economy within Pooler, but also the impact of the city of Pooler on the Savannah MSA.

Because Pooler is economically connected to jurisdictions throughout the MSA, a discussion of major industries, economic opportunities, and economic changes within the Savannah MSA as a whole will be discussed.



METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA (MSA)

A MSA is a geographical region with a relatively high population density at its core and close economic ties throughout the area. The city of Savannah acts as an anchor to other communities throughout Chatham, Effingham, and Bryan Counties.

—Census Bureau



Figure 3.1–Savannah MSA

LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS



Labor Force Participation

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the labor force is defined as all people above the age of 16 who are working or actively looking for work. This section will specifically address the key characteristics of the labor force in the city of Pooler and the Savannah MSA, ranging from the size of the labor force to their level of education.

Employment

The Savannah MSA, of which Pooler is a small part, has a labor force of almost 189,000 people, with an unemployment rate that typically hovers around 3% according to a 2020 report from the Georgia Department of Labor. During the pandemic, the unemployment rate skyrocketed to over 15% in April of 2020 and had since settled to an unemployment rate of 5.6% in December of 2020. Before the pandemic, the unemployment rate had been consistently declining. In December of 2019, the unemployment rate shrunk to 2.7% according to the Georgia Department of Labor. Prior to the decline in the economy caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Savannah's economy showed consistent improvement, with the number of employed residents in the area steadily increasing since 2009, while the unemployment rate consistently decreased during that same period. It is anticipated that the unemployment rate will again show a decrease once the economy begins to recover from the worldwide impacts of COVID-19.

LABOR FORCE

The labor force is defined as all people above the age of 16 who are working or actively looking for work. This section will specifically address the key characteristics of the Savannah MSA's labor force.

—Bureau of Labor Statistics



In 2019, the city of Pooler had a labor force of over 14,000 people, accounting for 7.45% of the entire labor force in the MSA. With a 2019 unemployment rate of 2.6% that later jumped to 5.9% in 2020 (due to COVID-19), Pooler, in general, experiences less unemployment compared with the rest of the Savannah MSA. It is anticipated that the unemployment rate will again show a decrease once the economy begins to recover from the worldwide impacts of COVID-19.

Average Unemployment Rates

Year	Average Unemployment Rate
2013	7.6%
2014	6.6%
2015	5.5%
2016	4.5%
2017	3.7%
2018	3.1%
2019	2.7%
2020	5.9%

Figure 3.2—Average Unemployment Rates, Pooler

U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table S2301)



Educational Attainment

Education is an important factor in the economy as it can provide insight into the skill base of the labor force. Understanding the skill set of the population can lead to creating better strategies for attracting industries or identifying a gap in skills that can be filled through educational programs. For example, if it is found that a large portion of the labor force has a degree in engineering, the community will be better able to attract engineering firms that can then hire that employment base.

Conversely, if there is a lack of technology skills in the labor force, prioritizing tech programs and training can increase the labor base, and thereby contribute to attracting more technology-based businesses.

High School

For the 2019–2020 school year, the Savannah Chatham County Public School System (SCCPSS) statistics show that

In Pooler, over 90% of residents age 25 or older have a high school diploma (or equivalent), and 37% of residents have a bachelor's degree or higher according to the American Community Survey.

Key Points: SY 2019–20 Graduation Rate

- SCCPSS achieved a graduation rate of 89.7%. This represents a gain of nearly two points compared with the previous year and establishes a new record high for the District
- The District has consistently improved the graduation rate since SY 2014–15 and exceeded the 2019–20 annual target rate of 85.7%

For the sixth consecutive year the district exceeded both the state and the comparison group graduation rates. In 2018–19 and 2019–20 school years, SCCPSS earned the highest graduation rate within the comparison group.

It should be noted that these statistics are only for the Chatham County public school system (SCCPSS), and do not reflect Effingham or Bryan County's schools, which are also within the Savannah MSA.

LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION?

For more information see the Quality of Life Element under Education, page (#)



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Four-Year Education Focus Areas

According to the 2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, around 35% of adults aged 18–64 in the Savannah MSA have a bachelor’s degree or higher. There are a variety of majors available at the many higher education institutions in the area. The majors of local college students, as shown in Figure 3.3, reflect that variety.

The most common major for residents 25 or older is Science and Engineering followed closely by Arts, Humanities, and Others

The third most popular major is Business. The majors that have the highest share of students also reflect some of the current businesses and institutions that make up the Savannah MSA economy. For example, there is a large presence of healthcare and aerospace businesses, which could explain why the Science, Engineering, and related fields have a higher share of students and vice versa.

The presence of an internationally recognized art institution, the Savannah College of Art and Design, as well as the growing entertainment industry, could contribute to the Arts, Humanities, and Others field also having a high share of students. Additionally, Pooler has a higher percentage of people who majored in an engineering or science field compared to the Savannah MSA, which may be due to the fact that Gulfstream, a large aviation company in the area, is a major employer in the city.

First College Major for Residents 25 or Older

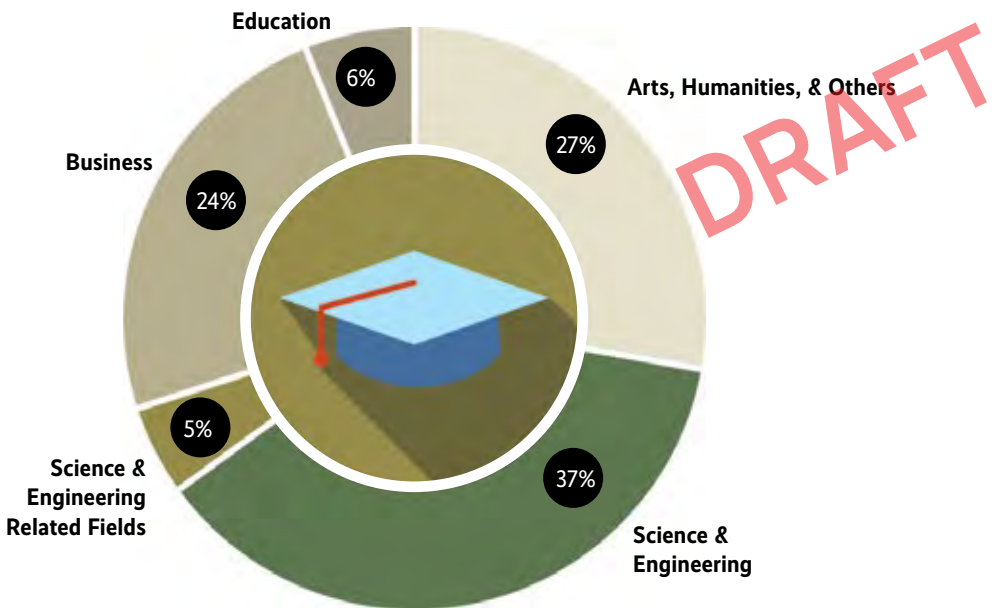


Figure 3.3—First College Major for Residents 25 or Older, Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Two-Year Technical College Focus Areas

A technical school or college is a form of higher education that offers two-year degrees. This form of degree program is beneficial as it provides attendees a more flexible and often a less expensive way to further their education compared to a four-year institution. Additionally, technical schools offer very specialized occupational schooling so students can gain specific skills that can be applied directly to the local workforce.

Savannah Technical College offers a diverse selection of technical degrees, with some degree fields growing more than others. Broadly speaking, the programs experiencing the most growth are manufacturing, drafting technician, or healthcare related programs. Similar to the four-year college majors discussed above, the largest programs also reflect the existing economy, in which healthcare, manufacturing, engineering, and construction have a large presence.

This data is important to highlight for Pooler, as industries with a large presence in Pooler, such as Aviation, Trucking Transportation, Construction, are some of the highest growing degree programs.

Savannah Tech is seeing a decline in Mechanical CAD Drafters and Nursing Aides graduates. This could suggest that there are changes in these job fields influencing students to change direction and pursue specific programs over others.

One field that has seen a decline in the number of students within the technical program yet has seen growth locally and continues to benefit the overall economy is Cinematography and Film/Video Production. Not only is this field growing, it also has a large presence in the Chatham County area, as Georgia is the number one state in the US in film production. Because more studios choose to film in Savannah, film production has been identified as a growing economic driver by the Savannah Economic Development Authority (SEDA).

This field has the potential to bring more capital into the economy and provide high paying, skilled jobs. According to the Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce, direct spending related to the film industry was \$2.9 billion in 2019. Trends suggest that area schools of all levels with film related programs should consider promoting and expanding these programs.

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Plan 2040 Survey

Forty-two percent (42%) of the respondents felt that developing skilled work force through training programs, recruitment, and continuing education was very important.

A full copy of the survey and the results can be found in the Pooler 2040 Appendix.



Technical Programs with the Highest Growth in Graduates

Program	TOTAL GRADUATES		PERCENT CHANGE 2018–2019
	2018	2019	%
Airframe Mechanics and Aircraft Maintenance Technology/Technician	50	94	88.0
Barbering/Barber	5	13	160.0
CAD/CADD Drafting and/or Design Technology/Technician	8	18	200.0
Construction Management	22	43	95.5
Criminal Justice/Police Science	25	42	68.0
Drafting and Design Technology/Technician, General	8	12	50.0
Food Preparation/Professional Cooking/Kitchen Assistant	60	81	35.0
Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training	14	23	64.3
Machine Shop Technology/Assistant	21	29	38.1
Medical Insurance Coding Specialist	32	48	50.0
Medical/Clinical Assistant	7	10	42.9
Solar Energy Technology/Technician	28	39	39.3
Truck and Bus Driver/Commercial Vehicle Operator and Instructor	167	227	37.1

Figure 3.4–Technical Program Growth Rates, Savannah MSA
Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL)

Technical Programs with the Highest Decline in Graduates

Program	TOTAL GRADUATES		PERCENT CHANGE 2018–2019
	2018	2019	%
Accounting Technology/Technician and Bookkeeping	34	22	-35.3
Autobody/Collision and Repair Technology/Technician	16	3	-81.3
Cinematography and Film/Video Production	49	22	-55.1
Electrical, Electronic and Communications Engineering/Technician	10	6	-40.0
Fire Science/Firefighting	16	11	-31.3
Fire Services Administration	5	1	-80.0
Hospitality Administration/Management/Personnel Administration	7	3	-57.2
Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology	80	52	-35.0
Legal Assistant/Paralegal	10	6	-40.0
Mechanical Drafting and Mechanical Drafting CAD/CADD	5	2	-60.0
Nursing Assistant/Aide and Patient Care Assistant/Aide	319	158	-50.5
Teacher Assistant/Aide	3	2	-33.3

Figure 3.5–Technical Program Decline Rates, Savannah MSA
Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL)



EDUCATION & LOCAL JOB ENVIRONMENT

Education is a powerful tool for economic advancement. It is one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty and increase earnings. For example, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, people with more education tend have a higher weekly income and lower unemployment. While there are still economic issues related to education, such as student loans and a lack of access due to price for lower income residents, it demonstrates that having more education opens the door for more job opportunities. Because of this, investment in education programs, especially those that are relevant to the local job market, is a necessary strategy to reducing the ever-present state of high poverty in the area.

Savannah Tech is an example of an institution that is offering degree programs in industries that exist locally, including the newly created Logistics degree program.

Earnings and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment in the U.S., 2020

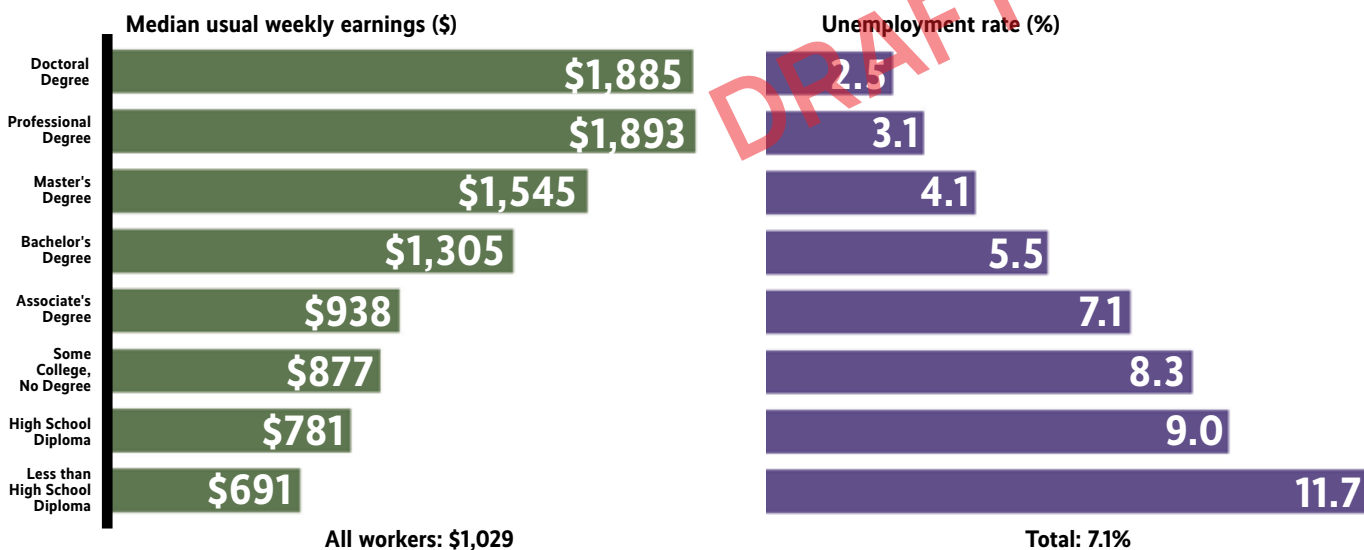


Figure 3.6—Earnings & Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment, 2020
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey

ECONOMIC BASE

The Savannah MSA has a diverse economic base similar to that of many coastal areas. Employment is highest in the service, retail trade, and manufacturing sectors. The largest manufacturing facilities in the MSA produce textiles, paper products, chemicals, transportation equipment, and food products. Retail trade establishments are located throughout Pooler to provide for the daily needs of local residents. Regional shopping areas that attract customers from throughout the southeast can be found in Pooler and the surrounding areas.

Major employers in the service sector include the health care industry, the tourism industry, and educational institutions. St. Joseph's/Candler and Memorial Hospitals are the most visible components of the city's health care industry. Additional health care jobs are provided at clinics, nursing homes, laboratories, and the offices of doctors, dentists, and other health care practitioners. The healthcare field will continue to grow in the Chatham County region as the aging population continues to rise.

Major educational institutions providing employment include the Savannah State University (SSU), South University, Georgia Southern University's Armstrong Campus, Savannah Technical College, Savannah College of Art and Design, and the Chatham County Board of Education. Major businesses providing support for the tourism industry include hotels, restaurants, gift shops, and museums.



MAJOR ECONOMIC DRIVERS

Major Industries

The major industries of the Savannah MSA impact the local economy in a variety of ways, either by employing a large portion of the workforce and/or contributing a significant amount of money back to the local economy. This section will discuss the major economic drivers of the Savannah MSA and the city of Pooler, and the overall impact on the area.

Georgia Ports Authority & Logistics

Chatham County's geographic position allows for a vibrant trading economy, in which imports can come directly to the port and be shipped to other nearby large metropolitan areas—which also contributes to the growing transportation industry. The Port of Savannah is the largest single container terminal in the United States, accounting for 21.6% of container trade on the east coast, and 12.2% of all container exports in the United States. The steady growth of the GPA has had a tremendous impact on the economy with no slowdowns predicted for the near future. This future growth will also impact port related businesses, such as logistics centers situated around the Savannah/Hilton Head Airport and Gulfstream Aerospace, both located within the city of Pooler.



IMPACTS OF GEORGIA PORTS AUTHORITY

- Garden City Terminal is the third busiest and fastest growing container handling facility in the US
- The Port of Savannah handled 41.27 million tons of cargo in 2018
- In May 2021, the largest ship to ever dock on the east coast, the CMA GGM Marco Polo, docked at the Port of Savannah. The ship is 1,299 ft long
- Port of Savannah is the top US port for agriculture exports. In 2019, agriculture accounted for 60% of Savannah's exports

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Manufacturing

The Savannah MSA enjoys a diverse manufacturing base. Products range from paper and forest products to chemicals, from construction equipment to food processing, and from corporate jets to drill bits. The significance of the manufacturing segment of the local economy cannot be overstated. Some of the largest employers and highest wage-earning workers are within the manufacturing segment. According to the Savannah Area Chamber, manufacturing firms accounted for 19% of the area's GDP. This already significant industry within the economy is set to grow more in the future.

Manufacturing expansion by companies like Medline Industries, Anatolia Tile+Stone, Plastics Express, Preci-Dip, A&R Logistics, and others will add at least 1,050 jobs over the coming years

Manufacturing also has a significant presence in the City of Pooler. JCB Inc, a manufacturing company specializing in construction, agriculture, and defense equipment, is headquartered in Pooler as is Blue Force Gear, a business that produces weapons and weapon accessories.

Aerospace

Aerospace manufacturing has been a key industry in the Savannah MSA since Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation planted roots in 1967. As the largest aerospace manufacturer in the Southeast, Gulfstream employs nearly 10,000 workers locally. In addition, more than 30 aerospace-related companies are located in the MSA, making the area a true aerospace supply cluster.

The aerospace industries enjoy the same benefits as other businesses in the area's advanced manufacturing sector, including state and local incentives, easy access to the Port of Savannah, the Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport and nationally recognized workforce training programs, among others. As with many of the larger economic drivers in the region, the trend for growth in the aerospace industry seems certain. Because Gulfstream is situated centrally between Pooler, Garden City, and Savannah, it has a direct economic impact on all three jurisdictions. For Pooler specifically, multiple Gulfstream facilities are located directly off Pooler Parkway, giving residents and staff direct access to one of the largest employers in the MSA.



Creative & Technical Businesses

A burgeoning group of small to large creative and technical firms have chosen Chatham County for their office locations. To support and encourage this growth, organizations such as the Creative Coast were formed through collaborative private and public partnerships to leverage the area's unique blend of bright talent, leading-edge technologies, and exceptionally high quality of life—all to stimulate the growth of entrepreneurial, creative, and technical business in the area.

Since the development of the Creative Coast in 1997, numerous organizations and efforts have come together to better meet the needs of Chatham County's creative community. By focusing on creative entrepreneurship, technology, new media, art, music, and food culture, these groups are helping to support and shape the future of the area. Additionally, the Creative Coast and others continue to market and bring in high tech and knowledge-based businesses to the area as highly technical jobs have been identified as a needed resource to improve economic growth in the region.

In 2020, Governor Brian P. Kemp announced that Georgia had been ranked as the number one state for film production, and prior to the global COVID-19 pandemic, was on pace for another record-setting year. The film industry has an established and continually growing presence in Chatham County. This is due to tax credits being offered at both the state and local levels as well as the diverse site locations being offered, ranging from natural to architectural resources. With sites varying from marshland to historic houses and parks, Pooler has numerous possibilities for filming.

Military & Government

The Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield military complex is a major sector in the Savannah MSA's economy. Hunter Army Airfield (HAAF) is the sister Installation to Fort Stewart and is located within the Savannah city limits. Its mission is to provide air transport to Fort Stewart, home of the 3rd Infantry Division, located on more than 285,000 acres nearby. HAAF's 5,400 acres centrally located in Savannah, plays a critical role in the Installation's deployment capabilities as a power projection platform with access to rail, port operations, and a major interstate road network. With the longest Army runway on the east coast, the largest military aircraft can land at Hunter, load the biggest equipment in the Army inventory, and deploy both equipment and soldiers within an 18-hour wheels-up timeline anywhere in the world.

Just 35 miles from Pooler, Fort Stewart is located in Liberty, Bryan, and portions of Evans, Long, and Tattnall Counties. Fort Stewart and HAAF together are one of Coastal Georgia's largest employers. The ratio of military to civilian employees is approximately five to one, with 20,850 officers and enlisted military and 4,153 civilians employed at both installations. With a total of 25,000 employees, Fort Stewart and HAAF account for nearly three-quarters of military employment in the area. Total payroll for both bases is estimated at well over \$1 billion dollars and with an annual financial impact of \$4–\$5 billion dollars.

The direct spending from military operations, staff, and residents helps to sustain local communities by creating employment opportunities across a wide range of sectors, both directly and indirectly. Active duty and civilian employees spend their military wages on services such as retail, food service, real estate, and education. The Savannah MSA also benefits from defense contracts with private companies for equipment, supplies, construction, and various services such as health care and information technology.

Higher Education

Higher education institutions have a large presence in the community, with the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) being one of the top ten largest employers in the region. There are multiple other institutions in the area, such as Savannah State University, South University, Strayer University, and the Georgia Institute of Technology's Pooler campus that all have an impact on the economy. These institutions allow for an ever-growing skilled workforce to attract a variety of businesses and institutions to the Savannah MSA and Pooler area.

As more individuals are drawn to the area for both education purposes and to tap into a diverse, higher skilled workforce that graduates nearly 10,000 students a year, a large majority of graduates currently leave the area after graduation. Efforts to retain these graduates and ensure their placement in the Savannah MSA should be expanded.

Healthcare

As the population of the area ages, access to healthcare will become increasingly more crucial. This industry already composes a large portion of the economy, as it is one of the top 10 employment sectors in the area. According to the Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce, the healthcare industry generated \$1.5 billion in the Savannah MSA in 2019.

The two major hospitals within this industry are Memorial Health University Medical Center (MHUMC) and St. Joseph's/Candler Health System (SJ/C). Memorial Health University Medical Center has been investing in adding and updating its facilities, and expanding health care for children, people with disabilities, and mental health services. MHUMC includes the region's only Level 1 trauma center, the region's only children's hospital and the Savannah campus of Mercer University School of Medicine. The St. Joseph's/Candler Health System is also expanding its reach just minutes over the bridge in Bluffton, South Carolina where the health system is scheduled to build a new medical campus. Additionally, a new campus was constructed in 2019 in Pooler to serve the western Chatham region. This new facility includes primary care, specialty care, outpatient surgery, advanced imaging services, physical therapy services and more. Within this system is also new forms of health care, such as the robotic DaVinci Surgical System, offering residents an advanced level of care, with more planned in the future as the hospital expands. With the continued growth in the area, St. Joseph's/Candler Health System already has plans for expansion in the vicinity of the new Pooler campus. As the population grows and more residents move to Pooler, the demand for both routine and critical healthcare services will surely increase.



Tourism

Since the beginning of the preservation movement in the 1950s, the preservation of Savannah’s historic resources has helped to preserve the famed Oglethorpe Plan that helps give Savannah its distinctive qualities that attract visitors from all over the country, creating a robust tourism industry.

Aesthetically pleasing architecture, culture, activities, and the beautiful natural environment brings an increasing number of visitors each year. The impact of tourism in 2019 generated \$3.1 billion in direct spending and \$27.7 million in tax revenue with most being spent on lodging, followed by food and beverage. The majority of travel to the Chatham County region is leisure while an ever-growing amount is for business travel.

According to the Pooler Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau, there are currently 11 hotels located in the city. These hotels help support the overall tourism industry by offering local visitors more options for lodging. For example, tourists lodging in Pooler have the option to visit destinations like the Tanger Outlet Mall and Savannah’s River Street located within minutes of Pooler.

While COVID-19 temporarily affected these numbers, tourism is beginning to recover and is expected to continue growing to meet and possibly exceed the figures that the industry had seen before the pandemic’s disruption.

Total Overnight Spending by Sector

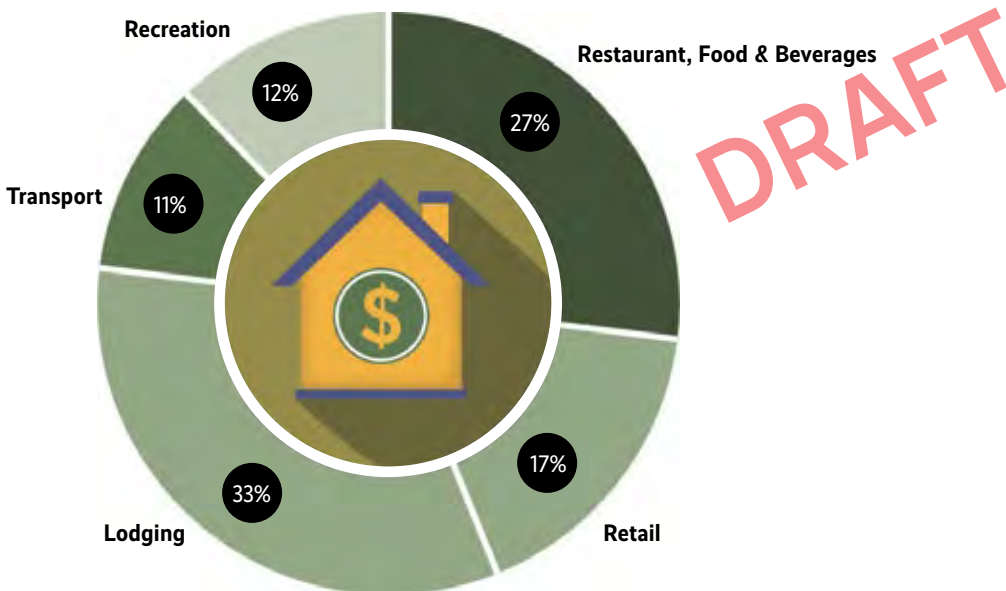


Figure 3.7–Total Overnight Spending by Sector, Savannah MSA
Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce 2019

Retail

Retail is a major industry in the Pooler area, especially given one of the main attractions is the regionally prominent Tanger Outlet Mall. The mall is home to over 100 businesses, ranging from clothing, to food, and furniture. Not only does this mall offer employment and business opportunities, but it also acts as an anchor for the multitude of other businesses along Pooler Parkway.



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SAVANNAH MSA BUSINESS PROFILE

MSA Profile

The community understands that businesses, most notably small businesses, are the backbone of what keeps the US economy thriving. Throughout Chatham County there are numerous resources and organizations specifically dedicated to assisting existing and prospective businesses both small and large by providing education, networking, and growth opportunities.

The majority of businesses in the Savannah MSA employ fewer than five people, but 21% of the workforce is employed by companies with fewer than 20 employees. This suggests that the small business infrastructure and programs in the MSA support a strong business environment.

Based on Georgia Department of Labor data, the largest employers in the Savannah MSA are listed below (in alphabetical order). Service industry employers, such as hospitals, retail, and grocery stores, represent the bulk of these major employment centers.

- Candler Hospital Inc.
- Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation
- Gulfstream Services Corporation
- Marine Terminals Corporation-East
- Savannah College of Art and Design
- Savannah Health Services, LLC
- Sitel Operation Corporation
- St. Joseph's Hospital, Inc
- The Kroger Company
- Walmart

Of the documented 158,399 individuals working in Chatham County, 77% work for businesses and companies with 20+ employees, while the remaining 23% work for companies with fewer than 20 employees

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Business Employment, 2020

ESTABLISHMENT SIZE	ESTABLISHMENTS	PERCENT	EMPLOYEES	PERCENT
0-4	5,973	57.78%	8,301	5.24%
5-9	1,714	16.58%	11,319	7.15%
10-19	1,232	11.92%	16,855	10.64%
20-49	895	8.66%	26,517	16.74%
50-99	287	2.78%	19,358	12.22%
100-249	182	1.76%	27,128	17.13%
250-499	30	0.29%	10,322	6.52%
500-999	12	0.12%	8,630	5.45%
1000 and Over	12	0.12%	29,969	18.92%

Figure 3.8-Business Employment Based on Size
Georgia Department of Labor 2020

Per Capita Income

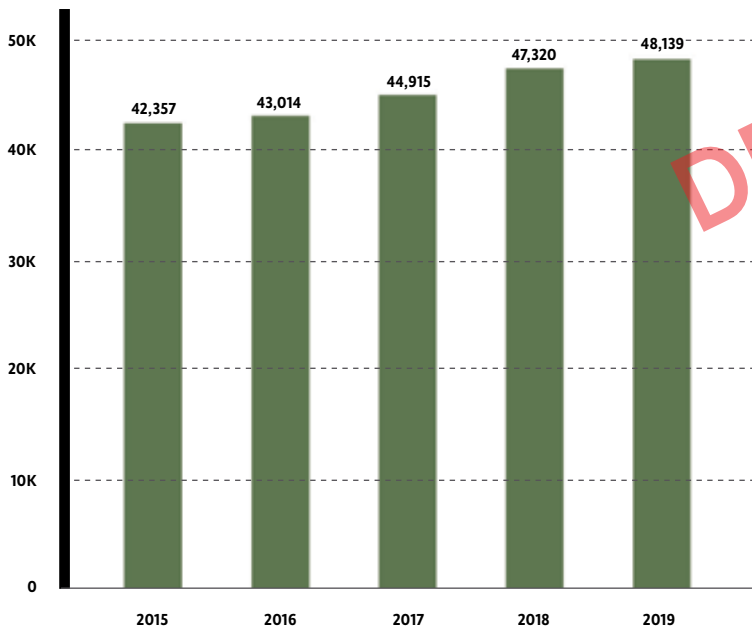
Per capita income refers to the average amount of money earned per person in a given area over a specified year. The average income of employees in the Savannah MSA has increased almost \$6,000 since 2015, from \$42,357 to \$48,139 in 2019 according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

The average income of employees per capita income in the Savannah MSA has increased almost \$6,000 since 2015, from \$42,357 to \$48,139 in 2019

—U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis



Average Yearly Residential Per Capita Income



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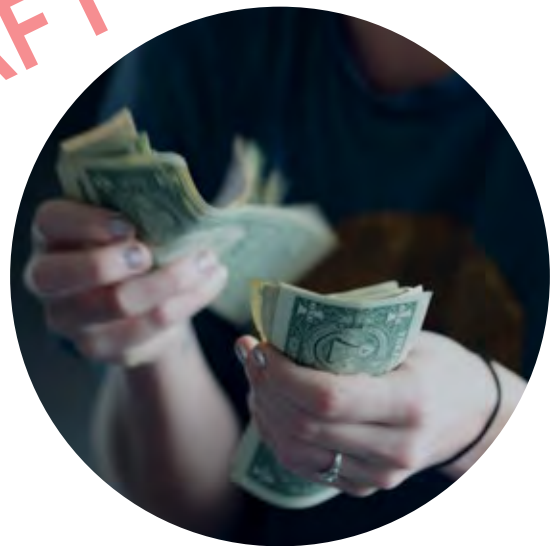


Figure 3.9—Average Yearly Income, Savannah MSA
Georgia Department of Labor 2015–2019



Wages and Employment

The overall average weekly wage in the Savannah MSA is \$921, which is a 3.1% increase between 2019 to 2020 according to the Georgia Department of Labor. The average hourly wage is \$21.92 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. These wages can vary by industry or job field, with some industries having a far higher average wage than others

Household Income

According to the US Census Bureau, household income refers to the combined earnings of all individuals in a household aged 15 or older. According to the American Community Survey, the median household income in Pooler is \$78,102, which is around \$21,000 higher than the median household income for the Savannah MSA of \$57,470. As shown by the chart below, a majority of households in Pooler earn \$100,000 to \$149,999.

Employees by Industry, 2020

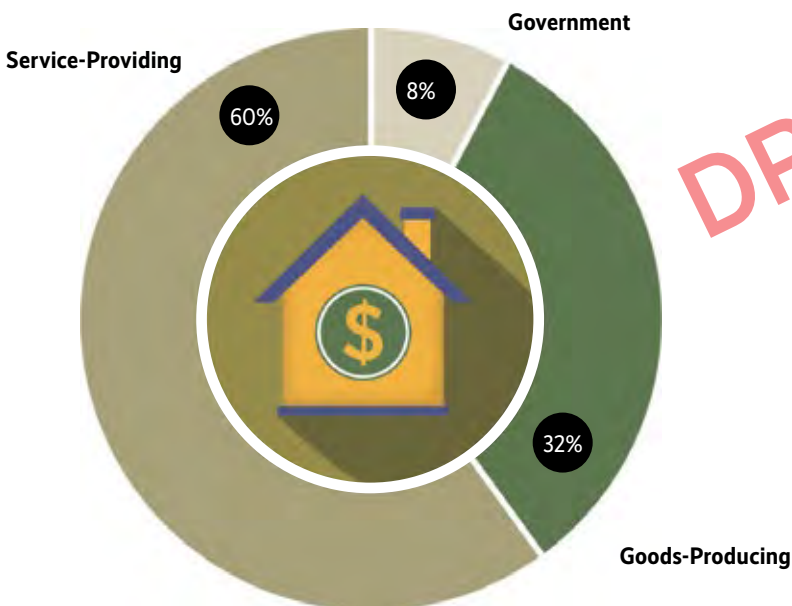


Figure 3.10—Percentage of Employees by Industry, Pooler
Georgia Department of Labor, 2020

Industry Breakdown

The majority of residents within the Savannah MSA work in the Service-Providing industry (69.5%), followed by the Goods-Producing industry (15.8%), and government (14.5%). The Goods-Producing industry is defined as a field that produces a physical product, whereas the Service-Providing industry is a field in which the product is the service itself. As shown on the facing page, Goods-Producing jobs have a higher average wage than both Service-Providing and government jobs. Within the Service-Providing industry, food service has the lowest average weekly wage among all of the job fields listed. It is important to note that these numbers are from 2020 and were impacted by COVID-19.

In Pooler, the majority of workers are employed in the Service-Providing industry (60.2%), followed by Goods-Producing (32.1%) and government (7.7%). A larger proportion of Pooler's population works in the Goods-Producing industry compared with the Savannah MSA as a whole—this could be due to the city's proximity to many manufacturing, construction, and transportation businesses.

Goods-Producing Industry

The highest wages within the goods-producing field are in Transportation Equipment, with a weekly wage of \$1,892. The lowest paying Goods-Producing jobs are in Printing and Related Support Activities, with a weekly wage of \$634.

The average wage within the Goods-Producing field is \$1,399

Savannah MSA Goods-Producing Wages, 2020

INDUSTRY	GOODS-PRODUCING SUB-CATEGORY	AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting		\$797
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction		\$1,004
Manufacturing		\$1,569
	Beverage and Tobacco Product	\$837
	Chemical	\$1,364
	Fabricated Metal Product	\$1,244
	Food	\$1,298
	Furniture and related Product	\$878
	Machinery	\$1,063
	Misc.	\$927
	Nonmetallic	\$1,141
	Paper	\$1,419
	Petroleum and Coal Products	\$1,422
	Plastics and Rubber Products	\$869
	Printing and Related Support Activities	\$634
	Textile Mills	\$1,073
	Textile Product Mills	\$900
	Transportation Equipment	\$1,892
	Wood Product	\$960

Figure 3.11–Goods-Producing, Savannah MSA
Georgia Department of Labor, 2020

Service-Providing Industry

The highest paying jobs in the Service-Providing field are in Finance and Insurance, with a weekly wage of \$1,669, while the lowest wages are in food service and accommodations, with a weekly wage of \$346.

The average wage within the Service-Providing field is \$808, while the average weekly wage in the government sector is \$1,025

Savannah MSA Service-Providing Wages, 2020

INDUSTRY	AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE
Utilities	\$1,369
Wholesale Trade	\$1,227
Retail Trade	\$641
Transportation and Warehousing	\$884
Information	\$1,069
Finance and insurance	\$1,669
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	\$863
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	\$1,126
Management of Companies and Enterprises	\$1,287
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	\$606
Educational Services	\$1,133
Health Care and Social Assistance	\$1,006
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	\$552
Accommodation and Food Services	\$346
Other Services (except Public Administration)	\$757

Figure 3.12–Service-Providing Wages, Savannah MSA
Georgia Department of Labor, 2020

Savannah MSA Government Wages, 2020

	AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE
Federal Government	\$1,466
State Government	\$1,110
Local Government	\$918

Figure 3.13–Government Wages, Savannah MSA
Georgia Department of Labor, 2020



GROWING INDUSTRIES

Which Industries are Growing?

Not only is the healthcare industry already one of the largest employment sectors in the MSA, but it is also forecasted to continue growing due to the increasing number of seniors living longer, healthier lives. Healthcare services such as ambulatory services, hospitals, and nursing homes are set to significantly increase over the next few years. Ambulatory services providing outpatient healthcare services will experience the largest growth in the number of employees between 2016–2026 with an almost 30% increase in the number of jobs.

The industry sector predicted to grow the most by percentage is the "Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation" sector, which is projected to grow by almost 35%, adding over 900 new jobs to the Savannah MSA region. "Construction of Buildings" will also experience large growth, with an increase of almost 30%, or 800 new jobs being added to the region between 2016 and 2026.

Pooler is also expected to see growth in recreation and retail, with a new indoor skydiving business that began construction in 2020 and the highly anticipated Costco that was announced in 2021.

Even though the almost 33,000 jobs within the "Food Service" category have some of the lowest weekly wages, this industry is projected to grow over the next few years, highlighting the need to reassess the hourly wage for the sector with the most employees in the Savannah MSA. With major growth in the volume of "Food Services and Drinking Places," "General Merchandise Stores," and "Support Activities for Transportation" industries, Pooler will continue to see strong impacts on the city's economy viability.

Targeted Growth Industries

According to SEDA, there are five major industries that are likely to increase economic growth if they are invested in at the local level:

- Manufacturing/Ports/Logistics
- Tourism
- Education
- Government/Military
- Healthcare
- Retail Logistics

MANUFACTURING, PORTS, AND LOGISTICS

This industry grew 24% between 2007 to 2017. With a growing logistics industry based around expanding port operations, investing in the manufacturing, ports, and logistics industry should continue bringing higher paying jobs to the Savannah MSA.

The average yearly wage for Manufacturing, Ports, and Logistics jobs was \$55,115 in 2017

—SEDA



CREATIVE AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

While creative and technical services have decreased over the last decade, there is still opportunity to increase growth and retain the highly skilled graduates that often leave Chatham County after college. Additionally, creative, and technical jobs, such as software and video game design, often have higher wages.

By expanding partnerships between businesses and education facilities to include SCAD, GSU, and other universities, highly skilled workers are more likely to be retained, and the industry will have a greater ability to expand.

TECHNOLOGY

Regional initiatives such as the Savannah Logistics Technology Corridor (SLTC) have helped to expand the technology sector. Established in 2018 to help cement Chatham County's place in the technology industry as well as encourage and grow investment, SLTC is already having a positive impact on the local industry.

The SLTC is an initiative comprised of business, government, education, and community stakeholders committed to the advancement of Georgia and the Savannah area in particular through the development of a technology corridor that supports logistics technology development through innovation and investment. The corridor was approved in 2018 by the Georgia legislature after looking for incentives for technology growth and locations for technology corridors.

The designation creates a geographically defined area where businesses can locate and be close enough to each other to encourage collaboration and innovation. The updated 2019 corridor boundaries cover a portion of Interstates 95 and 16, the Savannah River and U.S. Highway 17 and provide opportunities for Savannah and Chatham, as well as other areas such as Bryan and Effingham counties.

The following efforts are the current focus of the SLTC:

- Expand the corridor to include the Savannah Advanced Manufacturing Center, Georgia Southern Armstrong Campus, and Savannah Tech
- Fund the development of a "Logistics Tech Academy" following the model being used in other regions (Cyber Academy and FinTech Academy)
- Fund the development and operations of an innovation center/incubator, following the model being used in other areas of the state (TechSquare in Atlanta and Cyber Center in Augusta)
- Create Cluster Grants dedicated to the corridor to enable new ideas, better education, improved cooperation between entities all dedicated to Logistics Technology
- Create a student loan repayment program, similar to that used to attract doctors, to attract experienced technologists to the corridor
- Create a program where corridor-based companies can sell their R&D credits or financial losses to raise capital
- Increase funding for the Angel tax credit and dedicate that increase to corridor-based companies



ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION

The entertainment industry grew significantly between 2007 and 2017, with a 275% 10-year growth rate as cited by SEDA

The entertainment production industry has major potential to bring new opportunities to Chatham County. Not only have numerous movies been filmed in the area, but there is also a potential talent base in SCAD and Savannah Tech graduates, who have majored in subjects such as film, sound design, on-set production, and visual effects.

HEALTHCARE

The healthcare industry continues to be a major source of high paying jobs in Chatham County. With Georgia Southern University, South University, Savannah Tech, Mercer School of Medicine, and others offering health programs, continuing to emphasize the health care industry's impacts and needs in Chatham County will help to attract and keep highly trained graduates in the area.

The healthcare industry grew 20% between 2007 and 2017
—SEDA



Projected Employment Growth, 2016–2026

Industry Title	2016 Base Year Employment Staff	2026 Projection Year Employment Staff	Total Change in Employees	Percent Change in Employment	Projected Annual Growth Rate (%)
Ambulatory Health Care Services	12,050	15,610	3,560	29.55%	2.62%
Educational Services	25,370	28,690	3,320	13.09%	1.24%
Administrative and Support Services	15,350	17,850	2,500	16.25%	1.52%
Food Services and Drinking Places	30,920	32,840	1,920	6.21%	0.60%
Hospitals	12,560	14,140	1,580	12.58%	1.19%
Support Activities for Transportation	5,800	7,130	1,330	23.05%	2.10%
Social Assistance	4,660	5,890	1,230	26.18%	2.35%
General Merchandise Stores	7,460	8,510	1,050	14.12%	1.33%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	7,750	8,750	1,000	12.90%	1.22%
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	4,020	4,980	960	23.94%	2.17%
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	10,940	11,890	950	8.67%	0.83%
Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Industries	2,650	3,580	930	34.89%	3.04%
Federal Government, Excluding Post Office	10,120	11,000	880	8.77%	0.84%
Construction of Buildings	2,760	3,580	820	29.75%	2.64%
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	4,370	5,140	770	17.54%	1.63%
Accommodation, including Hotels and Motels	7,890	8,630	740	9.40%	0.90%
Specialty Trade Contractors	6,260	6,970	710	11.31%	1.08%
Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional, and Similar Organizations	5,660	6,320	660	11.79%	1.12%
Repair and Maintenance	3,250	3,840	590	17.99%	1.67%
Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	3,840	4,400	560	14.70%	1.38%

Figure 3.14—Projected Employment Growth within the Savannah MSA by Sector

Georgia Department of Labor, 2016–2026

RETAIL LOGISTICS

Amazon has announced a new fulfillment center, dubbed the “Pooler Megasite,” to be built at a central point between unincorporated Chatham, the city of Savannah, the city of Pooler, and Garden City. The project is expected to be complete in the second half of 2022, and is predicted to add 1000 jobs to the economy. This fulfillment center is a part of a larger trend of the growing foothold of the logistics industry in the area. The facilities’ location creates the opportunity for multiple jurisdictions to participate and work in this job system.

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DECLINING INDUSTRIES

Which Industries are Shrinking?

"Paper Manufacturing" is predicted to experience the highest decline in employees with an estimated 200 fewer jobs between 2016 and 2026. "Publishing Industries" are set to experience the biggest percentage decline in base employment, with a third of jobs expected to be lost in an ever-declining small industry.

Projected Employment Decline, 2016–2026

Industry Title	2016 Base Year Employment Staff	2026 Projection Year Employment Staff	Total Change in Employees	Percent Change in Employment	Projected Annual Growth Rate (%)
Paper Manufacturing	3,100	2,900	-200	-6.55%	-0.67%
Publishing Industries (except Internet)	450	280	-170	-37.53%	-4.60%
Postal Service	1,060	950	-110	-10.33%	-1.08%
Health and Personal Care Stores	1,980	1,890	-90	-4.94%	-0.51%
Forestry and Logging	300	240	-60	-20.46%	-2.26%
Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing	210	170	-40	-17.22%	-1.87%
Textile Product Mills	100	80	-20	-16.00%	-1.73%
Printing and Related Support Activities	470	460	-10	-2.75%	-0.28%
Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing	1,450	1,460	10	0.28%	0.03%
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	180	190	10	6.21%	0.60%
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	1,590	1,600	10	0.63%	0.06%
Rail Transportation	800	810	10	1.63%	0.16%
Data Processing, Hosting and Related Services	50	60	10	28.00%	2.50%
Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing	120	140	20	16.26%	1.52%
Water Transportation	230	250	20	7.73%	0.75%
Broadcasting (except Internet)	410	440	30	7.26%	0.70%
Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing	180	220	40	19.78%	1.82%
Telecommunications	860	910	50	4.98%	0.49%
Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation	330	390	60	17.74%	1.65%

Figure 3.15–Projected Employment Decline within Savannah MSA by Sector

Georgia Department of Labor, 2016–2026

ECONOMIC GROWTH CHALLENGES

While the Savannah MSA has many assets with the potential to drive economic growth, there are some challenges that may prevent employers and employees alike from planting their roots in the area.

QUALITY OF LIFE IMPACTS:

- According to a survey conducted by SEDA, many residents believe that the quality of education in the area is a problem. Respondents also believed that crime was a major deterrent in the city of Savannah. The existence and perception of these issues can negatively impact economic growth, as employers and skilled employees may steer clear of the Savannah MSA to avoid these issues.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY:

- A significant portion of residents in Savannah are cost burdened by housing. Far more people rent homes than own them. The lack of accessibility to home ownership can prevent possible new employees from moving to the region due to cost concerns.

WORKFORCE SKILL SHORTAGE:

- Both at the national level and more specifically via a study conducted locally by SEDA, business owners have voiced that the pool of new, younger candidates are lacking the basic “soft skills” needed for long-term success in the job force.



SOFT SKILLS

Soft skills are abilities that relate to how one works and interacts with others. Employers look for soft skills in candidates because these skills are hard to teach and are important for long-term success. Examples of Soft Skills are listed below:

—Indeed

- Dependability
- Effective Communication
- Open-Mindedness
- Teamwork
- Creativity
- Problem-Solving
- Critical Thinking
- Organization
- Willingness to Learn

Chatham County’s planning efforts have identified key initiatives that can advance the economic and physical success of the Savannah region in the next 20 years. The challenge becomes how best to grow denser, become more diverse, and yet maintain a sense of place that draws people to the region



SWOT ANALYSIS

SEDA's SWOT Analysis below identifies some of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) associated with the local economy for 2020.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Logistics Infrastructure: Port of Savannah, rail, interstate - Diverse economic drivers (manufacturing, logistics, tourism, health-care, education, government, military) - Higher education - Military assets - Favorable cost of living compared to other national MSAs - Historical preservation and cultural richness - Ability to draw people back after years away - Quality of life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Persistently high poverty rates - Underperforming K-12 schools - Crime - Inadequate skilled workforce/lack of soft skills - Capital is limited for small business community/entrepreneurs - Small number of headquarters leading to few corporate leaders active in community and economic development - Limited opportunities for young professional's career advancement - Limited public owned land available to attract high wage projects
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retain and attract more talent - Further diversify economic base - Continue efforts to attract affluent visitors, lengthen visitor stays and increase spending - Grow entrepreneurial resources and support entrepreneurship - Increase air service and lower costs - Invest in GSU as the regional university with the greatest potential to achieve a high level of talent - Develop infrastructure and ecosystem as well as local and regional support for the entertainment production industry - Leverage World Trade Center Savannah and other assets to increase international trade and investment - Continue to partner with SCAD to advance technology industries and entrepreneurship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of coordination between governmental entities - Perception of crime and public education limits progress - Limited public transportation for workforce - Companies unable to scale in Savannah - Environmental threats - Status quo bias - Land assets not always developed for highest and best use from an employment perspective (i.e., high wage companies) - Shortage of teachers and principals - Trade wars and other temporary global economic challenges arise

Figure 3.16—SEDA SWOT Analysis for the Local Economy, 2020
Savannah Economic Development Authority

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The goal of workforce development programs is to provide resources that residents can tap into to aid in their professional, educational, and/or career development. These programs offer an array of resources that include educational workshops, apprenticeships, internships, networking workshops, and job shadows. Efforts should be made to continue funding and expanding the reach and capabilities of similar organizations.

