

# 2019 Irwin County And City of Ocilla Comprehensive Plan



Prepared by: Irwin County  
City of Ocilla



Adopted February 4, 2019

Photos courtesy of Michael Rivera

## IRWIN COUNTY 2019-2023 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## **I. Chapter 110-12-1. Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning**

### **1. Introduction**

The 2019 County Comprehensive Plan was prepared in accordance with the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Chapter 110-12-1, Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning.

As required by the Local Comprehensive Planning Standards, the 2019 Irwin County and City of Ocilla's Comprehensive Plan consists of the following elements:

1. Community Goals
2. Needs and Opportunities
3. Community Work Program
4. Economic Development Element

(As a community included in the Georgia Job Tax Credit Tier 1 category) Although a separate summarized economic development element is included in this Comprehensive Plan, which by reference adopts the current regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), any economic development goals, policies, needs, opportunities, and objectives pertaining to Irwin County /City of Ocilla have also been integrated directly into their parallel components in this Comprehensive Plan.

5. Land Use Element

(As a community with zoning or land development regulations subject to the Zoning Procedures Law)

### **2. Community Involvement**

All of the required elements have been developed with extensive opportunity for involvement and input from stakeholders throughout the county and cities. The following steps were taken to ensure that this plan reflected the full range of needs and opportunities from the many stakeholders and residents in the county:

- a) Stakeholders were identified. These include local governments of Irwin County and the City of Ocilla; local businesses and industries; and the general public.
- b) Participation techniques were identified. Techniques used include a kick-off public information meeting, printed public information in local newspapers, and information on the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's website and local government websites. A steering committee was formed to oversee and participate

in planned development, including representatives from the stakeholders mentioned above.

- c) A participation program was conducted. Identified stakeholders were invited and attended, yielding specific input in plan content. The steering committee held regular meetings to provide input and feedback.

The public hearing kicking off the comprehensive planning process was held on Monday, July 2, 2018, at the Irwin County Courthouse, located at 301 S. Irwin Avenue, Ocilla, Georgia. It was held for the purpose of making any potential stakeholders and residents aware that the comprehensive plan update and review was now underway; to explain the purpose of the update; and to encourage residents and other stakeholders to actively participate in the plan update.

### **3. Identification of Stakeholders**

A comprehensive list of potential stakeholders was put together with input from the Chamber of Commerce, Development Authority, elected officials, and residents. A complete list of all the stakeholders is included in this plan.

### **4. Identification of Participation Techniques**

The following participation techniques were utilized during the update process:

Public Hearings

Workshops

Extensive e-mail correspondence with stakeholders

Special Webpage on SGRC website as well as County and City websites

Dissemination of information in the newspaper

Fliers

### **5. Participation Program**

A foundational principle utilized by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission in all of its planning projects is public and stakeholder participation from, and coordination with, multiple and diverse interest groups. Due to the relatively small population of the County and City, the entire stakeholder group was utilized as the steering committee, ensuring the broadest buy-in and diversity of input into the comprehensive plan update. Outreach to the public, local governments and other stakeholders and interested parties was accomplished by e-mail correspondence, direct communication, Facebook postings, the project website, and updates provided at workshops and at other group meetings. Opportunity for public comment was provided at public hearings and at city and county commission meetings.

In addition to the two required public hearings, SGRC held a series of three workshops to discuss several elements of the plan. The first workshop was used to review the existing goals, Needs, and opportunities; in the form of a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis, participants updated the list of goals, needs, and

opportunities to meet current needs. Copies of the sign-in sheets are provided in the appendix along with public hearing notices.

The policies and Report of Accomplishments were developed in the second workshop along with the draft of the updated Community Work Program. The Community Work Program was developed by the participants to include specific action items and projects that would be feasible for the County and the individual communities to implement should funding be available.

The third workshop was utilized to update the Economic Development Element and the Land Use Element and Maps as desired by the local governments.

## 6. Consideration of Regional Water Plan and Environmental Planning Criteria

During the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan, the local governments must review both the Regional Water Plan covering its area and the GDNR Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria, as laid out in Chapter 391-3-16, to determine whether any local implementation practices or development regulations need to be adapted to be consistent with both.

### Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan

Irwin County is within the area of the Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan, which was adopted in September 2017.



Source: CDM Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan

The Suwannee-Satilla Council has identified 13 goals for the region. It is important to note that the goals summarized below are not presented in order of priority, but rather were assigned a number to identify specific goals addressed as part of the water management practice selection process (Section 6).

#### Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan Goals:

1. Manage and develop water resources to sustainably and reliably meet domestic, commercial, industrial water needs, and agricultural water needs including all agricultural sectors (this includes the agro forestry economy of the region).