STEP UP SAVANNAH: CHATHAM APPRENTICE PROGRAM (CAP)

- The goal of this program is to help unemployed and under-employed residents improve their economic health by offering sessions on business, budgeting, and networking. The program is open to Chatham County residents 18 and older.

SAVANNAH IMPACT PROGRAM (SIP)

- This program is designed for at-risk youth and high-risk offenders to prevent the possibility of re-offending. SIP provides supervision, job readiness skills, and mental health resources, so youth who have previously committed a crime can re-enter society.

WORKSOURCE COASTAL

- This economic development program serves multiple coastal counties, including Bulloch, Bryan, Camden, Chatham, Effingham, Glynn, Liberty, Long, McIntosh, and Screven counties. The program has resources including training and workforce education for veterans, adult and dislocated workers, youth, and employers.

JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT (JA) OF GEORGIA

- This teacher and volunteer driven program provide activities for K-12 students focused on career readiness, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy. JA works to empower the next generation with the knowledge, capacity, and motivation to thrive and build a better future for themselves.

YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP

- This program is designated for junior and senior high school students and aims to prepare them for the workforce by providing apprenticeships.

EMPLOYABILITY

- This organization's goal is to empower those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Some of the services offered include job placement, career development, resume development, and ongoing job support so those with IDD can find and keep employment.



AUTOMATION, LOGISTICS, & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Automation is expected to change the employment landscape. As machines become more able to perform tasks typically done by humans, there will be a major shift in the job market. An example of automation that has increased are self-checkouts in stores and self-ordering kiosks in fast food restaurants. These technologies reduce the need for cashier positions. While this may be more visible in service positions, there is also increasing automation in manufacturing and transportation industries. With the rise of self-driving cars, AI technology, self-service technology, and businesses operated entirely online, the economy as we understand it may change completely over the next few decades. This brings the possibilities of less jobs as automated machines increasingly can do them more efficiently than humans. The plan for economic development must also consider a future with fewer jobs or new innovative roles.



Entrepreneurship has always been an important factor in the overall economy. With the rise of the internet, there are a variety of new ways that individuals can pursue self-employment and small business startups. The majority of businesses in the Savannah MSA are small, so it is necessary to be able to support this sector of the economy while also helping people wanting to start businesses enter the field.

The economy is changing, with many people being unable to afford to live off of one job. Because of this, there has been an increase in the gig economy, which is defined as temporary, short term, or small task jobs that are more flexible than getting a second job. People also can have gig jobs as their main source of income because of their flexibility. Gig jobs include driving for Uber and Lyft, and food delivery services like GrubHub and Instacart. Streamlining the entrepreneurship process can make this form of labor participation more accessible to local residents, and provide more economic opportunities

Plan 2040 Survey

Fifty-three percent (53%) of respondents felt that supporting local entrepreneurship, especially small business and home business was very important.

A full copy of the survey and the results can be found in the Pooler 2040 Appendix.



THE IMPACT OF GEOGRAPHIC MOBILITY

Geographic mobility refers to people moving into or within a municipality. According to the 2014–2018 American Community Survey, 8% of Pooler’s population moved into the city from within Chatham County, 3% relocated from another county within Georgia, 7% relocated from another state, and 1% relocated from abroad. These moves can be an indicator of the economic situation within an area. While there has been major economic growth in the Savannah MSA, the persistent poverty rate and low economic mobility suggests that this job growth is more beneficial to new residents of the Savannah MSA than existing residents. So, economic growth in and of itself is not necessarily beneficial to the local population if residents are not able to benefit from that growth through job access. People living within the Savannah MSA should have access to the same economic opportunities that newcomers receive.

Plan 2040 Survey

According to the Plan 2040 survey, investment into local businesses and residents is important to the majority of respondents. For example, over 78% of respondents felt it was important or very important to develop a skilled workforce through training programs, recruitment, and continuing education

A full copy of the survey and the results can be found in the Pooler 2040 Appendix.



ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

The impact of COVID-19 on communities throughout the country has increased discussions on how to make the economy more resilient.

Employment in the city of Pooler declined 18% during the COVID-19 pandemic

The number of passengers flying out of the Savannah Hilton Head International Airport declined significantly, which greatly impacted the aviation industry. Despite the economic disruptions caused by the pandemic, Pooler is forecast to bounce back, with the unemployment rate expected to decrease and employment expected to grow by 4-6% (i.e., 600 new jobs added to the economy). Job industries in Logistics/Port Activity, Real Estate Development, Residential Construction, Retail, and Leisure and Hospitality are also expected to improve in 2021 as the pandemic subsides.

As the economy recovers, it is important to consider the specific impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and strategies necessary to improve economic resilience in the future



ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

Economic resilience refers to the ability to recover quickly from a shock, the ability to withstand a shock, and the ability to avoid the shock all together.

—U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA)

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TRENDS

- The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the practice of remote working for most organizations. Businesses have invested in employee and customer safety, restaurants and retail have pivoted to providing outdoor services and options for online commerce, and the pandemic may have accelerated the adoption of virtual healthcare
- The following section identifies some points that should be evaluated and implemented to ensure the community is planning for and implementing economic resilience through the integration of specific goals and actions to bolster the long-term economic durability of the Chatham County region

EQUITY

- Multiple racial and ethnic groups were disproportionately impacted by unemployment in 2020. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for Black or African Americans jumped from 6% to 16.7% between February and May 2020 before dropping to 9.9% in December. By contrast, seasonal unemployment for white individuals grew from 3.0% to 12.3% in the same period and dropped to 6.0% by December 2020
- It is estimated that COVID-19 will have disproportionately impacted Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)-owned small businesses. A recent report from the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) notes that BIPOC business owners were more likely to apply for forms of financial assistance than white business owners, but less likely to receive it. BIPOC business owners were also more likely to report negative business impacts as a result of remote work measures compared with white-owned businesses. A report from the Federal Reserve Banks shows that BIPOC-owned businesses were nearly twice as likely to be classified as “at risk” or “distressed” in 2019, pointing to structural barriers that influence issues such as financial health and whether a business is able to accumulate significant cash reserves

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According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for Black or African Americans jumped from 6% to 16.7% between February and May 2020 before dropping to 9.9% in December

—Bureau of Labor Statistics



LAND USE ELEMENT

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04



LAND USE

Introduction

The Land Use Element of Plan 2040 defines Pooler's existing physical form and development patterns and presents a set of recommendations and strategies as a framework for responsible growth. The following land use information, recommendations, and strategies are intended to provide guidance for the location and intensity of land uses to support the city of Pooler in future land use policy decisions.

The Regional Development and Existing Land Use components describe historical and contextual information relating to land use in Pooler. The Character Area Map (CAM) identifies the character vision for Pooler and the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) serves as a guide for future zoning and development policy decisions in the community. Together, the CAM and the FLUM are intended to guide future land use decisions in Pooler through the interconnected elements of community character, development patterns, existing and future infrastructure, equity, and natural resources.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Physical Context

The city of Pooler is located in the western portion of Chatham County and is comprised of 27.85 square miles. It is bounded to the west by Bloomingdale, Garden City to the east, the city of Savannah to the north, and unincorporated Chatham County to the south. The city is primarily residential and commercial in character, with undeveloped areas between pockets of residential, commercial, and industrial areas and planned unit developments (PUD). Several of these undeveloped areas serve as buffers, such as the land between the Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport and the northern portions of Pooler. As the city continues to experience growth, these undeveloped areas will likely be developed as the pressure for development continues to grow more intense.

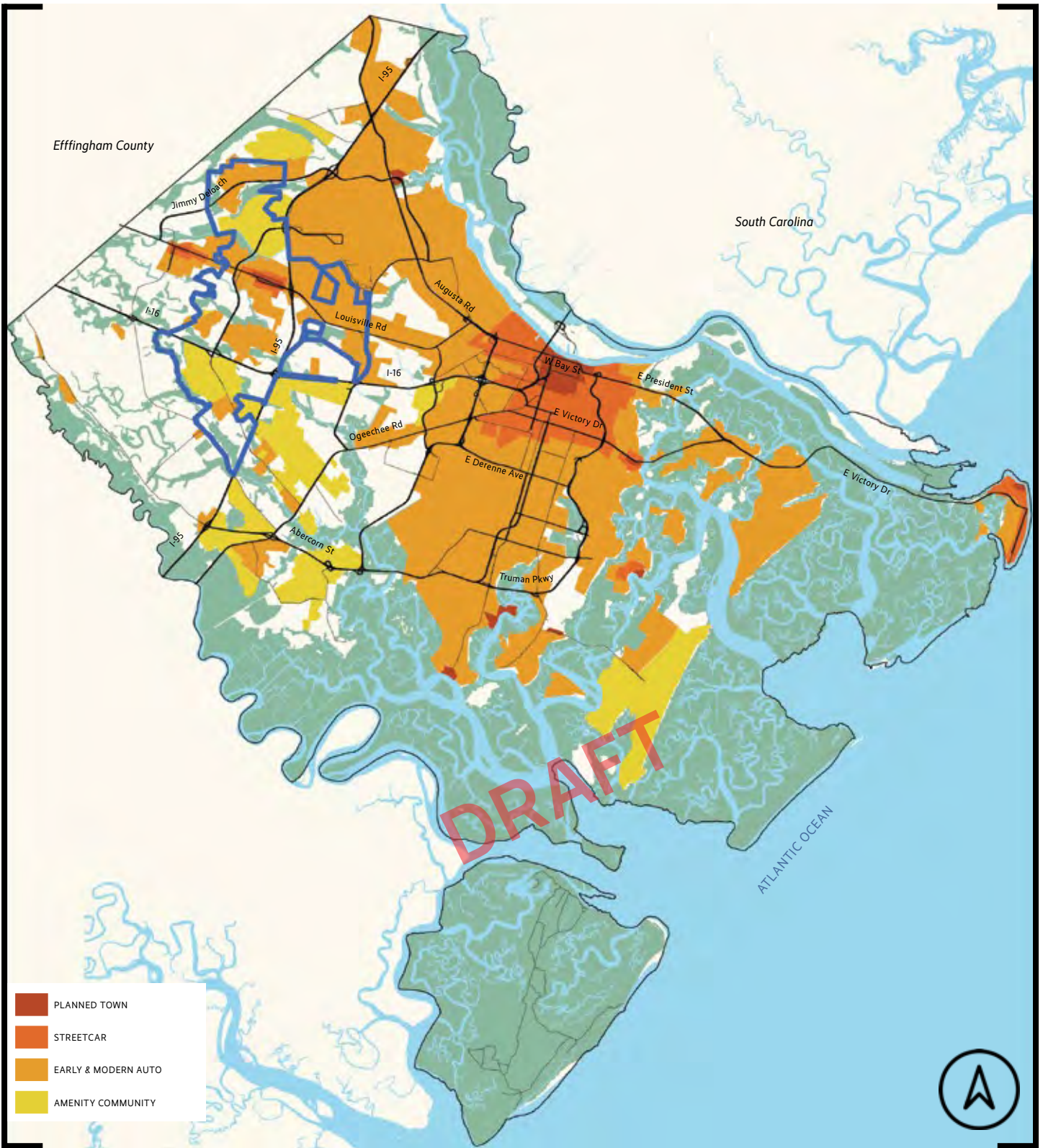


Development Patterns

In 1838, Pooler Station Stop No. 1 was established by the Central of Georgia Railroad, spurring the development of what would become the city of Pooler. In the late 1800s, permanent residential development in Pooler was spurred by the purchase of several hundred acres for locals to utilize to build homes in a bid to make the area a lasting community. When Pooler officially incorporated in 1907, the population was about 337 people. In 1928, the paving of U.S. Highway 80 allowed residents of Pooler easy access to Savannah.

Development in Pooler began to pick up in the 1950s with the construction of I-95, as businesses began to develop around the interchanges. For the remainder of Pooler, growth was slow until the 1990s, when development demands began to move west from Savannah, and new subdivisions and businesses began going up at a rapid rate. Transportation facilities played a large role in this growth and they continue to influence growth and land use patterns in the Pooler. Major facilities in proximity to Pooler include the Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport, Interstates I-16 and I-95, U.S. Highway 80, and Pooler Parkway.

Due to the rapid development of Pooler over the last 50 years, planning practice has been largely in reaction to incoming development, which can allow for incompatible land uses and decreased connectivity. This plan looks to ensure that planning efforts are forward thinking and consider growth with intentional forethought. Development in Pooler is likely to remain anchored around major transportation corridors, such as U.S. Highway 80 (Louisville Road) and Pooler Parkway and expand outward into areas which are currently developed at lower densities or remain undeveloped.



Map 4.2—Chatham County's Development Patterns Over Time



EMPLOYMENT CENTERS

This component highlights areas of Chatham County that influence land use patterns as places with existing and projected job growth. Employment centers have been identified based on a concentration of one or more of the following employment industries: hospitality, industrial/manufacturing, tourism, retail, health care, educational/public services, and other. Individual employers that have a large impact on land use have been identified as well.

The identification and analysis of employment centers is a useful tool in understanding which areas see high levels of daily commuters and could be suitable for reducing vehicle miles through a promotion of mixed-use development or strengthening access to public transportation and preventing sprawl into undeveloped areas.

1. West Chatham Aviation

- » The West Chatham Aviation employment center is situated between Augusta Road and I-95 and comprises the Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport and the bulk of operations of Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation in Chatham County.

This area provides employment opportunities in operation and management of the airport, and the design, manufacturing, and marketing of aircraft. Commuters traveling to and from this area typically travel by automobile.

2. Georgia Ports Authority

- » The Georgia Ports Authority (GPA) employment center consists of the Garden City and Ocean Terminal, operated by the GPA. This area provides employment opportunities in marine transportation and logistics.

3. Downtown Savannah

- » Downtown Savannah is a major employment hub that provides jobs in many sectors, including tourism, hospitality, retail, and educational/public services. This area sees a high number of commuters each day, many of whom utilize modes of transportation other than a car, such as walking, bicycling, or public transit

4. South Savannah Medical

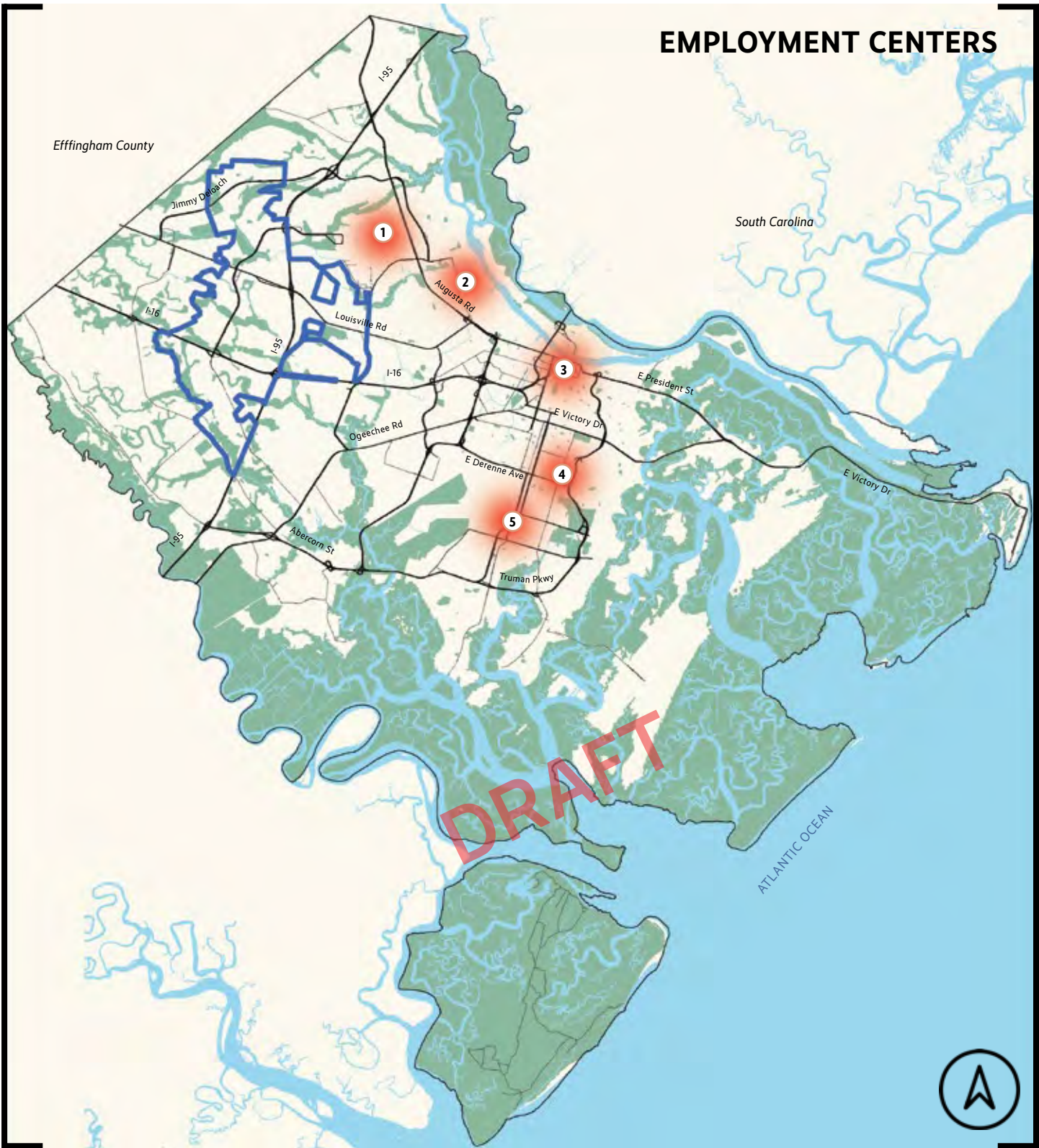
- » This employment area is located along DeRenne Avenue and the Truman Parkway, and consists of several large medical facilities and offices, including Memorial Health University Medical Center and Candler Hospital. Downtown residents can access this area by bus; however, most employees and commuters arrive by automobile.

5. Abercorn Extension Commercial Corridor

- » This area is located along the Abercorn Street Extension, which serves as a centerline for areas of regional commercial activity on either side. This employment corridor is home to many businesses, including some of the county's largest employers such as Walmart, Kroger, and Georgia Southern (Armstrong). This is a high traffic area, with both commuters and shoppers traveling primarily by automobile, with some utilizing the public bus system.

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EMPLOYMENT CENTERS



Map 4.4-Chatham County Employment Centers



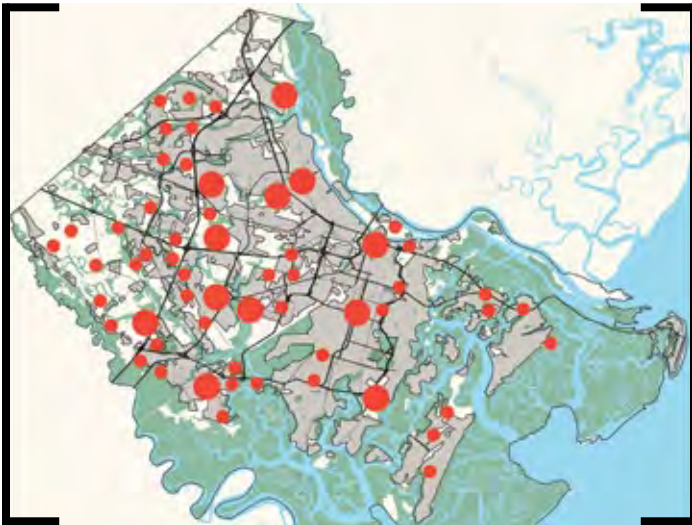
FUTURE GROWTH STRATEGIES

Options for the Future

Over the next 20 years, there are various mechanisms that can be used to manage growth and promote sustainable development within the county. Three alternative approaches were presented to the public and stakeholders for feedback during the comprehensive plan's development in 2020.

As shown, the intent was to allow the public to visualize the different directions growth could take over the next 20 years via a Business as Usual, Strong Corridor, or Compact Growth strategy.

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Business as Usual

The Business as Usual consists of continued outward development in Pooler between 2020 and 2040.

This strategy is based on existing development patterns, residential densities, future land uses, and infrastructure investments.



Strong Corridors

The Strong Corridors strategy focuses on reinvestment strategies along existing multimodal transportation nodes and corridors in Pooler.

This strategy incorporates efficient, mixed-use development and density around transit hubs.



Compact Growth

The Compact Growth strategy is based on reinvestment strategies into existing town centers, utilizing vacant lands and derelict or underperforming properties.

The strategy primarily focuses on efficient development, infill, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse within existing development boundaries.

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Preferred Growth Strategy: Strong Corridors

Given the choice of three scenarios during an online public survey, Pooler's survey respondents supported the "Strong Corridor" option with 41% preference. Under the Strong Corridor Scenario the following activities and concepts became the main focus for future decision making:

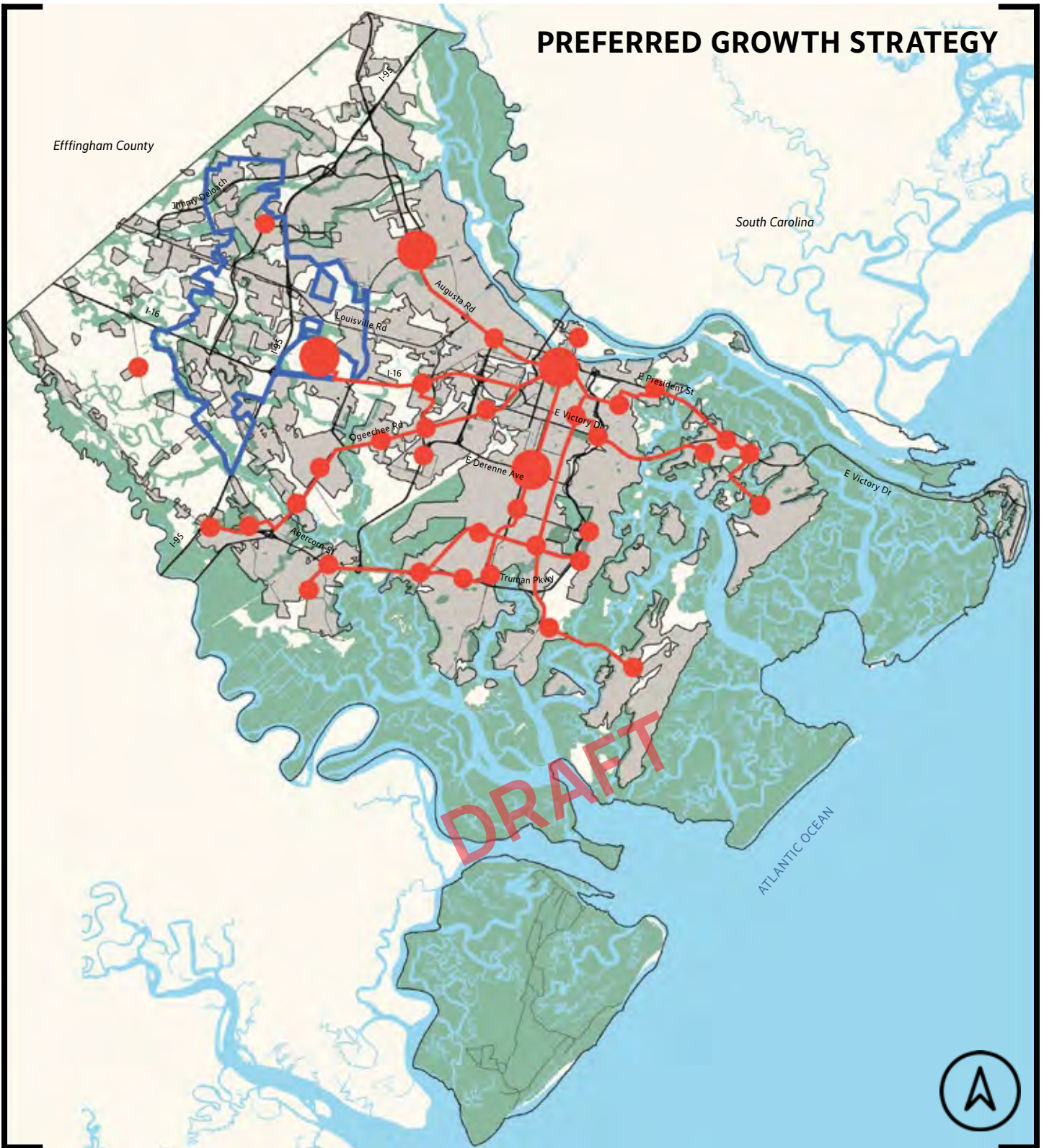
- More Managed Growth of Development
- Focus on Urban Rehab and Infill of Existing Developed Areas
- Priority for Mixed-use Zoning
- Interest in Diversity of Housing Choices
- Concentrate Development at Existing Transportation Nodes
- Prioritize Land for Parks, Trails & Natural Areas
- Manage Land for Conservation & Preservation
- Regional Cooperation between Jurisdictions
- Preserve Undeveloped Natural Resource Areas

With continued growth pressure in Pooler, a coordinated growth strategy across the nine jurisdictions will be critical. The adoption and successful implementation of a coordinated, regional growth policy can mitigate the negative externalities of growth—such as traffic congestion, air pollution, and loss of tree canopy—and will help to promote sustainable and equitable development countywide.

The Strong Corridor scenario became the basis for developing the Growth Centers Map, identifying Character Areas, and updating the Future Land Use Map found on the following pages.

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PREFERRED GROWTH STRATEGY



Map 4.5–Preferred Growth Strategy: Strong Corridors



GROWTH CENTERS

Purpose

The intent of the Growth Centers Map is to highlight areas of unincorporated Chatham and Savannah that may be suited to accommodate future development or redevelopment/infill efforts. These areas include suburban, commercial, or employment centers that should be studied to determine what type of redevelopment and/or infill development would be most appropriate. Due to their proximity to major road systems and potential sites of public transit expansion, transit-oriented (TOD), traditional neighborhood (TND) and mixed-use development should be a priority focus of these studies. More generally, the identification of growth areas may support ongoing future development and future land use decisions.

The Growth Centers Map defines the prioritization of lands for development to maximize areas that already have public investment (water, sewer, utilities, roadways, and services). Also taken into consideration are historic development patterns, employment centers, service areas, existing transportation nodes, and flood zones.

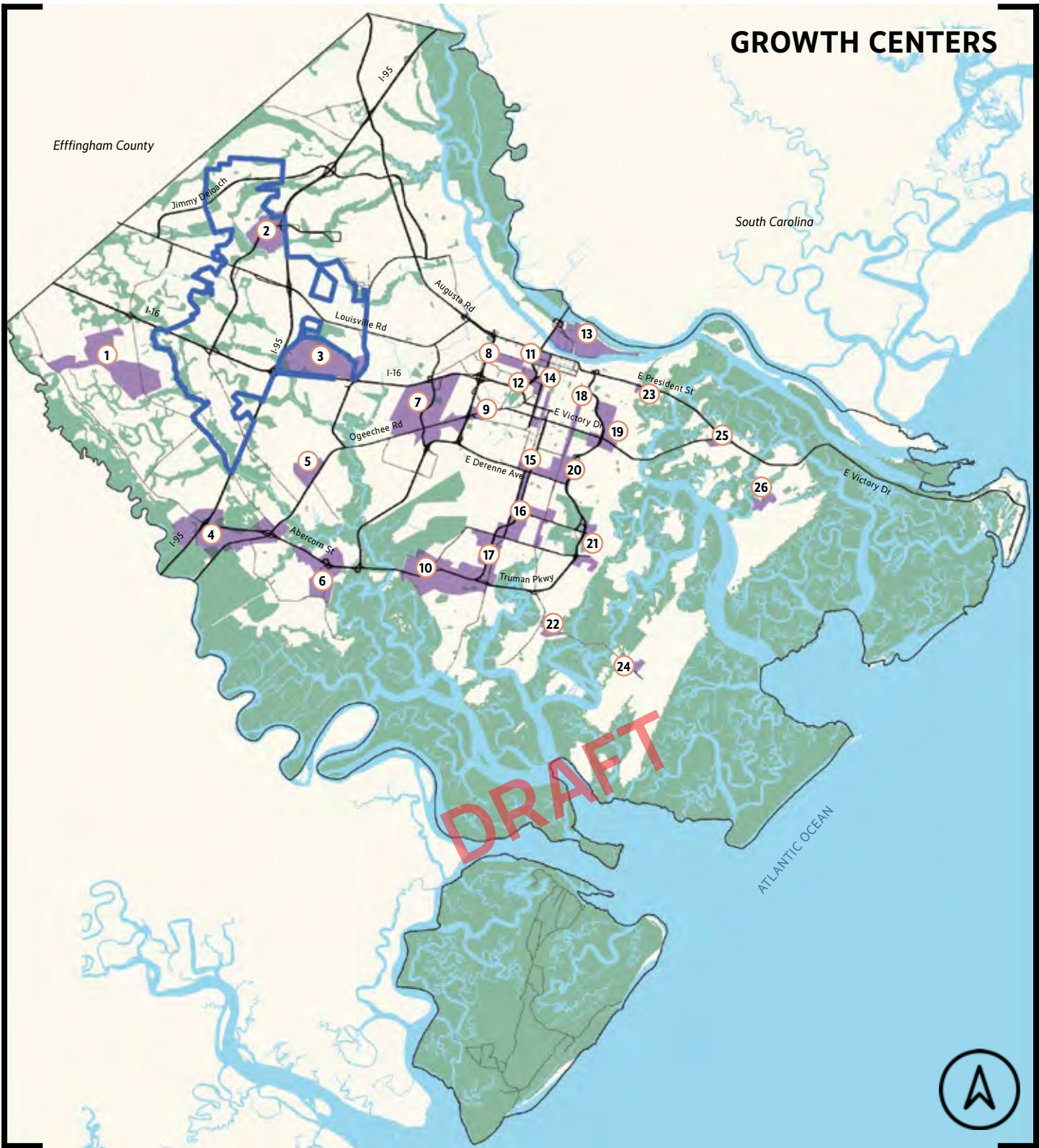
The Growth Centers Map is not a zoning map and is primarily intended to guide local decision makers on locations that should receive further study.

Areas of Further Study

Below is a list of potential Growth Areas identified through the prioritized land analysis and preferred growth strategy. The order of the areas listed below is in no particular order and does not indicate more importance or priority over others. Godley Station is the only identified growth center in the city of Pooler.

1. New Hampstead
2. **GODLEY STATION**
3. Megasite
4. Fort Argyle
5. Berwick
6. Georgetown
7. Chatham Parkway
8. West Savannah
9. Tremont
10. Savannah Mall
GSU-Armstrong
11. Yamacraw Village
12. Canal District
13. Hutchinson Island
14. Kayton-Frazier
15. Derenne Ave Corridor
16. Oglethorpe Mall
17. Abercorn Corridor
18. Waters Ave Corridor
19. Victory Square/Olympus
20. Medical Arts
21. Sandfly
22. Marshpoint
23. Beech & Capital
24. Skidaway
25. Whitmarsh Island
26. Wilmington Island

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Map 4.6–Potential Growth Centers Throughout Chatham County



WAYS TO ACCOMMODATE GROWTH

Transit Oriented Development (TOD)

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is defined as a moderate- to high-density mix of uses—including residences, retail shops, offices, and civic and entertainment uses—located within one-half mile of a transit station and designed to support transit use. The typical “station area” is considered to be a half-mile radius, which is an acceptable 10-minute walking distance for most transit users if the area contains a destination, provides dedicated walking routes, and is safe and visually appealing. Within the U.S., TOD is typically associated with rail transit; however, TOD could occur with other fixed guideway transit services, such as bus rapid transit, if they provide facilities and service levels similar to rail transit.

- Implementation of a transit-oriented development ordinance would help ensure that investments made in regional transit systems would be continual and that related codes and processes would be supported and utilized to their full extent.

Benefits of a TOD Ordinance include:

- » Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- » Increasing transit ridership
- » Increasing pedestrian access
- » Providing long-term return on investment for landowners
- » Providing easy access to goods and services for families, seniors, and people with disabilities
- » Creating vibrant centers and corridors for pedestrians

- Possible incentives for developers could include the following alternatives, but not limited to:
 - » Fast track development review (expedited review process)
 - » Incentives for constructing multi-unit housing projects with 25 or more units
 - » Prohibiting uses within ¼ mile of existing or proposed bus nodes to enable and promote more pedestrian-oriented development.

Cluster Development

Cluster development is a land development design tool that provides a means of both preserving open space and allowing development to be directed away from natural and agricultural resources considered important for protection. It is often best applied in suburban landscapes with larger undeveloped parcels.

Cluster development regulations are implemented through municipal zoning ordinance, subdivision, and land development ordinance in order to provide applicants with the appropriate design standards in addition to providing municipalities with adequate information on development plans.

- Allow as a permitted use “by right”
- Density incentive
- Possible requirement for subdivisions with parcels larger than a certain amount of acres

Traditional Neighborhood Development Ordinance (TND)

TNDs can involve development of a previously undeveloped area or construction on vacant or undeveloped parcels within an already developed community. Though this method is often driven by the private sector, TNDs are regulated by the zoning, subdivision, and land development ordinances of local governments for those planned growth areas.

Town Center Overlay (TC)

TC Overlay Districts are intended to be developed based on standards consistent with the community character of the surrounding neighborhood. This type of center is to be low-rise in scale not exceeding two stories in height (unless greater height is allowed on an incentive basis) and emphasizes landscaping and pedestrian access.

PUD/PD Planned Development

Conventional ordinances are often to blame for the automobile oriented subdivisions that have taken claim to many landscapes. A planned unit development (PUD) or Planned Development (PD), however, can provide the flexibility needed for a Transit-Oriented Development and, more generally, to encourage innovative site planning and lot design. A PUD allows a local government to control the development of individual tracts of land by specifying the permissible form of development in accordance with the local ordinance. However, care should be taken to protect and preserve natural resource areas during the design and planning process.

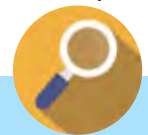
Suburban Retrofit

While suburban locations will always exist in a community's landscape, the principles of urbanism can be introduced to sprawling suburban communities. Retrofitting is simply a reconfiguration of uses and building types to create a more urban environment. The elements of suburban retrofit include:

- Creating a street grid
- Rezoning single use commercial to mixed-use
- Creation of public space
- Developing missing middle housing
- Preservation of wetlands & marsh lands

Adaptive Reuse

While adaptive reuse is commonly associated with historic preservation and structures that are contributing to an architectural period, the term can be used to encompass any structure that is underused, abandoned, vacant, obsolete and/or dilapidated. While adaptive reuse is a tool to conserve energy and waste, it also supports economic development, and enhances community character.



MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING

Missing middle housing describes a range of multi-family or clustered housing types that are compatible in scale with single-family or transitional neighborhoods.

—Optics Design



EXISTING ZONING

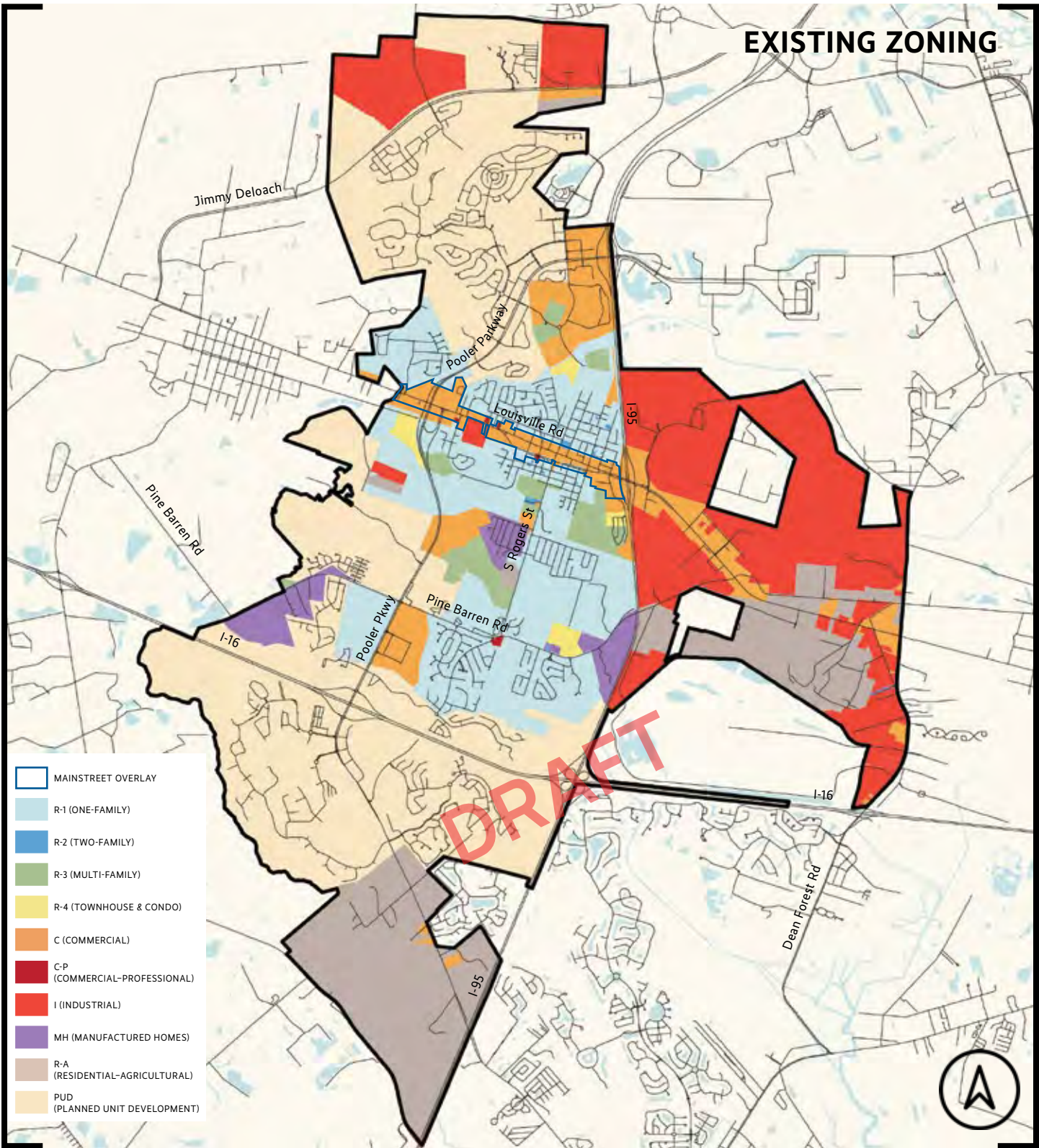
The city of Pooler's Existing Zoning Map is represented in order to classify, regulate and restrict the uses of land, buildings, structures, and other open spaces around buildings. Pooler is divided into districts as follows:

Existing Zoning Classifications, 2018

ZONING CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION
R-1 (A-C)	One-family residential district
R-2 (A-C)	Two-family residential district
R-3 (A-C)	Multi-family residential district
R-4 (A-C)	Townhouses and condominiums district
MH-1	Manufactured home dwelling district
MH-2 (A-B)	Manufactured home dwelling district
MH-3	Manufactured home park district
C-1	Commercial, light district
C-2	Commercial, heavy district
C-P	Commercial-professional district
I-1	Industrial, light district
I-2	Industrial, heavy district
R-A	Residential-agriculture district
RA-1	Residential-agriculture, limited district
RA-2	Residential-agriculture, two-family dwelling district
PUD	Planned Unit Development
Total	

Figure 4.1-Existing Zoning Classifications, Pooler

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Map 4.3-Existing Zoning Classifications, Pooler



CHARACTER AREAS

Character Areas

Character areas are places that may contain a multitude of specific land uses, but share defining characteristics, such as development intensity or topography. Pooler's character areas were developed utilizing the existing 2016 Comprehensive Plan character areas, existing community character, and future growth trends, in an effort to ensure compatible development and responsible future land use patterns.

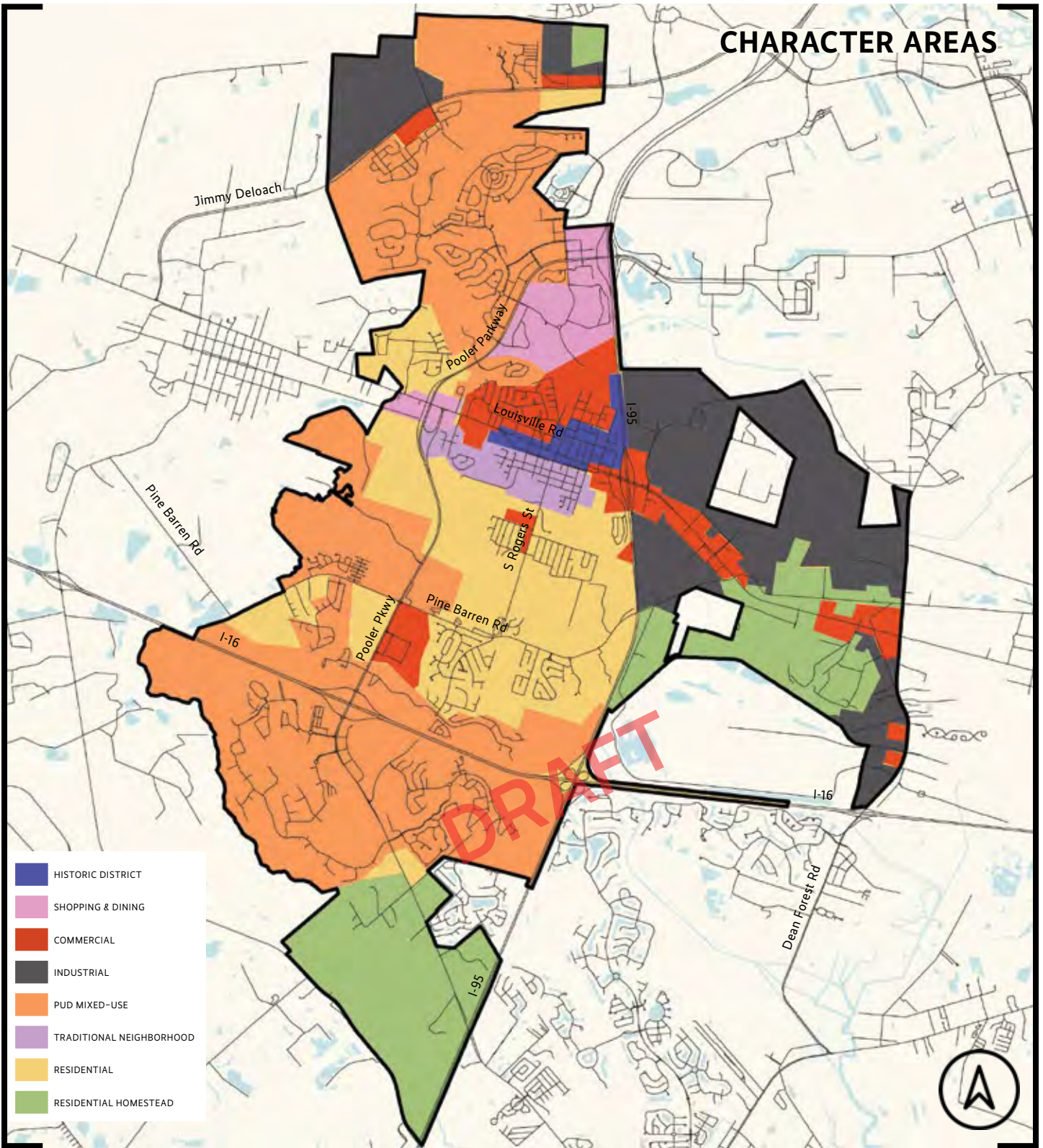
Interpretation of the Character Area Map (CAM) is to be used jointly with the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). The CAM is not intended to represent future zoning; however, it is important that the CAM be considered along with the FLUM, the city's zoning ordinance, and other local policies when decision-makers consider land development questions or requests.

Character Areas Identified

- Historic District
- Shopping & Dining
- Commercial
- Industrial
- PUD Mixed-use
- Traditional Neighborhood
- Residential
- Residential Homestead

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CHARACTER AREAS



Map 4.7-Character Areas, Pooler



HISTORIC DISTRICT

The city of Pooler's historic district is designed to protect the city's historic area from incompatible development. The city finds that its historic district is important to its cultural and economic assets, tourism, and education goals and ultimately public long-term interest.

See Element 8, Historic and Cultural Resources, for more detailed information regarding the establishment of historic preservation efforts in the city of Pooler.

Current Zoning:

R-1-A

Future Zoning Classification:

The city will need to survey current historic areas (as identified in Chapter X) to identify existing historic structures and to determine the best approach for steering future development while preserving and protecting the past. The creation of a conservation overlay district should be explored to provide a review process for the proposed demolition of historic structures and buildings within specific older areas or neighborhoods of the city

Implementation Measures:

- Finalize the boundaries of the area for a comprehensive historic resources survey and create a timeline for surveying those areas
- Enact protection strategies such as a conservation overlay district and/or procedures, standards, and guidelines for all new construction, building additions, and material changes within this district

SHOPPING & DINING

The purpose of the shopping and dining character area is to retain existing commercial uses and to provide for establishments catering to the lodging, dining, shopping, and service needs of residents and tourists.

Current Zoning:

C-1, C-2

Future Zoning Classification:

The land within the shopping and dining district is generally zoned for heavy or light commercial use. The city will need to evaluate current development trends, demand for property, and traffic impacts to determine the best approach for managing future development in these areas to ensure the areas remain a pleasurable destination residents and tourists want to visit.

Implementation Measures:

- Modify and allow flexibility for the parking ratio currently required for commercial development
- Establish maximum parking requirements versus minimum parking requirements
- Develop standards for overflow parking
- Develop access management standards for parking lots along main corridors to eliminate excessive curb cuts, etc.

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COMMERCIAL

This character area is applied to land that is, or should be, developed for general commercial purposes, as well as institutional and professional services. Pooler has a strategic location that will attract commercial businesses because of its proximity to the interstate. The commercial character area is established to enhance the quality and compatibility of development, to encourage the most appropriate use of land, and to promote safe and efficient movement of traffic.

Current Zoning:

C-1, C-2

Future Zoning Classification:

Most of the land located within this character area is zoned for commercial use. However, the city will need to evaluate current development trends and the demand for property to determine the best approach for managing future development in these areas to ensure issues such as traffic congestion and road network capacity are properly planned for.

Implementation Measures:

- Increase existing commercial retention and expansion rates
- Ensure allowed uses reflect the needs of the local market and are compatible with nearby residential neighborhoods
- Promote revitalization efforts to enhance job creation and location of businesses and offices within Pooler
- Incorporate current and future needs for housing, infrastructure, and natural resource protection into economic development initiatives
- Ensure road edges are clearly defined by locating buildings closer to the roadside with parking in the rear or at the side

INDUSTRIAL

The industrial character area identifies areas where industrial uses should be protected from an inappropriate level of unrelated uses and where activity should improve or accommodate a wider range of employment opportunities.

Current Zoning:

C-2, I-1, I-2

Future Zoning Classification:

Almost all of the land within the industrial character area is already zoned for industrial use. The biggest challenge the city will face with regard to industrial use is buffering such uses from neighboring residential uses.

Implementation Measures:

- Enhance workforce development by collaborating with business, industry, and planning of educational entities that provide necessary workforce skills
- Employ a strategy for industrial land use wherever economically and environmentally feasible, using industrial performance standards to integrate related industries while protecting neighboring uses
- Utilize commercial and office infill as a buffer between residential and industrial uses

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PUD/MIXED-USE

The PUD/Mixed-use character area is established to promote projects that integrate different land uses, such as retail stores, restaurants, residences, civic buildings, offices, and parks within a defined area. Mixed-use developments by definition have a minimum of three separate types of uses included in the development. PUD/mixed-use projects should aim to provide services equitably throughout the community.

Current Zoning:

PUD

Future Zoning Classification:

Amendments to the existing zoning ordinance and PUD zoning district would be required to ensure that future development in the PUD character area consists of a minimum of three separate types of uses. Additionally, the city should explore the creation of an overlay district along redevelopment corridors to ensure a consistent and connected form of development.

Implementation Measures:

- Encourage residential development and commercial uses that complement each other and create a live/work environment
- Allow for varied residential densities and housing types
- Encourage commercial uses that include a mix of retail, services, and offices to serve neighborhood residents' day-to-day needs, and match the character of the neighborhood
- Ensure mixed-use area design is very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses
- Encourage connectivity throughout the city by connecting pedestrian-accessible areas within and outside the boundaries of the PUD
- Create an overlay district along redevelopment corridors to facilitate consistent form of development

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD

Traditional communities are characterized by mixed land uses, grid street patterns, pedestrian circulation, intensively-used open spaces, architectural character, and a sense of community. Homes in this character area are primarily early and mid-twentieth century single-family homes. Existing housing stock, older homes in particular, should be preserved and improved. Underutilized or vacant sites could be candidates for infill or redevelopment, which should be of a compatible scale and character with the surrounding neighborhood.

Current Zoning:

R-1, R-3

Future Zoning Classification:

While this activity will continue to occur in appropriate land use areas, the city should explore the creation of an overlay district and/or design standards to ensure the protection of historic structures and appropriate infill development.

Implementation Measures:

- Encourage the continuation of the street grid pattern
- Ensure that infill development and redevelopment are consistent with the traditional architectural and design style.
- Identify and protect historic structures
- Continue to enforce residential property maintenance standards
- Require the continuation of existing sidewalk networks in new development
- Identify and seek funding for the implementation of streetscape improvements to improve the pedestrian environment
- Evaluate the city's tree protection ordinance to ensure the canopy is preserved citywide

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RESIDENTIAL

Residential character areas are characterized by grid street patterns, pedestrian circulation, architectural character, and a sense of community.

Current Zoning:

R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-A, M-H

Future Zoning Classification:

Amendments to the existing zoning ordinance would be required.

Implementation Measures:

- Increase existing commercial retention and expansion rates
- Ensure allowed uses should reflect the needs of the local market and are compatible with nearby residential neighborhoods
- Promote revitalization efforts to enhance job creation and location of businesses and offices within Pooler
- Incorporate current and future needs for housing, infrastructure, and natural resource protection into economic development initiatives
- Ensure road edges should be clearly defined by locating buildings closer to the roadside with parking in the rear or at the side

RESIDENTIAL HOMESTEAD

Pooler's residential homestead character area is designed for large tracts of land upon which a large home or estate can be built. The residential homestead allows for various large housing types and residential amenities. New developments should have access to adequate educational facilities, as well as active and passive recreational opportunities.

Current Zoning:

R-A, I-1

Future Zoning Classification:

Amendments to the existing zoning ordinance would be required.

Implementation Measures:

- Promote developments that have strong walkable connections within and between neighborhoods
- Encourage roadway activity and connectivity
- Allow for smaller local roads and associated rights-of-ways
- Allow for appropriate neighborhood mixed uses within planned developments to provide a destination for pedestrians and to minimize the need for long trips



FUTURE LAND USE

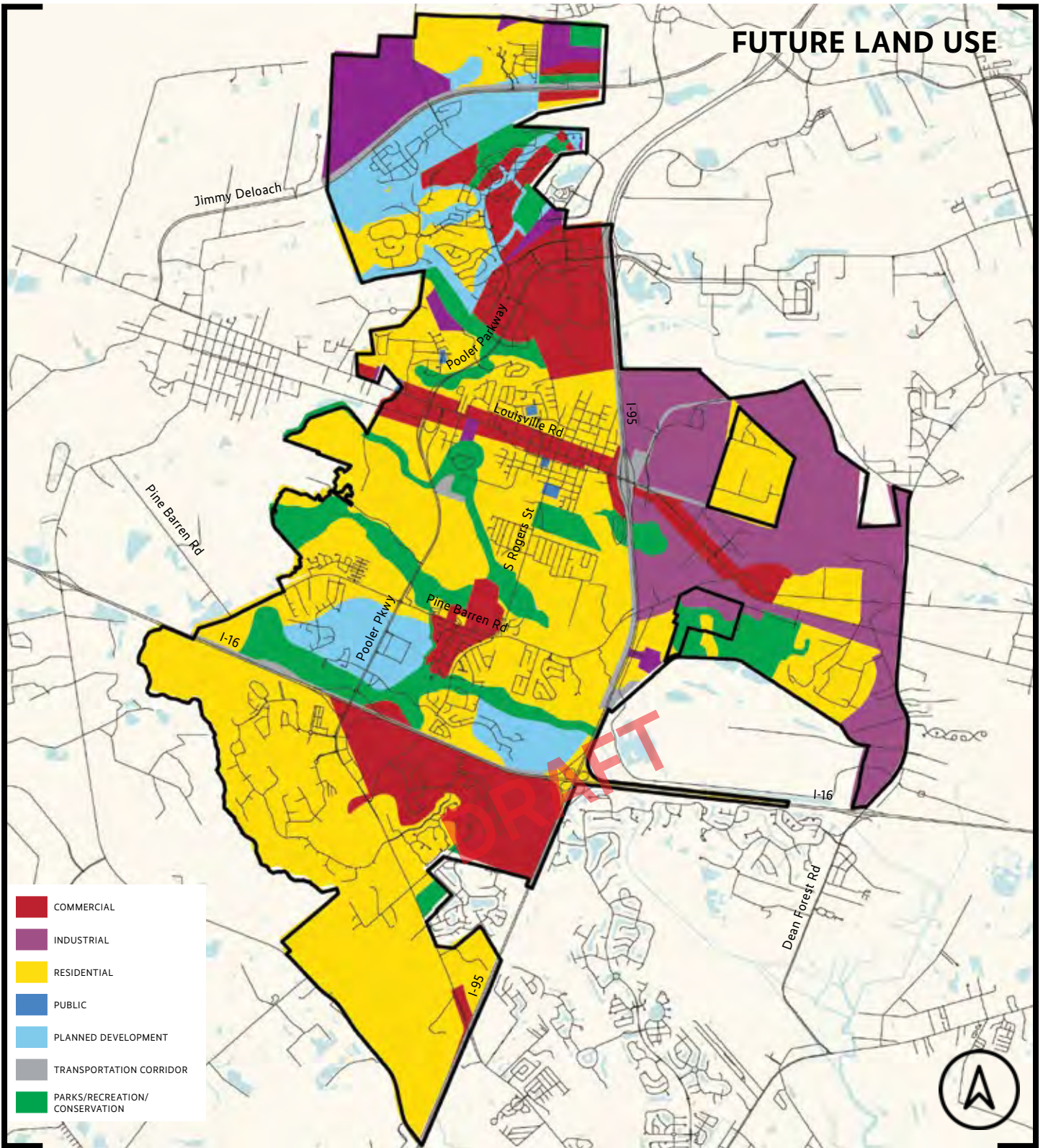
Plan 2040 sets a vision for the community and its future land use decisions. This element includes a FLUM and a CAM to present information, strategies, and recommendations to guide future land use policy and decisions. The FLUM and the CAM envision future land uses with an attention to the interconnected elements of community character, development patterns, transportation infrastructure, equity, and natural resources.

The FLUM provides direction for zoning decisions through specific land use categories for the city of Pooler. The CAM identifies the character vision for all of Chatham County. In combination with one another, the FLUM and the CAM are intended to guide the character and direction of land use decisions in the city with the goal of furthering consistent character.

The city of Pooler's future land use patterns are shown on the FLUM. The FLUM displays color-coded as well as overlay categories to visually represent land use categories to be used as a guide for future zoning and development policy decisions. Interpretation of the FLUM should be considered along with all zoning requests, local policy reviews, and conclusions when policymakers consider land development questions or requests.

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FUTURE LAND USE



Map 4.13-Future Land Use, Pooler



LAND USE CATEGORIES

CHARACTER ZONE		
MAP COLOR		
LAND USE	Commercial	Industrial
DEFINITION	<p>This district is defined as an area designated for the development of commercial properties with land uses of less than two acres. This district consists of lands and structures used primarily for the retailing of goods and the furnishing of services. Regulations within this district are intended to permit and encourage full development of the necessary uses while at the same time protecting nearby residential properties from the possible adverse effects of the commercial activity.</p>	<p>This district is established to provide land for industrial uses that are not significantly objectionable with regard to noise, odor, fumes, etc., to surrounding properties. This district's regulations are designed to provide a compatible environment for uses generally classified as industrial in nature; to protect and reserve undeveloped areas within the city that are suitable for such industries; and to discourage encroachment by residential, commercial, or other uses that may adversely affect the industrial character of the district. Lands within this district should be located in relation to the major thoroughfare network of the city, as well as rail and airport if possible, and designed so that uses within the district do not disrupt normal traffic flow patterns within the city. Planned industrial parks are encouraged within this district.</p>
USES	Light Commercial, Heavy Commercial, Commercial Professional	Light Industry, Heavy Industrial
CHARACTER ZONE		
MAP COLOR		
LAND USE	Residential	Public
DEFINITION	<p>The predominant use of land within the residential category is for single-family, multi-family, townhome, condominiums, manufactured homes, and manufactured home park district dwelling units organized into general categories of net densities.</p>	<p>This category includes certain state, federal or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc. Examples of institutional land uses include colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals, etc. This category does not include facilities that are publicly owned, but would be classified more accurately in another land use category. For example, include publicly owned parks and/or recreational facilities in the park/recreation/conservation category; include landfills in the industrial category; and include general office buildings containing government offices in the commercial category.</p>
USES	One-Family, Two-Family, Multi-Family, Townhouse & Condominiums, Manufactured Homes, Residential Agricultural	Public/Institutional

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CHARACTER ZONE		
MAP COLOR		
LAND USE	Planned Development	Transportation Corridor
DEFINITION	The purpose of the PUD district is to encourage flexibility in land planning that will result in improved design, character, and quality of new mixed-use developments; to promote the most appropriate use of land; to facilitate the provision of streets and utilities; and to preserve the natural and scenic features and open space.	This category includes such uses as major transportation routes, public transit stations, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, airports, port facilities or other similar uses.
USES	Planned Developments	Transportation/Communications/Utilities, Right-of-Ways
CHARACTER ZONE		
MAP COLOR		
USE	Green Infrastructure/Park/Recreation/Conservation	
DEFINITION	This category is for land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers or similar uses.	
USES	Recreation Active	



TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

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TRANSPORTATION

Introduction

The Transportation Element of Plan 2040 draws from the Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO)'s Total Mobility 2045 Plan to identify transportation-related issues and opportunities for quality growth. Pooler is a member of the CORE MPO, which is the entity responsible for transportation planning in the region.

As Pooler continues to grow in terms of population and employment, strategic transportation investments will be needed to handle and manage the additional traffic and congestion pouring into the city. While investments into the city's roadway infrastructure are necessary to increase capacity for vehicular users, other forms of infrastructure investment should be considered, including bike lanes, walking paths, and sidewalks, as well as bus service to create additional opportunities for connectivity to the region.

TRANSPORTATION CONDITIONS & TRENDS

Chatham County has long served as the regional center for Coastal Georgia and the Lowcountry of South Carolina for employment, shopping and recreation. In addition to serving as the regional center for residents, Savannah, with its Historic Landmark District, is host to over 14.8 million visitors each year spending \$3.1 billion and has become one of the top tourist destinations, both nationally and internationally, according to Longwoods Travel USA Study via Visit Savannah.

Chatham County is also home to the Port of Savannah, which is the largest and fastest growing single-operator container terminal in North America and the fourth largest in total volume, according to the Georgia Ports Authority (GPA).

The port is a major economic engine for the region, as well as the State of Georgia. The CORE MPO region is also home to a number of other regional employment centers, including medical, military and educational institutions, port-related industries and manufacturing centers.

An efficient transportation system that effectively provides for the movement of people and goods is critical to the continued economic vitality of the region and the State.



METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

A Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), is a long-range planning document that sets future goals and identifies transportation deficiencies, strategies, and projects over the next two decades.

—CORE MPO

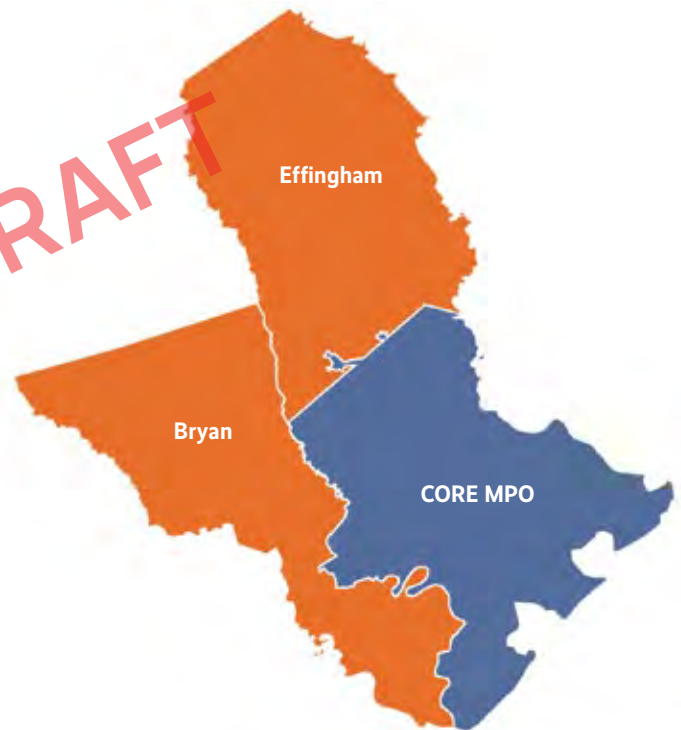


Figure 5.1—CORE MPO Boundary

Coastal Region MPO

The boundaries of the CORE MPO are smaller and fall within the larger Savannah MSA. The CORE MPO is a transportation policy-making and planning body with representatives of elected and transportation authorities from Chatham County and its municipalities, Bryan County, Effingham County and executives from local, state and federal agencies.

The CORE MPO is comprised of a policy board known as the Executive Board and four advisory committees including the Technical Coordinating committee (TCC), the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT) and the Economic Development and Freight Advisory Committee (EDFAC).

CORE MPO Statistics

Total Population in MPO*

276,406

Land Area (Square Miles)*

651

Year Established*

1983

*Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Database



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), is responsible for developing a regional transportation vision, direct planning and implementation of projects, allocated federal funds, and gather input from the public and stakeholders.

—Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

The CORE MPO follows the 3-C planning process of transportation: comprehensive, continuing, and cooperative. Through this planning process, the MPO coordinates policies, corridor studies, and plans such as the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Pooler, being within the CORE MPO planning boundary, will also be subject to the long-term transportation development outlined in the MTP.

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TRAVEL CHARACTERISTICS

Regional Commuting Patterns

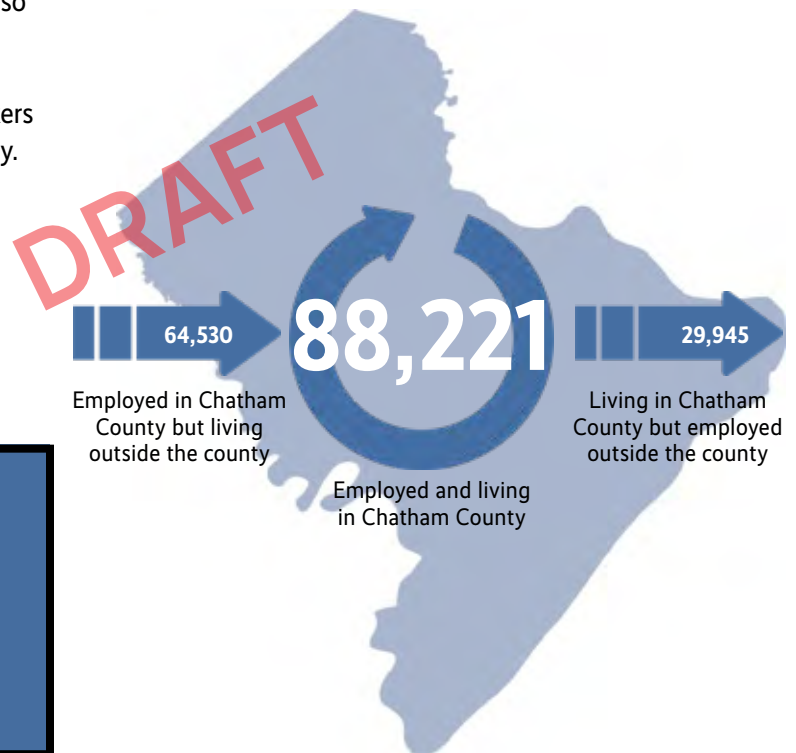
Chatham County and the city of Pooler are regional hubs for employment, shopping, recreation, medical and educational institutions, and other economic generators. Many residents of neighboring counties commute into Chatham County for work each day, greatly impacting the traffic patterns and overall efficiency of the transportation network.

The neighboring counties of Bryan and Effingham both have over 64% of their residents commuting outside the county for work each day, and 72% of Richmond Hill residents travel outside Bryan County for work. Other nearby counties also experience a significant out-commuting pattern. Liberty County has 18.6% and Bulloch County has 24% of their population working outside their county, and those workers have a typical commute time of about one hour each way.

Commuting Patterns

	Work in County of Residence	Work Outside County of Residence
Chatham County	92.2%	4.9%
Savannah	94.1%	3.6%
Richmond Hill	26.2%	72.1%
Bryan County	27.5%	69.7%
Effingham County	31.1%	64.4%

Figure 5.1—Regional Commuting Characteristics
U.S. Census Bureau: 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Map 5.1—Regional Commuting Pattern Flow, 2014–2018
U.S. Census Bureau: 2014–2018 American Community Survey

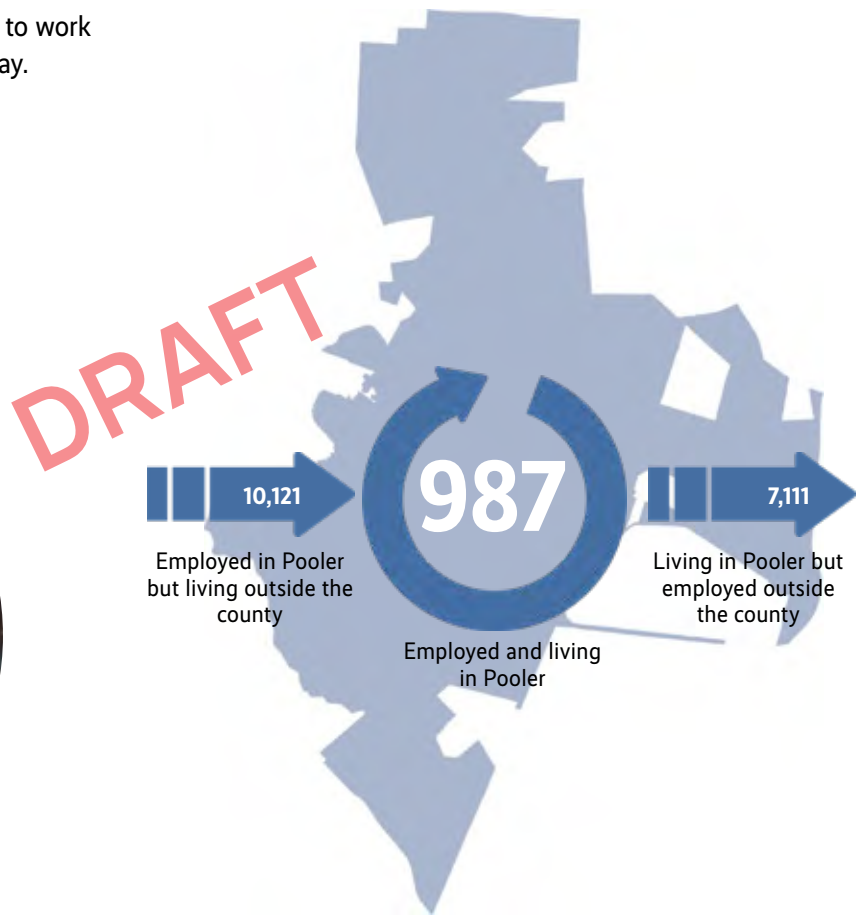
COMMUTING PATTERN

A commuting pattern is made up of journey to work and refers to groups of workers in a region, and the distances and directions they travel from home to work.

—Census Bureau

Local Commuting Patterns

Many local residents commute into the city of Pooler for both employment and leisure. Over 90% of people employed in Pooler live outside of the county, while 80% of people living in Pooler commute outside the city for employment. The high amount of commuting in and out of the city is evidenced by the high volume of traffic that congests Pooler's roadways. Roughly, a typical commute time to work for Pooler residents is more than 20 minutes each way.



Map 5.2—Local Commuting Pattern Flow, 2014–2018
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics



Commute Mode Share

The proportion of travelers using a given method of transportation is called the "mode share" or the "mode split." Mode share is influenced by the types of facilities or services that have been emphasized in the past (i.e., provision of more and wider roadways and "free" parking, rather than transit service, bikeways, or sidewalks).

Data that is available from the U.S. Census Bureau regarding the various ways people choose to travel (e.g., driving, taking transit, walking, etc.) focuses on the trips to and from work, as this is one of the most predictable trip purposes. The picture of travel activity implied by this data is also limited by the fact that trips involving multiple modes are counted under whichever mode was used for most of the trip distance (e.g., a commute involving a short bicycle trip to and from the bus stop and longer ride on the bus is counted only as a bus commute).

As captured in Figure 5.2, most work trips in Pooler are by automobile, as is the case for the state and country overall. Workers living within Pooler are less likely to use alternatives to driving alone, because there is no transit service coverage available in the city. Pooler is a growing city and becoming a larger player in the region for employment, shopping, and recreation; to help balance out this growth pressure, alternative means of transportation need to be considered.

According to American Community Survey estimates for 2014–2018, shown in Figure 5.2, 90% of workers living in Pooler drove alone to work and 78.5% of the workers in Chatham County drove alone to work, compared to 79.5% statewide and 76.4% nationally. About 85% of workers in Effingham County and Richmond Hill drove alone to work. In addition to having a higher percentage of workers commuting alone than neighboring communities, the state, and the U.S., Pooler also exhibits an extremely low percentage of walking (0.2%) and other means of travel to work (0.5%).

It is important to note that today's observed travel behavior does not necessarily reflect the choices people would make if different transportation options were available and at a level to make them safe and feasible.

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MODE SHARE

Mode Share (also called mode split, modes-share, or modal split) is the percentage of travelers using a particular type of transportation or number of trips using said trip.

—CORE MPO

Transportation policy, funding, and design decisions in support of automobile travel initially created great gains in mobility, most notably for the middle and upper classes. These trends have also resulted in some unintended, negative consequences for individuals and society, such as pollution, contributions to the atmospheric greenhouse effect, contributions to obesity, damage to the natural environment and to community social fabric, as well as a high cost for individuals to enter fully into the normal activities of society (i.e., the need to buy a car to reliably get to a job).

In other words, although most people in the region today go everywhere by private automobile, there are good reasons to encourage interest in other modes within the community.

Most People in Pooler drive alone to work, with only 10% of people carpooling, walking, biking, or telecommuting for their commute.

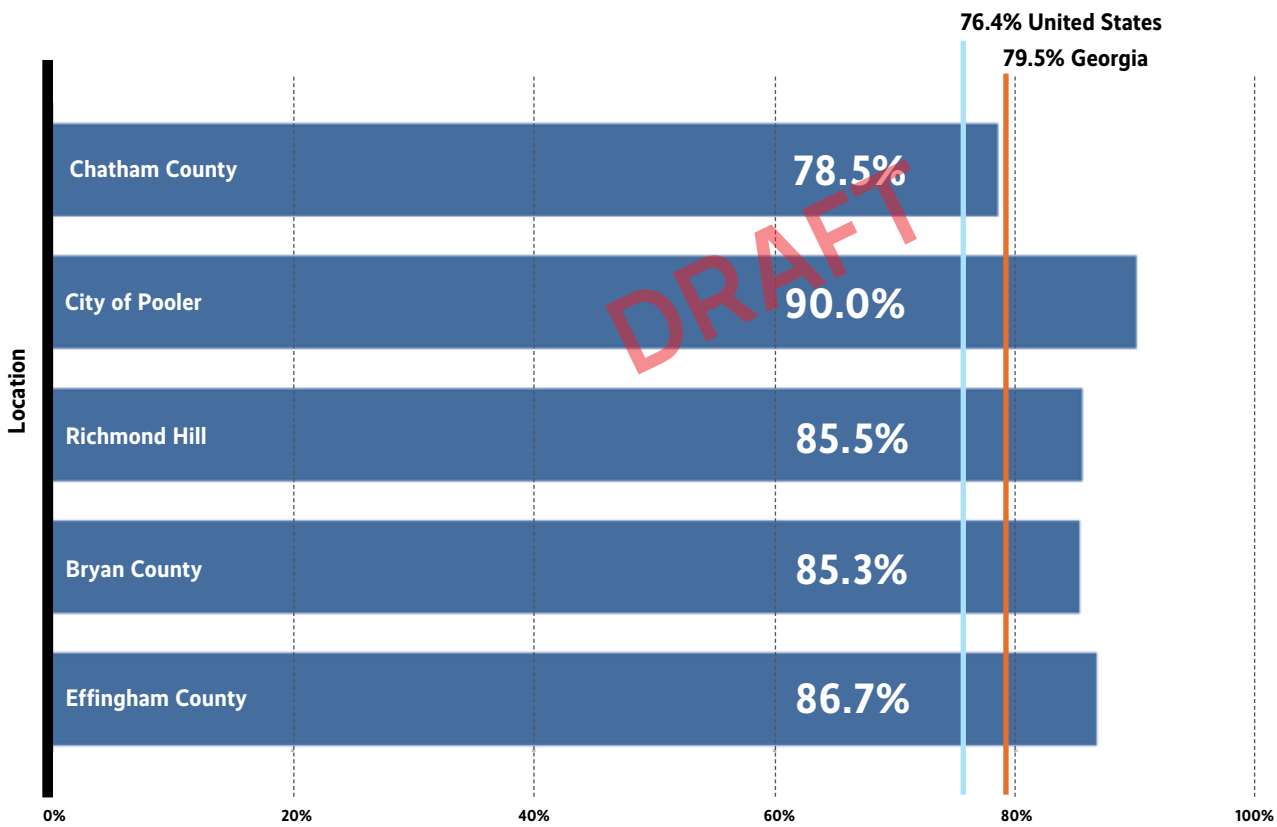


Figure 5.2—Percent of Commuters Who Drive Alone to Work
 U.S. Census Bureau: 2014–2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is a multi-modal plan that is based on the socio-economic development of the Savannah region and is intended to provide efficient transportation services to all the residents in this area. Its multi-modal approach incorporates highway development, transit service, bike/pedestrian improvements, and other related transportation investments.

The MTP identifies the vision, goals and objectives, strategies and projects that promote mobility for both people and goods. The MTP is updated every five years, at which time the MPO reviews, revises, and recalibrates the travel demand model with updated demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. Updating the plan also allows for the MPO to incorporate results of any new or ongoing studies and any changes to federal regulations and guidance. The CORE MPO has recently prepared an update of its MTP called Mobility 2045.

Mobility 2045

The CORE MPO recently prepared an update of its MTP called Mobility 2045. The Mobility 2045 Plan emphasizes a multi-modal performance-based approach to transportation planning to meet the travel demands over the next 26 years, while taking into consideration regional goals and financial capacity. Traditional transportation planning has focused on how quickly and efficiently vehicles can move from point to point. This approach typically has not considered the impacts on and relationships to land use, community character, and the quality of life.

The CORE MPO is committed to wisely investing in the transportation network to address the growth of the area while enhancing mobility for people and goods and ensuring a sustainable future. This commitment is incorporated in Mobility 2045 through a diverse and wide-ranging process, including an assessment of transportation needs in coordination with the future regional growth and anticipated future trends.

Mobility 2045 Goals

The overall goal of the Mobility 2045 Plan is to continue moving the planning process beyond a singular focus on moving motor vehicles and consider transportation issues from a comprehensive perspective that incorporates community values, needs, land use, and modal alternatives.

The Mobility 2045 Plan considers transportation issues from a comprehensive perspective that incorporates community values, needs, land use, and modal alternatives.

Mobility 2045 goals and objectives are targeted to ensure that the transportation system helps the region attain its overall vision for the future. Through public involvement, stakeholders and citizens helped identify these goals and objectives, which provide the framework for the provision of a safe, secure, and efficient, multimodal transportation network that meets the mobility needs of both people and freight (Figure 5.3).



Figure 5.3–Mobility 2045 Goals

TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT

Mobility 2045 provides a financially balanced list of projects where project costs must not exceed the \$1.8 billion anticipated funding for the 25+ year planning period.

Federal funds provide the largest share of funding for transportation improvements in the CORE MPO Metropolitan Planning Area, followed by state funds. State funds mostly come from Georgia's motor fuel tax and House Bill 170 funds. Transportation funds are also generated by local sources. The local revenues come from local governments' general funds, Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST), transit sales tax, transit fare box receipts, and transit district tax.

It is estimated there will be approximately \$1.8 billion available in highway funds and \$221 million in transit funds over the life of the plan. Projects totaling over \$670 million are currently under development and will continue to move forward with Mobility 2045, leaving approximately \$1.1 billion (of the \$1.8 billion) to fund new projects.

Projects identified as "needs" but not included in Mobility 2045 are incorporated into the Vision Project List, an unfunded project list. Subsequent plan updates will utilize the Vision Plan for projects to include when funds become available.



Total Funding Based on Project Type

Highway (\$1.1 B)

- Roadway Widening (\$470)
- Interchanges (\$417.5)
- New Roadway (\$155.3)

Preservation, Maintenance & Opt (\$553 M)

- Maintenance (\$232)
- Operations & Road Improvements (\$161)
- Bridges (\$160)

Non-Highway (\$262 M)

- Transit Priority Projects (FHWA & FTA Funds) (\$240)
- Non-Motorized (\$22.4)

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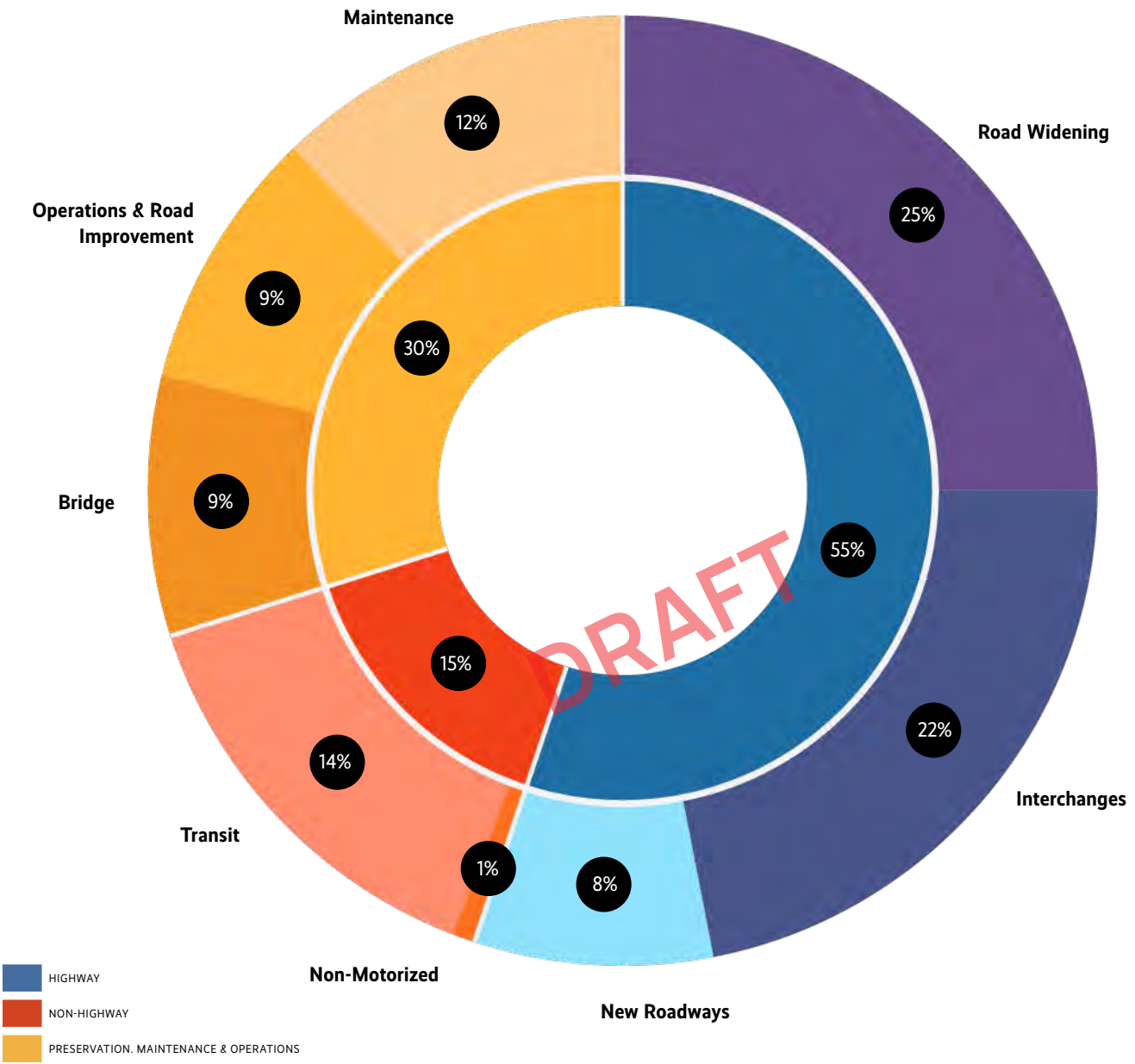


Figure 5.4—Funding for Transportation Projects
Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO)



ROAD NETWORKS

The Savannah Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) encompasses Bryan, Chatham, and Effingham Counties and has a total of more than 2,490 miles of roadways. These roadways are categorized by their use and the amount of traffic carried. These categories, as defined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), are described on the facing page. Roadways in the region serve multiple purposes and accommodate different types of travel. Roadways range from local streets, which are designed for direct access to homes and businesses, to interstate highways, which are primarily for mobility and long distance travel.

Map 5.3 depicts the functional classification of the roadway network in the Savannah MSA while Figure 5.6 shows the roadway miles by functional class. Local roads make up almost 70% of the total miles in the area. Collectors make up about 12.7% of the total roadway miles.

The interstates, freeway and arterials, though comprising only 17.28% of the total roadway mileage, carry most of the traffic. The interstates, freeways and principal arterials (about 9.49% of the total roadway mileage) also carry most of the freight traffic in the area.

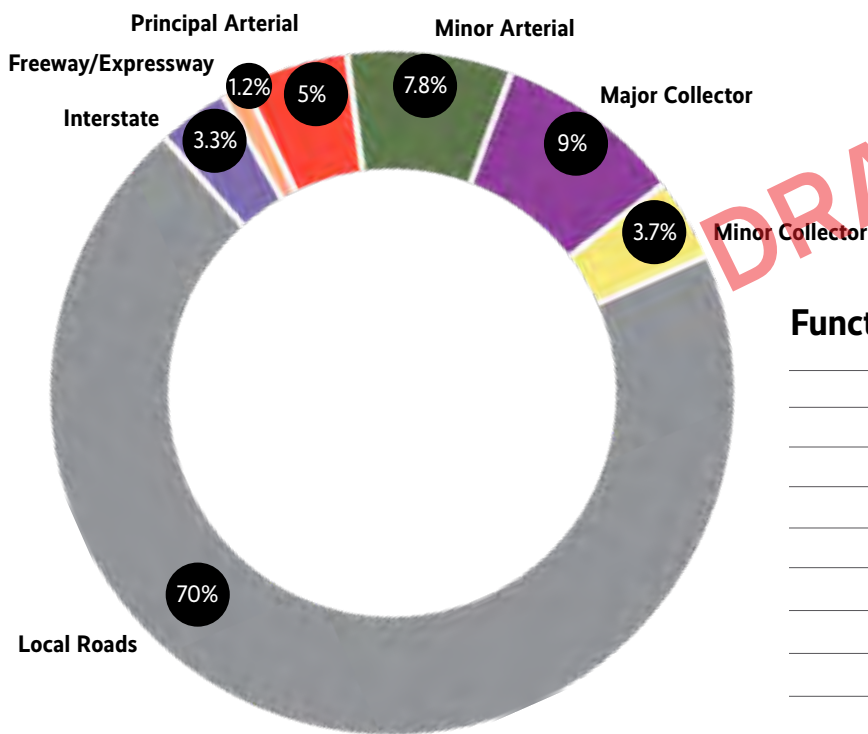


Figure 5.5—Percentage of Roadway in Region by Functional Classification
Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO)

Functional Classification

Functional Classification	Miles
Interstate	97.52
Freeway/Expressway	34.06
Principal Arterial	147.27
Minor Arterial	229.14
Major Collector	263.29
Minor Collector	108.83
Local Roads	2060.44
Total	2940.55

Figure 5.6—Miles of Roadway in Region, by Functional Classification
Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO)

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DEFINING OUR ROADWAY NETWORK

Interstate/Freeway

Roads that are fully accessed controlled and are designed to carry large amount of traffic at a high rate of speed; Examples include roadways such as I-16 and Harry Truman Parkway.

Arterials

Roads that are designed to carry large amounts of traffic at a relatively high speed, often over longer distances. Often some degree of access management is incorporated; Examples of arterials include Islands Expressway, SR 204 and U.S. 80.

Collectors

Roads that are designed to carry less traffic at lower levels of speed for shorter distances. These roadways typically “collect” traffic from the local roadways and provide access to arterials. Examples of collectors include Habersham Street, LaRoche Avenue; and Old Louisville Road.

Local Roadways

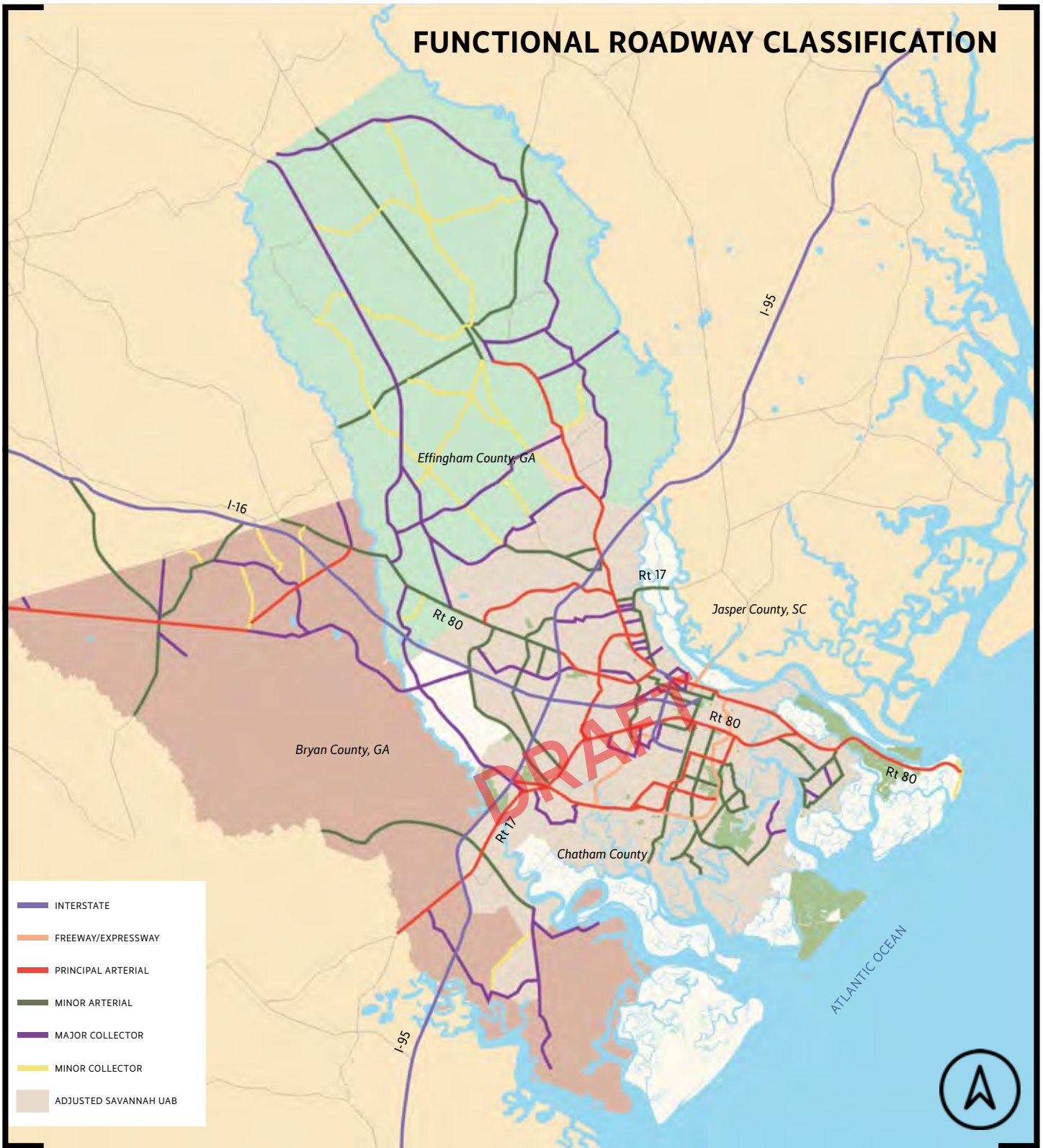
Local roadways are those not otherwise classified and tend to serve short, local trips or connect with the collectors to access the broader roadway network.

—CORE MPO

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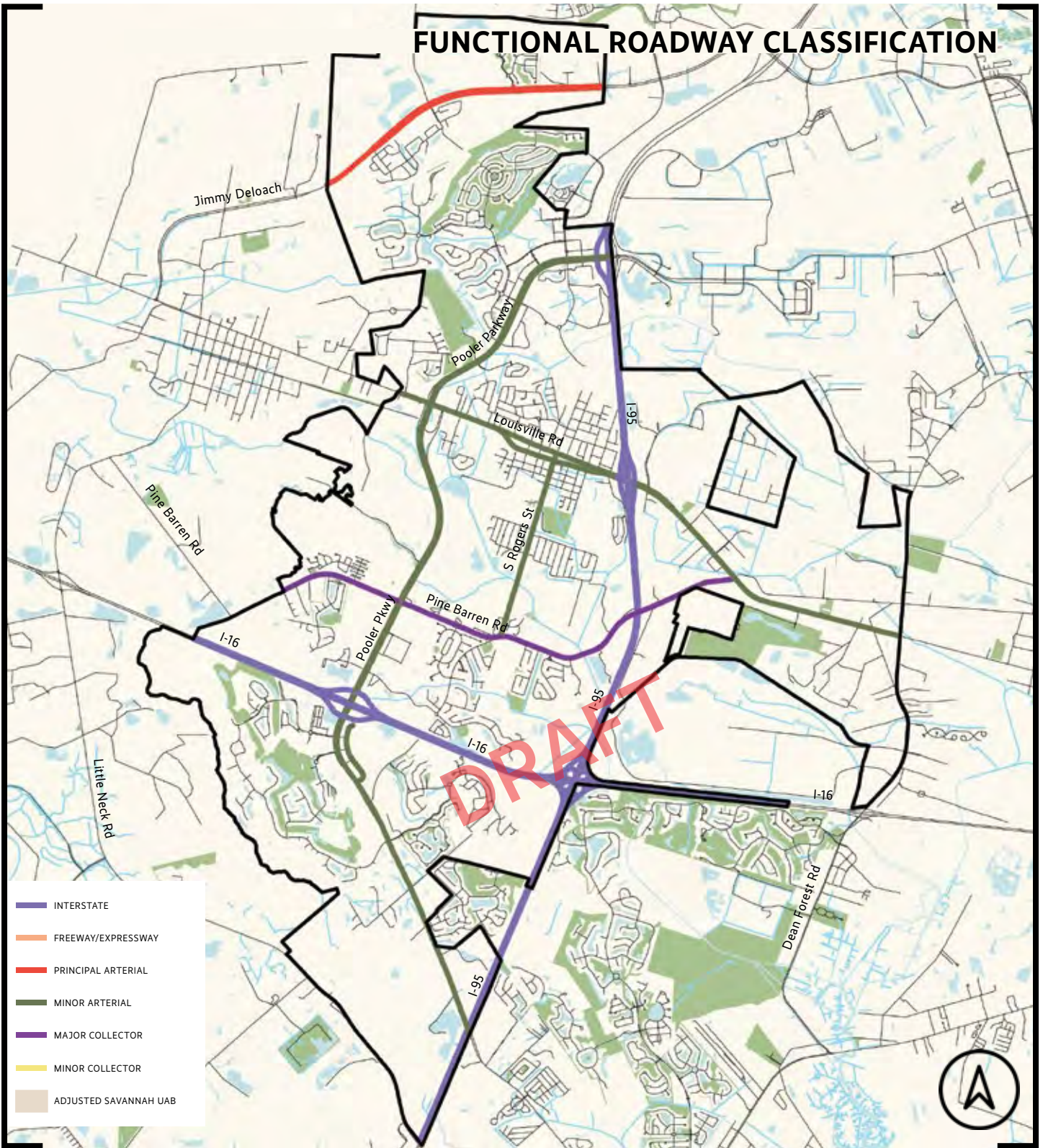


FUNCTIONAL ROADWAY CLASSIFICATION



Map 5.3-Savannah MSA Functional Roadway Classification, Savannah MSA
Georgia Department of Transportation, 2015

FUNCTIONAL ROADWAY CLASSIFICATION



Map 5.4—Functional Roadway Classification, Pooler
 Georgia Department of Transportation, 2015



Bridges

Due to the geography of the Savannah region, it is important to have a good understanding of bridge conditions. This consideration will be necessary for safety, congestion and freight movements performance measures. Map 5.6 shows an inventory and conditions of the bridges in the area.

A bridge with fatigue damage may restrict what vehicle types and weights may cross it safely. A bridge with a “posted for load” posting has a weight limit capacity. All (SD) bridges are posted, but not all posted structures are (SD). A bridge is “load posted” when its capacity to carry heavy loads is diminished. The status of these bridges are described as acceptable or structurally deficient (SD).

As shown by Map 5.6, there are currently no bridges in Pooler labeled structurally deficient.

LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION?