2. Manage groundwater and surface water to encourage sustainable economic and population growth in the region.
3. Manage the region's and state's water resources in a manner that preserves and protects private property rights.
4. Ensure an adequate water supply of suitable quality to meet current and future human needs, while protecting environmental resources.
5. Identify opportunities to optimize existing and future supplies, and water and wastewater infrastructure.
6. Promote efficient use and management of surface and groundwater resources to allow for sufficient supplies for current and future generations.
7. Protect and manage surface and groundwater recharge areas to ensure sufficient long-term water supplies for the region.
8. Protect, maintain, and where appropriate and practicable, identify opportunities to enhance water quality and river base flows.
9. Protect and maintain regional water-dependent recreational opportunities.
10. Identify opportunities to manage stormwater to improve water quantity and quality.
11. Identify and implement cost-effective water management strategies.
12. Seek to provide economically affordable power and water resource service to all citizens of the region.
13. Identify and implement actions to better measure and share water use data and information.

In addition, the Regional Water Plan has adopted several Short-Term Water Quantity and Water Quality Management Practices, which the local comprehensive plan should include in order to manage water resources in a sustainable manner through the planning period and beyond. The most significant Needs in the Suwannee-Satilla Region are surface water availability gaps driven by agricultural usage. As such, the majority of water supply management practices are intended to address agricultural surface water use.

### Short Term Water Quantity Management Practices (0-10 Years)

1. Utilize surface water and groundwater sources within the available resource capacities
2. Water conservation.
3. Data collection and research to confirm the frequency, duration, severity, and drivers of surface water gaps (forecast methodology assumptions and Resource Assessment modeling)
4. Evaluate and ensure that current and future surface water permit conditions do not contribute to 7Q10 low flow concerns
5. Encourage sustainable groundwater use as a preferred supply in regions with surface water 7Q10 low flow concerns and adequate groundwater supply
6. Identify incentives and a process to sustainably replace a portion of existing agricultural surface water use with groundwater use to address 7Q10 low flow concerns
7. Evaluate the potential to use existing storage to address 7Q10 low flow concerns
8. Education to reduce surficial aquifer groundwater use impacts to 7Q10 low flow concerns

### Short-Term Water Quality Management Practices (0 – 10 Years):

#### 1. Point Sources:

- Support and fund current permitting and waste load allocation process to improve treatment of wastewater and increase treatment capacity
- Data collection and research to confirm discharge volumes and waste concentrations as well as receiving stream flows and chemistry

#### 2. Non-Point Sources:

- Data collection to confirm source of pollutants and causes; encourage stormwater ordinances, septic system maintenance, and coordinated planning
- Ensure funding and support for local and state Best Management Practices programs, including urban/suburban, rural, forestry, and agricultural Best Management Practices

#### 3. Non-point Source Existing Impairments:

- Total maximum daily load listed streams: Improve data on source of pollutant and length of impairment; identify opportunities to leverage funds, and implement non-point source Best Management Practices

Longer Term (20 – 40 years) water quantity and quality management practices include:

- Improve infiltration and management of wetlands

- Evaluate incentive-based programs to manage, increase, and restore wastewater and storm water returns
- Identify potential/feasibility of a multi-purpose reservoir
- Identify feasibility of regional inter-basin transfer
- Continue wastewater and stormwater master planning

### **Chapter 391-3-16, Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria**

The Environmental Planning Criteria that are part of the Minimum Planning Standards deal specifically with the protection of water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, river corridors, and mountains; the last of which is not applicable in this region. These criteria were developed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as mandated in Part V of the Georgia Planning Act and in the Mountains and River Corridor Protection Act.

The criteria require that local governments shall identify existing and future water supply watersheds and adopt a water supply watershed protection plan for their jurisdiction.

Some uses may be grandfathered, such as land uses existing prior to the adoption of a watershed plan, mining activities permitted by DNR, certain utilities placements, special forestry, or agricultural services.

The environmental guidelines also spell out criteria for the delineation of small and large water supply watersheds, for the protection of groundwater recharge areas, for the protection of wetlands, and for the protection of river corridors. These criteria shall be incorporated into this comprehensive plan and addressed specifically and in more detail through local ordinances and land development code regulations.

## **II. Plan Elements**

### **1. Community Goals and Vision**

The purpose of the Community Goals Element is to lay out a road map for the future of Irwin County and the City of Ocilla; to generate local buy-in to the plan; and to ensure that the plan is implemented. Communities are encouraged to amend and update the goals as necessary.

#### **Vision**

Twenty years from now, Irwin County will continue to have a small town atmosphere that is characterized by welcoming communities and a sense of individual belonging, accentuated by natural greenway corridors. The community's rich agricultural and forestry heritage will be preserved through the preservation of prominent landmarks, and these sites will be of paramount importance to citizens and elected officials. Partnerships among the County and the City will have been expanded to promote improvement of the quality of life in the community.

**Goal 1:**      **NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES** – To provide for and promote the continued protection of our natural and cultural resources for current and future generations.

**Goal 2:**      **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** – To support a growing and balanced economy that bolsters the community's position as a regional economic engine, offering high-wage jobs by ensuring a high-level of workforce adequacy; and to ensure community growth and development, which benefits all segments of the diverse population.

**Goal 3:**      **HOUSING** – To encourage access to appropriate and affordable housing options for all residents of all income levels.

**Goal 4:**      **LAND USE** - To ensure that the County's anticipated growth occurs in a well-integrated yet organized fashion, which protects our community resources, promotes efficient use of infrastructure and support quality economic development.

**Goal 5:**      **TRANSPORTATION** – To promote transportation facilities, which protects our community resources, promotes efficient use of infrastructure and support quality economic development while supporting quality economic development.

**Goal 6:**      **COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES** – To ensure the provision of infrastructure, community facilities, and public services that support efficient growth and development patterns.

**Goal 7:**     **INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION** – To encourage coordination of planning efforts with other local service providers and authorities, neighboring communities, and state and regional planning agencies.

**Goal 8:**     **BROADBAND SERVICES** – To ensure broadband services are accessible throughout the communities and are consistent, reliable, and equitable.

## **2. Needs and Opportunities**

The Needs and Opportunities as shown in this Section were developed in meetings through discussions with stakeholders and residents, experiences by stakeholders and residents, analysis of statistical data and information, and review and revision as applicable of the Needs and opportunities identified in the 2010 Partial Update for Irwin County and the City of Ocilla. Each of the following needs and opportunities is addressed by corresponding implementation measures in the Community Work Program.

### **1. Natural and Cultural Resources**

#### **Needs**

- 1.1     **Updated Flood Plain Maps.** Correct existing flood plain maps are needed to replace the current maps, which are inaccurate by much as eleven feet, to protect flood areas, river corridors, and groundwater recharge areas from development.
- 1.2     **Development in Flood Hazard Areas.** Existing regulations need to be reviewed to ensure adequacy in reducing the amount of future development in identified flood hazard areas.
- 1.3     **Master Drainage Plan.** A countywide Master Drainage Plan is needed.
- 1.4     **Inventory of Historic Places and structures.** There are many historical structures and places including cemeteries, in Irwin County that are not identified nor inventoried.
- 1.5     **Historic Preservation.** More funding is needed to protect and rehabilitate local historic structures.
- 1.6     **Culture Resources Registry.** Irwin County and Ocilla are home to many renowned local artists and musicians however, no official registry or recognition of these cultural resources exists.
- 1.7     **Underutilized Tourism Resources.** Irwin County and Ocilla contain many historic and cultural resources in need of promotion.
- 1.8     **School Renovations.** The old Ocilla Schoolhouse is in need of renovations.
- 1.9     **Sustainable Water Management.** Sustainable management of water as a resource, especially for agri-business, is required.

#### **Opportunities**

- 1.1     **Water conservation.** Encourage citizen education and awareness through brochures and workshops to encourage water conservation.

- 1.2 **Water management.** Promote more efficient use of surface irrigation and better water management to ensure long-term opportunities for sustainable development and quality of life for residents.
- 1.3 **Runoff Management.** Implement storm water retention ponds, wetlands, and bio-retention areas to manage runoff quality and flow rate and help support river flows.
- 1.4 **Seek Funding.** Apply for water quality grants to assist with reduction in runoff.

## 2. Economic Development

### Needs

- 2.1 **Job Opportunities.** More job opportunities are needed, especially higher-wage jobs.
- 2.2 **Need of Value-Added Products & Diversification.** Development of more value-added products and diversification is needed for agribusiness and other industries.
- 2.3 **Innovative Economic Development.** More innovative economic development is needed.

### Opportunities

- 2.1 **Promote & Support.** Promote and support existing and expanding local businesses and industries.
- 2.2 **Local Retention of Graduates.** Expand recruitment of businesses that will hire local graduates from the Quick Start training program and graduates from the trades' certification programs at Wiregrass.
- 2.3 **Workforce.** Encourage degree programs in relevant and lucrative fields, such as science, technology, and engineering.
- 2.4 **Sustainable & Innovative.** Promote and encourage sustainable and innovative agri-business opportunities.
- 2.5 **Grants Research.** Research grants that are available to assist businesses and tourism and pursue them as feasible.
- 2.6 **Downtown Expansions.** Expand economic development in Downtown Ocilla focusing on restaurants and retail.

## 3. Housing

### Needs

- 3.1 **Substandard Housing.** Blighted/substandard homes/properties need to be renovated or demolished.
- 3.2 **Housing Compatibility.** New homes being constructed in the City need to blend with the character of the area and neighborhood.

### Opportunities

- 3.1 **Funding Sources.** Continue to pursue CHIP, GICH and CDBG funds and other available grants to renovate appropriate housing.
- 3.2 **Code Enforcement.** Continue a code enforcement program that will support homeowners in the maintenance and upkeep of blighted homes and properties.

- 3.3 **Cleanup of Blighted Homes & Properties.** City of Ocilla is actively cleaning up blighted homes and properties to revitalize neighborhoods and improve property value.
- 3.4 **Land Bank.** Create a Land Bank Authority.

#### 4. Land Use

##### Needs

- 4.1 **Zoning Enforcement.** Both the City and County need better enforcement of their respective zoning codes, and need more resources to accomplish this task.

##### Opportunities

- 4.1 **Greenspace Program.** Develop a countywide Greenspace Program.

#### 5. Transportation

##### Needs

- 5.1 **Public Transit.** The community needs public transit. The City of Ocilla has expressed a desire for rural public transit.
- 5.2 **Roads.** The City still has dirt roads that need to be paved.
- 5.3 **Sidewalks.** Irwin County and Ocilla have a need for the creation or improvement of sidewalks that are handicap accessible.