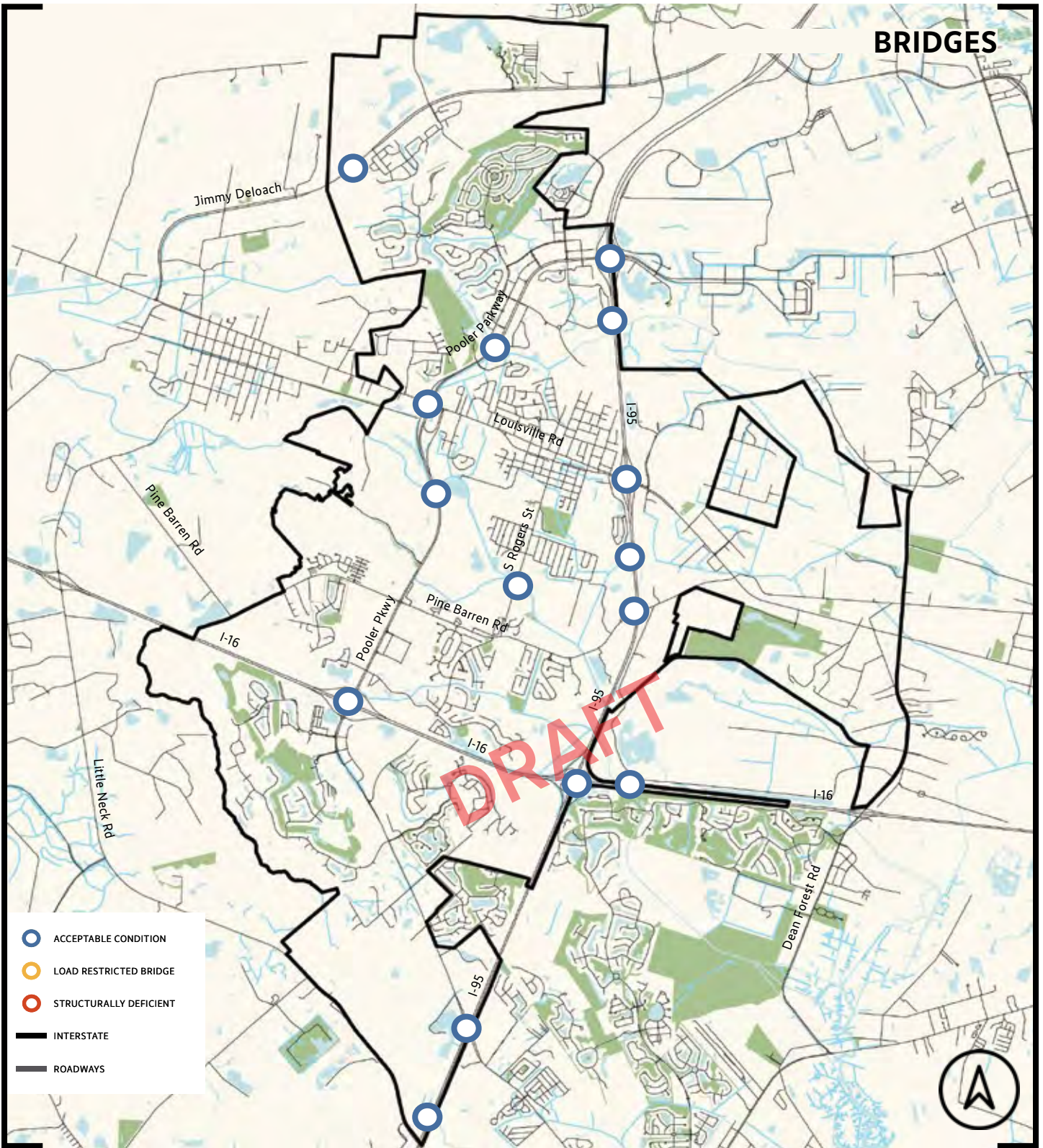
More information on bridges can be found in the U.S. 80 Bridges Study.

See...

<https://www.thempc.org/Core/Studies>

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BRIDGES



Map 5.6—Bridge Locations and Conditions, Pooler
Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO)



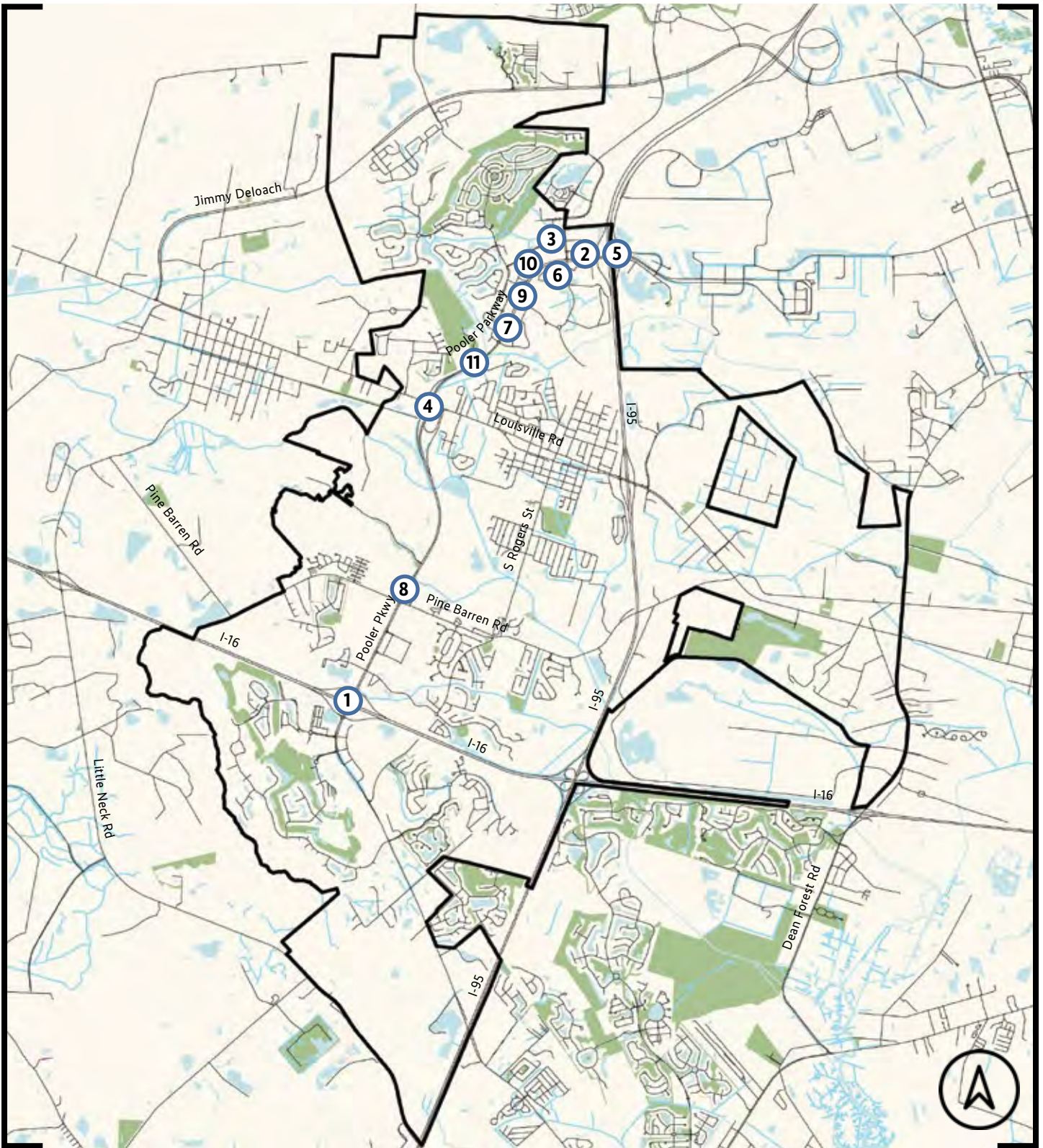
VEHICULAR ACCIDENTS

According to Pooler Police data from 2014–2019, vehicle wrecks have increased year after year. According to data, from January 1, 2014 to September 24, 2019, there were 2,541 vehicle wrecks.

This information reveals a major need for alternative solutions to accommodating traffic and congestion on Pooler's roadways. While public safety is most often a reactive measure to an issue, solving the issue of traffic and, in turn, traffic accidents will require a proactive approach in which Pooler rethinks its roadway design, transportation planning, and land use.

	Intersection	Vehicular Wrecks
1	Pooler Parkway & I-16	525
2	Pooler Parkway & Mill Creek Circle	260
3	Pooler Parkway & Benton Boulevard	256
4	Pooler Parkway and US 80	236
5	Pooler Parkway & I-95	177
6	Pooler Parkway & Tanger Outlets Boulevard	170
7	Pooler Parkway & Godley Station Boulevard	126
8	Pooler Parkway & Pine Barren Road	104
9	Pooler Parkway & Park Avenue	89
10	Pooler Parkway & Maxwell Drive	52
11	Pooler Parkway & Issac G. Laroche Drive	35
	Vehicular Wrecks with No Intersections	511

Figure 5.7—Major Vehicular Wrecks by Roadway Intersection, 2014–2019
City of Pooler Police Department



Map 5.7-Vehicular Wrecks by Roadway Intersection, 2014-2019
 City of Pooler Police Department



TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

As required by federal laws 23 USC 134 (i)(5) and 49 USC 5305(e), each MPO must develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). A TIP is essentially a list of upcoming transportation projects, covering a period of at least four years. The list below consists of programmed and conceptual infrastructure projects in the city of Pooler.

Additional Projects

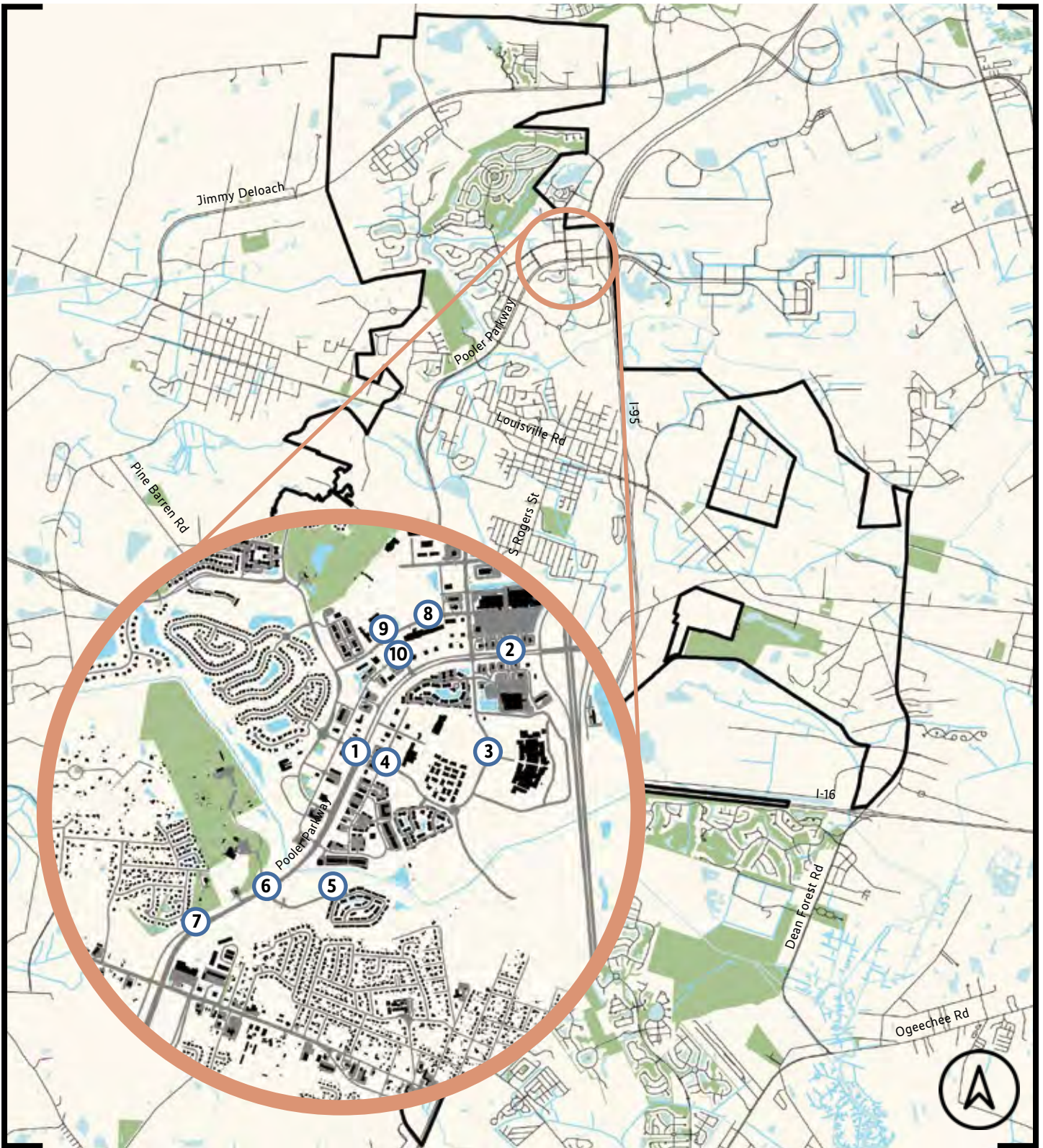
	Project	Investment
1	Dual Left Lanes on Park Avenue at Pooler Parkway	\$800,000
2	I-95 to Benton Boulevard	\$5,300,000
3	Roundabout at Tanger Outlets Boulevard and Tanger Outlets Main Entrance	\$2,000,000
4	Roundabout at Park Avenue and Canal Street	\$1,550,000
5	Extension of Durham Park Boulevard from Pooler Parkway	\$440,000
6	Intersection Improvements at Pooler Parkway and Durham Park Boulevard Road Extension	\$4,300,000
7	US 80 Road Connection with two Mini Roundabouts	\$4,300,000
8	Closing Median Breaks Along Town Center Boulevard	\$3,100,000* (8–10)
9	Town Center Boulevard and Maxwell Drive	TBD
10	Maxwell Drive and Traders Way (Mini)	TBD

Figure 5.8–Additional Transportation Improvement Projects
Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO)

Conceptual Infrastructure Projects

Project
Parkway at Benton Boulevard and Tanger Outlet East to Bridge at I-95
Dual Turn Lanes from Park Avenue
I-95 and US Highway 80
Sangrena and US Highway 80
Mosaic Circle Street System Modification at Blue Moon Crossing & Westbrook Lane

Figure 5.9–Conceptual Infrastructure Projects
Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO)



Map 5.8—Transportation Improvement Projects (TIP), Pooler
Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO)

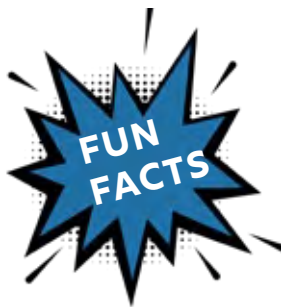


INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION

Port of Savannah

Chatham County has two modern, deepwater terminals on the Savannah River that are collectively known as the Port of Savannah: Garden City Terminal and Ocean Terminal. Both facilities are run by the Georgia Ports Authority (GPA), which is a state-level quasi-governmental organization. The Port of Savannah is the largest single container terminal in North America and the fourth busiest container exporter in the United States, moving 4.5 million twenty-foot container units in FY 2019.

According to GPA, Garden City Terminal is the third-busiest container handling facility in the United States as of 2021, encompassing more than 1,200 acres and moving millions of tons of containerized cargo annually. Ocean Terminal, Savannah's dedicated breakbulk and roll-on/roll-off facility, covers 200.4 acres and handles forest and solid wood products, steel, automobiles, farm equipment, and heavy-lift cargoes. The Port is a major economic engine for the region, as well as the State of Georgia.



3rd

Busiest Container Gateway in the Nation



INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION

The term "Intermodal" is used to describe the mass transportation of freight or human passengers, usually over long distances, and via more than one mode of transportation. There are three types of intermodal facilities are discussed in this section: ports, railroads, and airports.

—CORE MPO

In effect for the Port of Savannah is the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project. This project supports jobs and commerce throughout the nation, and allows newer, larger freighters to navigate the river with greater flexibility.

The Georgia Ports Authority, which also operates port facilities in Brunswick, has a huge impact on economics and trade in Georgia. As one of the state's largest public employers, the GPA directly employs almost 1,000 trained logistics professionals. The GPA, however, is responsible for generating far more employment throughout the state.

The total economic impact of Georgia's deep water ports on Georgia's economy is \$84 billion. The Georgia Ports Authority supports more than 369,000 jobs and approximately \$20.4 billion in personal income annually.

As port operations grow and intensify, the surrounding transportation infrastructure will need to support that growth. Mobility 2045 includes numerous projects that will help support port operations.

Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport

Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport is a commercial and military-use airport. Owned by the City of Savannah and managed by the Savannah Airport Commission, the airport is located about eight miles northwest of the Savannah Historic District.

The Airport's passenger terminal is directly accessible to Interstate 95 between Savannah and the suburban city of Pooler. Savannah/Hilton Head International is the chief commercial airport for Savannah, the Coastal Empire region of southeast Georgia and the Lowcountry of South Carolina, where the resort town of Hilton Head accounts for some 40% of total airport passenger traffic.

It is second only to Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International Airport as Georgia's busiest commercial airport. The Airport is currently served by Delta (and Delta Connection carrier Shuttle America), JetBlue, United Airlines, American Airlines, Air Canada, Allegiant Air, Frontier, Southwest, Silver Airways and Sun Country Airlines.

In 2017, the first regularly scheduled international flight by a major air carrier launched when Air Canada began service to Toronto. The Airport also serves as world headquarters for Gulfstream Aerospace. The Georgia Air National Guard's 165th Airlift Wing is also based at Savannah/Hilton Head International.

In 2018, the Airport handled a record 2,799,526 commercial airline passengers (1,395,040 enplanements and 1,404,486 deplanements), a 13.4% increase over 2017. The Airport began a comprehensive capital expansion program with the construction of a new Federal Inspection Station, a terminal apron expansion and the southeast quadrant redevelopment project and began design on a new air cargo complex; all scheduled for completion in the coming years.



NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

While the automobile is the primary mode of transportation in the area, bicycling and walking are also important modes. The CORE MPO and the other local jurisdictions have a strong commitment to the provision of safe, connected facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists. There are some major gaps in sidewalk, trail and bike connections in the city of Pooler.

The Non-motorized Transportation Plan, as part of Mobility 2045, is a plan that addresses the needs of pedestrians, and other self-powered travelers. The Plan:

- Identifies needed improvements for the non-motorized modes
- Identifies areas for amenities to help create a human-scaled environment that encourages use of physically active modes
- Prioritizes improvements and identifies funding opportunities

Pedestrian Network

CORE MPO adopted the Non-motorized Transportation Plan in 2014 and later updated it in 2020. CORE MPO's Non-Motorized Transportation Plan contains extensive lists of recommended pedestrian and bicycle projects, which may be implemented with or without federal funds. The plan was developed with several methods of public participation: public mapping exercises, public online surveys, and periodic presentations of draft networks and lists.

Map 5.9, from the MPO-adopted plan, shows existing and recommended improvements throughout the MPO's planning area (which is more extensive than the area covered by the Plan 2040).

NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

Non-motorized transportation includes walking or using a wheelchair, bicycling, skating, and using pedicabs.

—CORE MPO



Priority National & Regional Non-Motorized Projects

Various studies or plans developed by CORE MPO, partner agencies, or informal groups since 2014 have included proposals that affect bicycle and pedestrian networks (e.g. Chatham County Greenways Implementation Plan, Parking Matters, streetscape plans; Downtown Master Plan update). In addition, there are three new routing concepts in the region, Tide to Town, East Coast Greenway, and US1.

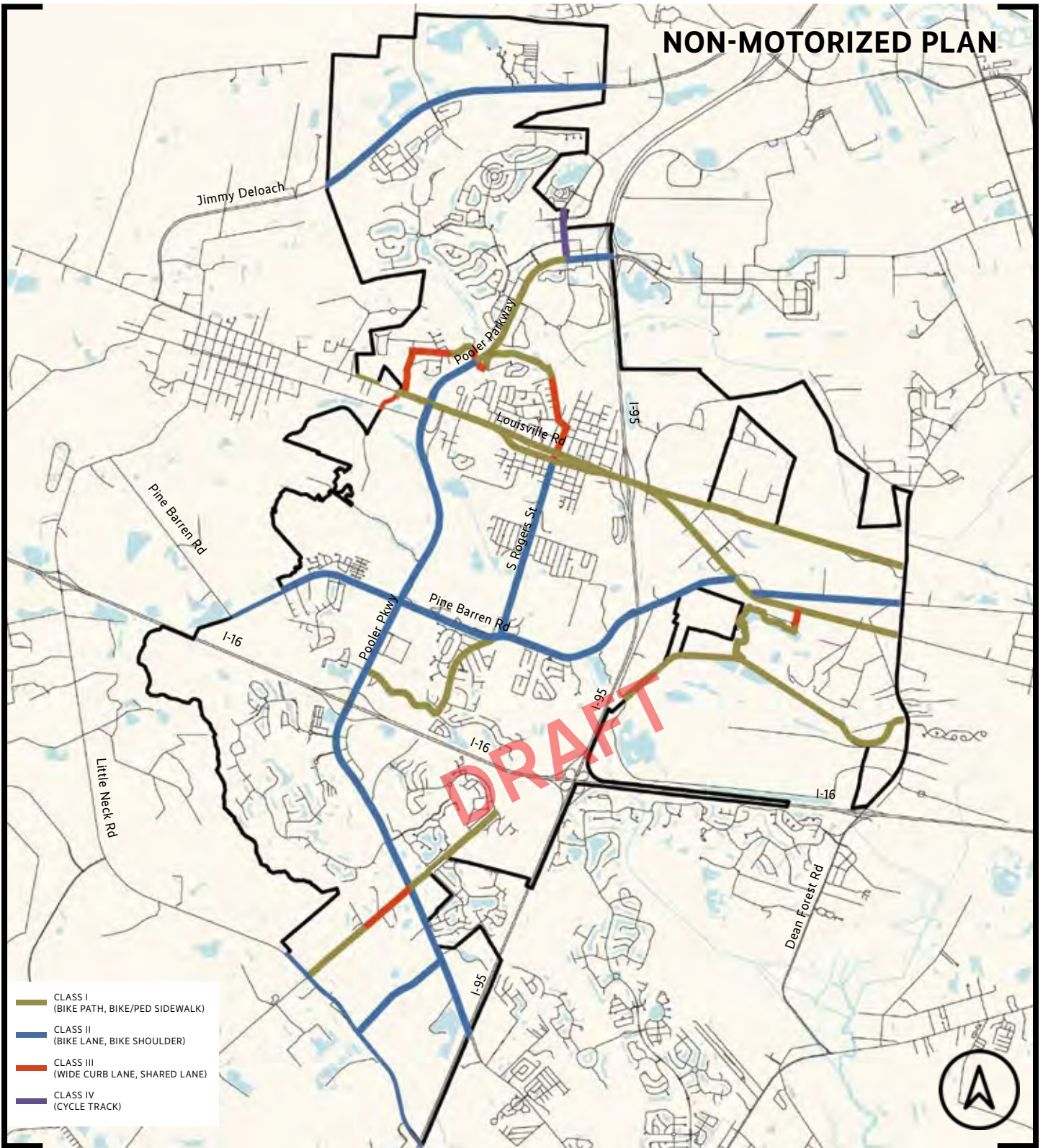
CHECK OUT CORE MPO'S INTERACTIVE MAP

For more details about individual projects on the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan follow this link...

www.thempc.org/Core/Bpp

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NON-MOTORIZED PLAN



Map 5.9-2020 Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, Pooler
 Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO)



Tide to Town

Following the lead of many communities across Georgia, Friends of Tide to Town, a coalition of citizens in Savannah, is coordinating an effort to create a branded urban trails system, "Tide to Town." Like Atlanta's Beltline and Carrollton's Greenbelt, Tide to Town will be a network of protected walking and bicycling facilities connecting all of Savannah's neighborhoods.

Tide to Town will link together existing and planned projects, including the Truman Linear Trail and the Springfield Canal Trail. The core of the system is a 30-mile route that encircles the city of Savannah. Additional miles of connector paths will connect to priority neighborhoods as the system grows. Spur trails to popular destinations will also be added as the system expands outside of Savannah and potentially to Pooler.

The system maximizes existing public rights-of-way along streets and canals, which significantly reduces the cost of implementation. The coalition formed in 2017 to lead the development of Tide to Town. The Tide to Town trail system has quickly become a regional priority and has garnered additional support through the special-purpose local-option sales tax (SPLOST) passed Savannah city council in 2019.



East Coast Greenway

The 2014 Non-Motorized Plan includes the Coastal Georgia Greenway. The Coastal Georgia Greenway co-locates in many areas with the East Coast Greenway, an envisioned 3,000 mile network of trails spanning from Key West, Florida to Calais, Maine. The East Coast Greenway is designed to transform the 15 states and 450 communities it connects through active and healthy lifestyles, sustainable transportation, community engagement, climate resilience, tourism, and more.

The Greenway offers a safe place for bicyclists, walkers, and runners of all ages and abilities to commute, exercise, and visit new destinations.

The nonprofit East Coast Greenway Alliance leads the development of the trail network working in collaboration with hundreds of volunteers, partner organizations, and officials at the local, state, regional, and national level to continue moving more of the route onto protected paths. The trail system connects people to nature and communities via a safe, accessible Greenway.

The network links towns, attractions, recreational sites, historic and cultural sites, waterways, and natural habitats of the coast. The route consists of 165 miles, 14 of which are protected greenway. The Greenway will follow various north-south routes, including the U.S. Highway 17 corridor, abandoned rail lines, and historic canal corridors, from which visitors can enjoy coastal vistas.

Most of the Georgia route is still on road, but a growing number of volunteers and municipal officials are working diligently to make an off-road trail a reality.

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United States Bicycle Route System—US 1

The United States Bicycle Route System (USBRS) is the national cycling route network of the United States. It consists of interstate long-distance cycling routes that use multiple types of bicycling infrastructure, including off-road paths, bicycle lanes, and low-traffic roads. The USBRS is intended to eventually traverse the entire country.

Communities in Chatham County committed to the US 1 cycling route by passing a resolution in support of the national cycling route's development in 2019. The route generally follows along Highway 17, leading through Savannah's historic downtown district, then along Louisville Road before heading out Highway 25.



GREENWAYS

A greenway is a linear open space established along either a natural corridor, such as a riverfront, stream valley, or ridgeline, or overland along a railroad right-of-way converted to recreational use, a canal, scenic road or other route.

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TRANSIT SYSTEMS

Chatham Area Transit Authority

Chatham Area Transit (CAT) is the agency responsible for the provision of transit services to the Savannah area, including fixed route and paratransit. CAT currently operates a fleet of 65 fixed route buses, six of which are electric, and 42 paratransit vehicles. The CAT service area includes unincorporated Chatham County, the city of Savannah, and portions of Garden City. Currently, there are no CAT service connections in Pooler.

The CAT bus network has served the region since 1987. While individual transit routes have been added or changed over the years, the overall design of the network has not been revisited. To provide more efficient and accommodating services, CAT launched a full system redesign starting with a “blank slate” plan, to see what would be possible if the network were re-imagined for the people and places of today.

Some of CAT's near term priorities include:

- Vehicle replacement/expansion—fixed route & paratransit
- Intelligent Transit System (ITS)
- Upgrade farebox and payment systems
- Electric vehicle infrastructure
- Passenger amenities
- Facility improvements at downtown intermodal facilities
- Facility improvements at Gwinnett Street location
- Initiate vanpool/carpool program
- Initiate park and ride
- Facility construction for ferry maintenance and ferry docks
- Ferry boat construction

To meet the future needs of the growing community, CAT must look beyond the five-year planning horizon to identify projects and innovations that will provide access and opportunity for all. Some of these long-term projects include:

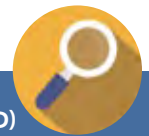
- Establish region-wide park and ride network
- Work with local partners on projects that incorporate Transit Oriented Development (TOD) principles
- Explore partnerships with fixed route cost benefits while serving private industry needs for transportation
- Coordinate with state and local government agencies to implement commuter services through dedicated or limited public access lanes for transit vehicles
- Work with surrounding county agencies to streamline passenger experience across multiple service alternatives
- Complete fleet conversion to low-to-no emissions vehicles
- Funding for bus replacements secured and incorporated into planning process
- Work with housing and other community partners to develop joint FTA/HUD grant funded projects
- Leverage improved cash position by becoming stronger financial partner for public/private ventures with focus on long term revenue producing opportunities
- Identify and develop satellite facilities to accommodate system growth
- Work with the agency partners to implement fixed guideway services

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Routes and Facilities

CAT currently operates 20 routes, including one express route and three free shuttle services. The express route provides service from the Savannah Hilton Head International Airport to the transit center in downtown Savannah. Currently, there are no bus routes directly serving the city of Pooler.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)



A transit-oriented development is a type of urban development that maximizes the amount of residential, business and leisure space within walking distance of public transportation.

It promotes a symbiotic relationship between dense, compact urban form and public transport use.

—Transit Oriented Development Institute



TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGY

Today, transportation agencies are facing trends, such as increased urbanization, that create a growing demand for travel with less funding and space to work with. As a result, communities can no longer build their way out of congestion. Trends seen today include:

- Limited funds—The primary source of federal funding for the U.S. highway system is the federal gas tax, which has not changed since 1993. Since that time, the financial constraints for public agencies have increased.
- Inflation—The cost to build roads and bridges has increased.
- Fuel efficiency—Vehicles today can travel farther with fewer trips to the gas pump, decreasing revenue. The growing use of electric and plug-in hybrid cars has also reduced the purchase of fuel.
- Advances in technology—Transportation agencies can leverage technology to develop solutions to address congestion issues. However, given the advancement in consumer technologies (smart phones, apps, GPS, etc.), privately owned mobility services (Uber, Lyft, etc.), and the availability of more information, the traveling public expects that the products they use and the technologies they encounter will be "smart" and will ultimately improve their travel experience. They also expect that the information received will be accurate and reliable. This creates an added responsibility for the transportation community to provide the best customer service. Technology will likely have an even greater impact on the transportation network in the future with automation, connectivity, and big data.

Automated Vehicle Technology

Automated vehicle technology has made changes to intelligent transportation systems (ITS) and will likely continue to do so in the future. ITS helps advance safety and mobility by integrating communications technology into transportation infrastructure and vehicles. Automated vehicles communicate to other vehicles and infrastructure through ITS. This emerging technology has prompted the USDOT to release a policy statement providing guidance on implementation. The USDOT promotes research and has made recommendations on achieving safe operations during testing. However, predicting any unintended consequences of this emerging technology on the transportation

The automated nature and vehicle-to-vehicle communications could increase capacity of a given number of lanes by reducing average following distance between vehicles (currently needed for human reaction time), while still improving safety. The increased capacity also has negative impacts as it requires more maintenance, installation, and redesign of infrastructure to accommodate the increase and technology required.

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Traffic Operations

Transportation improvements that focus operations and technology can maintain and even restore the performance of the existing transportation system before extra capacity is needed. The goal here is to get the most performance out of the transportation facilities we already have. Operations projects may enable transportation agencies to “stretch” their funding to benefit more areas and customers.

The benefits of operations projects can include:

- Improved quality of life
- Smoother and more reliable traffic flow
- Improved safety
- Reduced congestion
- Less wasted fuel
- Cleaner air
- Increased economic vitality
- More efficient use of resources (facilities, funding)

Traditionally, congestion issues were primarily addressed by funding major capital projects, such as adding lanes or building new interchanges and roads, to address physical constraints, such as bottlenecks.

Regional Traffic Operations Programming

Operational projects provide agencies with the tools to manage and operate what they already own more efficiently and effectively before making additional infrastructure investments.

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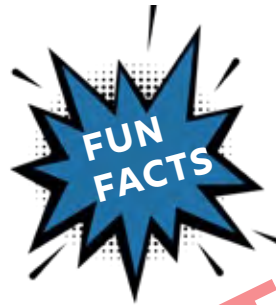
There are plans to expand SRTOP to include the intersections in Pooler on the following corridors:

- SR 26 between Pooler Parkway and Jimmy DeLoach
- Pooler Parkway between Durham Park and Lowes and I-16 ramps
- SR 307 at Jimmy De Loach and Commerce
- SR 21 between Rice Hope and Fort Howard

The long-range expansion of the SRTOP program may include additional locations. The city of Pooler has also installed an adaptive signal program on Pooler Parkway at I-95 which interconnects signals along the corridor with “smart” signal technology by Rhythm Engineering allowing the signals to adapt to changes in traffic patterns rather than remain on fixed timing sequence.

Automated Vehicles/Self-Driving Cars

Automated vehicles, also known as self-driving cars, are still an emerging technology and it is difficult to determine how they will affect the transportation system and when. There are six levels of automation, with level zero being no automation and level five being full automation (autonomous). The State of Georgia has passed legislation allowing the testing, operation, and deployment of automated vehicles (AV) and is the third US state to allow autonomous (level five) cars to operate on roadways. While fully autonomous cars are allowed to operate in Georgia there currently are no vehicles available to the public past level three automation.



3rd

As of 2017, Georgia is the third state to allow for the operation of AVs without human operators present in the vehicle.

At this time there are only programs testing AV technology in the Atlanta, Georgia area. The highest application and advancement of automated vehicles is in the trucking/freight industry. The Savannah metropolitan area is a large trucking region, which could provide Pooler with the opportunity to serve as a testing ground for the advancement of this technology.

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Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) Ride-Hailing/Ride Share

Ride-hailing services use apps and websites to connect passengers with drivers to provide rides in their personal vehicles. These types of services offer the potential to expand transportation choices, increase carpooling and reduce vehicle miles traveled as well as car ownership.

Companies such as Uber and Lyft currently service Savannah and the surrounding area. In smaller populated areas such as Pooler, ride-hailing services may be limited due to driver availability.

Ride-hailing trips are more likely to be made by segments of the population who are comfortable with smart phones, new mobile applications, and who have credit cards. Thus, it does not necessarily fill a gap for the traditionally underserved populations (e.g., low income, disabled, elderly).

Furthermore, while ridesharing may reduce parking, it may increase air pollution because rideshare drivers frequently circulate (similar to taxi operations) in hopes of a trip

assignment via the mobile application. The use of ride sharing may also require infrastructure and streetscape redesign since there will be a higher demand for pick-up and drop-off areas.

Like the trucking/freight industry, TNCs are exploring opportunities and the applications of self-driving cars in their ride-hailing/ride share services.



Shared Vehicles

Car sharing is an emerging trend that can help curtail CO² output because, according to research, a single shared on-demand driven car can replace about eight private cars. Companies are allowing users to reserve a vehicle or other means of transportation when they need it, by the hour or day, and only pay for the time the vehicle is used. Plans for expansion could include aspects such as:

- A community storage/corral
- Charging stations
- Preferred parking for shared vehicles, etc.

Considerations for public transportation grants and public/private partnerships to quickly implement and manage the programs should be promoted.

Bike & Scooter Share

Bike and scooter share systems offer fleets of bicycles and scooters for short term rental within a defined service area. Micromobility programs offer both benefits and challenges for cities. The benefits of shared bikes and scooters includes first mile/last mile connections, flexible mode of travel, reduction in vehicle emissions and fuel consumption, health benefits, and positive economic impacts for businesses near docking stations and within the service area.

While there are benefits to shared micromobility, cities have encountered challenges such as maintenance and safety concerns. Some cities have found that without docking stations, scooters and other shared-use electric devices are often abandoned by users. These abandoned scooters can become hazards for motorists and pedestrians when left on sidewalks and in roadways. Maintenance costs for running shared micromobility are high and create a long backlog of needed repairs for some programs. Another challenge for cities with shared micromobility programs is equitable use; many programs require mobile phone apps and credits cards.

The city of Pooler has not participated in any shared micromobility programs. The city should consider a feasibility study or pilot program to determine if the application of shared micromobility can benefit the community.

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Parking

Most drivers prefer to park as close to their destination as possible, which creates parking challenges for downtowns and dense areas. These areas have high concentrations of activity resulting in increased parking demand often when parking availability is low.

To identify the demand for parking and identify potential parking solutions, cities should consider completing parking studies. The study area for parking studies can be based on specific attractor, such as a mall, or could include an entire region such as a central business district.

Situations that may indicate parking issues include:

- Excessive illegal and overtime parking
- Excessive cruising to find parking
- Congestion in traffic flow due to cars attempting to find parking
- Drivers frequently park more than 650 feet from the desired destination

Pooler should survey community members and stakeholders to identify potential issues and evaluate the need for a parking study.

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ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Public Health & Mobility

The approach to community and public health spans a number of disciplines including transportation planning especially as it relates to policy and infrastructure.

The considerations for public health in transportation planning should include

- The promotion of active transportation and ensuring that the necessary facilities are in place
- Developing strategies and projects to enhance the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists
- Reducing the negative impacts on the environment by increasing the number of active transportation users

The CORE MPO recognizes and has implemented strategies and plans to promote a healthy community. The development of non-motorized and thoroughfare plans, the long standing commitment to complete streets and context sensitive design principles, and a focus on accessible transportation for all populations provides the policy framework for the promotion of health considerations in transportation planning.

The region is cognizant of the interconnectedness between land use and public health. Additionally, bus transit systems are often routed through areas challenged with high poverty, unemployment, or low workforce participation rates. As such, programs and policy changes have been implemented to improve public health and economic mobility show commitment to continuing these efforts into the future.

Climate Change, Sea Level Rise, & Resiliency

A highly discussed topic at the national and local level is climate change and its effects, which include sea level rise and nuisance flooding, and how to become more resilient to these events. There has been an increased focus at the federal level, with the FHWA completing research and providing best practices for MPOs to develop policies and strategies that address impacts from the changing climate.

With its coastal location, the CORE MPO recognizes the need for understanding any potential impacts on the existing and future transportation infrastructure and for developing an approach to address and/or mitigate these impacts. An example of impacts the CORE MPO is addressing is nuisance flooding, which is now being seen more frequently during heavy rainfall events.

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Plan 2040 Survey

Twenty-three percent (23%) of the respondents strongly agree that if it were safer, they would bike/walk to frequent destinations more often.

A full copy of the survey and the results can be found in the Pooler 2040 Appendix.

Stormwater Management

Stormwater has long been a concern in the region due to its negative impacts on water quality in communities, including Pooler. Efforts to deal with stormwater impacts as they relate to the transportation system are focused mainly on protecting water quality and road or roadway runoff. Roadways move goods, people, and services but also can carry stormwater runoff and pollutants from the vehicles traveling on them and adjacent land—including heavy metals from tires, brakes, and engine wear, and hydrocarbons from lubricating fluids.

If pollutants are not properly controlled they can cause water to no longer support its designated uses and biotic communities.

In roadway construction, stormwater can be managed using temporary sediment control devices. These devices prevent sediment from leaving the construction site via stormwater runoff.

In recent years stormwater management efforts have expanded due to increased frequencies of extreme weather events, resulting in impassible roadways. Efforts are underway to protect transportation systems from the negative impacts of stormwater runoff and to improve their resiliency and reliability during these extreme events.



HOUSING ELEMENT

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06



HOUSING

Introduction

The Housing Element Pooler 2040 is an inventory and assessment of the community's housing stock, as well as a discussion of the housing issues and needs associated within the city of Pooler. This element attempts to identify major housing problems, determine future housing needs, and develop a plan for managing housing development in the future.

Pooler is a growing a community that has an equally growing housing situation. There have been many new single-family and multi-family housing developments to serve the area as Pooler, and the Savannah MSA as a whole, grows. As the community grows and changes, different housing needs will emerge. The purpose of this element is to discuss the housing stock, quality, and needs of the community, while also making suggestions of what housing strategies should be implemented in the future.

THE STATE OF HOUSING

Housing Occupancy

As more people move into the Chatham County area, the number of housing units increases alongside population increases.

According to the 2018 5-Year ACS, there are approximately 9,000 housing units in the city of Pooler. Pooler has a very high occupancy at 96.3, with the vacancy rate continually decreasing since 2010 according to Census and ACS data. Additionally, homeowner vacancy rates tend to be lower than rental vacancy rates, with vacancy rates for both categories consistently decreasing over the years. High housing occupancy is beneficial for the community, as vacant properties are at a higher risk of becoming dilapidated.



As shown by Figure 6.1, the number of housing units in the city of Pooler has been increasing consistently since 2010. This is attributed to the fact that Pooler population has been growing, increasing a need for housing.

Number of Housing Units, 2010–2018

	2010	2014	2018
City of Pooler	7,182	8,606	8,985

Figure 6.1–Housing Units, Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Housing Occupancy, 2018

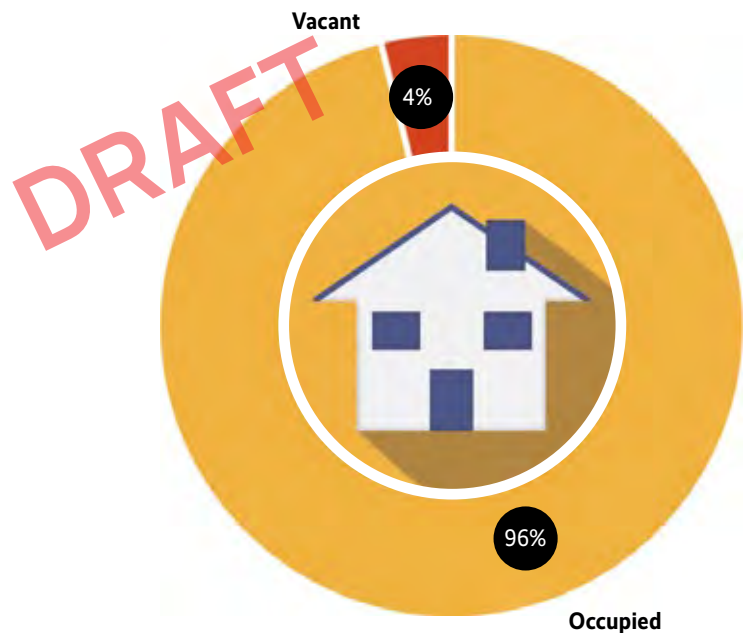


Figure 6.2–Housing Occupancy, Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Housing Types

Maintaining a mix of housing types is one of the most important housing strategies. It helps to boost a socially and economically diverse community by providing viable housing options for residents from the full spectrum of personal preference and economic buying power.

The dominant housing type in Pooler is single-family detached, accounting for 66% of the total housing stock. The second most common form of housing in Pooler are apartments with 20 or more units, at 9.1%. There are smaller amounts of other types of housing units, such as townhomes, small multi-family units, and mobile homes, but they are dwarfed in comparison to the amount of single-family detached homes.

There are two primary that influence the different housing types in Pooler: zoning, which specifies the types and density of units developers are permitted to build, and market demand, which refers to the types of housing units that people want to buy. Currently, the vast majority of housing areas are allocated for single-family, detached housing, but there is a rising among of apartments being constructed in the area as well. Additionally, speculation is a housing market driver, as real-estate investors can create fluctuations in home prices and demands by guessing on the future value of certain homes based on their investments.

*In Pooler, 66% of all housing is single-family detached
—American Community Survey, 2018*

Housing Types, 2014–2018

Housing Type	CITY OF POOLER	
	Number of Units	%
1-unit, detached	5,948	66.2
1-unit, attached	431	4.8
2 units	99	1.1
3 or 4 units	242	2.7
5 to 9 units	144	1.6
10 to 19 units	575	6.4
20 or more units	818	9.1
Mobile home	728	8.1
Boat, RV, Van, etc.	0	0
Total	8,985	100%

Figure 6.3—Housing Types, Pooler

U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Age of Housing

Much of the housing in Pooler is relatively new, with the majority of housing being built between 2000 to 2009. The age of the housing stock reflects how new many of the residences are and is indicative of the large population growth that Pooler has experienced, with 68% of structures being built within the last 20 years. Still 23% of housing is over the age of 30 years old and by 2040, houses built between 2000 to 2009 will also be over 30 years old. Structures that old are at an increased risk of becoming dilapidated. While Pooler has relatively new housing currently, steps toward maintaining present housing can reduce future risks of dilapidation.

Around 68% of housing in Pooler was built within the last 20 years
—American Community Survey, 2018



Year Housing Structure Built, 2014–2018

Year Built	CITY OF POOLER	
	Number	%
Built 2014 or later	450	5
Built 2010 to 2013	1,042	11.6
Built 2000 to 2009	4,609	51.3
Built 1990 to 1999	799	8.9
Built 1980 to 1989	467	5.2
Built 1970 to 1979	853	9.5
Built 1960 to 1969	288	3.2
Built 1950 to 1959	288	3.2
Built 1940 to 1949	99	1.1
Built 1939 or Earlier	90	1
Total	8,985	100%

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Figure 6.4—Age of Housing Structure, Pooler
 U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Housing Tenure

The majority of houses are owner-occupied in Pooler with 62% of homes being owned. The percentage of renter-occupied housing has decreased since 2010, which is the opposite of neighboring jurisdictions and national trends. With the current increase in apartment constructions, the number of renters in the area may increase in the future. Additionally, the ratio of owner-occupied to renter-occupied units may also change.

Housing Tenure, 2014–2018

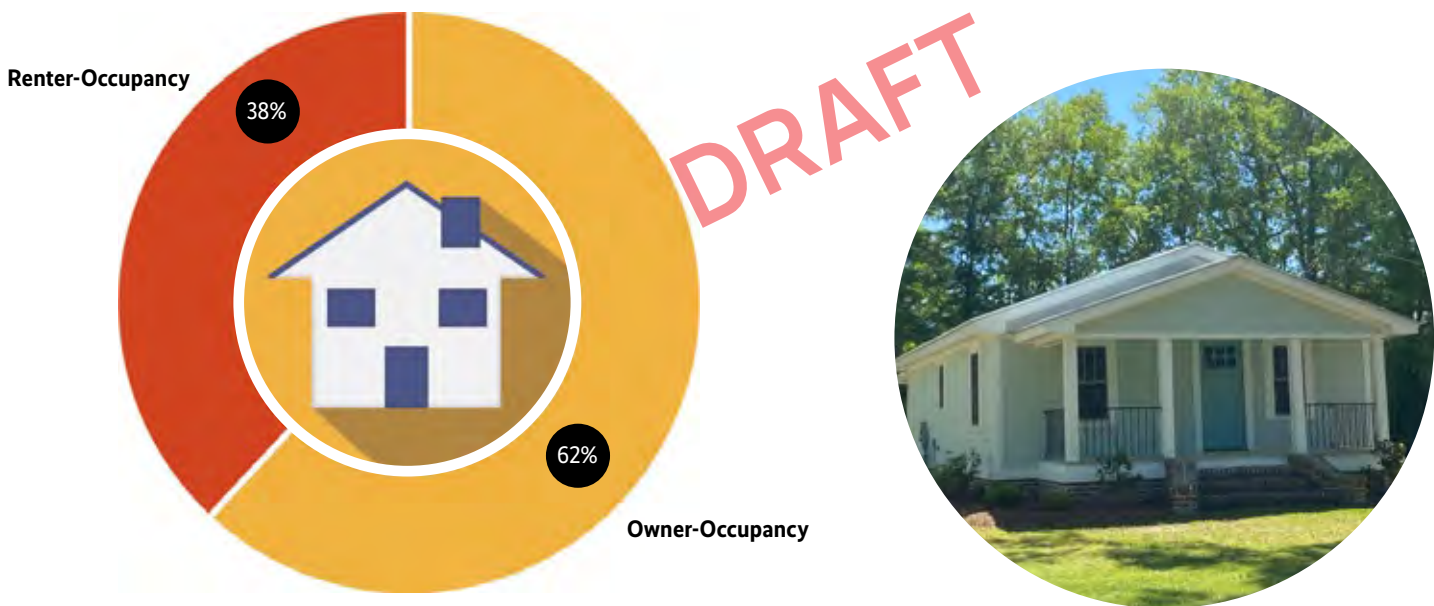


Figure 6.5–Housing Tenure, Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Housing Values

Overall, home values have been increasing in Pooler since 2000, aside from a slight dip recorded on the 5-Year 2014 ACS. The majority of home values are between \$200,000 to \$299,999, with another 1/4 being between \$150,000 to \$199,999. The median home value is \$215,500 and has increased 125% since 2000.

The Median home value in Pooler is \$215,500 and has increased 125% since the year 2000

—American Community Survey, 2018

Home Values, 2014–2018

Median Value	CITY OF POOLER	
	Number	%
Less than \$50,000		5.6
\$50,000 to \$99,999		4.2
\$100,000 to \$149,999		8.9
\$150,000 to \$199,999		23.6
\$200,000 to \$299,999		41.8
\$300,000 to \$499,999		9.8
\$500,000 to \$999,999		5.3
\$1,000,000 or More		0.9
Total	8,985	100%

Figure 6.6—Housing Values, Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Year Moved In, 2014–2018

Year	CITY OF POOLER	
	Number	%
2017 or Later		11
2015 to 2016		19.3
2010 to 2014		25.4
2000 to 2009		32.8
1990 to 1999		3.9
1989 and Earlier		7.6
Total	8,985	100%

Figure 6.7—Year Moved In, Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Year Moved In

The majority of residents moved into their houses between 2000–2009. Another 1/4 moved in between 2010–2014 while another 1/5 moved in between 2015 to 2016.