##### Opportunities

- 5.1 **Public Transit.** Federal programs and regional resources could help to fund public transit.
- 5.2 **TSPLOST.** TSPLOST has been approved with funding for basic road resurfacing and maintenance.

#### 6. Community Facilities and Services

##### Needs

- 6.1 **Infrastructure Improvements.** The City's existing water and sewer lines are very old and many of the pipes are rusty and leaking, and the sewer pond needs to be dredged.
- 6.2 **Funding Sources.** There is a lack of funding to repair the water and sewer system.
- 6.3 **Inventory.** There is a lack of a complete inventory of water and sewer system including valves, meters and manholes which makes identification of problems and solutions (including budgeting for improvements) very difficult and more expensive.
- 6.4 **GIS Data.** There is a GIS inventory of some community infrastructure, but a more complete inventory is needed.
- 6.5 **Recreation Employment and Volunteers.** The Recreation Department has one full-time staff person and relies on volunteers to do the work. There is a need for more paid employees and volunteers.



- 6.6 **Emergency System.** A countywide Early Warning Communication/Notification System is needed.
- 6.7 **CERT.** The “Community Emergency Response Team” (CERT) program needs to be implemented.
- 6.8 **Generators.** Portable and/or fixed generators are needed for all designated evacuation and emergency shelters and community water systems, as well as other critical facilities.
- 6.9 **Recreational Protections.** Lightning warning and protection equipment is needed at outdoor recreational facilities countywide.
- 6.10 **Training.** There is a need to improve wildland fire training at the local fire department level.

### **Opportunities**

- 6.1 **Funding Resources.** Public finances are scarce to undertake much needed improvements to the public infrastructure. Review more opportunities for applications for state and federal funding sources to provide for the improvements.
- 6.2 **Local Grant Matches.** Research and implement sufficient private/public funding sources to act as local match for any state and Federal grants to increase the percentage of grants being awarded to Irwin County and the City of Ocilla.
- 6.3 **Community Partnerships.** Build on the active partnership between the local Schoolboard and the City and County.
- 6.4 **Volunteer Services.** Encourage volunteer opportunities and expand the local volunteer program.
- 6.5 **Designated “Firewise Community.”** Become a designated “Firewise Community”.
- 6.6 **Enforcement of Codes.** Enforce building, fire, and safety codes.
- 6.7 **Storm Ready.** Become a “Storm Ready Community”.

## **7. Intergovernmental Coordination**

### **Needs**

- 7.1 **Collaboration.** Increased collaboration with neighboring counties is needed.

### **Opportunities**

- 7.1 **Continue to Collaborate.** Maintain the excellent working relationship between the City and the County.

## **8. Broadband Services**

### **Needs**

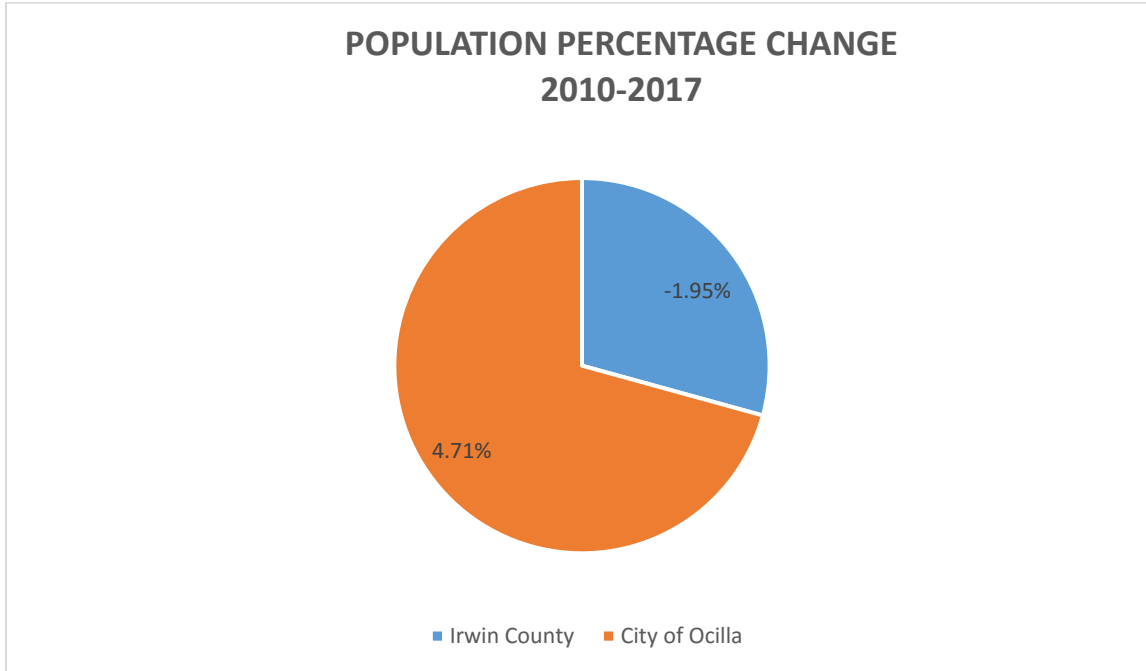
- 8.1 **Broadband access.** More affordable, accessible, consistent, and higher-speed broadband access is needed throughout all of Irwin County and the City of Ocilla, especially in underserved areas.

### **Opportunities:**

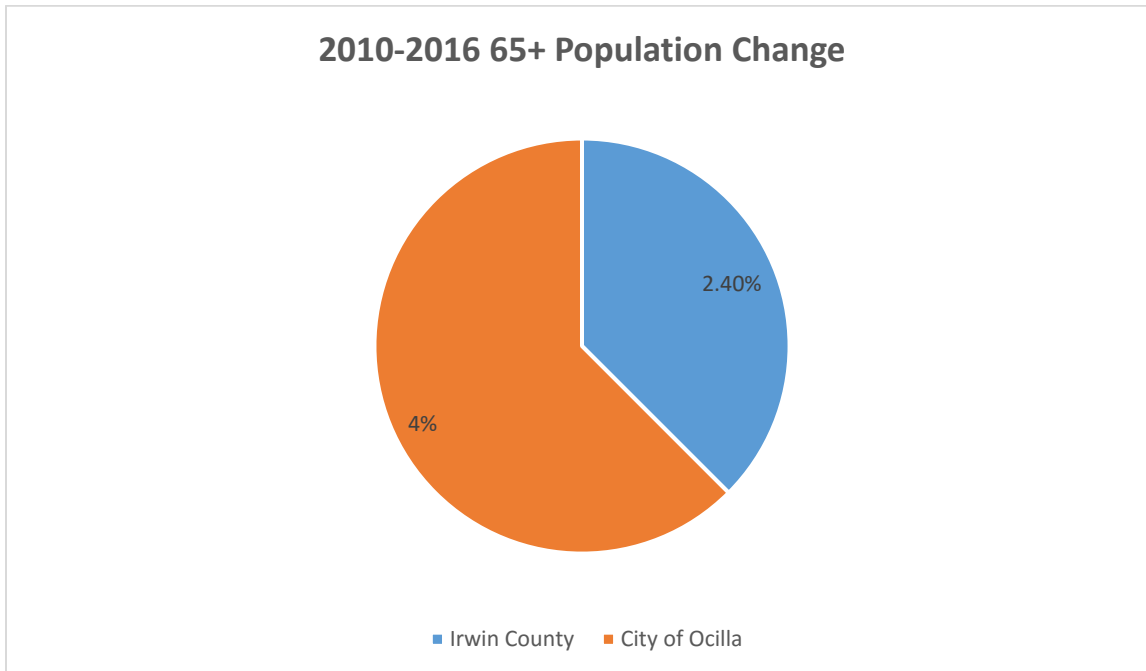


- 8.1 **Economic growth.** Better broadband services will improve the future for all citizens and businesses.
- 8.2 **Public/Private Partnerships.** Public/private partnerships could be developed to provide comprehensive broadband coverage that is consistent, reliable, and equitable.