With such a large influx of people moving in, the housing landscape has changed within the area, leading to the construction of new neighborhoods and apartments.



Monthly Mortgage

The majority of homeowners with a mortgage are paying either \$1,000 to \$1,499 (32.3%) or \$1,500 to \$1,999 (30.5%). The median mortgage is 1597 and has increased 77.44% since 2000.

Monthly Rent

The median rent is \$1,217 and has increased 107.32% since 2000. With such steady increases in rent throughout the years, efforts to ensure that housing is affordable to all Pooler residents must be explored.

Median gross rent is \$1,217 in Pooler, representing a 107% increase since 2000 —American Community Survey, 2018



Monthly Mortgage Costs, 2000–2018

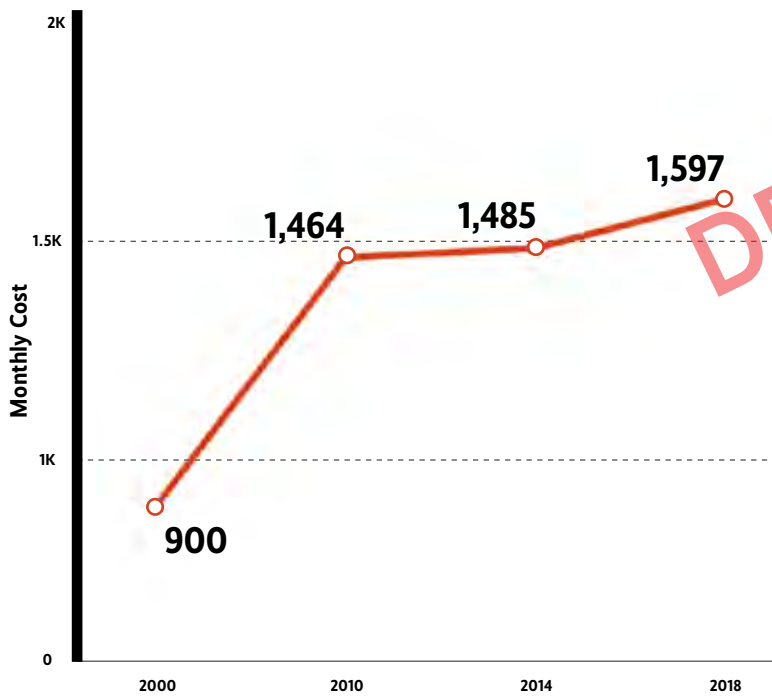


Figure 6.8—Monthly Mortgage Costs, Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Monthly Rent Costs, 2000–2018

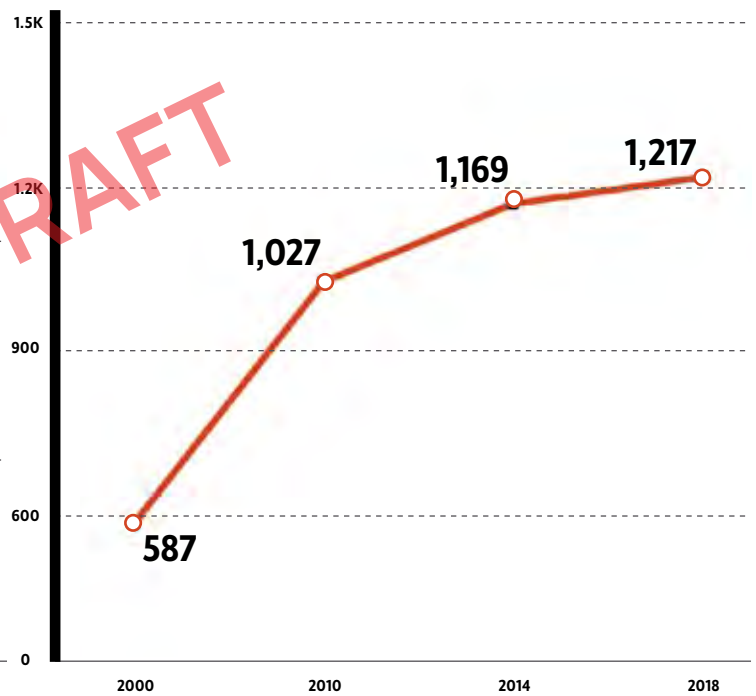


Figure 6.9—Monthly Rent Costs, Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



AGE & HOUSING DEMAND

Aging & Multi-Family

The median age of Pooler residents is 37.3, which is slightly older than the rest of the county. As the aging populations rises, housing needs will change. While there are elderly communities, new developments should focus on age conscious designs.

One major factor in determining the future need of the various housing quantities and types available is the age distribution of our future population. Age is a major determinant in housing choice because populations within a given age group tend to share various characteristics and needs. Individuals in their early twenties are more likely to rent an apartment than buy a house because younger residents tend to have more limited financial resources than an older population, and twenty-somethings also tend to move more often. Individuals and families in their working years are likely to choose to live in single-family homes because they are likely to be raising children and want more space to raise a family. People who are retired may opt for a simpler lifestyle, which often involves selling their single-family home and moving into a townhouse, garden apartment, or other type of multi-family unit. An area's age distribution, along with its wealth and cultural characteristics, is therefore a major factor in determining the associated demand for various types of housing units.

Trends are showing us that the U.S. population is living longer as the "Baby Boomer" generation approaches retirement. In the U.S., some also called "Generation Xers" the "baby bust" generation because of the drop in the birth rate following the baby boom. This nationwide aging trend is even more pronounced in the South, which continues to be a retirement destination. The local effect in Chatham County will likely be more noticeable because of its desirable coastal location, warmer climate, and the close proximity to health care, resorts, and retirement communities.



As shown in Figure 6.10 Chatham County's population is projected to grow significantly over the next 10 years with the largest population gain being seen in the older age groups. The effect will be increasingly pronounced among the 45 to 54-year-olds with a projected increase of 5.8% from the 2010 counts, 55 to 64-year-olds increasing 18.1% and individuals who are over 65 increasing by over 70%. Younger age groups, by contrast, are projected to experience either a very modest growth or a slight reduction from current and previous levels.

As the population grows older, many find it advantageous to relocate from single-family homes to multi-family dwellings, making it likely that an increase in demand for multi-family units will accompany the larger aging population. Although Chatham County's total year-round population of young adults living within the county is projected to decrease slightly, it is expected that the county's population of college students residing in Chatham County part of the year will increase as Chatham County's major institutions of higher learning continue to expand and attract students from outside the county. This trend also supports the finding that the local market could support more multi-family units within Chatham County.

As the average age of Pooler residents is higher than the average for Chatham County, there may be a higher percentage of older residents in the area. Thus, a focus on housing that is affordable and accessible to elderly people is necessary

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Projected Age Distribution, 2000–2018

Age	2010	2020	2030	%Chge. 2010-2030
Under 5	17,219	17,442	17,514	1.7%
5 to 14	34,008	34,911	35,141	3.3%
15 to 24	33,666	35,056	35,221	0.5%
25 to 34	35,959	34,690	35,354	-1.7%
35 to 44	35,318	35,370	34,949	-1.0%
45 to 54	35,318	35,370	37,340	5.8%
55 to 64	29,466	35,494	34,789	18.1%
Over 65	33,772	48,040	57,696	70.8%

Figure 6.10–Chatham County Population Projections by Age Cohort
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



COST-BURDEN

Housing Costs

As discussed earlier in the chapter, home values, monthly mortgage, and monthly rent has been increasing in both unincorporated Chatham and the city of Savannah. With this in mind, the issue of cost burden must be heavily monitored.

According to the HUD, cost-burden is defined as: as those “who pay more than 30% of their income for housing” and “may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.” Severe rent burden is defined as paying more than 50% of one’s income on rent.

26.4% of homeowners in Pooler are cost-burdened by housing costs. While cost-burden has been declining, it is still higher than it was in 2000. 44.4% of renters are cost burdened, which is an overall increase of 62% since 2000. With 1 in 4 homeowners and almost half of all renters in Pooler should explore strategies to reduce cost-burden, especially for renters.



COST-BURDENED

Cost-burdened families as those “who pay more than 30% of their income for housing” and “may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.” Severe rent burden is defined as paying more than 50% of one’s income on rent.

—HUD

Cost-burden for renters has been consistently higher than cost-burden for homeowners, especially in Savannah
 —American Community Survey, 2018

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Mortgage Cost Burden, 2000–2018

Year	Garden City	City of Pooler	City of Savannah
2000	17.3%	18.4%	26.57%
2010	38.2%	32.1%	42.76%
2014	29.8%	34%	41.24%
2018	24.6%	26.4%	33.53%

Figure 6.11–Mortgage Cost Burden

U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Rent Cost Burden, 2000–2018

Year	Garden City	City of Pooler	City of Savannah
2000	30.3%	27.5%	52.93%
2010	46.3%	26.6%	61.13%
2014	60.4%	36.2%	59.80%
2018	37.7%	44.4%	55.39%

Figure 6.12–Rent Cost Burden

U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable Housing

The definition of affordable housing can take many forms, with many typically believing it refers to only low income housing. However, in this discussion of affordable housing, affordability is relative to multiple incomes and living situations. For example, Pooler’s median income is \$78,102 which is higher than the median for the rest of the county. People in this income bracket, and all income brackets, have a limit on what they can afford, which is why it is necessary to ensure that residents can still afford their housing.

Additionally, with cost-burden on the rise for renters, and 1 in 4 homeowners being cost-burdened, housing affordability may still be a problem despite the fact that Pooler residents earn more on average.



"Missing Middle" Housing

Missing Middle Housing describes a range of housing types between single-detached homes and lower density apartment buildings that have gone “missing” from many of our cities. The referenced housing types are compatible in scale with single-family homes yet are denser and yet still fit seamlessly into existing residential neighborhoods. These housing types can include duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, rowhouses, and townhouses.

While the “missing middle” refers to a range of housing types, the popularity of the term has grown alongside the housing challenges facing middle-income households. Increasingly, middle income households throughout Chatham County are experiencing difficulty finding housing that suits their needs and budgets. Accordingly, the term “missing middle” is used to describe the lack of available and affordable housing options for middle-income households, both in the ownership and private rental sectors. In fact, much housing that falls under the category of “missing middle” is unaffordable to households across the income spectrum.

16.5% of housing in Pooler constitutes as Missing Middle Housing. Increasing the number of missing middle housing units can increase the affordable housing stock for low- and moderate-income residents.



SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

Special Needs Housing

A disability is defined as one of six disability types: hearing difficulty, vision difficulty, cognitive difficulty, ambulatory difficulty, self-care difficulty, and independent living difficulty.

According to the American Community Survey 13.3% of Pooler are living with a disability. Noting that individuals 75 years and older tend to have higher rates of disabilities, we can deduce that as the senior population in Chatham County and Pooler continue to rise, the need for more housing that disabled individuals can comfortably live in will also increase. This requires housing with wider hallways, wide doors, handrails, and ramps for wheelchair access while other disabled residents, such as individuals with cognitive difficulties, may require long-term residential care.

Nearly 13% of the population in Pooler is living with a disability

—American Community Survey, 2018

WHAT IS DISABILITY?

A disability is defined as one of six disability types: hearing difficulty, vision difficulty, cognitive difficulty, ambulatory difficulty, self-care difficulty, and independent living difficulty.

—CDC



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In addition to those areas highlighted above, Chatham County has an array of housing services to help its residents. For example, domestic violence shelters offer safe and private housing for victims of intimate partner violence and their families. Additionally, rehabilitation centers for individuals recovering from drug addiction and mental illness, residential facilities for people with developmental disabilities, and transitional housing for homeless families and individuals are also available.

In addition, a number of agencies provide subsidized or affordable housing for older adults as well as hospice residences for patients with terminal illness. Although not all-inclusive, Figure 6.13 and 6.14 below displays the percentage of residents within Chatham County and the city of Pooler with a disability as defined by the American Community Survey (2018) that may have special housing needs.

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Disabled by Age Group, 2018

	Chatham	Pooler
Age		%
Under 5 Years	2.9	3.4
5 to 17 Years	6.6	6.4
18 to 34 Years	8.7	3.0
35 to 64 Years	16.9	15.7
65 to 74 Years	22.2	35.8
75 Years and Over	58.3	57.7

Figure 6.13–Percent Disability by Age, Chatham County & Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Disability Type, 2018

	Chatham	Pooler
Disability Type		%
Hearing Difficulty	4	3.6
Vision Difficulty	2.6	2.3
Cognitive Difficulty	6.5	5.0
Ambulatory Difficulty	8.6	9.2
Self-Care Difficulty	2.4	3.5
Independent Living Difficulty	6.2	5.7

Figure 6.14–Percent Disability Type, Chatham County & Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



RESILIENCE & HOUSING

Resiliency Planning

Resiliency planning is a way to reduce indirect vulnerabilities by improving the long-term conditions that can leave communities exposed to hazards. There are six core sectors around which communities can plan for resiliency.

These are:

- Community
- Economic
- Health and Social
- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Watersheds and Natural Resources

These six sectors are broad lenses through which a community can examine the impacts, identify stresses, or weaken their ability to respond, and strategically plan to address these upsets. Integration of activities across each sector is key to developing a resilient community. These sectors are interdependent, yet many strategies are likely to have a cross-sector impact. With the rise in extreme weather events, many communities are looking for ways to prepare for disasters that accompany the changing climate. New studies, regulations, and design practices are helping to address current and future needs.

Additionally, low-income communities are often disproportionately affected by weather-and climate-related disasters, such as built-up in areas that are vulnerable to flooding. Resilient design can offer solutions to dangerous disruptions while alleviating long-term costs.

Emergency preparedness also builds pathways to make a difference not only for the built environment but also for residents within vulnerable communities.

Much of Chatham County is a flat coastal plain, making it susceptible to flooding, especially during the springtime and hurricane season. As the impact of climate changes compound and grow, not only will flooding issues worsen but higher temperatures will most likely continue to threaten residents and vulnerable populations during the hot summer months. To alleviate these threats, it is recommended that any new housing developments, most notably affordable housing developments, be built outside of flood zones and with a higher, more sustainable design in mind. It is essential that residents living in high-impact flood zones understand how to protect themselves and their homes during rainy and hurricane seasons.

Lastly, the further people live from their jobs, schools, and services, the longer they spend commuting in cars, which creates more greenhouse gas emissions. When people have affordable options for housing close to where they work, they can spend less time commuting and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, building affordable places to live in close proximity to public transit options is an effective way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



Plan 2040 Survey

The MPC's Plan 2040 survey asked in your opinion, "Do we need more, less or about the same of the following housing types?"

- Single-family
- Townhouses
- Apartments
- Duplexes
- Accessory dwelling units
- Mobile homes
- Transitional housing
- Nursing or retirement homes

Forty-six percent (46%) of the respondents felt that there needed to be more single-family housing, with only 3% of respondents selecting more apartment housing.

A full copy of the survey and the results can be found in the Pooler 2040 Appendix.

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NATURAL RESOURCE ELEMENT

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07



NATURAL RESOURCES

Introduction

Pooler is home to exceptional natural resources that are vitally important to the quality of life, resilience, health, and economy of the region. The city therefore has an interest in promoting, developing, sustaining, and protecting its natural resources for current residents and future generations.

This Element of Pooler 2040 includes an existing conditions assessment of specific natural resources and natural resource issues found in Pooler as well as specific goals and objectives for the management and protection of these resources for the next 20 years.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Not many landscapes can match the beauty and romance of the coastal environment. Since the earliest times of Georgia's founder, General James Oglethorpe, people have wanted to live near the water. Our streams, rivers, and marshes are now more attractive than ever as places to live near and visit. Tide, climate, and geology all shape the unique relationship between land and water along the nation's coastline. Southeast Georgia continues to grow as people leave colder climates and higher taxes to live near the beautiful oak trees and sandy beaches. People and homes are only part of the growth coastal Georgia is experiencing. With population come many other elements of development.

The vision of a community that is a healthy place to live, work, and raise a family—where the protection of natural resources is considered an integral part of its social and economic values—can be accomplished when forethought and reverence for the environment is considered. To effectively manage the development of Georgia's coastal areas, residents and local governments must continue in their efforts to protect and be good stewards of the community's natural resources. With proper planning, Pooler will continue to be a place of beauty for centuries to come.

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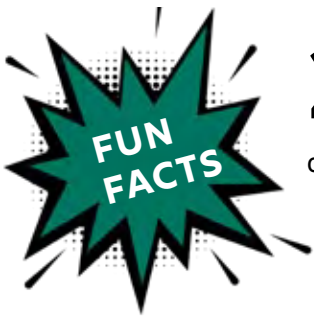


Coastal Resources

Georgia’s coastal marshlands and beaches are seen as one of the State’s greatest resources and a defining characteristic feature of Chatham County. The beaches draw new residents and tourists to the area, while the marshlands are an essential ecosystem for many plant and animal species and also protect coastal residents from the impacts of storms and higher than normal tides. The landscape along the Georgia coast is also dotted with marsh hammocks—back barrier islands or small upland areas surrounded by tidal waters and marshes that provide a haven for wildlife.

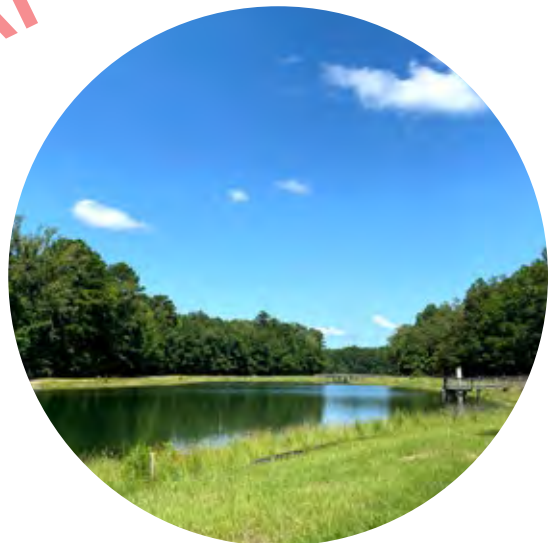
As the state's coastal population grows and development pressures threaten Georgia’s coastal resources, public policies protecting and conserving coastal lands need to be implemented. Preservation of the region’s coastal resources through land use regulations and land acquisition programs is essential to the resiliency of the community, the local economy, and the quality of life for residents.

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22%

of land in Pooler is classified as marsh



WATER RESOURCES

Water Supply

Pooler is located within the Atlantic Coast Flatwoods area of the State within both the Savannah and Ogeechee River Basins and more specifically within the boundaries of the Lower Savannah, Lower Ogeechee, and Ogeechee Coastal Watersheds.

The Ogeechee River Basin headwaters are located in mid-to southeastern Georgia and are flanked by the Altamaha and Oconee River Basins to the west and the Savannah River Basin to the east. The headwaters are located in the southeastern edge of the Piedmont province, and the basin continues southeastward to the Atlantic Ocean, draining approximately 5,540 square miles. The river basin is located entirely in the state of Georgia and plays a significant role in forming Wassaw, Ossabaw, Saint Catherine's, Black Beard and Sapelo islands off the coast of Chatham County.

The Savannah River Basin is a 10,577 square mile watershed whose headwaters originate in the Blue Ridge Province of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. The Savannah River forms the boundary between South Carolina and Georgia as it flows southeast to the Atlantic Ocean at Savannah. The Savannah River is the most extensively used surface water source in the Savannah River Basin.



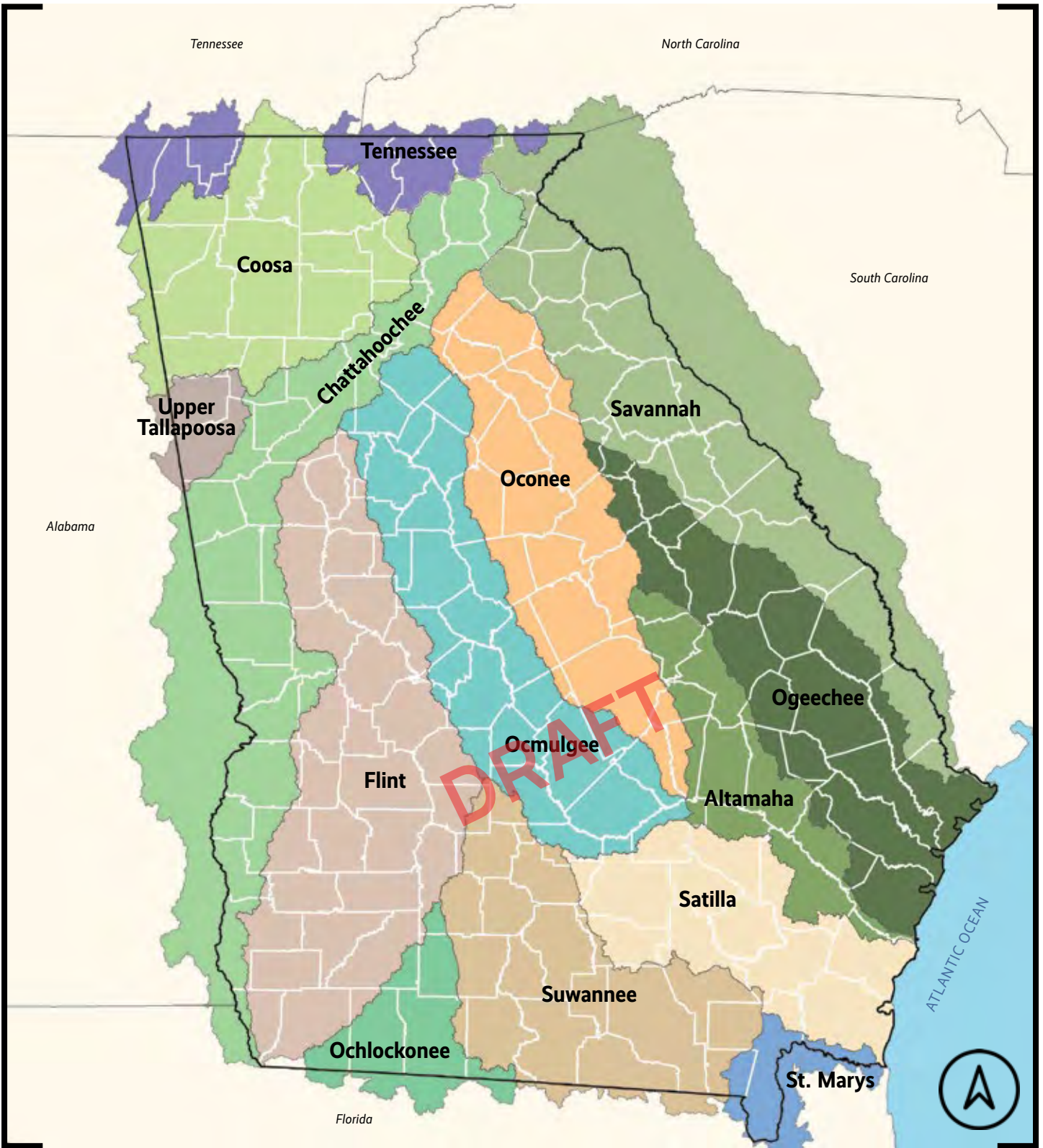
WATERSHEDS

A watershed is a land area that channels rainfall and snowmelt to creeks, streams, and rivers, and eventually to outflow points such as reservoirs, bays, and the ocean.

—USGS

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SAVANNAH RIVER





Map 7.1—Georgia's River Basins



Public Water Supply Sources

The groundwater resources of Coastal Georgia—and the Floridan Aquifer system in particular—are recognized as some of the most productive in North America. This particular system underlies an area of about 100,000 square miles in southern Alabama, southeastern Georgia, southern South Carolina, and all of Florida. The depth below the ground surface to reach the top of the Floridan Aquifer increases from less than 150 feet in coastal South Carolina to more than 1,400 feet in Glynn and Camden counties, Georgia.

Approximately 95% of the population of Chatham County is served by municipal or community water systems (Chatham County Comprehensive Water Supply Management Plan (2000 Update). Ninety-eight percent of the water provided by these systems, including Pooler's, is pumped from the Floridan Aquifer and meets or exceeds drinking water standards. Water is pumped directly into the city's distribution system with chlorine and fluoride being the only treatment necessary.

Public Water Supply Issues

As a result of extensive pumping in much of the developed areas of Savannah and in the adjacent coastal areas in Georgia and South Carolina, the aquifer has experienced changes in groundwater levels, rates and distribution of recharge and discharge, rates and direction of groundwater flow, and overall water quality in the aquifer system. As population growth increases the demand for drinking water, a reduction in groundwater usage becomes necessary to prevent saltwater intrusion into these critical water supplies.

Measures to reduce the amount of groundwater pumped from the Floridan Aquifer were instituted in 1995 when the Comprehensive Water Supply Management Plan for Chatham County, including Pooler, was adopted. The Plan was the result of a cooperative effort by the municipalities, major domestic water companies, and major industrial water users to reduce groundwater pumping.

Saltwater intrusion into the Floridan aquifer in the Chatham County region threatens the continued viability of the region's primary drinking water supply source. In 1997, the State of Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) limited the amount of groundwater that could be withdrawn from the Floridan Aquifer.

EPD previously capped the amount of groundwater that could be withdrawn from the Aquifer and mandated a 10-million-gallon reduction in pumping by 2005. The moratorium on additional groundwater withdrawal was viewed as a temporary measure pending a study to measure saltwater intrusion into the groundwater supply. This study, called the Sound Science Initiative, was completed in May 2010 and led to a multi-step approach to managing groundwater withdrawals along the coast.



Map 7.2-Floridan Aquifer System



Map 7.3-Chatham's Large Watersheds



Red Zones

The Chatham and Effingham County region, classified as the “Red Zone,” has experienced significant reductions to its groundwater withdrawal permit limits to help prevent impacts to the Floridan Aquifer system. Analysis of pumping indicated that the permit restrictions, conservation measures, and additional management strategies were proving effective. Again, in October of 2015 EPD mandated a reduction in pumping from all groundwater withdrawal permittees within the Red Zone with reduction milestones for 2020 and 2025 included. In general, most of the 2015 permit limits for Red Zone users were reduced by 22% for 2025.

In light of the new directives from EPD, the municipal water providers within Chatham County and southern Effingham County, continue to explore opportunities to coordinate water supply management and conservation efforts for the long-term.

The issues affecting groundwater quality (domestic, industrial, and agricultural pumpage and vertical and horizontal migration of saltwater into the aquifer) must continue to be addressed on a regional basis because groundwater withdrawal in one area affects the piezometric pressure throughout the aquifer, and saltwater intrusion in one part of the aquifer may eventually contaminate the entire aquifer system.



MANAGING SALTWATER INTRUSION

Chatham County and the southern portion of Effingham County (south of GA Hwy 119) were identified in the 2006 Coastal Georgia Water and Wastewater Permitting Plan for Managing Saltwater Intrusion as having the highest vulnerability for the groundwater cone of depression that extends into South Carolina, where saltwater intrusion has already occurred.



SALTWATER INTRUSION

Saltwater intrusion, the technical name for the problem, occurs when too much groundwater is pumped from coastal aquifers, thereby upsetting the subterranean balance between inland freshwater.

—USGS

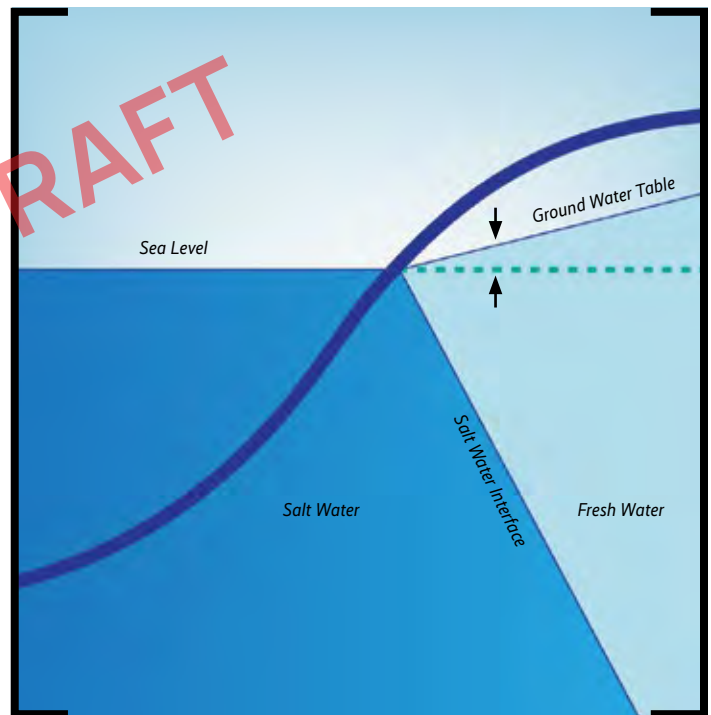
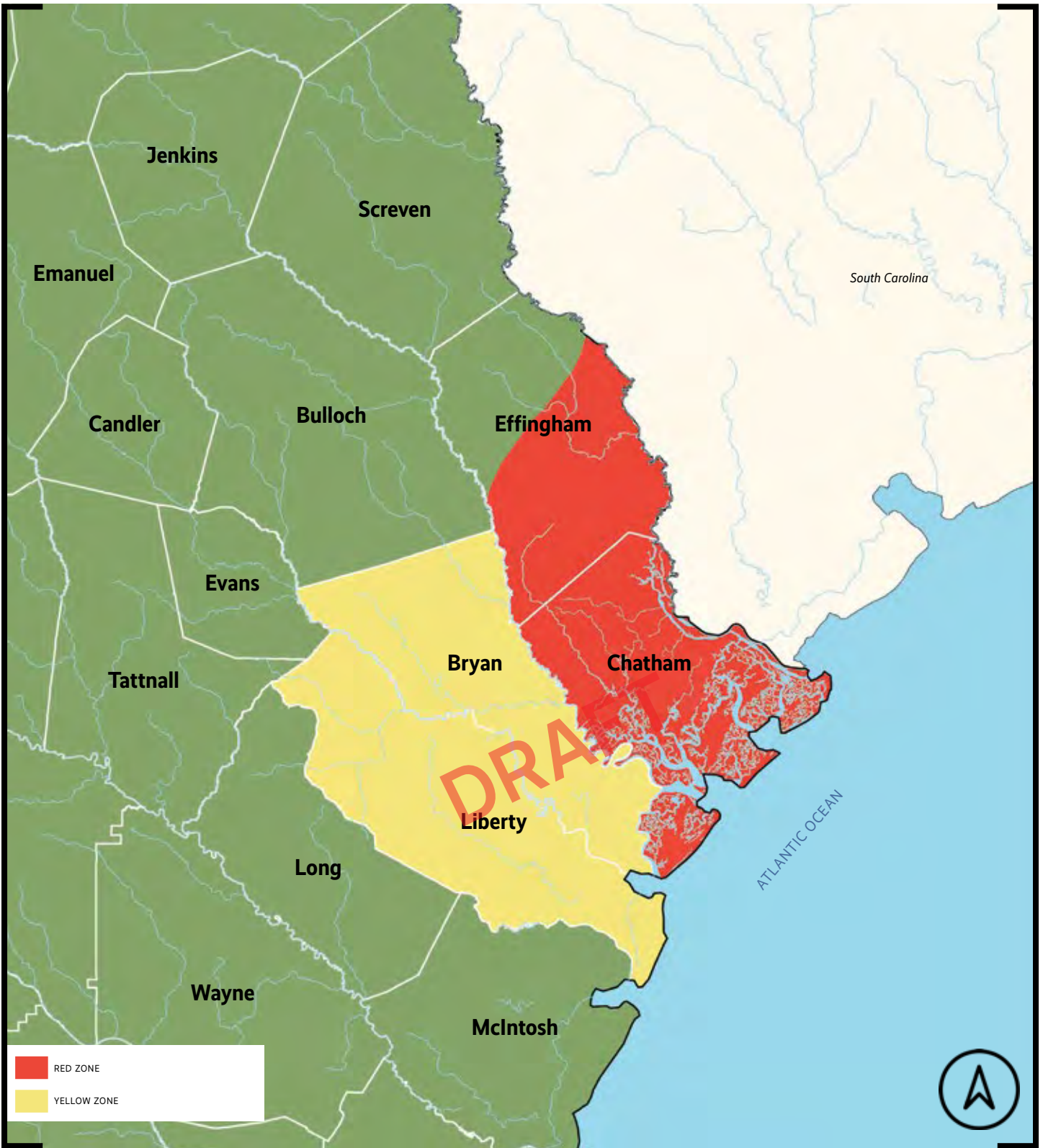


Figure 7.1–Aquifer Impact Diagram



Map 7.4—Chatham's "Red Zone" Water Management Area



Groundwater Recharge Areas

A groundwater recharge area is the land where the water that eventually seeps down into an aquifer first enters the ground. Groundwater can move readily through soils and rocks that have large pore spaces (porous), such as sand, gravel, sandstone, or limestone. However, soils and rocks having small pore spaces (non-porous), such as clay, shale, or granite, will hinder water movements. The principal aquifer recharge zone for the Floridan Aquifer system is located approximately 100 miles northwest of the city of Savannah where the upper boundary of the aquifer's confining layer outcrops at the surface near the Fall Line separating the Piedmont province from the Coastal Plain. Smaller areas of groundwater recharge are specifically located in the Miocene/Pliocene-Recent unconfined aquifer system within Chatham County. These local recharge areas are generally located outside of Pooler on Wilmington Island, Skidaway Island and along the Abercorn Street corridor in Savannah.

Groundwater Pollution Susceptibility

If hazardous or toxic substances pollute the water that seeps into the ground in a recharge area, these pollutants are likely to be carried into the aquifer and contaminate the groundwater, ultimately effecting a community's drinking water source. Once polluted, it is almost impossible for a groundwater source to be cleaned up. For this reason, a local wellhead protection ordinance was passed, and the City routinely performs inspections of community wells to prevent wellhead contamination and to address any stormwater pollutants that have the potential to impact groundwater quality through the wellhead.

In Pooler, the protection of groundwater recharge areas is also overseen by restricting land uses that generate, use, or store pollutants within groundwater recharge areas and by establishing minimum sizes for lots within groundwater recharge areas that are served by on-site sewage management systems. Prior to the issuance of a building permit or a demolition permit, the Zoning Administrator assesses whether the proposed activity is located within a groundwater recharge area as identified by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GA DNR). All lands identified as groundwater recharge areas are subject to restrictive development standards.

Specific areas adjacent to Pooler have also been deemed to have a higher pollution susceptibility. Careful consideration should be taken within these areas when deciding on land uses and new development to protect the area's groundwater system.

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Map 7.5—Chatham County's Groundwater Recharge and Groundwater Pollution Areas



Impaired Water Bodies

Under related environmental protection measures, section 303(d) of the 1972 Clean Water Act mandates that all states develop lists of impaired waters within their jurisdiction. The EPD has a complete “303(d) list” for the State of Georgia and Chatham County.

Currently, there is two impaired waterway within Pooler that is currently being monitored and investigated for measures to improve the water quality. One of these impaired bodies is The Pipe Makers Canal, a major waterway and floodway that traverses several jurisdictions and should be considered for more stringent protection measure due to the amount and type of flood waters it receives.

LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION?

The most current 303(d) list can be found for the State of Georgia and Pooler at the link below...

<https://epd.georgia.gov/watershed-protection-branch/watershed-planning-and-monitoring-program/water-quality-georgia>

Impaired Waters 305(b)/303(d) List 2020

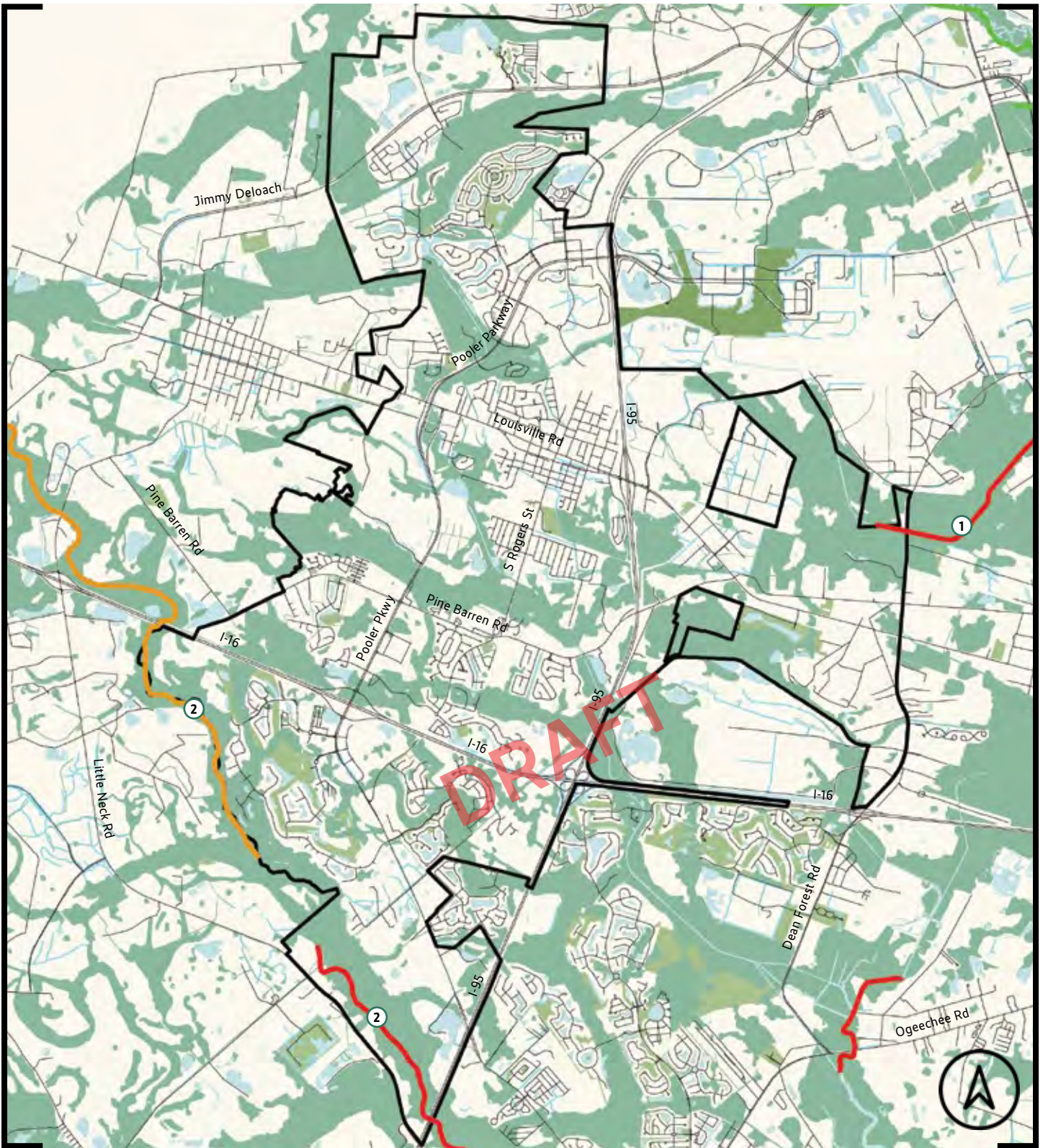
	Name
1	Pipe Makers Canal
2	Little Ogeechee River

Figure 7.2–Impaired Water Bodies

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PIPEMAKERS CANAL





Map 7.6—Impaired Water Bodies, Pooler



STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Stormwater runoff is generated from rain that flows over land or impervious surfaces, such as paved streets, parking lots, and building rooftops, and does not soak into the ground. The runoff picks up pollutants like trash, chemicals, oils, dirt, and sediment that can harm our rivers, streams, lakes, and coastal waters. To protect these resources, communities, construction companies, industries, and others, use stormwater controls, known as best management practices (BMPs). These BMPs filter out pollutants and/or prevent pollution by controlling pollutants at their source.

The State and Local National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater programs regulate stormwater discharges through municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s). Depending on population size, operators of the MS4s are required to obtain an NPDES permit before they can discharge stormwater. This permitting mechanism is designed to prevent stormwater runoff from washing harmful pollutants into local surface waters.

Stormwater Management Programs (SWMP) have been adopted by each municipality in Chatham County as a requirement of the NPDES administered by the State of Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GA DNR). Pooler is considered a Medium Phase I MS4 Permittee. The city's management plan includes routine water quality sampling and testing; calculation of pollutant loads; identification and elimination of illicit discharges; training, preparation of annual reports to the Georgia EPD; and education and public awareness programs.

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Municipal Stormwater Programs & Permits

	MS4 Permit Number	Location
1	GAS000205	Savannah
2	GAS000206	Chatham County
3	GAS000207	Bloomingtondale
4	GAS000208	Garden City
5	GAS000209	Pooler
6	GAS000210	Port Wentworth
7	GAS000211	Thunderbolt
8	GAS000212	Tybee Island



Figure 7.3—Phase I—MS4s in Chatham County

Coastal Stormwater Supplement

Pooler adopted the Coastal Stormwater Supplement to the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual (CSS). The CSS is a tool intended to provide Georgia's coastal communities with comprehensive guidance on an integrated, green infrastructure-based approach to natural resources protection, stormwater management, and site design.

As water flows across municipal boundaries and stormwater management efforts, or lack thereof, impact neighboring jurisdictions, the County and all the municipalities within the County should work towards addressing stormwater issues in a regional manner. The creation of a Regional Stormwater Committee or Commission should be considered to ensure that efforts being made are as efficient and effective as possible.

Statistically, most stream quality indicators decline when watershed impervious cover exceeds 10%, with severe degradation expected beyond 25%. In Chatham County, the majority of growth is targeted to western areas of the county. It is likely that future stream health indicators (e.g., biological health, streambank stability) will be impacted in watersheds that have a substantial amount of land development. Several of these watersheds may transition over to an Impacted category. As a result, these impacted watersheds are excellent target areas for advanced stormwater management, riparian buffer management, and development principles that protect water quality, such as low-impact development.

STORMWATER RUNOFF

Stormwater runoff is rainfall that flows over the ground surface. It is created when rain falls on roads, driveways, parking lots, rooftops and other paved surfaces that do not allow water to soak into the ground.

—Center for Watershed Protection



#1

Stormwater runoff is the number 1 cause of stream impairment in urban areas*

*Center of Watershed Protection, 2006



Coastal Stormwater Supplement to the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual

First Edition
April 2009



GEOLOGY & SOIL TYPE

All of Chatham County, Georgia, is labeled as the Atlantic Coast Flatwoods area of Georgia. The Atlantic Coast Flatwoods area occurs along the seaward portion of Georgia and is characterized by nearly level topography and poorly drained soils that are underlain by marine sands, loams, and/or clays. A series of marine terraces, roughly paralleling the coast, extends inward from sea level to an elevation of approximately 100 feet. The lower lying flat terraces do not have well-defined drainage systems, and runoff moves slowly into slow-moving canals, streams, rivers, and finally into the ocean. The overall elevation in this region ranges from sea level to about 80 feet.

Pooler's soils tend to predominantly fall into the D-type category of soils, with shallow water tables, thus, making infiltration difficult. Group D soils are clay loam, silty clay loam, sandy clay, silty clay, or clay. This Hydrologic Soil Group has the highest runoff potential. They have very low infiltration rates when thoroughly wetted and consist chiefly of clay soils with a high swelling potential, soils with a permanent high-water table, soils with a claypan or clay layer at or near the surface and shallow soils over nearly impervious material. The average soil rating, as measured by the National Commodity Crop Productivity (NCCPI) is 47.



NATIONAL COMMODITY CROP PRODUCTIVITY

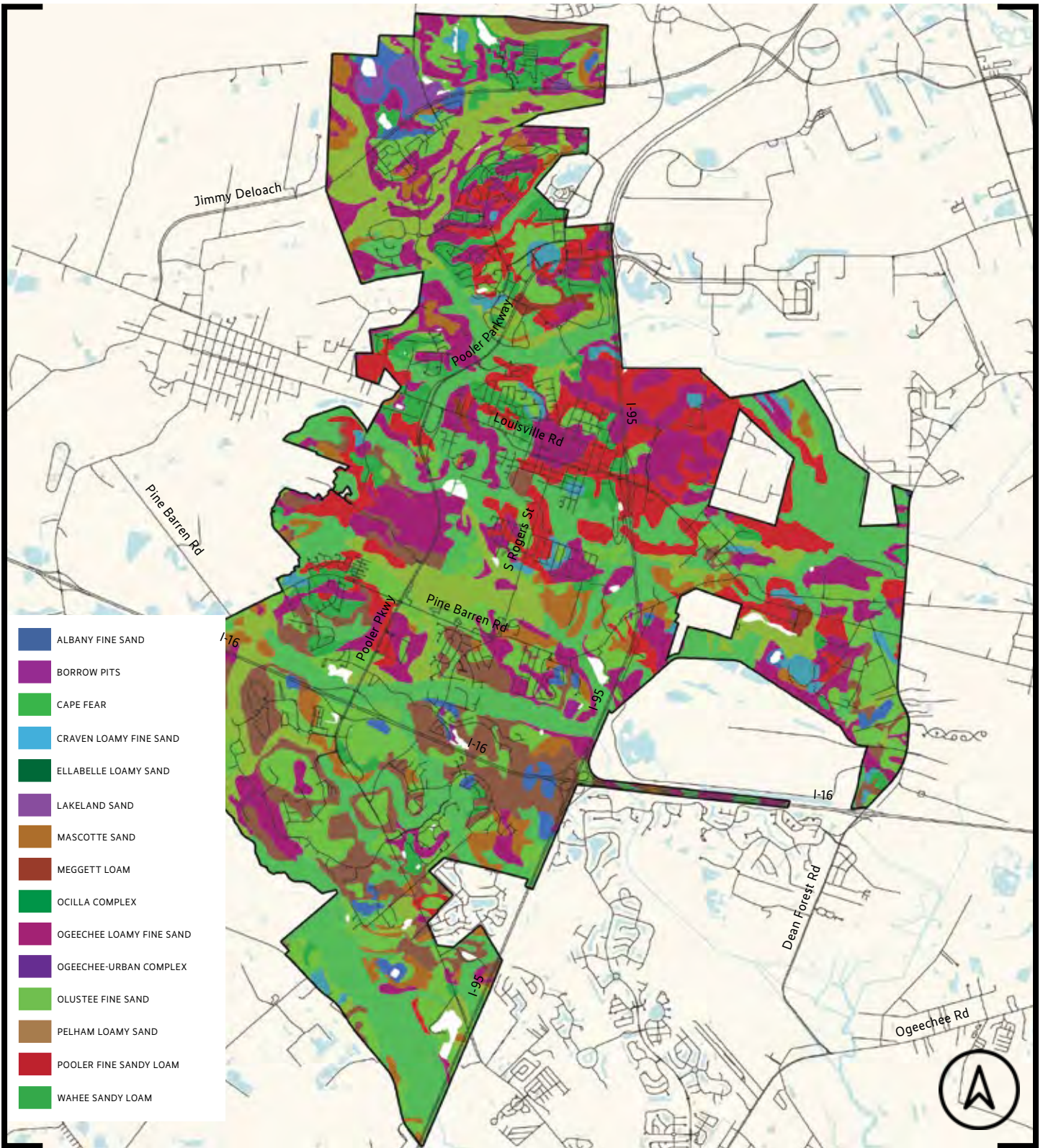
The National Commodity Crop Productivity Index (NCCPI) is a model that uses inherent soil properties, landscape features and climatic characteristics to assign ratings for dry-land commodity crops such as wheat, cotton, sorghum, corn, soybeans and barley.

The value of ranges is from 0 to 100, 100 being the best

—USDA

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Map 7.7—Soil Types, Pooler



WETLANDS

Wetlands are vital features in the region's landscape that provide benefits for people and wildlife. Wetlands are able to improve our water quality, provide natural habitat, and store floodwaters. A wide variety of amphibians, animals, plants, and microbes inhabit wetlands, making them some of the most productive ecosystems in the world.