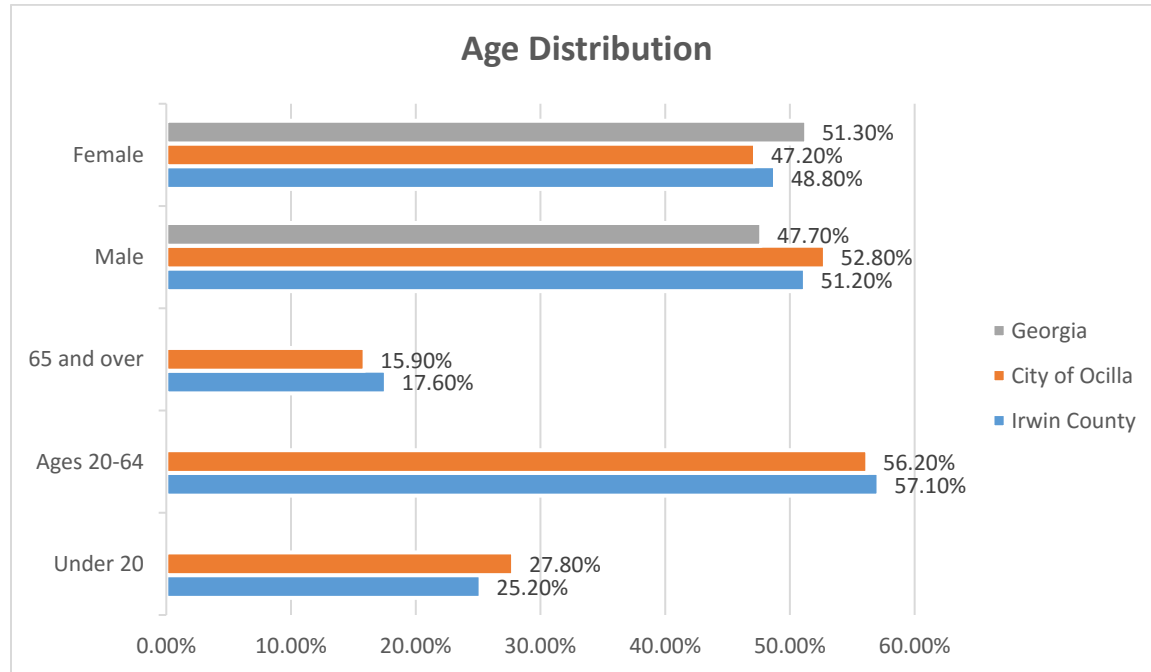
### 3. Analysis of Data and Information



The 2017 population of Irwin County is estimated at 9,410. This is a -1.95% decrease since 2010. The 2017 population of the City of Ocilla is estimated at 3,627 and is a 4.71% increase since 2010. There are a total of 4,076 households in Irwin County, with an average of 2.8 people per household.

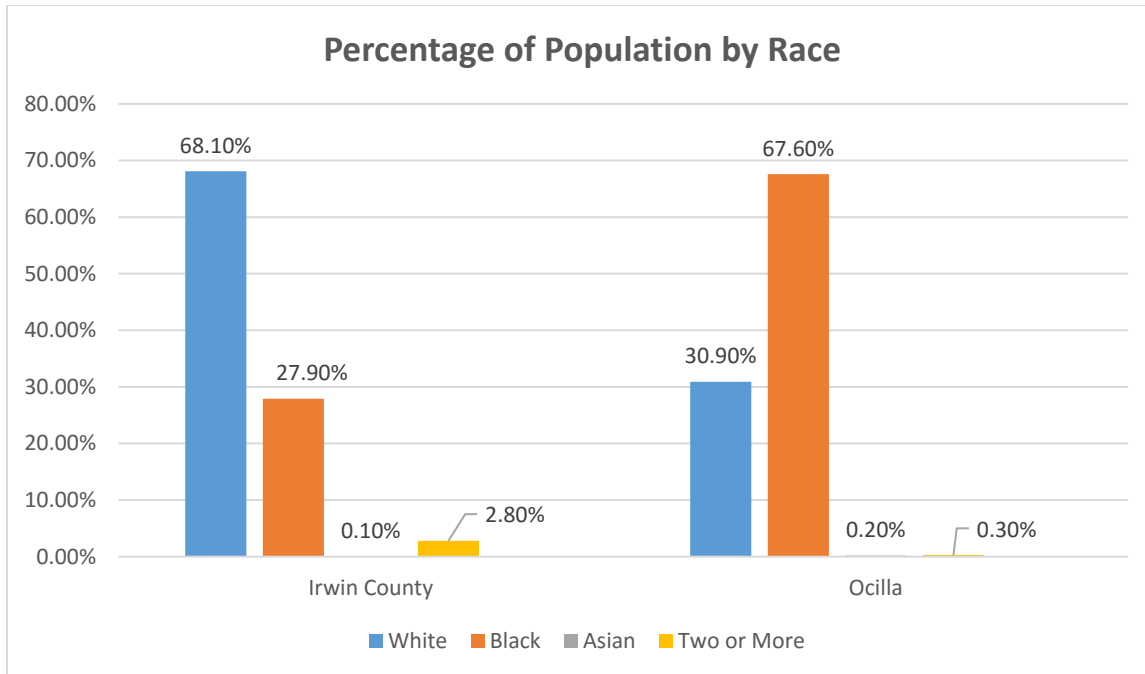


Since 2010, the percentage of the population aged 65 and older has increased in 2016 for Irwin County (2.4%) and the City of Ocilla has increased 4%. The median age in Irwin County is 38.6, compared with a median US age of 37.7.