Over the past 60 years, many wetlands in Georgia have been altered and converted to other uses due to development; many of these conversions were of freshwater wetlands on the coastal plain. Conversion rates in Georgia have accelerated due to changing demands for agricultural and forest products, population growth and urban expansion in the Piedmont, mountains, and along the coast. This has had a distressing effect on not only the natural environment, but also on the human environment as flooding increases in frequency and magnitude with nowhere for floodwaters to go.

Over the past 60 years, many wetlands in Georgia have been altered and converted to other uses due to development; many of these conversions were of freshwater wetlands on the coastal plain.

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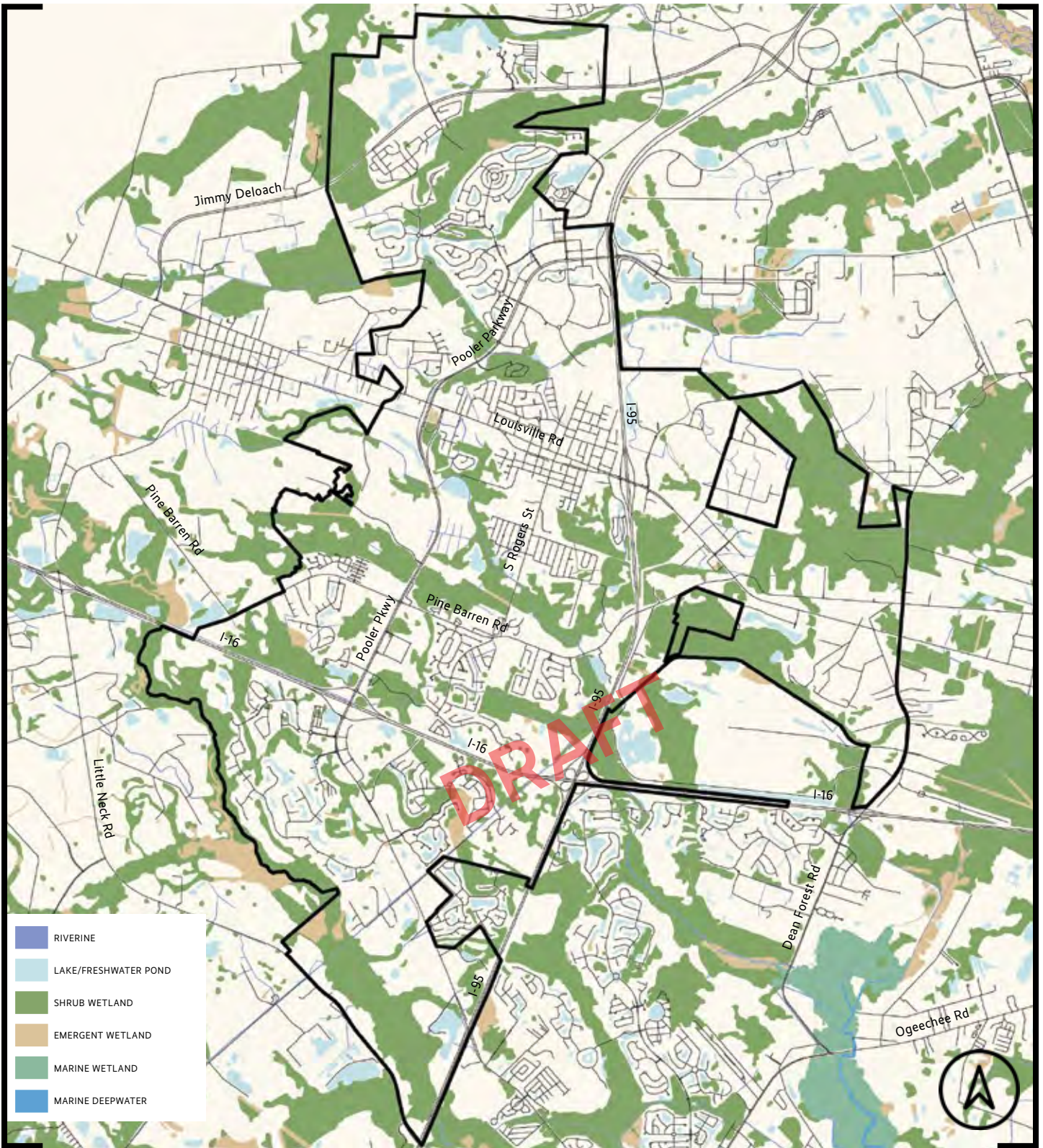
BENEFITS OF WETLANDS

Among the numerous functions of wetlands, the following roles are the most critical:

- » Flood control
- » Water quality and availability
- » Erosion control
- » Fish and wildlife habitat
- » Recreation and aesthetics

—US EPA



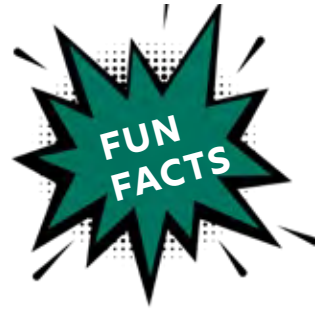


Map 7.8—Wetland Classification, Pooler



Directly related to the need for wetland conservation, under the Part V Environmental Planning Criteria requirements, Pooler has an adopted Wetland Protection Ordinance that provides a procedure to coordinate federal wetlands permitting with local permitting. This ordinance provides a regulatory framework by which potential wetland impacts are evaluated before local permits for land disturbance and building are issued.

The future of wetlands is closely linked to land use decisions made not only by local governments but by private landowners as well, since regulations are inexpensive relative to acquisition and can provide substantial protection for wetlands. Incentive-based programs, including nonconventional development standards such as subdivision regulations, stormwater management ordinances and floodplain ordinances are other means of protecting wetlands that have been implemented.



11.5

square miles of land in Pooler is classified as wetland



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Stormwater management ordinances such as Pooler’s can be used to protect wetlands as a means of reducing non-point source pollutants and to create artificial wetlands for the treatment of surface runoff. In addition, pollution controls may be used to prohibit discharges into area wetlands.

According to NOAA’s Office of Coastal Management (NOAA OCM), from 1996 to 2016, a total of 8.54% or 54 square miles of the county’s land coverage has changed, including a loss of approximately ten square miles of loss of Woody Wetlands (-9.54%) and approximately five square miles of Emergent Wetland gain (+1.23%) over the last 20 years.



PLANNING CRITERIA

To ensure continuous protection of water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, and river corridors, specific environmental planning criteria have been developed and discussed throughout this section of the Comprehensive Plan as required. These include:

- » Criteria for Water Supply Watersheds
- » Criteria for Protection of Groundwater Recharge Areas
- » Criteria for Wetlands Protection
- » Criteria for River Corridor Protection

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Chatham County Land Coverage Changes Over Time

Land Cover Categories	1996 Area	Area Lost	Area Gained	2016 Area	Percent Change	Net Change
Developed (High Intensity)	19.15	0.00	8.95	28.10	46.73%	8.95
Developed (Low Intensity)	38.14	-0.34	10.00	47.80	25.32%	9.66
Developed (Open Space)	22.31	-1.02	6.35	27.63	23.87%	5.32
Grassland	8.36	-4.90	1.99	5.45	-34.74%	-2.90
Agriculture	3.54	-0.67	0.74	3.61	1.98%	0.07
Forested	89.97	-19.36	3.46	74.07	-17.67%	-15.90
Scrub/Shrub	8.76	-5.30	4.15	7.61	-13.10%	-1.15
Woody Wetland	78.04	-9.07	1.63	70.60	-9.54%	-7.44
Emergent Wetland	155.91	-2.13	4.06	157.84	1.23%	1.93
Barren Land	9.09	-1.06	2.59	10.62	16.76%	1.52
Open Water	199.03	-2.25	2.19	198.97	-0.03%	-0.05

Figure 7.4–Chatham County Land Coverage Changes 1996–2016



FLOODPLAINS & FLOOD ZONES

Floodplains are flat or lowland tracts of land adjacent to lakes, wetlands, and rivers that are typically covered by water during a flood. The ability of the floodplain to carry and store floodwaters should be preserved in order to protect human life and property from flood damage. Moreover, undeveloped floodplains also provide many other natural and economic resource benefits.

Floodplains often contain wetlands and other areas vital to a diverse and healthy ecosystem. By making wise land use decisions in the development and management of floodplains, beneficial functions are protected and negative impacts to the quality of the environment are reduced. Pooler has updated its Floodplain Protection Ordinance to begin addressing sea level rise and the natural migration of waters along the coast; however, more attention must be given, and measures must be enacted in the near future to allow for further protection of the coastal community from rising waters due to changes in the environment.

Flood Zones

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is tasked with creating Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) that determine flood zone designations for properties. Flood maps offer useful information and represent the official depiction of flood hazards for a community. Flood zone designations, coupled with local policies and the efforts of municipal floodplain managers, impact the flood insurance rates of individual properties.

It is important for property owners to know what their property's flood zone designation is in order to fully understand the potential risks their area faces. This information can aid in making decisions regarding investments or alterations to property that will minimize possible risks, in making preparations for potential flooding events, and in determining if flood insurance is necessary.

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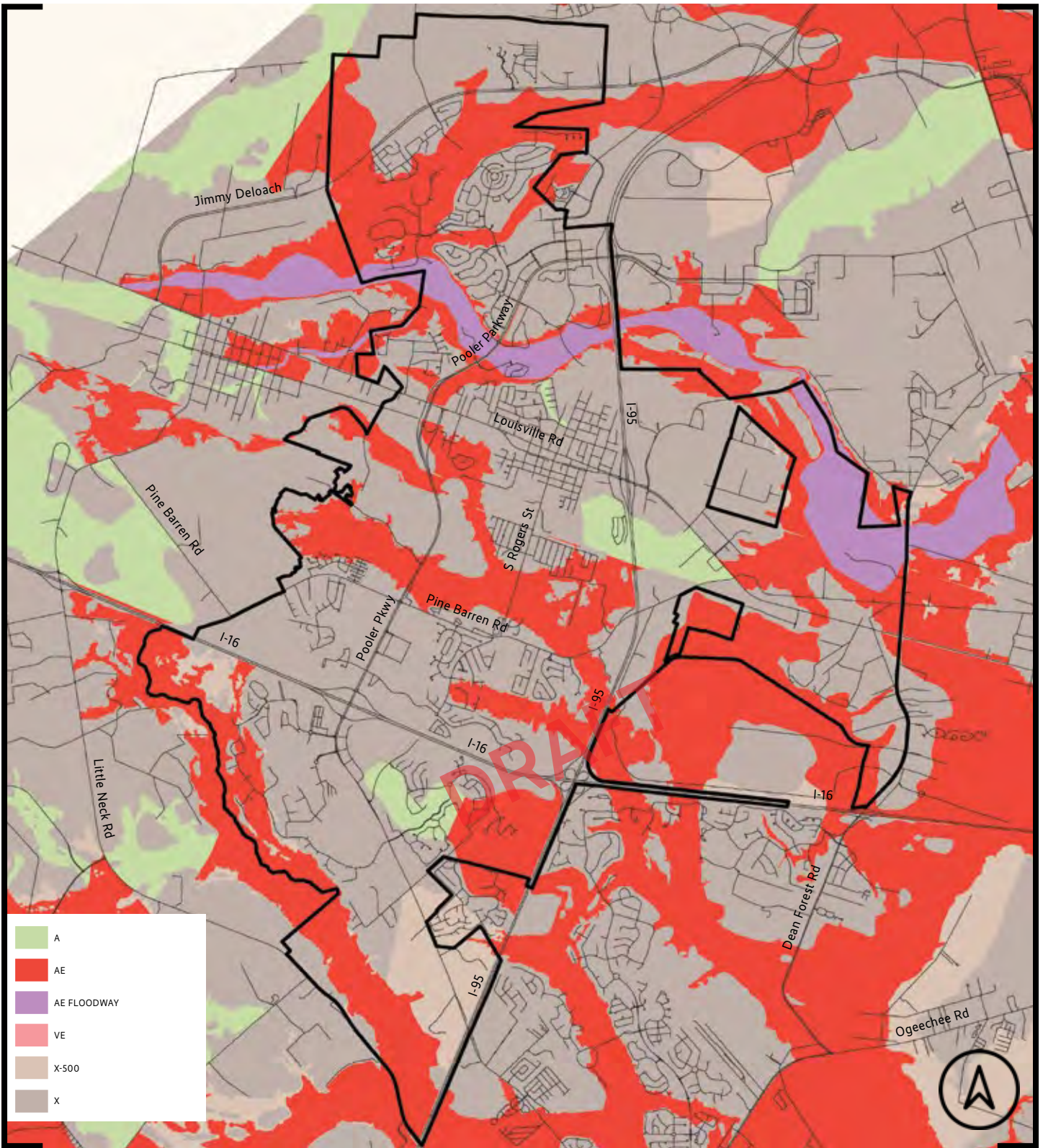


FLOOD ZONES

Flood zones are a geographic areas that FEMA has defined according to varying levels of flood risk. These zones are depicted on a community's FIRM or Flood Hazard Boundary Map. Each zone reflects the severity or type of flooding in the area.

—FEMA





Map 7.8—Flood Zones 2018, Pooler



PARKS, RECREATION, & CONSERVATION AREAS

The natural and scenic amenities of Pooler offer many recreational and cultural opportunities. As open space in the city continues to be lost as development increases, it is imperative to explore all available means for land conservation before it is too late. Land acquisition programs such as the Chatham County Resource Protection Commission should be funded and utilized in conjunction with land use regulations to ensure the open space needs of the region will continue to be met.

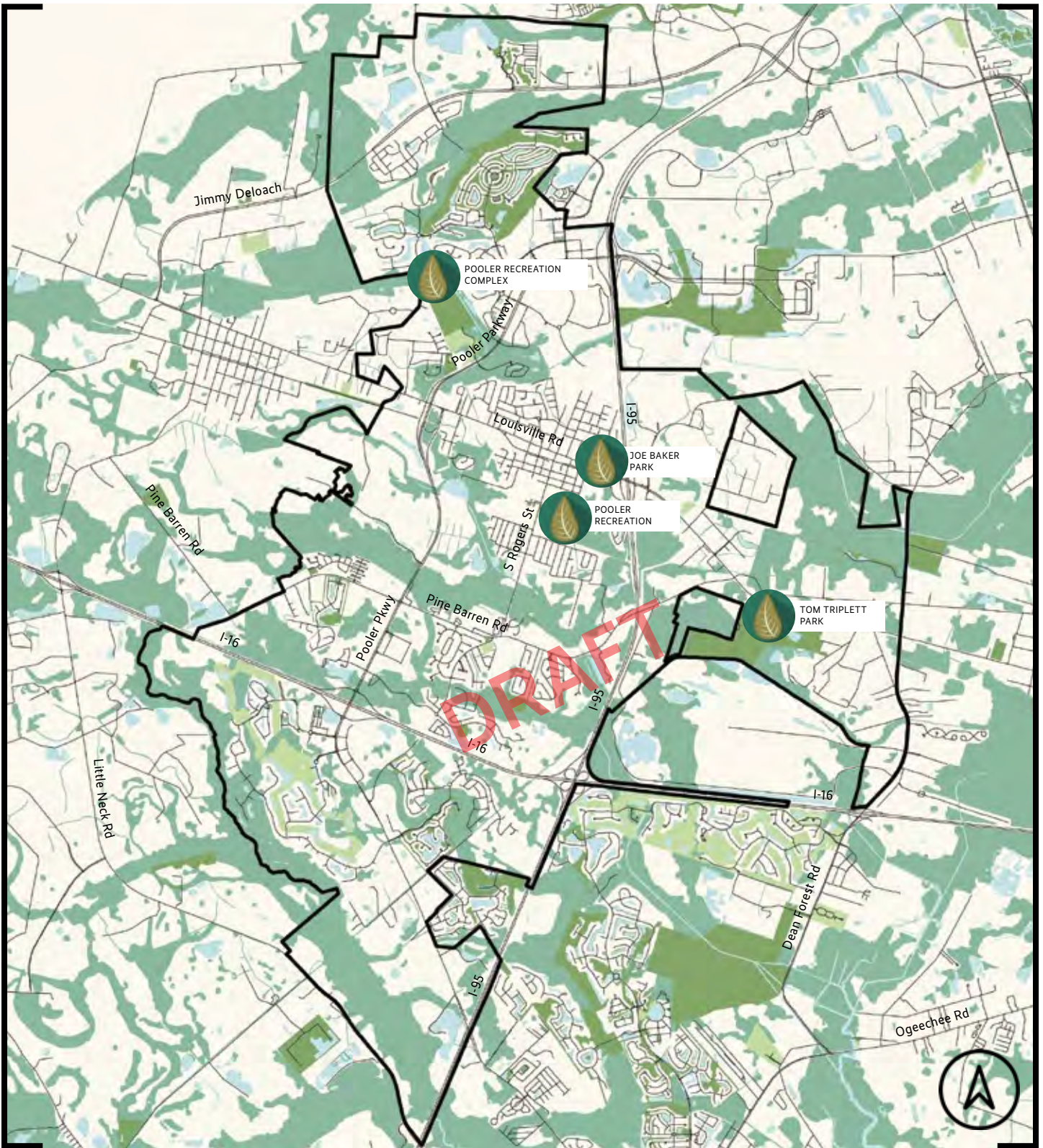
In addition to providing an adequate quantity (acres) and type (ballfields, wildlife habitat) of open space, it is important to work to ensure equity to all residents. All residents should have access to a variety of parks, recreation, and open space within close proximity to their residence. Trails, bikeways, pedestrian paths as well as other non-vehicular paths should be incorporated into such areas to provide access for those without personal transportation.

“Open space” is an area that is valued for active and passive recreation and protection of natural resources (including natural processes and wildlife), provides public benefit, and is part of one or more of the following categories: developmentally difficult lands, natural resource areas, commercially used natural resources areas, natural amenity areas, recreational areas and urban form areas”.

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TOM TRIPLETT PARK





Map 7.9—Parks, Recreation, and Conservation Areas, Pooler

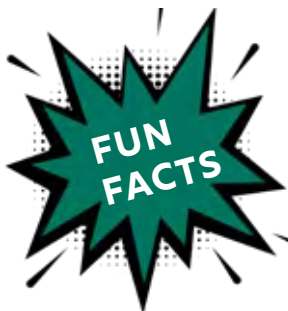


PRIME AGRICULTURAL & FOREST LAND

The loss of agricultural and forest land is not only a local issue but is taking place across the country. More and more land that was once in farmland or forest is being developed for subdivisions or commercial uses. The loss of these lands negatively impacts the environment by increasing impervious surfaces resulting in flooding and nonpoint source pollution, reducing air quality through the elimination of trees, which filter pollutant gases, and increasing energy consumption due to the additional miles traveled for crops and livestock for consumption, as well as making residents reliant on other states or countries for their food supplies.

Per the National Agricultural Statistics Service (USDA), between 2012 and 2017 there was a 91% increase in the number of farms, from 35 to 67 farms, with a total area of 4,677 acres. Chatham County’s average farm size in 2017 was 70 acres. The number of farms in the county has been trending upward for the first time in almost 20 years most likely due to the increasing movement of growing and sourcing local foods such as berries, honey, meat, and eggs from nearby nurseries and small farms.

Now more than ever, the implementation of land use regulations and incentive-based programs to prevent the loss of agricultural and forest lands is pertinent.



63%

of land in Pooler is classified as vegetation*

*Savannah Tree Foundation, Tree Canopy Assessment 2020

Tree Canopy

The Savannah Tree Foundation’s 2020 Tree Canopy Assessment provided a bird’s eye view of all of Chatham County illustrating general trends in tree loss and gain countywide.

Major Takeaways

- While the county has gained tree quantity, it has lost quality trees
- The impacts of not having or not enforcing tree ordinances can be clearly seen
- Large-scale clear-cutting associated with industrial construction is having the most noticeable impact on the county’s tree canopy

Tree Canopy Change Overtime

Municipality	2014 Percent Vegetation	2020 Percent Vegetation	Percent Change	Acreage Change
Unincorporated	25%	32%	7%	14,655
Savannah	39%	49%	10%	7,137
Garden City	53%	66%	13%	1,207
Pooler	62%	63%	1%	204
Bloomingtondale	83%	83%	0%	-5
Tybee Island	7%	15%	8%	168
Thunderbolt	17%	31%	14%	146
Port Wentworth	66%	73%	8%	812
Vernonburg	73%	83%	10%	26
Overall	34%	41%	7%	23,757

Figure 7.6–Chatham County Tree Canopy Percent Change

Challenges Ahead

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT:

The City of Pooler has seen a dramatic 39% increase in population since 2010. This is vastly higher than Chatham County's population growth of about 9% during the same time frame. This sustained residential growth and industrial expansion in the city will continue to drive a reduction in tree canopy with fewer trees being replanted versus what is being removed during construction. This additional growth will continue to put stressors on the city's infrastructure systems and require planning to ensure the growing population and related impacts do not adversely affect the city's efforts toward sustainability.

AGING TREE CANOPY:

Pooler is dealing with an aging tree canopy, especially in older neighborhoods with trees that are 75-100+ years old. For example, most urban live oaks will live to be about 150 years old, aging out around 2040. To ensure that a consistent tree cover remains intact at all times, the City will need to make certain that dollars are programmed, trees are systematically replanted, and strict protection and planting ordinances are strengthened.

INCREASED OCCURRENCES OF PESTS AND DISEASE:

Increased globalization means that pests and disease travel quicker and further. For example, the adjacent City of Savannah has already lost 1000+ Sugarberry trees to an unknown disease and the Asian Longhorned Beetle whose larvae feed on hardwoods and infestations in the US have led to large-scale destruction of trees, was recently found in nearby South Carolina.

Impacts of Changing Climate

The coastal area has begun to see scattered "ghost forests" that represent the extent of coastal trees lost to sea-level rise and saltwater intrusion over the last several decades.

Trees are a powerful tool by naturally absorbing large amounts of stormwater, helping to mitigate any flood impacts from increased sea levels. However, a negative consequence of this same saltwater storm surge and infiltration can often later be seen after storms and recurrent flooding. The rising waters lead to saltwater intrusion into freshwater habitat, often gradually killing or severely damaging coastal trees from the roots up leading to their expensive removal later.

Additionally, tree canopies can greatly assist in lowering the temperatures and overall "heat stress" in communities dealing with known heat island effects.



PROTECTED MOUNTAINS, RIVERS, & CORRIDORS

The State of Georgia requires every community to identify and put mechanisms in place to protect specific critical resources such as mountains, rivers, and river corridors that flank major rivers. The coastal region does not contain any protected statewide mountain areas; however, the coast's beautiful rivers and corridors are not only critical ecosystems, but they are paramount to the community's future growth and sustainability.

These river corridors are of vital importance since they help preserve those qualities that make a river suitable as a habitat for wildlife, a site for recreation, and a source for clean drinking water. River corridors also allow the free movement of wildlife from area to area within the state, help control erosion and river sedimentation, and help absorb floodwaters during natural events, and allow the natural migration of floodwaters due to sea level rise.

Riparian buffers are of particular importance to the overall protection of water quality and habitat within the Lowcountry and coastal areas of Georgia. Scientific research has found many reasons for riparian buffers, including:

- to reduce the volume and velocity of stormwater runoff in order to protect the hydrological profiles of surrounding waterways;
- to reduce sediment and pollutants going into open water;
- to provide upland wildlife habitat areas;
- to help maintain in-stream temperatures provided by shade within the tree canopy of the buffer system;
- Buffering adjacent neighborhoods, and
- enhancing community appearance

RIVER CORRIDOR

Corridors include an expanded channel width to help preserve the qualities that make a river or stream suitable as a habitat for wildlife, a site for recreation, and a source for domestic and other water uses.

—FEMA

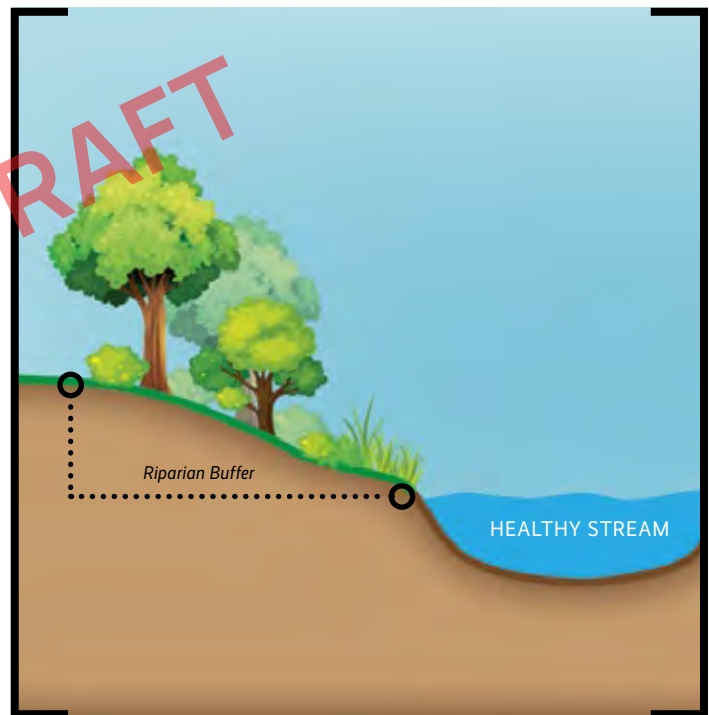


Figure 7.7–Riparian Buffer



RIPARIAN BUFFER

A riparian buffer or stream buffer is a vegetated area (a buffer strip) near a stream, usually forested, which helps shade and partially protect the stream from the impact of adjacent land uses.

—EPA



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RENEWABLE ENERGY

A community's dependence on non-local fossil fuels as an energy source has many far-reaching consequences. Extracting these resources negatively impacts the environment, while burning fossil fuels contributes to poor air quality which can lead to respiratory disease and other ailments. The culmination of these actions depletes the atmosphere and exacerbates climate change.

Facing the challenge to accelerate the development of clean, renewable energy sources to respond to the negative impacts of burning fossil fuels, while also protecting the natural resources and unique community character is a daunting endeavor. But it is one that must be made a priority in order to protect the environment and the quality of life of Pooler's residents.

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SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Historically, the method for handling solid waste in Chatham County has been primarily through the disposal of solid waste in area landfills. This arrangement has been satisfactory from the standpoint of the landfill operators and their customers who enjoy the benefits of the profits generated (operators) and the relatively inexpensive disposal fees (customers). However, because of the high land costs in Chatham County, it is unlikely that land will be available to construct new landfills when existing landfills reach capacity, at which time county residents may be required to pay additional transportation costs to new landfills in other counties. In addition, it is likely that surrounding counties will demand a premium to accept waste generated outside of their area.

Chatham County's two landfills will reach capacity between the next 3-9 years.
 —Georgia EPD

Pooler has a curbside single-stream recycling program. The city's recycling program is popular with residents and has proven to be successful in removing materials from the waste stream prior to disposal in area landfills. The cheap cost of certain raw materials in comparison to the cost incurred to recycle that material continues to be a challenge in making recycling even more successful. In addition, recent years have seen adjustments in the recycling industry due to global market changes, leaving some materials unable to be recycled at all. Education campaigns should be adjusted to emphasize the need to reduce consumption and reuse materials where possible.

Preserving the capacity of the landfills through reduction of the waste stream by reduction of waste generated, recycling, composting, and mulching of yard waste should be a priority of the county. The city of Savannah is currently planning for expansion of its Dean Forest Landfill, however, as shown by the number of operating years remaining for each of the two area landfills, and because the management of solid waste requires a long-term perspective, a regional outlook and discussion on solid waste management is warranted.

Solid Waste Facilities

Facility	Facility Description	Average Daily Tons	Net Volume per Year	Rate of Fill (yd3/day)	Years Remaining	Estimated Fill Date	Operating Days per Year
Savannah - Dean Forest Rd (SL)	Municipal Solid Waste Landfill	276.00	109,415.00	329.00	3	06.01.2024	333
Superior Landfill & Recycling Center 2 MSWL	Municipal Solid Waste Landfill	2,463.00	766,270.00	2,737.00	9	10.09.2030	280

Figure 7.8—Chatham County Permitted Landfills



CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change does not simply mean warmer temperatures. Negative impacts of climate change that are seen locally include extreme heat, changes in the amount of annual rainfall, warmer ocean waters that feed and strengthen hurricanes, beach erosion, saltwater encroachment upon drinking water sources and natural habitats, infrastructure damage, loss of property and flooding in the region due to sea level rise and “sunny day” flooding. The effects of climate change negatively impact the quality of life of residents in addition to causing irreparable damage to the natural and built environment.

Up to 178,787 people in Georgia could be at risk of sea level rise impacts by 2100 and, if sea levels rise 3 feet by 2100, Georgia will lose 36 square miles of salt marsh
—Georgia Climate Project



CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change includes both global warming driven by human emissions of greenhouse gases and the resulting large-scale shifts in weather patterns.

Changes occurring on Georgia’s coast due to climate change are expected to redistribute species and greatly modify ecosystems. Local ecosystems provide animal habitat, recreational opportunities, improve water quality, provide seafood, reduce erosion, minimize flooding impacts, and aid in the carbon sequestration process. These potential changes will come at a great cost financially, in the form of tax dollars spent to mitigate impacts and the loss of revenue by small, local businesses that make their livelihood fishing or working the land, in addition to the cost to the natural environment of such a loss of habitat (US Global Change Research Program, Fourth National Climate Assessment).

Climate change efforts can be in the form of mitigation, reducing activities that add to climate change, and adaptation, adapting to the changes in the climate that are currently occurring. Both mitigation and adaptation efforts will need to be implemented to protect the region from the impending negative impacts of climate change.

The way communities are developed has significant impacts on greenhouse gas emissions. Fundamental to this is for the city to support and require Smart Growth measures to manage the impacts of climate change as it relates to land use and development. This can be done through both mitigation and adaptation measures to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions from development and redevelopment projects.

Some mitigation efforts include the preservation of greenspace (particularly ecologically valuable land), preservation of existing trees and/or requiring the planting of new trees, limiting the amount of impervious surfaces permitted, transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable, clean energy sources, and implementing land use regulations and capital improvement plans that limit development and infrastructure in areas at risk of sea level rise impacts. All new infrastructure should be designed with climate change in mind.

The city is already seeing the effects of climate change, and these effects are projected to become more pronounced in the coming decades. Impacts will include more and stronger storms, more drought, more frequent extreme-heat events, rising sea levels, and more localized flooding. Recognizing what specific changes might be projected for the city is essential to planning the community's future land use.

Adaptation efforts include elevating roads, lift stations, drinking water and other facilities where feasible, building

flood defenses, preparing for reduced water availability, and planning for heat waves. It is a delicate balancing act to attempt to protect natural resources, public safety, and the economic stability of the community while implementing efforts to address climate change. Successful outcomes will depend on multi-jurisdictional cooperation in the development and implementation of policies that incorporate mitigation and adaptation measures.

The implementation of smart strategies can help the community adapt to these changes as well as other challenges that could arise regardless of climate change. Four main challenges facing Pooler include:

- Urban infrastructure and health risks
- Flood risks in coastal and low-lying areas
- Natural ecosystem transformation
- Economic and health risks for more rural and low-income communities



URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE AND HEALTH RISKS:

Pooler is particularly vulnerable to climate change compared to cities in other regions, with expected impacts to infrastructure and human health. The vibrancy and viability of this area, including the people and critical regional resources located within, are increasingly at risk due to heat, flooding, and vector-borne disease brought about by a changing climate. Pooler is rapidly growing and offers opportunities to adopt effective adaptation efforts to prevent future negative impacts of climate change.

FLOOD RISKS IN COASTAL AND LOW-LYING REGIONS:

Pooler’s inland low-lying area supports a rapidly growing population, a tourism economy, critical industries, and important cultural and natural resources that are highly vulnerable to climate change impacts. The combined effects of changing extreme rainfall events and sea level rise are already increasing flood frequencies, which impacts property values and infrastructure viability. Without the implementation of significant adaptation measures, the area is projected to experience daily high tide flooding by the end of the century.

NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS WILL BE TRANSFORMED:

Pooler’s diverse natural systems, which provide many benefits to the community, will be transformed by climate change. Changing winter temperature extremes, wildfire patterns, sea levels, hurricanes, floods, droughts, and warming ocean temperatures are expected to redistribute species and modify ecosystems. As a result, the ecological resources that our community depend on for livelihood, protection, and well-being are increasingly at risk, and future generations can expect to experience and interact with natural systems that are much different than those we see today.

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ECONOMIC AND HEALTH RISKS FOR MORE RURAL AND LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES:

More frequent extreme heat episodes and changing seasonal climates are projected to increase exposure-linked health impacts and economic vulnerabilities in our manufacturing, fishing, and shrimping sectors. Projected warming ocean temperatures, sea level rise, and ocean and coastal acidification are raising concern over future harvests. By the end of the century, over one-half billion labor hours could be lost from extreme heat-related impacts. Such changes would negatively impact the region’s labor-intensive occupations and compound existing social stresses in the city’s low-income areas.

While adaptation and resilience can help to moderate climate change impacts, areas of the city facing other stressors, such as poverty and limited access to healthcare, will be less resilient and will have a harder time coping with climate-related challenges. Heat-related stresses are presently a major concern with future temperature increases projected to pose challenges for human health. While recent regional temperature trends for Chatham have not shown the same consistent rate of daytime maximum temperature increase as observed in other parts of the United States, climate model simulations strongly suggest that daytime maximum temperatures are likely to increase as greenhouse gases continue to be emitted into the atmosphere.

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The resulting temperature increases are expected to add to the heat health burden in both Pooler’s more rural and urbanized areas. Additionally, drought has been a recurrent issue affecting the community’s water resources. With rapid growth in population and overall demand, drought is increasingly a concern for the local jurisdictions’ water resource managers, as well as our ecosystems, and energy producers.



HEAT ISLANDS & CLIMATE CHANGE

As new development occurs to accommodate the city's population influx, the built environment will be altered in a way that significantly affects the natural environment surrounding it. The replacement of open, vegetated land with the dark, impervious surfaces that characterize cities modifies the local temperature and moisture characteristics, contributing to a climatological phenomenon known as the urban heat island effect.

The urban heat island effect can cause cities to have temperatures up to 10°F hotter than their more rural surroundings
—UCAR Center for Science Education

Generally, heat islands are grouped into two distinct categories: surface heat islands and atmospheric heat islands. Surface heat islands are simply the elevation in temperature of surfaces in urban areas over surfaces in the surrounding rural areas, while atmospheric heat islands directly impact the thermal comfort and health of people and animals in an area. Surface heat islands are present at all times, but are often most intense during the day when urban materials receive the most solar radiation. Additionally, surface heat islands are not heavily influenced by the anthropogenic heat sources that affect the air temperature of a city, such as transportation vehicles or heating and cooling units.



URBAN HEAT ISLAND EFFECT

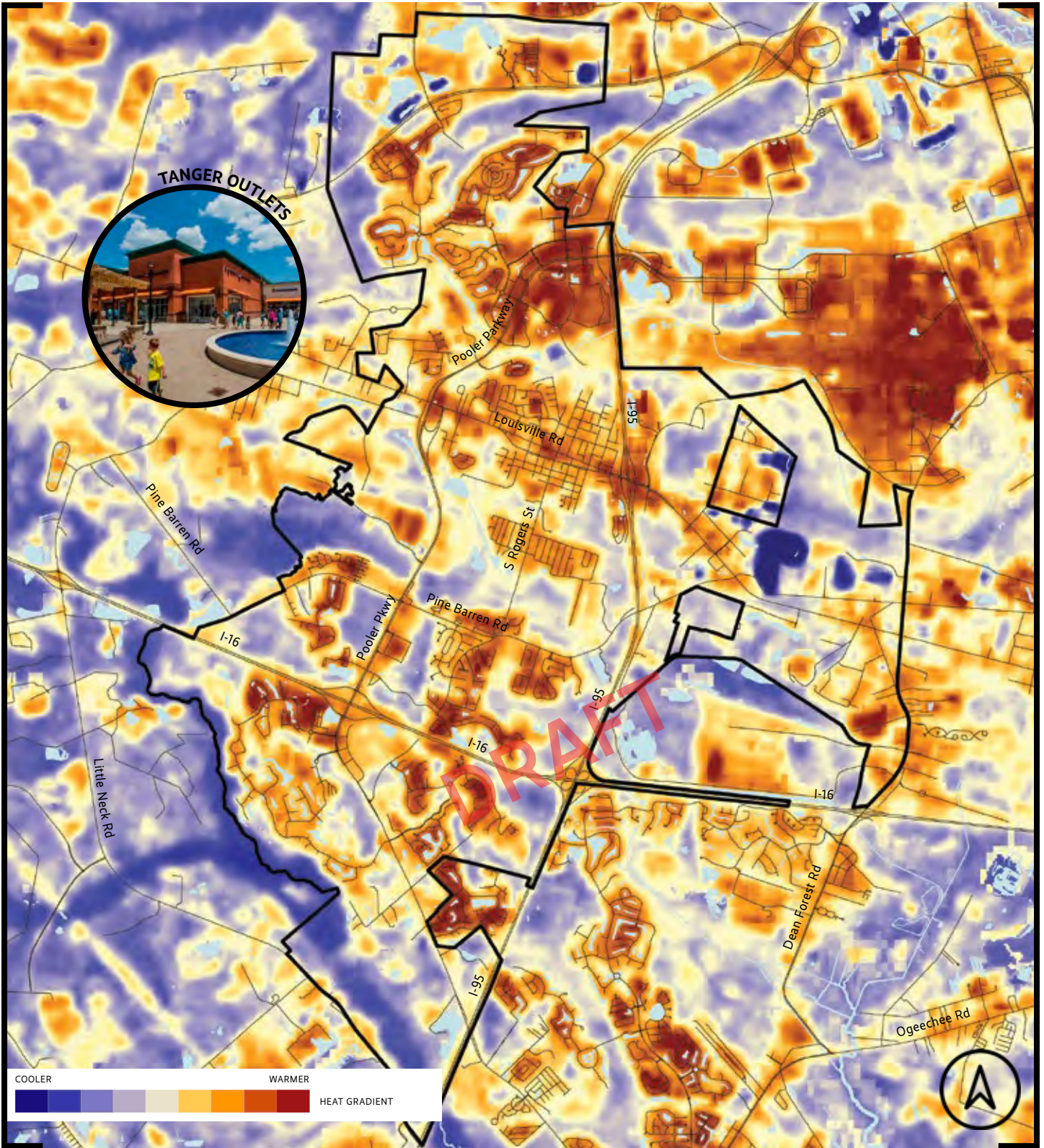
Heat islands are urbanized areas that experience higher temperatures than outlying areas. Structures such as buildings, roads, and other infrastructure absorb and re-emit the sun's heat more than natural landscapes such as forests and water bodies.

—EPA

Temperatures vary within cities, too. Areas that are well-shaded or have ample green space are cooler than areas covered with asphalt or concrete. Historically, neighborhoods with little or no vegetation have been inhabited by minority populations and those with low socioeconomic status, exposing them to increased heat and the negative consequences associated with it. Land surface temperatures in Pooler are shown in Map 7.11.

It is important to understand and consider these environmental inequalities when working to improve our community for all residents.

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Map 7.11-Land Surface Temperatures, Pooler



SMART GROWTH & CLIMATE CHANGE

Smart growth policies contribute to both mitigating and adapting to climate change. Mitigation strategies reduce greenhouse gas emissions from development, and adaptation strategies make communities more resilient to the effects of a changing climate

Smart growth strategies also bring environmental benefits and provide economic advantages to local governments and the private sector. In addition, they can save people money on energy and transportation, which is particularly important for low-income residents, and help protect human health.



Mitigation

The way communities are developed has significant impacts on greenhouse gas emissions. Pooler can reduce greenhouse gas emissions from development and redevelopment if they:

- Build compactly and use energy-efficient, green building techniques, which reduce emissions from both electricity generation and transportation.
- Reuse existing infrastructure and buildings to take advantage of previous investments and the energy already used to build them.
- Put homes, jobs, stores, parks, schools, and other destinations close to each other so that people can easily walk, bike, use public transit, or drive shorter distances.
- Preserve green space, which can sequester CO², by conserving ecologically valuable land and promoting development in previously developed areas, which helps reduce pressure to build on undeveloped land.

LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION?

The most current information about smart growth strategies and their environmental benefits can be found at the link below...

<https://www.epa.gov>

Adaptation

As noted earlier, the effects of climate change are already being experienced, and these effects are projected to become more pronounced in the coming decades. Impacts could include more and stronger storms, more drought, more frequent extreme-heat events, continual rising sea levels, and more flooding.

Smart growth strategies could help the community adapt to these changes, as well as natural disasters, economic changes, and other challenges that could arise regardless of climate change. Some strategies we should consider include:

- Determine which areas are both well-connected to existing development and less vulnerable to current and projected climate change impacts such as sea level rise and higher storm surges, and riverine flooding, and encourage growth in these areas.
- Discourage building in areas that are currently or are projected to be more vulnerable to climate change-related impacts. Making it easier to build in safer areas can help relieve pressure to develop in more vulnerable areas.
- Preserve large, contiguous areas of open space to better protect ecosystems that might be under pressure from the changing climate. Open space preserved along water bodies can also absorb flood waters and reduce flooding in developed areas.
- Coordinate land use and transportation infrastructure decisions, and incorporate climate change projections into these decisions.

- Encourage water- and energy-efficient buildings and land use patterns so that communities can continue to thrive if energy prices rise. This strategy can also help communities and their residents better cope with drought and extreme heat.
- Upgrade stormwater systems to better manage heavier storm flows and use green infrastructure to reduce the amount of runoff from paved surfaces.
- Encourage green roofs, parks, street trees, and other elements that can reduce ambient air temperatures and filter pollutants from stormwater runoff and the air.
- Design buildings with adaptation and resilience in mind.

Recognizing the long-term challenges associated with climate change and taking proactive steps to adapt will allow the city to be much more prepared to retain population while moving residents away from danger.



Photo Credit: Cody Thomas



SEA LEVEL RISE

Concerns of sea level rise and the negative impacts associated with it are resulting in many coastal communities considering implementing measures to reduce risks to private property owners and public investments. It is important to identify what areas are at risk and gauge the level of risk, or severity of impacts, for each area in order to determine the most appropriate means to protect it.

Land use regulations, land purchase/buyout programs and policies that do not allow for the investment of public funds for infrastructure or other development in areas at risk for flooding due to sea level rise reduce the number of vulnerable structures and infrastructure, while efforts such as the elevation of existing roads or lift stations mitigate the impacts on existing investments. It is more costly to mitigate than to prevent development in areas that are at a higher risk. All future capital improvement projects should include an assessment of potential sea level rise impacts through the expected life cycle design of the projects.

Sea level data recorded at the tide gauge at Fort Pulaski, just 30 miles outside of Pooler, begins in 1935 and indicates a historic sea level rise trend of approximately one foot over 100 years. More recent global data and local data from Fort Pulaski suggest that this rate is accelerating, although there remains a high degree of uncertainty within the future projections.

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FORT PULASKI





PLAN 2040 SURVEY

The MPC's Plan 2040 survey asked how important was "Protecting the community from environmental hazards and climate change?"

Eighty-eight percent (88%) of the respondents felt that this objective was either very important, important, or mildly important for Pooler to work on.

A full copy of the survey and the results can be found in the Plan 2040 Appendix.

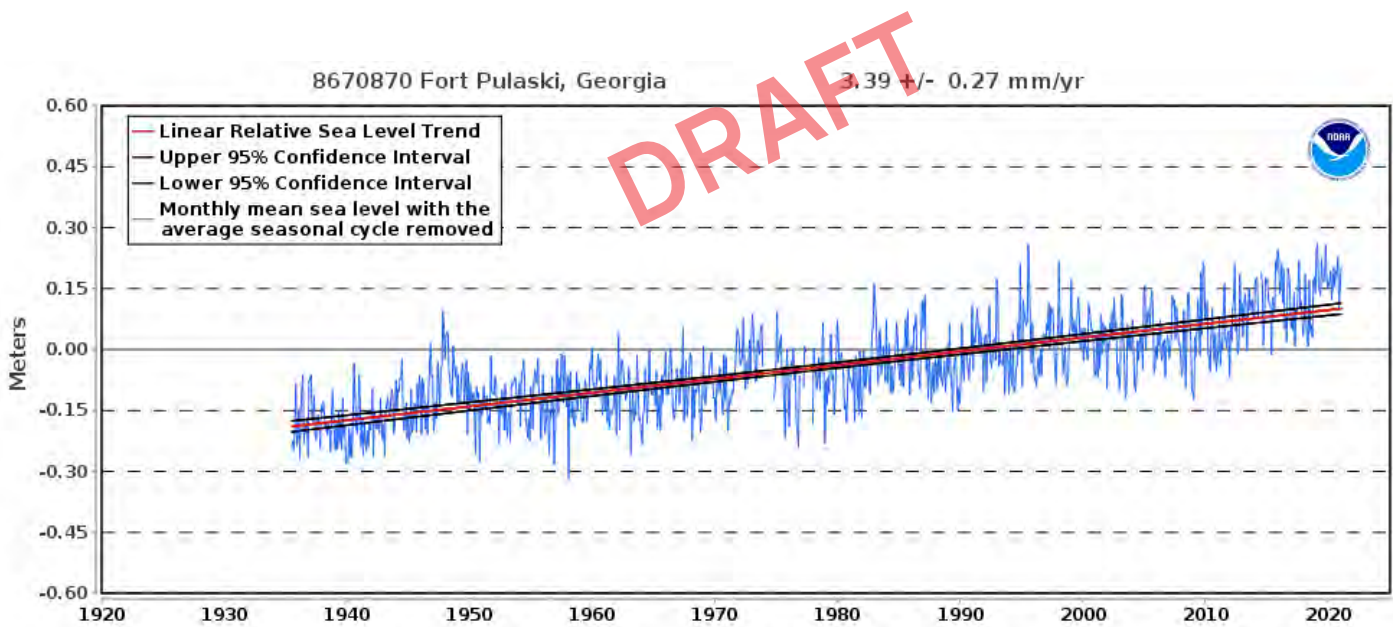


Figure 7.9—Local Increasing Sea Level Trends



RESILIENCY & LOCAL PREPAREDNESS

All communities are vulnerable to the potential impacts of an event, such as a hurricane, pandemic, or infrastructure failure, that can cripple the routine of residents, business, industry, infrastructure, and government services. Community resiliency includes implementing safeguards so that all members of the community are better prepared for such events, ensuring that all of the community will bounce back and flourish as quickly as possible following the event.

Community resiliency also protects against more common occurrences such as sea level rise, sunny day flooding, and severe economic inequities. Building a strong network focused on addressing equity gaps and elevating vulnerable populations is necessary in creating a truly resilient community.

Community Resiliency Stats

Increase in Extremely Hot Days*

79%  Within 25 Years

*Headwaters Economics



Coastal Empire Resilience Network

The Metropolitan Planning Commission began work in 2020 to expand previous work done around sea level rise impacts along Chatham County's coast. The MPC began partnering with the City of Savannah, University of Georgia, Georgia Sea Grant, Georgia Department of Natural Resources Coastal Resources Division, and others to develop a Coastal Empire Resilience Network (CERN).

The CERN will engage regional community partners, municipal staff, and policymakers to coordinate strategies to address the physical, economic, and social challenges that the region faces due to climate change and other hazards. Also included will be an effort to ensure all local level policy makers have adequate education on climate change and sea level rise. CERN will work to align regional strategies, share resources, and advocate for collective action to improve the resilience of the coastal region.

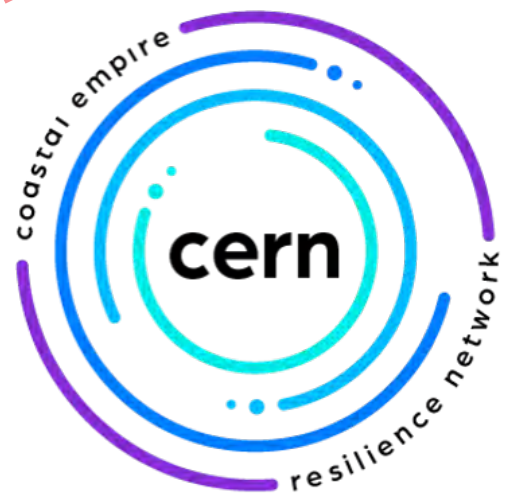
CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Climate resilience is the ability to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to hazardous events, trends, or disturbances related to climate. Improving climate resilience involves assessing how climate change will create new, or alter current, climate-related risks, and taking steps to better cope with these risks.

—Center for Climate and Energy Solutions



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Hurricanes

Hurricane season officially runs from June 1 through November 30, with the peak period for hurricane development in early to mid-September. Over the last decade there has been an increase in both frequency and intensity of storms during hurricane season due to increasing water temperatures. In addition, the rising sea level has resulted in higher storm surges in these storm events, most recently in 2016 with Hurricane Matthew (Category 2 off Chatham coast), Hurricane Michael in 2018 (Category 1–Tropical Storm in Georgia), and Dorian in 2019 (Category 3 off Chatham coast).

The six coastal counties at highest risk of evacuation because of storm surge are Bryan, Camden, Chatham, Glynn, Liberty and McIntosh. The hurricane threat in Chatham County is high since Georgia’s coastline is impacted from tropical systems from both the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico.

Population growth along the coast has complicated the evacuation and sheltering process. Millions of residents and tourists from Georgia and its neighboring states of Florida, North Carolina, and South Carolina jam highways in search of safety and shelter when evacuation orders are issued. And often, just the threat of a hurricane is enough to put voluntary and mandatory evacuation orders into effect.

Improved forecasting and warning capabilities have diminished hurricane-related deaths in the 20th century; however, damage to property has increased with the rapid growth along coastal regions. For this reason, population growth, flood plain management, and housing development issues are carefully monitored by government and municipal agencies to ensure that all of the coastal communities and their inhabitants are safe for years to come.

COVID-19 Impacts

COVID-19s impact on the environment has been mixed. Although the pandemic resulted in improved environmental conditions, there have been other negative effects, some of which are obvious, others less so.

In short, the positive effects have been reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, improved water quality, reduced noise pollution, improved air quality and in some cases, wildlife restoration. However, some negative effects have also increased such as the amount of medical waste, haphazard disposal of PPEs (i.e., face masks), increased municipal waste and reduced recycling efforts. Building back with sustainability in mind will be critical for our future success.

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HURRICANES

A hurricane is a type of storm called a tropical cyclone, which forms over tropical or subtropical waters... When a storm's maximum sustained winds reach 74 mph, it is called a hurricane. The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale is a 1 to 5 rating, or category, based on a hurricane's maximum sustained wind.

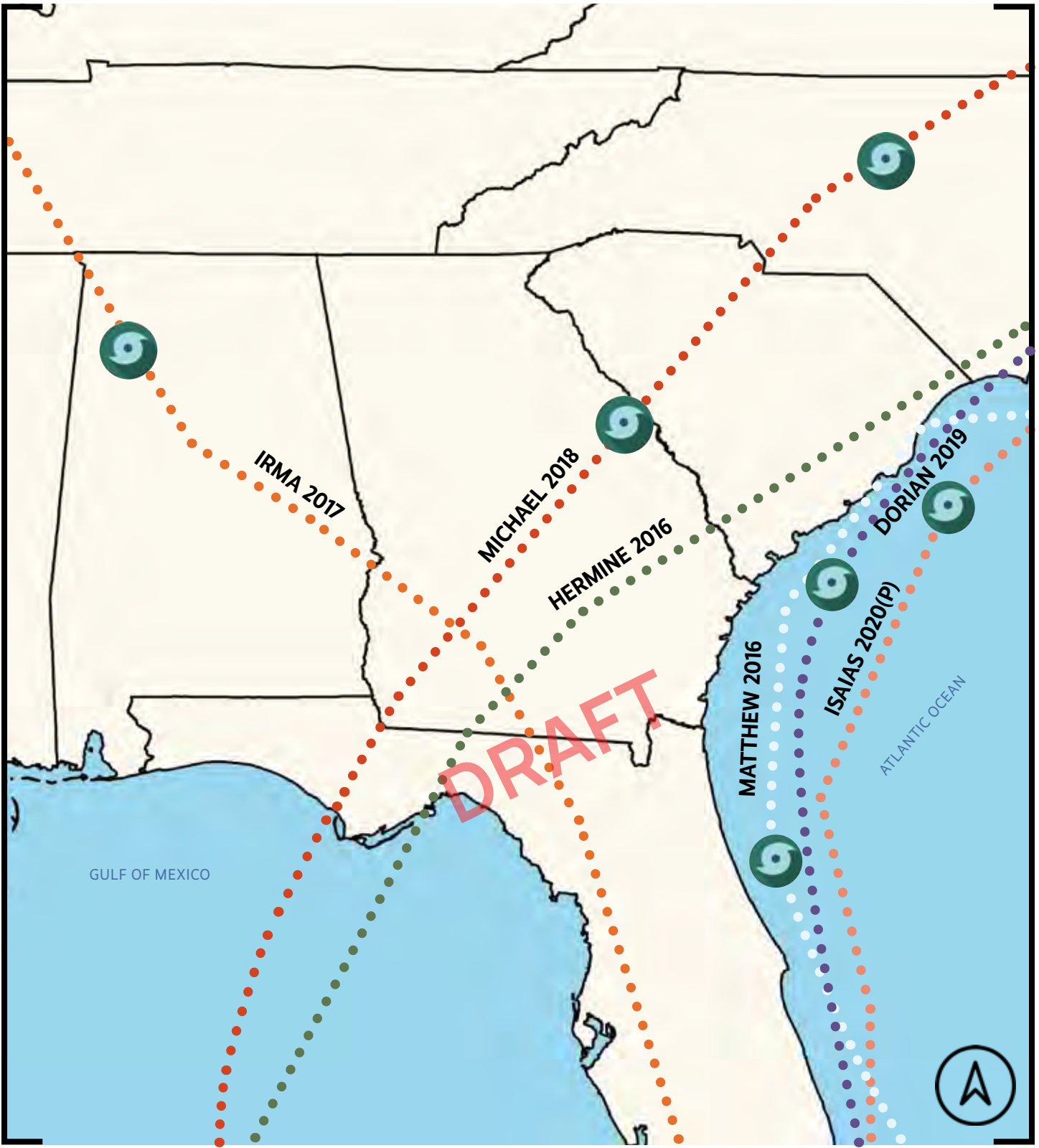
—NOAA

Hurricane List 2016–2020

Storm Name	Date Range	Max Wind Speed	Min Pressure	Max Category
Hermine 2016	8.28.16–9.08.16	70	981	H1
Matthew 2016	9.28.16–10.10.16	145	934	H5
Irma 2017	8.30.17–9.13.17	155	914	H5
Michael 2018	10.06.18–10.15.18	140	919	H5
Dorian 2019	08.24.19–09.09.19	160	910	H5
Isaias 2020	7.23.20–7.05.20	75	987	H1

Figure 7.14–Hurricane Categorization





Map 7.12-Hurricane Paths



PLANNING ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

In order to determine the adequacy of existing policies and programs, a thorough assessment of both is needed. This will ensure that resources are utilized, developed, managed, and preserved wisely for maximum long-range benefits for the community.

After careful review, the following list was created to highlight the points that will need careful attention in the future.

COASTAL RESOURCES:

More intense local programs and development standards for marsh, wetland, and island protection need to be established, implemented, and maintained. There is also a strong need for natural resource sites in need of protection to be identified and ultimately “protected” through a number of means: possible acquisition using SPLOST funds, zoning, conservation easements, donation, etc. Also in need of continued protection are coastal species of flora and fauna in danger of population decline and extinction. The previously active Chatham County Resources Protection Commission (CCRPC) was a viable mechanism for this type of protection effort; however, due to discontinued funding, the program has stalled as of 2021.



LOCAL IMPACT OF COVID-19

COVID-19's impact on the environment has been mixed. Although the pandemic resulted in improved environmental conditions, there have been other negative effects, some of which are obvious, others less so.

In short, the positive effects have been reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, improved water quality, reduced noise pollution, improved air quality and in some cases, wildlife restoration. However, some negative effects have also increased such as the amount of medical waste, haphazard disposal of PPEs (i.e., face masks), increased municipal waste and reduced recycling efforts. Building back with sustainability in mind will be critical for our future success.

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EFFICIENT LAND USE:

Maximizing the use of existing infrastructure and minimizing the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the periphery of the community should continue. This is achieved by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the traditional core of the community and focused around transportation; designing new development to minimize the amount of land consumed; carefully planning investment in public infrastructure; and maintaining open space and conservation uses.

Enhancements to existing regulations to require and/or incentivize open space preservation are needed. Both data and public feedback have shown that the community is calling for development that minimizes the amount of land consumed and allows for more open space to be set aside from development for public use as parks, greenways, and wildlife corridors.

PARK, RECREATION, AND CONSERVATION AREAS:

Too often laws are not sufficient to protect conservation sites from adjacent development impact. More restrictive zoning regulations and buffer requirements may be needed in the future to limit or prohibit future uses in these areas. In addition, the CCRPC program cited above could be a possible viable mechanism for increasing the number of permanently protected areas within the city should funding again become available.

WEST CHATHAM COUNTY GROWTH:

Rapid growth in western Chatham County has led to separate, unique challenges for Pooler. A strong program for natural resource protection is needed to ensure that the area’s isolated wetlands, tree canopies, and greenspace are not lost due to the rapid development in Pooler. Additionally, the community is requesting more open and park space, which directly correlates to the protection of greenspace.

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Photo Credit: Hussey Gay Bell



STORMWATER:

Stormwater BMPs such as Low Impact Development (LID) strategies that reduce stormwater runoff must continue to be implemented elsewhere throughout the county to lessen the impacts of runoff on the entire coastal environment. The city should evaluate to determine whether a stormwater utility is feasible for the continued maintenance, management, and treatment of the city's stormwater system. Additionally, all of the jurisdictions within Chatham County need to collectively discuss stronger, more unified options for handling stormwater and flood waters related to growth on a county-wide scale.

SALTWATER INTRUSION:

Saltwater intrusion into the Floridan Aquifer system needs to continue being addressed regionally to ensure the protection of the coastal area's groundwater source of drinking water. An update of the Red Zone Water Management Plan needs to be completed to determine total usage for the region and the city's capacity for growth.

SOLID WASTE:

Solid waste control and disposal need to be evaluated and addressed on a regional basis to allow for a more thorough approach to management, reduction, and continued capacity for the coastal areas. This effort should include the reduction of waste streams through recycling, composting, and mulching of yard waste.

SEA LEVEL RISE:

The city needs to continue to evaluate and update the current building standards, zoning code, and related regulations to ensure the adequate protection of the existing built environment, the design of future construction, and the resiliency of the natural environment to periodic permanent inundation over time due to sea level rise.

LOCAL PREPAREDNESS:

Chatham County's Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP) overseen by the Chatham Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) is a multi-phase effort to help the County address the complications that can arise following a disaster as the community attempts to rebuild and recover. The DRP is a tool that can identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve. Additionally, the countywide Hazard Mitigation Plan outlines specific hazards and highlights areas being focused on to become a more resilient community. Continued efforts are needed around planning for infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, hospitals, housing) to pinpoint where to direct new growth.



Photo Credit: Hussey Gay Bell

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RACIAL DISPARITIES:

Environmental racism refers to the disproportionate exposure to and impact of environmental harm on people of color (POC). POC-majority neighborhoods are more likely to be exposed to these harms due to redlining and development policies that segregated their communities into specific areas. These areas are more likely to be near pollutant-heavy industries and/or traffic-heavy roads. Additionally, the design of these neighborhoods, with many lacking foliage and containing a large amount of asphalt, can impact how hot the neighborhood is for residents. Summertime temperatures in neighborhoods containing fewer trees are often more than five degrees hotter than in a tree-heavy neighborhoods. Furthermore, redlined neighborhoods tend to be low-lying neighborhoods that experience recurring flooding.

These environmental impacts are deleterious, as these communities face exposure to contaminated air, water, and soil. Such environmental harms can increase health problems such as asthma, cancer, and heat-related illness. Stronger policy action—such as reducing pollution, reducing segregation, enhancing the tree canopy, and investing in flood protection—is necessary to improve the environmental health of these communities.

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QUALITY OF LIFE ELEMENT

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08



QUALITY OF LIFE

Introduction

The Historic and Cultural element of Pooler 2040 seeks to present goals and recommendations for establishing historic preservation activities within Pooler in order to preserve and recognize its historic, cultural, and archaeological resources.

This element 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 which 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.



1993

Since the last known historic resource survey was conducted by the MPC



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.

There has been substantial interest in pursuing historic preservation in Pooler, however preservation efforts have been limited. The last known historic resource survey was completed in 1992/1993 by the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) staff. This survey identified 38 resources in an area bounded by Collins Street, Chestnut Street, Holly (Traver) Street, and Read Street. The 2016–2036 Comprehensive Plan incorporated and expanded upon this original survey area for the establishment of a Historic District Character Area.

Goals pertaining to this character area included the establishment of a historic preservation ordinance, design standards, and an architectural review committee. However, no up-to-date survey has been taken of either this area or the City of Pooler generally, and no further preservation efforts have been established.



POOLER CITY HALL



MIGHTY EIGHTH AIRFORCE MARKER



POOLER CABOOSE



POOLER HISTORY

Indigenous History

The area now known as the Pooler was likely occupied by Native peoples from the Yamacree Nation and/or the Mvskoke (Muscogee/Creek) Nations prior to the arrival of British colonist in the mid-1700s. This land was ceded in the Savannah Treaty of 1733 between the Trustees for the Colony of Georgia and the Chief Men of the nation of the Lower Creeks (*Georgia Treaties, 1733–1763, Vol. XI*).

Central of Georgia Railroad Station Stop No. 1

Until the mid-1800s, the land that would become Pooler remained relatively un-developed. In 1838, Station Stop No. 1 was established by the Central of Georgia Railroad, contributing greatly to the economic, social, industrial, and transportation development in the area. This station was named for Robert W. Pooler, born in 1796, who was a prominent figure in Savannah and instrumental in the railroad route itself. Robert W. Pooler deeded a large piece of land to the Central of Georgia Railroad Co. as a right-of-way. Pooler, with his plan for the Georgia railroad route, went in person to each county the railroad line was to run through, and arranged for the purchase of rights-of-way. Before the larger formation of the town itself, a portion of the land was sold by the railroad and became part of the residential area around the station. The Pooler station was the last stop in the connection route before reaching Savannah.

The Civil War at Pooler Station

On Friday, December 9, 1864, the more than 11,000 troops of the 17th Corps approached and made camp at Pooler Station No. 1 on the Central Railroad. The next morning, General Sherman rode forward on Louisville Road with his staff to get a closer look at the Confederate line. In a dense wood of the modern day Tom Triplett Community Park, Sherman and the troops stopped to assess and strategize their eventual siege of Savannah. From December 10th to 15th, the troops set up camp in these woods, where hundreds of small mounds, made by Federal soldiers to keep belongings out of water, can still be found. The marker in the photo below was erected by the Georgia Civil War Heritage Trails in Tom Triplett Park and describes a more detailed history of this event.



The Beginnings of Pooler

At the time of Sherman’s camping in Pooler, less than 200 people lived in the isolated Pooler community. Following the siege of Savannah, residential development in Pooler was spurred by a man named Ben Rothwell. Rothwell, of the Rothwell Brick and Manufacturing Company, purchased several hundred acres for locals to utilize to build homes which would make the area a lasting community.

When Pooler officially incorporated in 1907, the population had grown slightly to 337 people. Later, in 1923, the first Pooler Town Hall was built. During this time, dairies made up the majority of the local economy, with some small shops and businesses springing up later. In 1928, the paving of Highway 80 allowed residents of Pooler easy access to Savannah.

The Mighty Eighth Air Force

The Eighth Air Force of the United States Army Air Corps was known as the most effective bomber force of World War II and was monickered the “Mighty Eighth”. Activated in January of 1942 at the nearby Savannah Army Airbase (also known as Hunter Army Airfield), the Eighth’s forces grew in numbers such that by November 1944, the 5,000th airplane was sent to England from the Hunter Army Airfield. This plane was a B-17G named City of Savannah, as it had been bought with half a million dollars donated by the people of Savannah and surrounding areas.

Planning for a museum to honor the Mighty Eighth began in 1983, by Major General Lewis E. Lyle and other war veterans. The city of Pooler offered land for the museum, and in May of 1996 the museum officially opened its doors. The B-17 Flying Fortress City of Savannah is currently being restored to its full combat configuration and is on display within the museum.

The City of Pooler

Development in Pooler began to pick up in the 50s with the construction of the I-95. Businesses began to develop at the intersection of I-95 and Highway 80. However, for the remainder of Pooler, growth was slow until the 90s, when development demands began to move west from Savannah. Pooler began to grow, with new subdivisions and businesses going up at a rapid rate. The Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport, followed by the completion of the Pooler Parkway in 2000, have contributed to the city being recognized as one of the fastest growing communities in Georgia. Development pressure continues in Pooler. With this rapid growth, older and affordable houses in the historic portion of Pooler can often come under threat of demolition.



EXISTING HISTORIC RESOURCE 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 resource 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 to take place in Pooler was in 1992/1993, in which 38 resources in an area bounded by Collins Street, Chestnut Street, Holly (Traver) Street, and Read Street were surveyed. Of these 38, two were determined to potentially meet the criteria for eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places (indicated as “Yes” in chart below). Six others were identified as needing more information to determine eligibility.

Historic Places: National Register Eligibility—Pooler

	Address	Year Built	NR Eligible
1	Fox Field Cemetery—0 Brooklyn Way	1933	More Info
2	Newton Family Cemetery—0 Cemetery Road	1888	More Info
3	321 E Collins Street	1900	No
4	425 East Collins Street (205 S. Skinner Avenue)	1888	N/A
5	Withington House—117 West Collins Street	1885	No
6	215 West Collins Street	1900	No
7	Milan House—305 West Collins Street	1920	No
8	Wright Cemetery—0 Dot Barn Road	1903	More Info
9	108 Morgan Street	1890	N/A
10	111 Morgan Street	1888	N/A
11	112 Morgan Street	1900	No
12	115 Morgan Street	1890	No
13	116 Morgan Street	1890	No
14	119 Morgan Street	1930	No
15	John Smith House—116 Newton Street	1887	No
16	W.B. Biddenbach House—120 Newton Street	1888	Yes
17	Baker Sisters House—205 Newton Street	1890	No
18	209 Newton Street	1890	N/A
19	213 Newton Street	1890	No

	Address	Year Built	NR Eligible
20	Antioch Baptist Church Cemetery—480 Pine Barren	1885	More Info
21	Halliday Cemetery—890 Pine Barren	1848	More Info
22	Ennis Cemetery—1485 Pine Barren	1895	More Info
23	Tyner House—5230 Old Louisville Road	1900	N/A
24	139 Read Street	1933	N/A
25	Richard Turner Masonic Lodge—108 N Rogers	1900	No
26	119 North Rogers Street	1890	N/A
27	120 North Rogers Street	Unknown	N/A
28	Nungazer House—121 North Rogers Street	1880	No
29	Adams House—129 North Rogers Street	1890	No
30	130 North Rogers Street	1890	No
31	Forehand House—133 Rogers Street	1900	No
32	134 North Rogers Street	1890	No
33	205 North Rogers Street	1900	No
34	Lindermann House—219 North Rogers Street	1890	No
35	Wallace House—230 Rothwell Street	1890	No
36	108 Symons Street	1900	No
37	104 East US Highway 80	1900	No
38	204 West US Highway 80	1900	Yes

Figure 8.1—Historic Places, Pooler

 DEMOLISHED; THIS IDENTIFICATION IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE



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RECOMMENDED HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY

Updating and expanding the historic resources survey ensures that those resources which are vital to the history of Pooler are known and potentially protected. Without this knowledge, further preservation efforts cannot be pursued. Moving forward, areas of Pooler which 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 1993 survey area bounded by Collins Street, Chestnut Street, Holly (Traver) Street, and Read Street, as well as the expanded boundaries identified in the 2016–2036 Comprehensive Plan should be utilized to create updated boundaries for an area in which new and renewed historic resources survey efforts should take place. 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 Survey Area

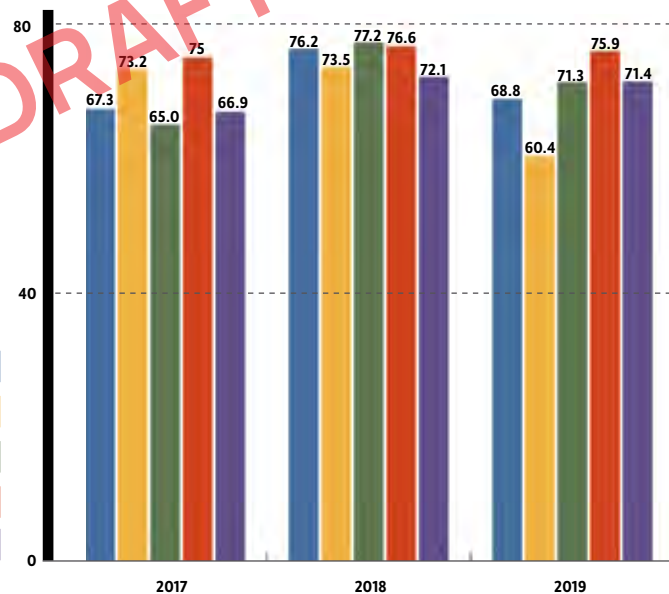
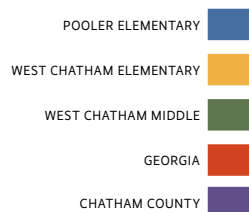



EDUCATION

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 the entire County are managed and operated by the Savannah—Chatham County Public School System (SCCPSS). As of 2020, the school system consists of 24 elementary schools, 7 K-8 schools, 8 middle schools, 11 high schools, and 5 charter schools. In 2018 the school district had 37,576 students enrolled with a 14:1 student to teacher ratio. In Pooler there are 3 schools, Pooler Elementary, West Chatham Elementary, West Chatham Middle School. The College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) scores have been provided below for each school in Pooler for the 2018–2019 school year.

- Pooler Elementary School received a CCRPI score of 68.8, or D grading for the 2018–2019 school year.
- West Chatham Elementary School received a CCRPI score of 60.4, or D grading for the 2018–2019 school year.
- West Chatham Middle School a CCRPI score of 71.3, or C grading for the 2018–2019 school year.

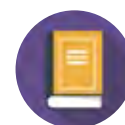



CCRPI

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

Figure 8.9—CCRPI Single Score 2017–2019
Georgia Department of Education



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.

A current trend which 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 school wide 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

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Education Beyond K-12

Life after high school presents many avenues to opportunity. Some may choose college or the military, many choose trade and technical schools, and some go straight into the workforce. Whatever route a new graduate, or any adult, wants to take, Pooler has several options to choose from in preparing one for their career moves. Attention to growing industries in the area—including manufacturing, coding, and film production—can help ensure the workforce has the skills needed to support the local economy.

Regarding countywide public high school graduation rates and educational attainment for adults, there has been gradual improvement in the past five years. Figure 8.10 shows that the high school graduation rate in the county has increased over 6 percent in the past 5 years; this calculation only reflects the students who graduated within 4 years.

Graduation Rate Trends, 2015–2019

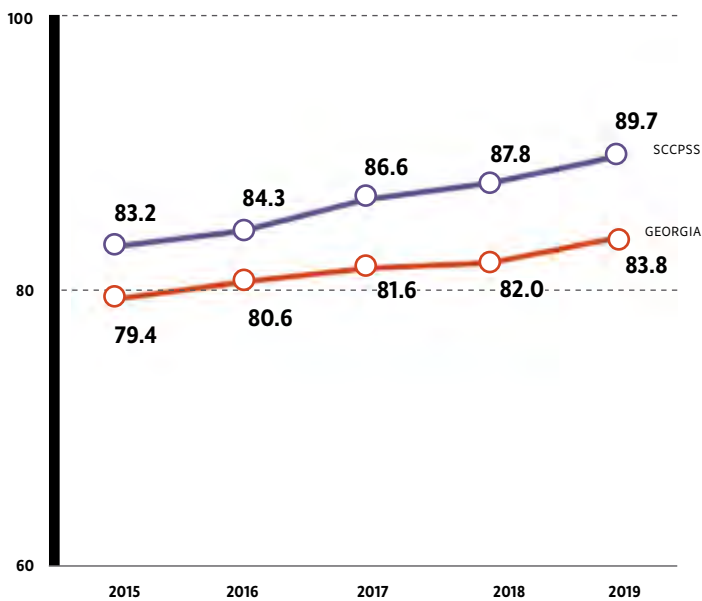


Figure 8.10—Graduation Rate Trend Chart 2015–2019
Savannah—Chatham County Public School System

In Pooler, most people over age 25 held a high school diploma (including high school equivalency degree) or higher in 2014–2018 (91.4%), while 37.1% held a bachelor’s, graduate, or professional degree.

These percentages are down slightly from 2009–2013, when an estimated 94.2% of residents had at least a high school diploma and an estimated 39.4% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Figure 8.11 below illustrates the breakdown of educational attainment in Pooler.

Educational Attainment, 2014–2018

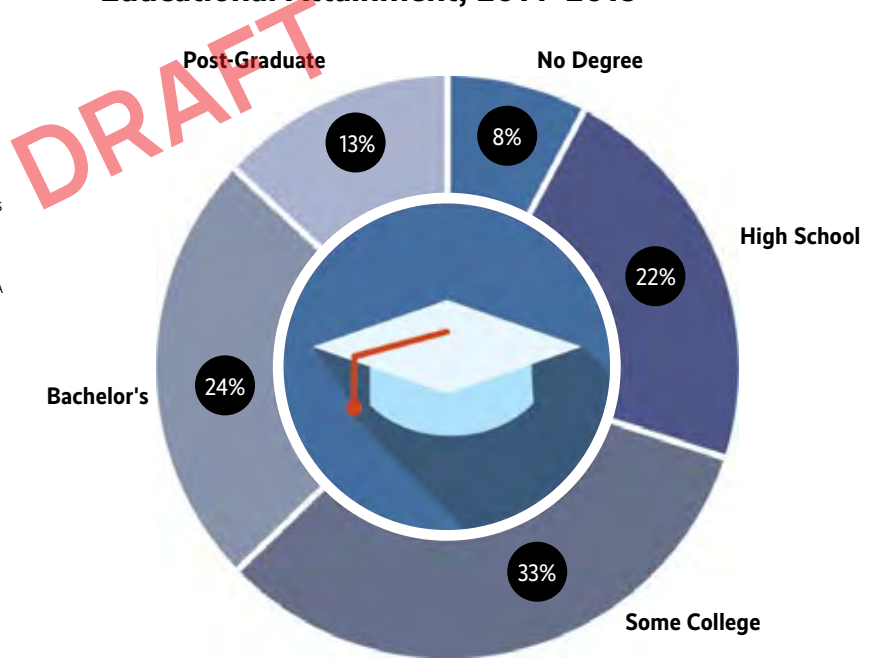
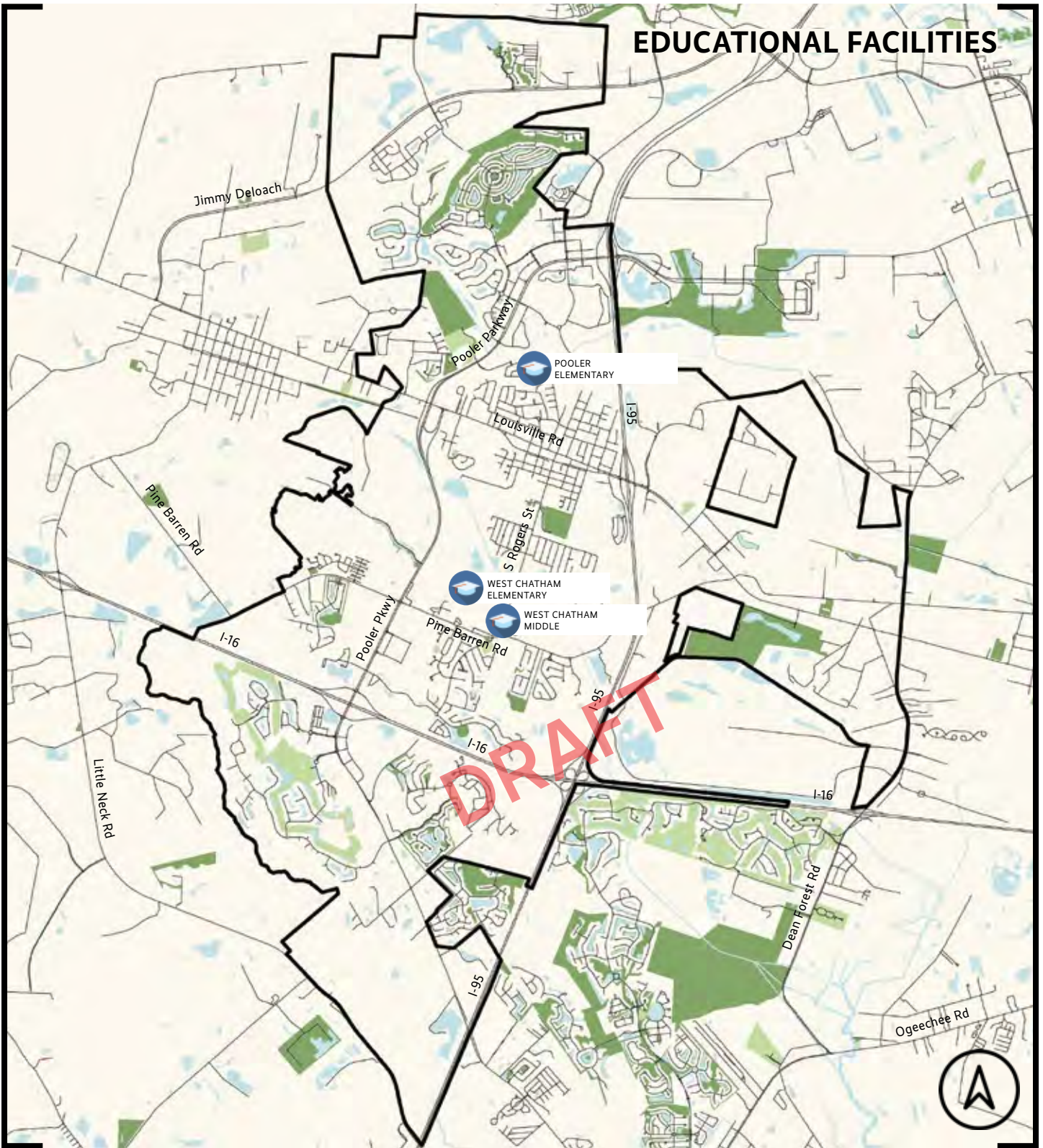


Figure 8.11—Educational Attainment, Pooler
U.S. Census Bureau: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES



Map 8.5—Educational Facilities, Pooler



Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD)

SCAD is a private, nonprofit institution founded in 1978 in the city of 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 include: Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Master of Architecture, Master of Arts, Master of Fine Arts, and 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 Georgia's oldest historically black college or university (HBCU), 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 5 graduate degrees to its approximate 4,500 students. These majors are housed within four colleges: the College of Business Administration, the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, the College of Science and Technology, and the College of Education.

SSU awards more Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Marine Science to African Americans than any other program in the country. 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 the 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, located in the southside of Savannah, is attended by nearly 6,500 students and offers over 50 majors at the undergraduate and graduate levels. GSU's Waters College of Health Professionals is one of the school's premier programs, having long been a top producer of undergraduate health professionals in Georgia.

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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, including 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.

South University

South University was founded in Savannah in 1899 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 more than 3,500 students. South University offers nine programs which award degrees at the associate, undergraduate, and graduate levels in fields 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 one of those located in Pooler.

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.

Live Oak Public Libraries is focused on increasing access, increasing community engagement and increasing 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

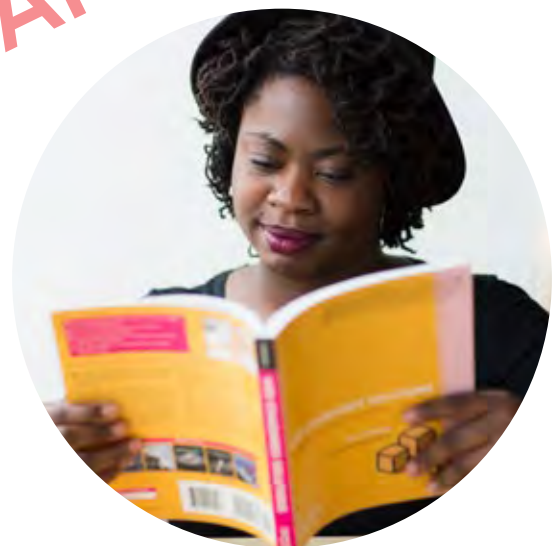
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Benefits of the Library System

- 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

One of the city of Pooler's main capital projects to be completed in the next 5 years is the construction of a new full service library to be overseen by the Live Oak Public Library System.

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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 8.12–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 8.13–Wireless Internet Usage Trends

Live Oak Public Library

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.

The impacts of COVID-19 can be seen within the libraries' visitors and internet usage in 2020.



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 result in a stratified spectrum of community health. The following sections are all factors that make up or can determine community health.

Obesity Rate

Obesity is the condition when an individual has excessive body fat which 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 Pooler 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 into our transportation infrastructure, parks & recreation and healthy food retail can positively impact our 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 CDC. REACH (Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health).

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



Overlaying 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 with 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 dire 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. We live in the time where 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.

According to the American Community Survey, an estimated 526 households in Pooler received SNAP benefits in 2014–2018

This is more than double the 238 households that received SNAP benefits in 2009–2013. Furthermore, roughly 80% of SNAP households today have children under the age of 18. In alignment with food access, food nutrition is just as important. If someone is gifted the option to choose between a monthly supply of processed convenience foods or a monthly supply of dry beans, rice, and vegetables, their knowledge of food nutrition (or lack thereof) will usually be the driving force behind that decision. Having access to affordable healthy food is paramount; however, so is the ability to recognize the value in it is as well.

Pooler’s evaluation of areas not having a grocery store within a 1 mile radius reveals that for the most part, Pooler is food rich with a diverse range of healthy food options. While it is a food rich community overall, there are two areas in particular that lack healthy food access: the Pine Barren Road and southern Quacco Road corridor, and the northern most area of the city along Jimmy Deloach Parkway.



POLK’S ON THE GO

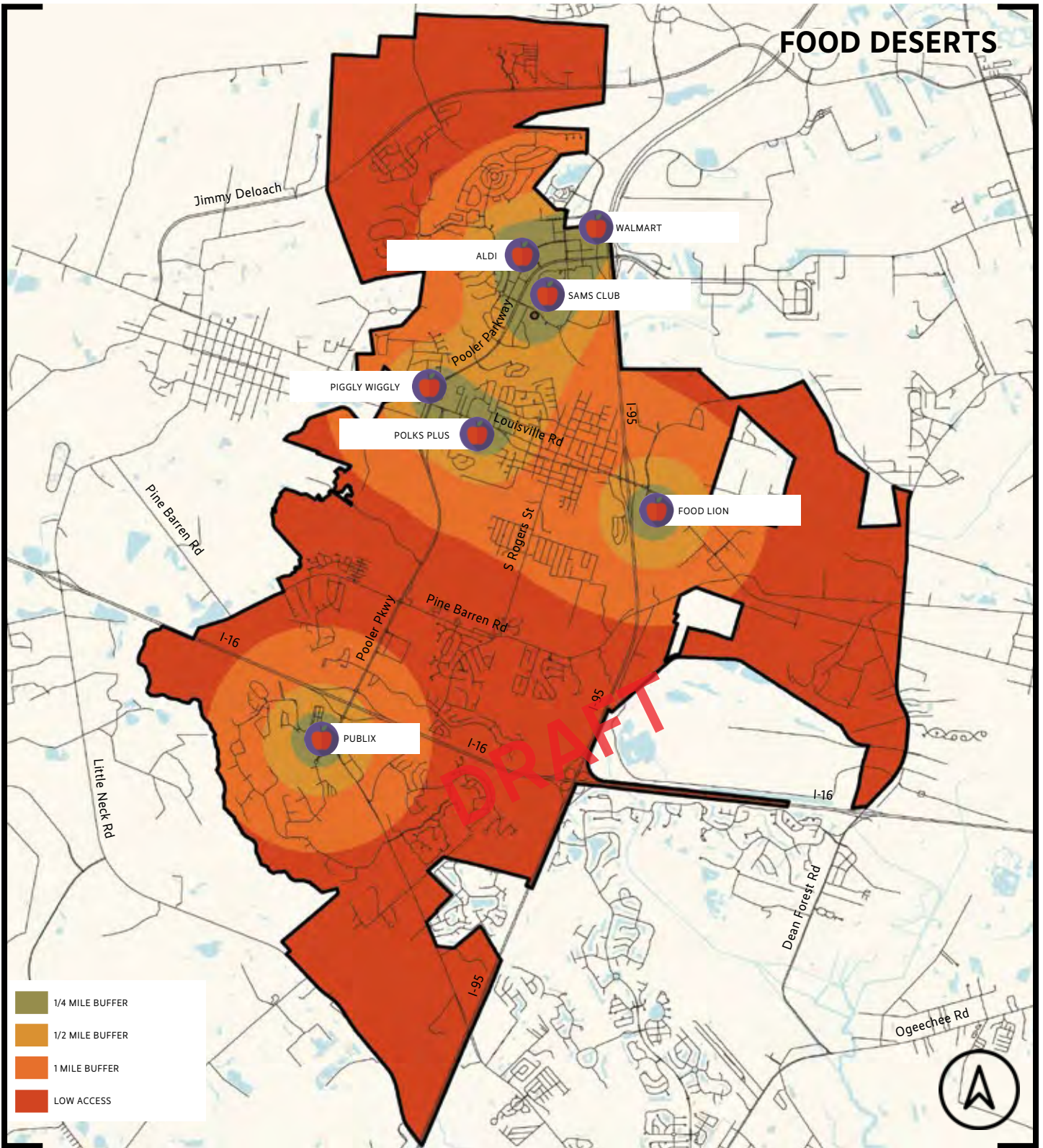
In an effort to increase access to healthy and affordable foods, Polk’s On the Go, has a delivery service called “Fresh to Your Door.” Delivery boxes start at \$20 and contain 4 veggie types, 3 fruit types, and tomatoes. You can also add-on eggs and meat from local vendors.

While this might draw some concern for Pooler, these two identified areas of Pine Barren Road and Jimmy Deloach Parkway are still developing and will attract future commercial development as more residential households are constructed. Currently, Pooler has approved the coastal region’s first Costco, which will be located on Pooler Parkway and will have a positive effect on food access on the Pine Barren Road area.

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POLK’S PLUS PRODUCE



FOOD DESERTS



Map 8.6—City of Pooler's Food Deserts



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 a myriad of areas in life including finances, mental wellness, safety, and food security.

Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show that the unemployment rate for the city of Pooler 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
City of Pooler	4.5	3.7	3.7	2.7	5.9

Figure 8.14–Unemployment Rates, Chatham County & Pooler
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 has 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.

Annual Average Employment Statistics

Year	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Rate (%)
2013	10,214	840	11,054	7.6
2014	10,667	749	11,416	6.6
2015	11,134	653	11,787	5.5
2016	11,797	555	12,352	4.5
2017	12,225	471	12,696	3.7
2018	12,560	399	12,959	3.1
2019	13,501	379	13,880	2.7
2020	12,856	810	13,666	5.9

Figure 8.15–Annual Average Employment Statistics, Pooler
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey

LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION?

For more information about unemployment please check our Economic Development Element.
Check it out on page XX!



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Climate Change

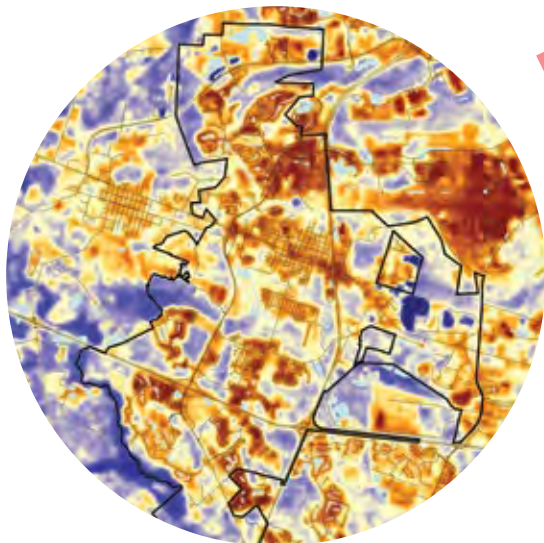
As the nation continues to experience drastic changes in weather patterns due to climate change, the consequences will be felt by individuals, economies, and governments alike.

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 strongly linked in low-income areas (*The Urban Crime and Heat Gradient in High and Low Poverty Areas | NBER*). At the same time, extreme cold temperatures decrease the amount of time people spend outside, which in turn lowers levels of vitamin D and results in weaker immune systems as well as depression.

In the spring of 2020, large-scale weather patterns exposed some areas of the Country that normally do not experience hard freezes to severe cold temperatures. Many states and local governments were ill-prepared for this, as the effects of the weather interrupted power sources and destroyed infrastructure. This event—and others like it—highlighted the need to assist and protect our most vulnerable populations and communities.

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 has 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 Pooler's population.



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LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION?

For more information about the urban heat island effect please check our Natural Resource Element. **Check it out on page XX!**



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 of its residents, economy, and longevity.

In today's world there are critical threats we must keep an eye out for: domestic and international terrorism, drastic shifts in weather patterns, rising sea levels, and more recently- pandemics such as COVID-19. In response to these, a successful government employs departments and passes ordinances in effort 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.

Emergency Management

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

The agency 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/emergencies. In the Hazard Mitigation Plan, CEMA has listed severe weather, extreme heat, and flooding as the most likely hazards to impact the county.

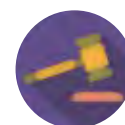
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HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING

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



Law Enforcement

Law enforcement in Pooler provides full service public safety and law enforcement services to its citizens and visitors. The city of Pooler's Police Department employs 42 sworn officers.

The Pooler Police Department's mission is to protect life and property through the maintenance of peace and order, and the provision of law enforcement services.

Police Statistics and Trends

While the city of Pooler has grown and the number of service calls have increased, part I crimes—which include offenses such as homicide, aggravated assault, robbery, larceny, and automobile theft—have decreased steadily over the past three years.

Although part I crimes are decreasing, traffic accidents and hazards associated with vehicles on Pooler's roadway systems have surged in recent years. According to Pooler police data, there were a total of 2,541 vehicle wrecks from January 1, 2014 to September 24, 2019.

This information reveals one major thing: there is a need for an alternate solution to accommodating traffic and congestion in Pooler's roadways. While public safety is most often a reactive measure to an issue, solving the problem of traffic and, in turn, traffic accidents will require a proactive approach in which Pooler rethinks its roadway design, transportation planning, and land use.

Part I Crime Records

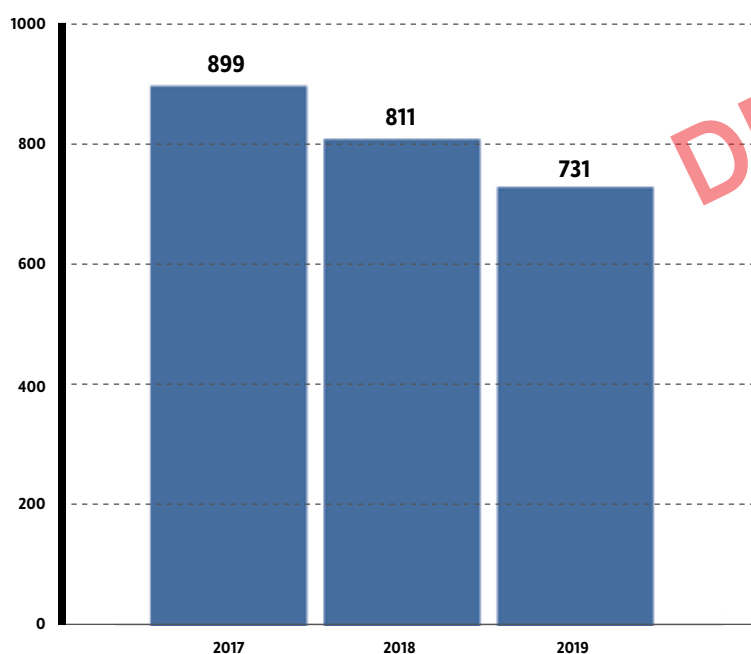


Figure 8.13—Part I Reported Crime Records, Pooler



Fire

The city of Pooler's Fire-Rescue Department stands committed to the core values of integrity, valor, loyalty, professionalism, and dedication.

The city of Pooler and the unincorporated fire district have a combined population of more than 26,000 and encompass an area of 30 square miles. During the day, the population can swell to greater than 50,000 people thanks to interstate 95 & interstate 16, which collectively bring over 45 million vehicles through the city each year. There are just over 8,000 occupied dwellings, roughly a third of which are rental units. There are also more than 1,000 commercial/industrial buildings in this area.

The city of Pooler's Department of Fire-Rescue provides fire protection and emergency response services to the businesses and residences within Pooler and the greater Savannah area upon request. The Fire-Rescue Department is comprised of 57 firefighters and 4 fire stations that provide fire suppression, rescue, prevention services to the city.

Firefighters that make up the operational staff of Pooler's Fire-Rescue Department are uniformed members of the International Association of Fire Fighters, representing the Professional Firefighters Association of Pooler, Local 574.

Although Pooler currently does not have a fire fee, the City should evaluate the need to establish a fire fee as a financing option to provide an equitable, stable and dedicated revenue source to support fire services well into the future.