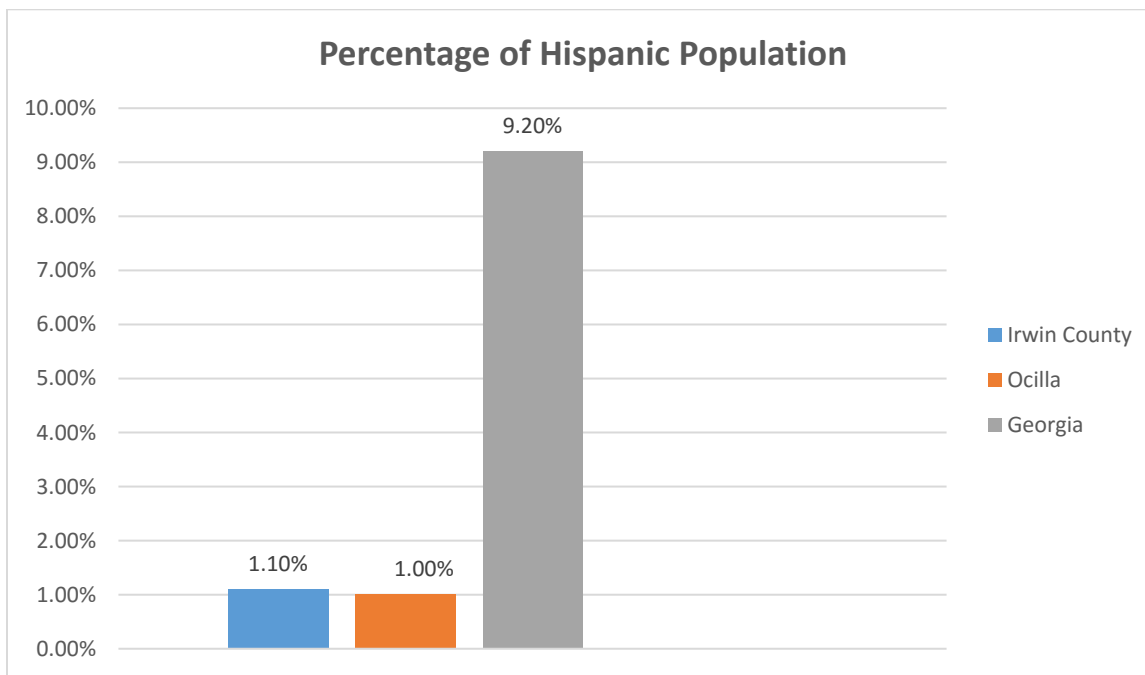


The 2016 age distribution in Irwin County is 17.6% over 65, 57.1% ages 20-64 and 25.2% under 20. In the City of Ocilla, the age distribution is 15.9% over 65, 56.2% ages 20-64 and 27.8% under 20.

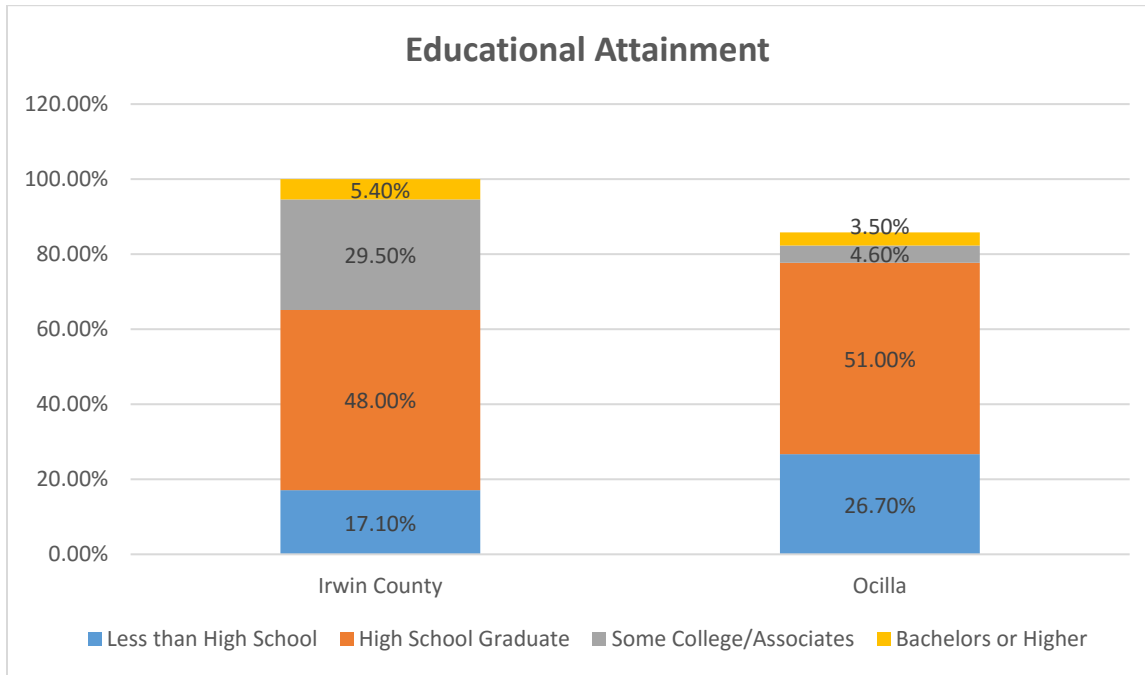
Irwin County's population is 51.2 %male and 48.8% female while the City of Ocilla's population is 52.8% male and 47.2% female. Georgia is 47.7% male and 51.3% female.