Total Fire Call Trends

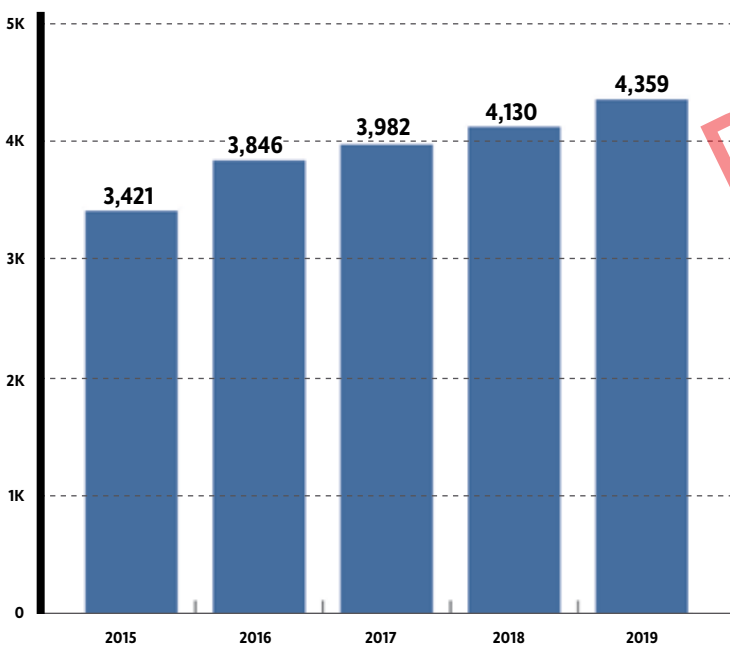


Figure 8.14–Total Fire Calls, Pooler

Structure Fires

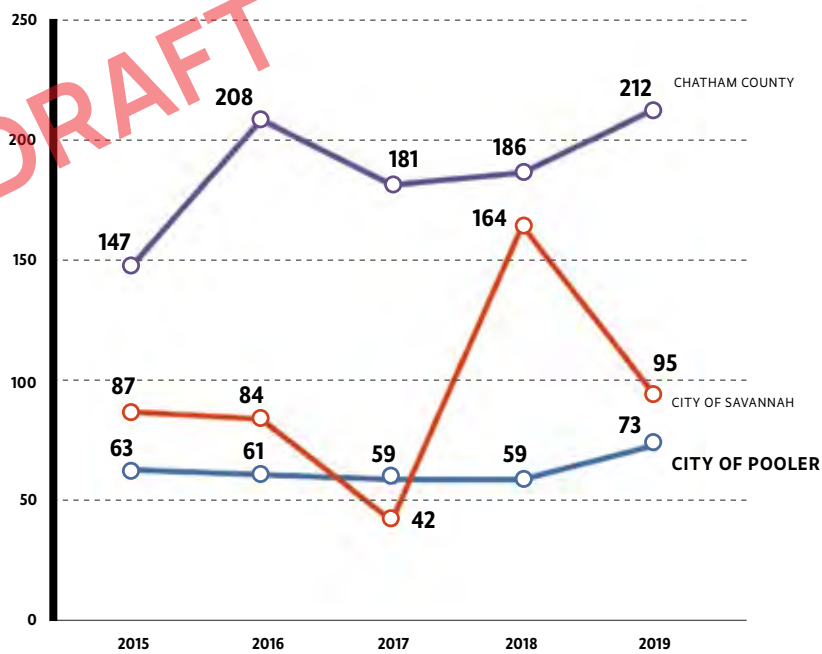


Figure 8.15–Structure Fires, Pooler



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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 concurrent fiber optic feasibility studies completed in 2017 were 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 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. 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.

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Network Technology

Broadband refers to high-speed internet services, which provide online content—websites, television shows, video conferencing, cloud services, or voice conversations—to be accessed and shared via computers, smartphones, and other devices. The Federal Communications Commission defines broadband to be at least 25 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 is considered the gold standard for supporting broadband, essential for fast, reliable connections. Fiber-optic cables—or just “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. The term, “broadband” refers to the high-speed service, which enables devices to access online services.

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 the older technologies result in slower, less reliable access to content. Due to capacity limits of this infrastructure, companies



INTERNET ACCESS

Reliable internet access is even more important now that many adults and children are working and learning from home.

—Georgia Fiber-Optic Feasibility Study (2017)

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

First, it is important to understand the reasons why households do not subscribe to internet services. Remarkably, across all surveyed households, there were no households that reported they chose not to subscribe because they do not need the internet.

Results from the Chatham County Fiber Optic Feasibility Study shows in Figure 8.16 that of the non-subscribing Chatham County households, an overwhelming 76.5% say they choose not to subscribe to service because residential internet access is too expensive. This data allows us to understand whether non-subscribership is the choice of the household, or if their decision reflects local broadband market conditions, such as a lack of service availability near the home, or if the high cost of service discourages service adoption.

Top Reasons for Non-Subscribership

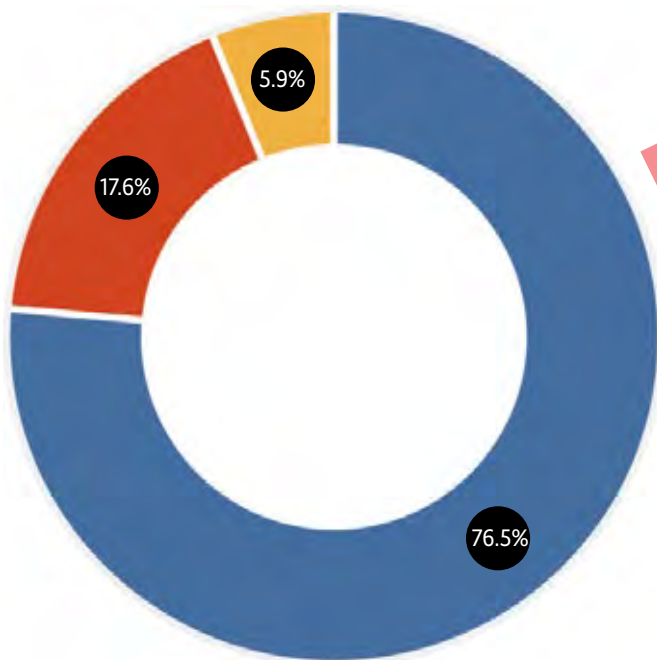


Figure 8.16–Most Important Reason for Non-Subscribing to Internet

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

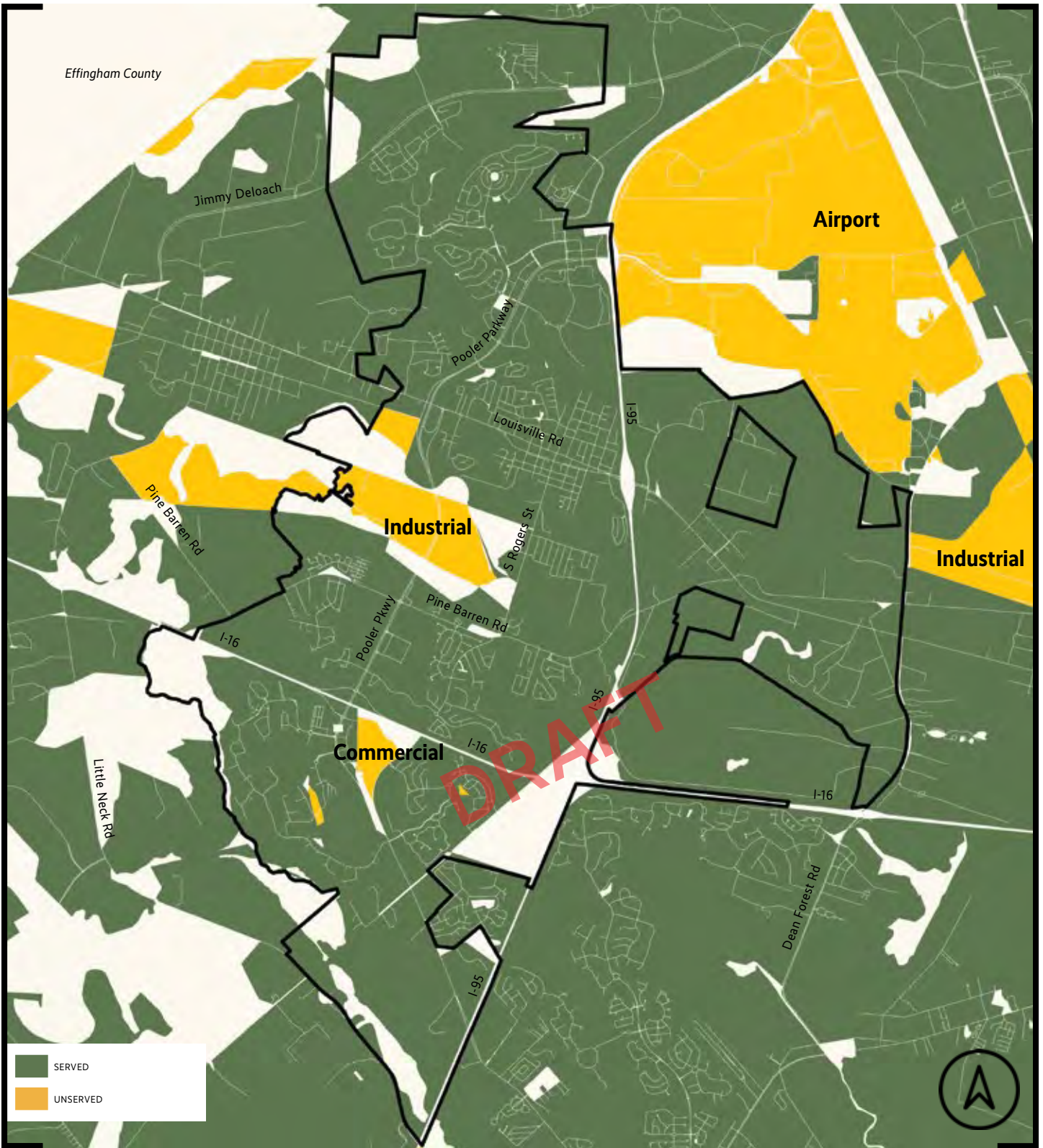
Nearly 1 out of 5 Chatham County households (17.6%) that do not subscribe to broadband say that broadband is not available at their home. From a quality of service perspective, 5.9% of non-subscribing households say that available services are too slow or unreliable, perhaps dropping service from poor previous experience. However, every household responding to a 2016 survey recognized a need for the internet.



Nearly 1 out of 5 Households say
Broadband is not available at their homes

While these percentages are very telling of local broadband market conditions, Chatham County’s findings conflict with national household averages. In fact, both Chatham County and Savannah households do not align with the most recent U.S. Department of Commerce research that identifies non-subscribing U.S. households with “no internet availability” at 48%, with “too expensive” the reason of 28% of U.S. households. These findings shine a light on issues beyond access to the internet and reveal a digital divide in Chatham County that is based more on cost of services.

This could be an indication of current service providers charging too much for service but could also reveal the economic conditions of some households in the county. Indeed, the notion of being “too expensive” is a relative term, as what could be out of financial reach for some households and income levels could be considered discretionary spending for other households.



Map 8.7—Broadband Access Map, Pooler



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 made in comparing these two sets of data. First, while cost of service appears to be the reality of market conditions in Chatham County, two additional reasons hint at possible workaround solutions for non-subscribing 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 2016 survey gauged how much the internet is a part of their household functions.

Taken together, 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)

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Next Steps

Reiterating the recommendations, the next steps move Chatham County toward developing and realizing county-wide 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 steps that will lead to a broader fiber-optic partnership and county-wide fiber-optic deployment.

These findings shine a light on issues beyond access to the internet and reveal a digital divide in Chatham County that 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.

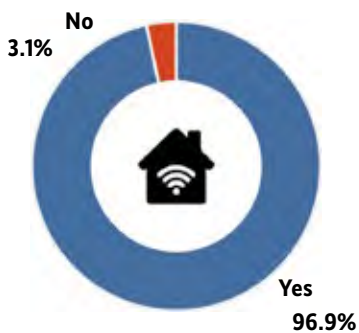
Chatham County was forced to find new ways to work, go to school, communicate, and connect. In the United States alone, state and local directives urged millions of Americans to stay in and, when possible, work from home.

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.

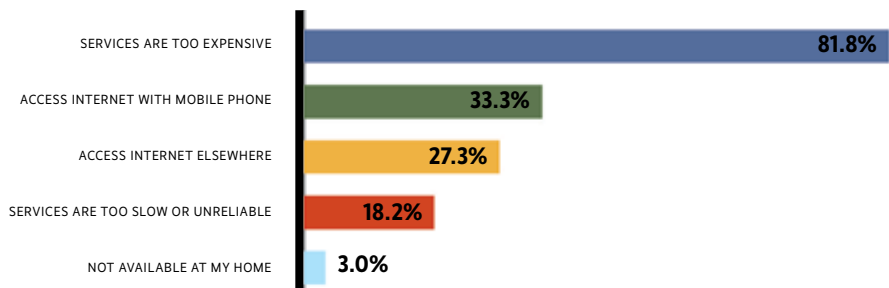
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Household Survey Findings

Households with Internet Access



Reasons for not having Internet Access



SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM

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09



SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM

Introduction

The Short Term Work Program is comprised of projects that are ongoing or should be launched over the next five years to further the goals of the plan. The STWP is organized by element and lists timeline, lead partner, funding source, and cost estimates.

Progress on the activities and goals established in this section will be tracked and reported on an annual basis.

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LAND USE

	STRATEGY	TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
LU.1	Update Comprehensive Plan	0-5 Years	Administration	General Fund	\$20,000
LU.2	Land use decisions must continue to consider future airport and port expansions	0-5 Years	Administration	General Fund	Staff Time
LU.3	Regularly evaluate parking conditions with regards to the need for maximum parking requirements versus minimum requirements to encourage safe growth	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	Staff Time
LU.4	Evaluate and amend the city's Landscape and Tree Protection Ordinance	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	Staff Time
LU.5	Evaluate and amend ordinances to allow for increased freeboard during development for flood protection (2-foot total)	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	\$10,000
LU.6	Review and amend future land use map to include areas surrounding impaired waterways	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	Staff Time
LU.7	Amend applicable ordinances to require the construction of parks and recreation opportunities for all demographics and age groups within all new residential developments	0-2 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	Staff Time
LU.8	Develop policy and guidelines for the implementation of community gardens on both public and private property	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	Staff Time
LU.9	Evaluate the need for city sub-area land use plans to better define growth and needed area/neighborhood improvements (e.g. Downtown Pooler, Quacco Road to I-95, the area surrounding the impaired Pipemakers Canal)	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	\$40,000
LU.10	The city will create and adopt design guidelines that address issues of commercial building size and massing, definition of open spaces, site character and quality as well as access and circulations	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	\$25,000
LU.11	Adopt City Design Guidelines for major corridors	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	\$75,000

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	STRATEGY	TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
LU.12	Review and amend subdivision regulations	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	Staff Time
LU.13	Update the City's Engineering Policy for new development to include updated civil plans/specification submittals	0-2 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	Staff Time
LU.14	Update policy clarifying acceptance of private roads (identifying maintenance, ownership, use, and connectivity link requirements) private roads	0-2 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	Staff Time
LU.15	Propose policy to support the development and maintenance of community gardens and reduce regulatory barriers to urban agriculture	0-2 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	Staff Time
LU.16	Hire City Arborist	0-2 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	\$30,000
LU.17	Assess and update Zoning Ordinance as needed: to separate zoning classifications for warehousing/transportation related uses	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	Staff Time
LU.18	Adopt historic preservation ordinance	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	Staff Time
LU.19	Develop an intergovernmental coordination plan/strategy with Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport (SHHIA) to ensure that the near term and long-term development plans of both Pooler and the SHHIA are compatible	0-2 Years	Executive	SHHIA Staff/ General Fund	Staff Time
LU.20	Create a Sea Level Rise checklist for development projects	0-2 Years**	Planning & Zoning**	**	**

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TRANSPORTATION

STRATEGY	TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE	
T.1	Quacco Road improvements: Blue Moon Crossing & Mosaic Circle Road & intersection improvements.	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning; Public Works	General Fund; SPLOST	\$28,300,000
T.2	1st phase: Quacco Road widening from Blue Moon to Canal Bank and 2nd phase: from Canal Bank to I-95	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning; Public Works	General Fund; SPLOST	\$28 Million
T.3	Complete N. Rogers Street resurfacing, traffic circle, widening, & sidewalk project	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning; Public Works	General Fund; SPLOST	\$725,000
T.4	S.H. Morgan Parkway intersection improvements & resurfacing	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning; Public Works	General Fund; SPLOST	\$500,000
T.5	Old Louisville Road widening & improvements	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning; Public Works	General Fund; T-SPLOST	\$9,500,000
T.6	North Godley Station Boulevard traffic circle construction at Forest Lakes Dr	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning; Public Works	General Fund; T-SPLOST; SPLOST	\$2.8 Million
T.7	Towne Center Boulevard at Maxwell Drive and Traders Way median and traffic circle/roundabout construction	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning; Public Works	General Fund; T-SPLOST	\$3.5 Million
T.8	Work closely with GDOT to make improvements to Highway 80 corridor, including rehabilitation efforts and signalization	0-5 Years	Administration	General Fund	Staff Time
T.9	Track and implement local road resurfacing projects	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning	LMIG	\$503,600
T.10	Change Out Strain Poles to Mast Arm (e.g. Pooler Parkway, Pine Barren, Park Avenue)	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund; SPLOST	\$500,000
T.11	Complete U.S. Hwy 80, and Rogers Street traffic/corridor study	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund; SPLOST; MPO Grants	\$200,000
T.12	Complete Pine Barren Road widening & traffic circle (based on 2021 Kimley Horn study)	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund; SPLOST; T-SPLOST	\$24,250,000
T.13	Pooler Parkway pavement overlay construction	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund; SPLOST	\$5,000,000

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STRATEGY	TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE	
T.14	Tanger Outlet traffic study, Durham Park Boulevard & Pooler Parkway improvements & road extension per T&H recommendations	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning; Public Works	General Fund; SPLOST	\$4,740,000
T.15	Explore ways to encourage the development and implementation of bike paths to connect commercial and residential areas	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning; Public Works	General Fund	Staff Time
T.16	Pooler Parkway widening (I-95 at Exit 104 adding lanes on each side from Benton Boulevard to I-95 and Benton Boulevard improvements to include resurfacing)	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning; Public Works	General Fund; SPLOST; T-SPLOST	\$6 Million
T.17	Dig both sides of Quacco Road from I-95 to the Gates Subdivision	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning; Public Works	General Fund; SPLOST	\$300K
T.18	Complete S. Rogers Street widening project	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning; Public Works	General Fund; SPLOST	\$13,400,000
T.19	Implement Pooler Pkwy/Benton Boulevard improvements based on T&H recommendations	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning; Public Works	General Fund; SPLOST	\$6,000,000
T.20	Park Avenue dual turn lane improvements based on T&H recommendations	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning; Public Works	General Fund; SPLOST	\$800,000
T.21	I-95 & U.S. Highway 80 interchange improvements & landscape plan	0-2 Years	Planning & Zoning; Public Works	DOT Grant Funds	\$750,000
T.22	Tanger Outlets roundabout construction based on T&H recommendations	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning; Public Works	General Fund; SPLOST	\$3,000,000
T.23	U.S. Highway 80 connector	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning; Public Works	General Fund; SPLOST; T-SPLOST	\$6.5 Million
T.24	Pooler multi-use trail	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning; Public Works	General Fund; SPLOST; T-SPLOST	\$1.5 Million

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HOUSING

STRATEGY	TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE	
H.1	Maintain the inventory of substandard and dilapidated housing in the city to allow for the elimination or upgrade of dilapidated buildings	0-5 Years	Coded Enforcement; Administration	General Fund	Staff Time
H.2	Complete a citywide housing assessment and gap analysis (to include cost analysis) to determine current and future needs. This shall also include the identification of areas in the city where the addition of new housing is possible and desirable	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	\$35,000
H.3	Continue to encourage the inclusion of handicap units in new multi-family and special type residential facilities	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	Staff Time
H.4	Continue to work with developers to use Affordable Housing Policies and programs to build affordable units	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	Staff Time

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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STRATEGY	TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE	
E.1	Support Chamber of Commerce to actively recruit retail commercial and appropriate industries to the city	0-5 Years	Administration	General Fund	Percentage of collected hotel/motel tax
E.2	Utilize incentive packages to promote the city and attract business development	0-5 Years	Administration	General Fund	Staff Time
E.3	Work with Chamber to explore additional ways to capitalize on commuters passing through Pooler such as commuter service-oriented businesses	0-5 Years	Administration	General Fund	Percentage of collected hotel/motel tax

NATURAL RESOURCES

STRATEGY	TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
NR.1 Encourage protection of plant and animal habitats by implementing public awareness programs through hosting on the official city website	0-2 Years	City	General Fund	Staff Time
NR.2 Newton Cemetery regrading, add fill, pave driveway	0-5 Years	Parks & Recreation	General Fund	\$30,000
NR.3 Expand the interconnection of open space, trails, paths, and recreation areas (both public and private) throughout the city	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	Project Based— Case by Case Basis
NR.4 Analyze the need for and implement wetland buffer ordinance	0-2 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	Staff Time
NR.5 Analyze need then implement impaired waters ordinance	0-2 Years	Planning & Zoning; Stormwater	General Fund	\$25,000
NR.6 Update Stormwater ordinance to include floodway impacts and increased stormwater conveyance impacts (25-year storm)	0-2 Years	Planning & Zoning	General Fund	Staff Time
NR.7 The city will continue improving participation in the current Recycling Program	0-5 Years	Sanitation	General Fund	Staff Time
NR.8 The city will evaluate the need and feasibility of offering e-cycling events	0-2 Years	Sanitation	General Fund	Staff Time

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CAPITAL PROJECTS

Public Works–Water & Sewer

	STRATEGY	TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
PWW.1	Install pneumatic butterfly valves within distribution system that are controlled with our existing SCADA system to isolate purchases surface water from groundwater system	0–5 Years	Public Works	Water & Sewer Fund	\$75,000
PWW.2	Complete survey of old sewer system to determine condition of mains/manholes	0–5 Years	Public Works	Water & Sewer Fund	\$25,000
PWW.3	Prepare sewer replacement program	0–5 Years	Public Works	Water & Sewer Fund	\$400,000
PWW.4	Increase current flow capacity of Wastewater Treatment Plant from 3.1 to 6.223 MGD	0–5 Years	Public Works	Water & Sewer Fund; GEFA	\$30 Million
PWW.5	Identify future sites and customers for water reuse program	0–5 Years	Public Works	Water & Sewer Fund	Based on Project Site
PWW.6	Complete water tower and pump maintenance program requirements	0–5 Years	Public Works	Water & Sewer Fund	\$35,000
PWW.7	Evaluate the feasibility of implementing capital cost recovery/fees for new construction to include infrastructure beyond just water and sewer	0–5 Years	Public Works; Planning & Zoning	General Fund; Water & Sewer Fund	\$50,000
PWW.8	Complete evaluation and implement water/sewer improvements and/or upgrades	0–5 Years	Public Works; Planning & Zoning	General Fund; Water & Sewer Fund	Based on Project Site
PWW.9	Complete a water/sewer rate study	0–2 Years	Public Works; Planning & Zoning	General Fund; Water & Sewer Fund	Ongoing 2.5% Increase Annually; Staff Time
PWW.10	Complete an inflow & Infiltration evaluation for sanitary sewer system	0–5 Years	Public Works; Planning & Zoning	General Fund; Water & Sewer Fund	Ongoing \$200K/Year
PWW.11	Placement and construction of a second elevated storage tank	0–5 Years	Public Works	Water & Sewer Fund	\$1,200,000

Public Works–Water & Sewer

	STRATEGY	TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
PWW.12	Start large meter testing program	0–5 Years	Public Works	Water & Sewer Fund	\$8,000
PWW.13	New position for Fire hydrant maintenance program	0–5 Years	Public Works	Water & Sewer Fund	\$40,000
PWW.14	Miscellaneous water line construction & repair	0–5 Years	Public Works	Water & Sewer Fund	Ongoing
PWW.15	Savannah Quarters lift station & force main replacement	0–2 Years	Public Works	Water & Sewer Fund	\$6 Million
PWW.16	Pooler Middle School lift station	0–2 Years	Public Works	Water & Sewer Fund	\$1,800,000
PWW.17	East Side #1 and #2 lift station: Just down from Savannah Quarters (pump and panel change out)	0–5 Years	Public Works	Water & Sewer Fund	\$600,000
PWW.18	SCADA for all lift stations	0–5 Years	Public Works	Water & Sewer Fund	\$500,000
PWW.19	Highway 80 water line replacement (replacement of Permastrand water main)	0–5 Years	Public Works	Water & Sewer Fund	\$2,500,000
PWW.20	Alternative water source feasibility study	0–5 Years	Public Works	Water & Sewer Fund	\$50,000
PWW.21	Rebuild Savannah supply point valve stations	0–5 Years	Public Works	Water & Sewer Fund	\$25,000
PWW.22	Decommission Water Supply Well # 2	0–5 Years	Public Works	Water & Sewer Fund	\$10,000
PWW.23	Taste and odor study and rehabilitation	0–5 Years	Public Works	Water & Sewer Fund	\$10,000
PWW.24	Feasibility of eliminating the use of ammonia	0–5 Years	Public Works	Water & Sewer Fund	\$15,000
PWW.25	Begin system pressure monitoring program	0–5 Years	Public Works	Water & Sewer Fund	\$35,000

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Public Works–Street & Drainage

	STRATEGY	TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
PWD.1	Upgrade drainage in downtown Pooler (southside of Hwy 80/Old Pooler)	0–5 Years	Public Works	General Fund	\$600,000
PWD.2	Continue to upgrade/maintain canal banks	0–5 Years	Public Works	General Fund	\$200,000
PWD.3	Install and implement infrastructure mapping	0–5 Years	Public Works	General Fund	Staff Time
PWD.4	Develop a long-range plan for sea level rise impacts on the city's infrastructure (roads, bridges, storm, wastewater, etc.,) which evaluates multiple adaptation methods	0–5 Years	Public Works; Planning & Zoning	General Fund	\$75,000
PWD.5	Evaluate and implement needed modifications to Pipemakers Canal based on the multi-jurisdictional current/future capacity and conditions.—Underway with Savannah River Utilities	0–5 Years	Public Works; Planning & Zoning	General Fund; SPLOST	\$2,200,000
PWD.6	Old Town drainage C	0–5 Years	Public Works; Planning & Zoning	General Fund	\$2,000,000
PWD.7	Old Town drainage D	0–5 Years	Public Works; Planning & Zoning	General Fund	\$2,000,000
PWD.8	Forest Lakes drainage	0–5 Years	Public Works; Planning & Zoning	General Fund	\$125,000
PWD.9	Pipe or repair banks of canal from Hardees south to the end of Pooler Villages	0–5 Years	Public Works	General Fund	\$350,000
PWD.10	Replace and enlarge pipe at cross over to billboard on Governor Treutlen Canal	0–5 Years	Public Works	General Fund	\$6,000
PWD.11	Replace and enlarge pipe under the railroad tracks on Governor Treutlen	0–5 Years	Public Works	General Fund	\$350,000
PWD.12	Survey all of the rights-of-way along Pooler canals	0–5 Years	Public Works	General Fund	\$100,000
PWD.13	Replace bridge on South Rogers at Hardin Canal (see T.18 Rogers Project)	0–5 Years	Public Works	General Fund	\$1,000,000

Public Works–Street & Drainage

	STRATEGY	TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
PWD.14	Repair slope along Sangrena Canal at Durham Parkway	0–5 Years	Public Works	General Fund	\$115,000
PWD.15	Pipe in section of Garden Acres outfall along the railroad tracks	0–5 Years	Public Works	General Fund	\$50,000
PWD.16	Drainage repairs & improvements: West Whatley Street	0–5 Years	Public Works	General Fund	\$50,000
PWD.17	Drainage repairs & improvements: Holly Avenue	0–5 Years	Public Works	General Fund	\$90,000
PWD.18	Drainage repairs & improvements: Georgia Avenue	0–5 Years	Public Works	General Fund	\$16,000
PWD.19	Drainage repairs & improvements: Chatham Avenue	0–5 Years	Public Works	General Fund	\$45,000
PWD.20	Drainage repairs & improvements: West Tietgen Street	0–5 Years	Public Works	General Fund	\$40,000
PWD.21	Drainage repairs & improvements: Pipe in ditch between Tietgen & Whatley	0–5 Years	Public Works	General Fund	\$8,000
PWD.22	Drainage repairs & improvements: Mell Street	0–5 Years	Public Works	General Fund	\$16,000

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Public Safety–Fire

	STRATEGY	TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
PSF.1	Hire 3 lieutenants, 3 fire apparatus operators to staff Station 4	0–5 Years	Fire Department	General Fund; Grant	\$345,000
PSF.2	Hire 6 new firefighters to staff Station 4 ladder truck	0–2 Years	Fire Department	General Fund; Grant	\$315,000
PSF.3	Hire 3 battalion shift commanders	0–5 Years	Fire Department	General Fund	\$225,000
PSF.4	Emergency protective gear for new employees	0–5 Years	Fire Department	General Fund	\$126,000
PSF.5	Purchase new gear and radio equipment to meet Federal Regulations	0–5 Years (\$45,000/Year)	Fire Department	General Fund	\$225,000
PSF.6	Station 2 renovations/upgrades	0–2 Years	Fire Department	General Fund	\$250,000
PSF.7	Vehicles for new staff positions	0–5 Years	Fire Department	General Fund	\$195,000
PSF.8	Hire small equipment/assistant mechanic	0–5 Years	Fire Department	General Fund	\$65,000
PSF.9	Hire fire prevention specialist	0–5 Years	Fire Department	General Fund	\$65,000
PSF.10	Replace self-contained breathing apparatus	0–5 Years	Fire Department	General Fund	\$250,000
PSF.11	Mobile data terminals for all vehicles	0–5 Years	Fire Department	General Fund	\$110,000
PSF.12	Add safety officer staff each year to accommodate growing needs	0–5 Years	Fire Department	General Fund	\$35,000

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STRATEGY	TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
PSF.13	Purchase safety equipment to accommodate growing needs	0-2 Years	Fire Department	General Fund; SPLOST \$25,000
PSF.14	Evaluate the expansion of public service training programs to include active shooter training and equipment	0-5 Years	Fire Department	General Fund; SPLOST \$78,000
PSF.15	Determine feasibility and cost of implementing a Community Paramedicine program through the Fire Department (feasibility study)	0-5 Years	Fire Department	General Fund \$15,000
PSF.16	Expand staff who are trained in crisis intervention within the Fire Departments	0-5 Years	Fire Department	General Fund \$12,000
PSF.17	Replace 2 fire engine pumper trucks	0-5 Years	Fire Department	General Fund; SPLOST \$500,000
PSF.18	Fleet Replacement: Fire Engine	0-5 Years	Fire Department	General Fund; SPLOST \$655,000
PSF.19	Fleet Replacement: aerial ladder	0-5 Years	Fire Department	General Fund; SPLOST \$1,600,000

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Public Safety–Police

	STRATEGY	TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
PSP.1	Replace and add 5 vehicles	0–5 Years	Police Department	General Fund	\$191,000
PSP.2	Train and outfit patrol with rifles	0–2 Years	Police Department	General Fund	\$12,000
PSP.3	Install automated target system at firing range	0–2 Years	Police Department	General Fund; SPLOST	\$46,500
PSP.4	Add safety officer staff each year to accommodate growing needs	0–5 Years	Police Department	General Fund	\$500,000 (\$100,000/Year)
PSP.5	Upgrade the city owned police training range	0–5 Years	Police Department	General Fund	\$50,000
PSP.6	Upgrade the police annex (old library)	0–5 Years	Police Department; Administration	SPLOST	\$5 Million
PSP.7	Tag readers (1 additional each year for five years)	0–5 Years	Police Department	General Fund	\$7,800/Year (Ga Power Program)
PSP.8	Evaluate the expansion of public service training programs to include police de-escalation, active shooter training, and crisis intervention	0–5 Years	Police Department	General Fund	\$10,000

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Intergovernmental Coordination

STRATEGY	TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
IC.1 Explore ways to improve coordination with other agencies such as BOE, GDOT, DCA, EPD	0-5 Years	Administration	General Fund	Staff Time
IC.2 Institute a youth council program to promote mentorship programs between employers and students to prepare students for employment and promote upward mobility	0-5 Years	Administration	General Fund	Staff Time
IC.3 Recognize and promote existing available social services resources and outside agencies within the county to assist residents with wraparound services (ex. mental illness, housing, homelessness, etc.). Includes PD and Fire staff crisis intervention training and sharing of information on resources within Chatham County (Red Cross, Safe Shelter, etc.)	0-5 Years	PD; Fire; Administration	General Fund	Staff Time
IC.4 Establish a process for sharing common population projections with the county and adjacent municipalities, local authorities, and decision-making boards to ensure consistent infrastructure and services decisions	0-2 Years	Planning & Zoning; Administration	General Fund	Staff Time
IC.5 Explore ways to coordinate and share land use and new development proposals with adjacent communities for land areas near mutual boundaries	0-2 Years	Administration	General Fund	Staff Time

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Parks & Recreation

STRATEGY	TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE	
PR.1	Expand the interconnection of open space, trails, paths, and recreation areas (both public and private) throughout the city	5-10 Years	Planning & Zoning; Parks & Recreation	General Fund	Staff Time; Project Based
PR.2	Expand the city's baseball/softball/tennis complex. Phase 1 with stadium already completed	0-5 Years	Parks & Recreation	General Fund	\$10,000,000
PR.3	Construct a city-owned soccer/lacrosse complex	0-5 Years	Parks & Recreation	General Fund	\$16,500,000
PR.4	The city shall continue to financially support community events such as the Patriot Weekend Festival	0-5 Years	Chamber or Commerce	Hotel/Motel Tax	Hotel/Motel Tax
PR.5	The city shall create a strategic, long-range city of Pooler master plan establishing criteria, standards, and locations for the provision of providing parks and recreation services throughout the city for all demographics and ages. This shall also include the identification of areas for purchase and permanent preservation as open space	0-5 Years	Parks & Recreation	General Fund	\$40,000
PR.6	Complete and implement an urban forest management plan	0-5 Years	Parks & Recreation	General Fund	\$30,000
PR.7	Senior citizens center vehicle	0-2 Years	Parks & Recreation	General Fund	\$35,000

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Community Facilities

STRATEGY		TIMELINE	LEAD PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE
CF.1	Construct a library with Wi-Fi/broadband and meeting space within the city's boundaries to provide needed services	0-5 Years	Planning & Zoning; Administration	General Fund; SPLOST	\$11,000,000
CF.2	Promote the development of a full-service emergency room and in-patient hospital by supporting any effort(s) to receive a state Certificate of Need	0-5 Years	City Council	General Fund	Staff Time

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REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

TASK NUMBER	ACTION/ IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	COMPLETED	UNDERWAY	POSTPONED	NOT ACCOMPLISHED	EXPLANATION	COMPLETION DATE
NATURAL, CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES							
NCH.1	Take proactive measures to protect valued historic and natural resources through inventories		✓			City has reviewed and updated historic resources inventory and mapped in 2016 with assistance of Coastal Regional Commission. City participates in Savannah Areas GIS (SAGIS) to maintain data layers for wetlands, floodplains, waterways, and other natural resources	
NCH.2	Improve participation in the current recycling program		✓			The city's contracted sanitation provider, Atlantic Waste, provides curbside recycling and provides monthly reports of recycling volume	
NCH.3	Continue with beautification of city by planting trees, shrubs, and plants		✓			City has adopted a point-based tree ordinance that requires planting in any new development. If new development cannot meet ordinance then they must contribute to the city tree fund that provides for planting and maintenance	

TASK NUMBER	ACTION/ IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	COMPLETED	UNDERWAY	POSTPONED	NOT ACCOMPLISHED	EXPLANATION	COMPLETION DATE
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NATURAL, CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

NCH.4	Adopt historic preservation ordinance		✓			Began researching what would be needed for drafting ordinance and process development	
NCH.5	Develop design guidelines for historic districts and form an architectural review committee		✓			Ultimately will be a part of the above process	
NCH.6	Encourage protection of plant and animal habitats by implementing public awareness programs through hosting on the official city website.		✓			Information to be posted on the city's website	
NCH.7	Review existing development and land use regulations to ensure best practices		✓			City requires wetland delineation on land suspected of having wetlands identified by the NWI, Army Corps of Engineer concurrence is required, and any impact must be permitted by ACOE as a part of local development regulations	
NCH.8	Implement water conservation programs through public awareness campaigns		✓			Pooler regulates outdoor water in compliance with the Georgia Water Stewardship Act. Notification is done through website and individual door hangers. City has adopted in increasing block rate structure to promote conservation	

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TASK NUMBER	ACTION/ IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	COMPLETED	UNDERWAY	POSTPONED	NOT ACCOMPLISHED	EXPLANATION	COMPLETION DATE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT							
ED.1	Audit policies and programs that support entrepreneurial activities		✓			Rezoned appropriate areas to commercial zones; steam-lined business license approval, most license can be issued in a day. City coordinates with Development Authority to identify and fund projects	
ED.2	Utilize incentive packages to promote the city and attract business development	✓				The city reduced all development fees in the downtown overlay district to \$5,000. This includes all building permit and water/sewer fees	2019
ED.3	Explore ways to capitalize on commuters passing through Pooler such as commuter service-oriented businesses		✓			The Chamber agreement includes expenditures for billboard, print, radio, tv, internet advertising. Promotional material has been provided at the GA and FL visitor centers on I-95	

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TASK NUMBER	ACTION/ IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	COMPLETED	UNDERWAY	POSTPONED	NOT ACCOMPLISHED	EXPLANATION	COMPLETION DATE
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TRANSPORTATION

T.1	Reduce traffic congestion on commercial corridors		✓			Ongoing, Performing studies on major collectors	
T.2	Explore ways to encourage the development of bike paths to connect commercial and residential areas		✓			Ongoing	
T.3	Work closely with GDOT to make improvements to Highway 80 corridor, including rehabilitation efforts and signalization		✓			Ongoing	

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TASK NUMBER	ACTION/ IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	COMPLETED	UNDERWAY	POSTPONED	NOT ACCOMPLISHED	EXPLANATION	COMPLETION DATE
PUBLIC WORKS—WATER & SEWER DEPARTMENT							
PWW.1	Continue ongoing water tower and pump maintenance program		✓			Underway/Ongoing	
PWW.2	Continue replacement of water main program		✓			Underway/Ongoing	
PWW.3	Install pneumatic butterfly valves within distribution system that are controlled with our existing SCADA system to isolate purchases surface water from groundwater system			✓		Not started due to funding	
PWW.4	Loop water main from east side of I-95 on Pine Barren Road to west side of I-95			✓		Not started due to funding	
PWW.5	Complete survey of old sewer system to determine condition of mains/manholes		✓			Underway/Ongoing	
PWW.6	Prepare sewer replacement program		✓			Underway/Ongoing	
PWW.7	Construct sewer upgrades according to replacement program		✓			Underway/Ongoing	
PWW.8	Crosstrain employees in sewer department		✓			Underway/Ongoing	

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TASK NUMBER	ACTION/ IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	COMPLETED	UNDERWAY	POSTPONED	NOT ACCOMPLISHED	EXPLANATION	COMPLETION DATE
PUBLIC WORKS—WATER & SEWER DEPARTMENT							
PWW.9	Certify employees in sewer department		✓			Underway/Ongoing	
PWW.10	Increase current flow capacity of Wastewater Treatment Plant from 2.5 mgd to 3.4 mgd by expanding existing plant.		✓			Project has since expanded to increase capacity to 6.223 MGD	
PWW.11	Identify future sites and customers for water reuse program		✓			Underway/Ongoing	
PWW.12	Implement programs and policies to comply with requirements set forth by the Environmental Protection Division as a part of our water withdrawal permit		✓			Ongoing	

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TASK NUMBER	ACTION/ IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	COMPLETED	UNDERWAY	POSTPONED	NOT ACCOMPLISHED	EXPLANATION	COMPLETION DATE
PUBLIC SAFETY—POLICE DEPARTMENT							
PD.1	Replace 5 vehicles		✓			Replaced 11 vehicles and purchase new as additional officers are hire	
PD.2	Train and outfit patrol with rifles		✓			Purchased 30 rifles and half of sworn officers have completed training on the Daniel Defense M-4	
PD.3	New police building	✓				Occupied in winter of 2016	2016
PD.4	Purchase Glock secondary weapons for officers	✓				As new officers are hired second weapons are issued	2017
PD.5	Purchase body cameras	✓				All current officers have cameras and as additional officers are hired it is part of standard issue	2018
PD.6	Upgrade 1st Gen L3 vehicle cameras	✓				All current patrol vehicles have new systems	2021
PD.7	Equip fitness center at PD	✓					2018
PD.8	Automated target system at firing range			✓		City has been making additional physical upgrades to the range including expanding berms. Have portion of the money assigned for the target system but will be completed in 2020	

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TASK NUMBER	ACTION/ IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	COMPLETED	UNDERWAY	POSTPONED	NOT ACCOMPLISHED	EXPLANATION	COMPLETION DATE
PUBLIC SAFETY—POLICE DEPARTMENT							
PD.9	Purchase remote aerial camera equipment	✓				Unit purchased and city has a licensed pilot	2017
PD.10	Purchase radar speed display signs	✓				Installed 2 permanent speed display and purchase 1 mobile unit	2017
PD.11	Equip CID vehicle	✓					2017

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TASK NUMBER	ACTION/ IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	COMPLETED	UNDERWAY	POSTPONED	NOT ACCOMPLISHED	EXPLANATION	COMPLETION DATE
PUBLIC SAFETY—FIRE DEPARTMENT							
FD.1	Design/construct new combined public safety facility to include training tower		✓			Site on Rogers Street was purchased in 2018. Construction to begin in 2021-2022	
FD.2	Hire new firefighters/3 lieutenants, 3 fire apparatus operators to staff Station 5			✓		Deferred until Station 5 is built	
FD.3	Hire 3 lieutenants, 3 fire apparatus operators to staff Station 4			✓		The call volume in Godley Station on Pooler Parkway has not meet expected growth	
FD.4	Hire 6 new firefighters to staff Station 4 ladder truck			✓		Call volume has not meet expected growth to justify	
FD.5	Hire 3 battalion shift commanders		✓			Programmed for future budgets beginning in 2021	
FD.6	Emergency protective gear for new employees		✓			Has been funded every year	
FD.7	Purchase one new medical first responder vehicle	✓				Combined with first responder unit; purchased in 2018	2018
FD.8	Purchase new radio equipment to meet Federal regulations		✓			Purchased as needed	
FD.9	Purchase replacement brush truck/ first responder unit	✓					2018

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TASK NUMBER	ACTION/ IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	COMPLETED	UNDERWAY	POSTPONED	NOT ACCOMPLISHED	EXPLANATION	COMPLETION DATE
PUBLIC SAFETY—FIRE DEPARTMENT							
FD.10	Station 2 renovations/upgrades	✓					2021
FD.11	Vehicles for new staff positions		✓			Have purchase 1 of the 3 needed vehicles	
FD.12	Hire small equipment/assistant mechanic			✓		To date not enough demand for service provided by this position	
FD.13	Hire fire prevention specialist		✓			Applying for position in 2021-2022 Budget	
FD.14	Hire fire inspector	✓					2019
FD.15	Design/construct Station 5			✓		Requested for SPLOST 2020 for \$1.5 million (revised estimate)	
FD.16	Replace self-contained breathing apparatus	✓					2018
FD.17	Replace breathing compressor/fill system		✓			Applied for Assistance for Fire Grant in 2019; if funded will be purchased in 2019, if not it will be a 2020 Budget request	
FD.18	Station emergency generators—Stations 1, 3, 5	✓				Installed generators as Stations 1 and 3; Station 5 has not been built due to lack of service calls presently	2019



TASK NUMBER	ACTION/ IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	COMPLETED	UNDERWAY	POSTPONED	NOT ACCOMPLISHED	EXPLANATION	COMPLETION DATE
PARKS & RECREATION							
PR.1	Continue to upgrade and maintain city parks		✓			Ongoing	
PR.2	Redesign/remodel park on S. Rogers Street			✓		Delayed until 2019 SPLOST renewal	
PR.3	Construct restrooms/concession stand for fields 3 and 6			✓		Delayed until 2019 SPLOST renewal	
PR.4	Rework park on S. Rogers Street to resemble Complex			✓		Delayed until 2019 SPLOST renewal	
PR.5	Construction of Phase 2 at Rec Complex			✓		Delayed until 2019 SPLOST renewal	
PR.6	Create a recreation master plan		✓			Assisted Chatham County with County recreation plan. Expand to include city plan	
PR.7	Newton Cemetery regrading, fill, and pave driveway		✓			Fill added, however, paving delayed due to funding and priority	

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TASK NUMBER	ACTION/ IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	COMPLETED	UNDERWAY	POSTPONED	NOT ACCOMPLISHED	EXPLANATION	COMPLETION DATE
PUBLIC WORKS—STREETS, DRAINAGE DEPARTMENTS							
PWS.1	Asphalt overlay streets on an as needed basis		✓			Ongoing	
PWS.2	Purchase knuckle boom truck for yard waste				✓	No longer a need	
PWS.3	Upgrade drainage in downtown Pooler		✓			Ongoing	
PWS.4	Upgrade/maintain canal banks		✓			Ongoing	
PWS.5	Install and implement infrastructure mapping		✓			Ongoing	

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TASK NUMBER	ACTION/ IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	COMPLETED	UNDERWAY	POSTPONED	NOT ACCOMPLISHED	EXPLANATION	COMPLETION DATE
HOUSING							
H.1	Maintain a substandard inventory to continue the elimination/upgrade of dilapidated buildings		✓			City adopts by reference the latest International Property Maintenance Code	
H.2	Continue to encourage a sense of neighborhood pride in keeping property and streets clean		✓			Street sweeping is done on a regular schedule and is a required activity to be compliant with the NDPEs Stormwater permit	
H.3	Continue to upgrade and enforce zoning ordinance		✓			Ongoing	
H.4	Continue to support the Neighborhood Crime Watch community program				✓	Crime Watch Program no longer active	
H.5	Continue to eliminate incompatible land uses which negatively impact neighborhood quality of life		✓			Ongoing	
H.6	Purchase new camera and video camera for inspections department	✓					2019
H.7	Scan old plans to disk for inspections department	✓					2018
H.8	Maintain the inventory of substandard and dilapidated housing in the city				✓	REMOVED— Combined with H.1 Task	Combined with H.1 Task:
H.9	Continue to encourage the inclusion of handicap units in new multi-family and special type residential		✓			Ongoing	
H.10	Continue to work with developers to use Affordable Housing Policies and Programs to build affordable units		✓			Ongoing	

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TASK NUMBER	ACTION/ IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	COMPLETED	UNDERWAY	POSTPONED	NOT ACCOMPLISHED	EXPLANATION	COMPLETION DATE
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INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

IC.1	Continue to explore ways to improve communication and coordination with the County and surrounding municipalities		✓			Ongoing	
IC.2	Explore ways to improve coordination and communication with other agencies such as DNR, BOE, GDOT, DCA, EPD, etc		✓			Ongoing	
IC.3	Establish a process for sharing common population projections with the county and adjacent municipalities, local authorities, and decision-making boards to ensure consistent infrastructure and services decisions		✓			Began sharing monthly building permits that allows the tracking of new populations with MPC, SCCPSS, and other jurisdictions	

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

IC.1	Hire a new City Planner	✓					2019
IC.2	Extend sidewalks from Sangrena to Godley	✓					2019



TASK NUMBER	ACTION/ IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	COMPLETED	UNDERWAY	POSTPONED	NOT ACCOMPLISHED	EXPLANATION	COMPLETION DATE
LAND USE							
LU.1	Review land use and zoning regulations		✓			City contracted with the Coastal Regional Commission to update zoning code. To be completed in 2022	
LU.2	Develop overlay district for Highway 80 corridor	✓					2017
LU.3	Update Comprehensive Plan	✓				City contracted with the Coastal Regional Commission to write the comprehensive plan. The plan was completed and adopted in 2016.	2016
LU.4	Consider adoption of transitional zoning for protection between incompatible uses and development patterns	✓				Transitional buffers were added to zoning code in 2020	2020
LU.5	Land use decisions must continue to consider future airport and port expansions	✓				According to the Savannah International Airport Master Plan Update, the existing airfield is sufficient to accommodate projected levels of aircraft operations through 2035 without experiencing unacceptable levels of delay. The Airport is not projected to reach 60 percent of airfield capacity (i.e., the level of capacity the FAA indicates should be used as a threshold for planning additional capacity) until after 2035 just one year before the expiration of the city of Pooler Comprehensive Plan.	2020

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TASK NUMBER	ACTION/ IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	COMPLETED	UNDERWAY	POSTPONED	NOT ACCOMPLISHED	EXPLANATION	COMPLETION DATE
LAND USE							
LU.6	Review land use and zoning regulations		✓			Ongoing	
LU.7	Develop overlay district for Highway 80 corridor	✓					2017
LU.8	Update Comprehensive Plan				✓	REMOVED— Combined with Parks and Recreation Action/Strategy PR.6	Combined with PR.6

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