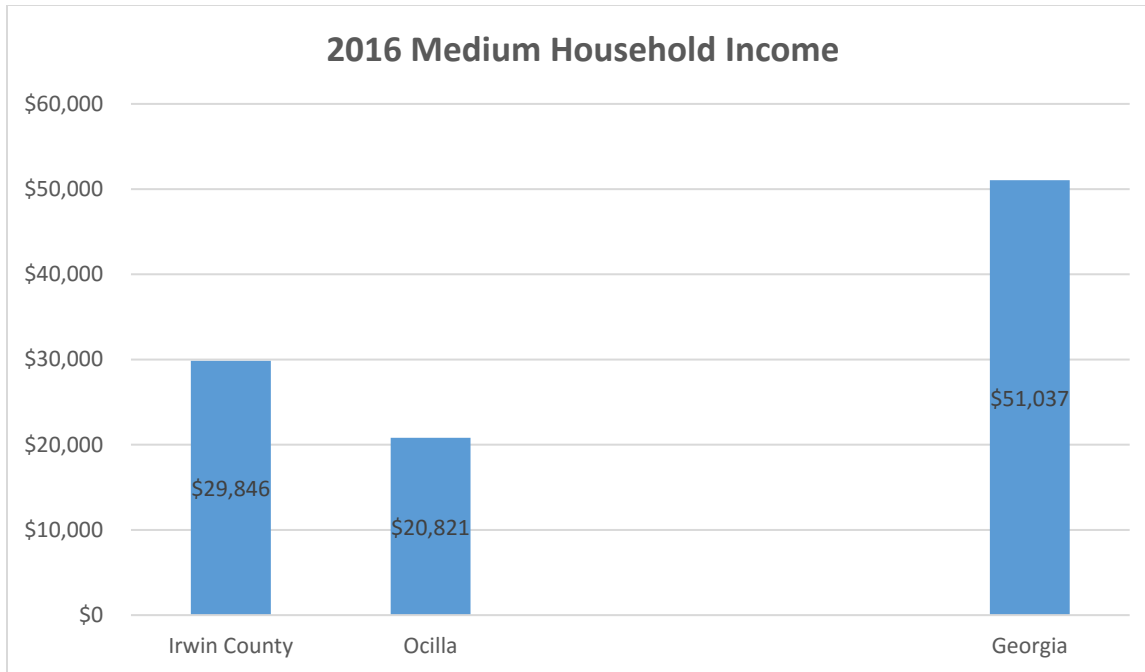
The 2016 population of Irwin County is 68.1% White/Caucasian, 27.9% Black/African American, 0.1% Asian, 0.0% some other race, 2.8% two or more races and 0.0% Native American. The City of Ocilla’s 2016 population is 30.9% White/Caucasian, 67.6% Black/African American, 0.2% Asian 0.0% some other race, 0.3% two or more races and 0.0% Native American.



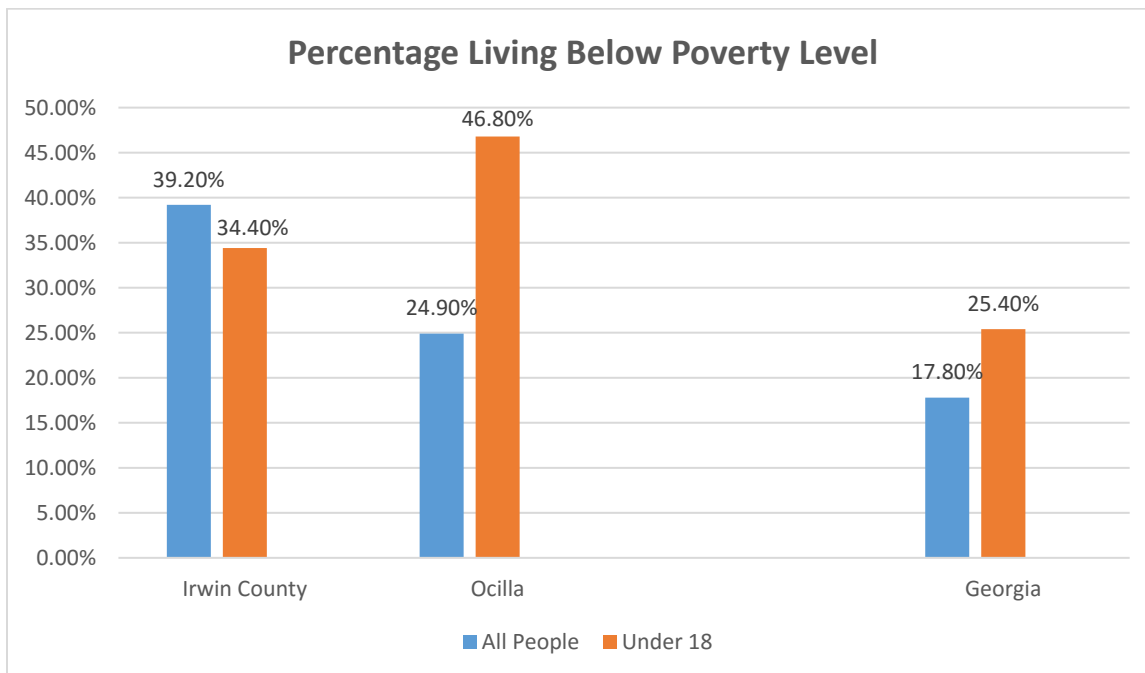
For 2017, Irwin County’s population is 1.1% Hispanic/Latino (of any race) and the City of Ocilla’s is 1.0% Hispanic/Latino (of any race). Georgia’s population for 2017 is 9.2% Hispanic/Latino (of any race).



In 2016, among persons aged 25 or older, in Irwin County, 17.1% have no high school diploma, 48.0% are high school graduates (includes equivalency) with no further education, 29.5% have an associate’s degree or some college and 5.4% have a bachelor’s or higher degree. Among persons aged 25 or older in the City of Ocilla, 26.7% have no high school diploma, 51.0% are high school graduates (includes equivalency) with no further education, 4.6% have an associate’s degree or some college and 3.5% have a bachelor’s or higher degree.

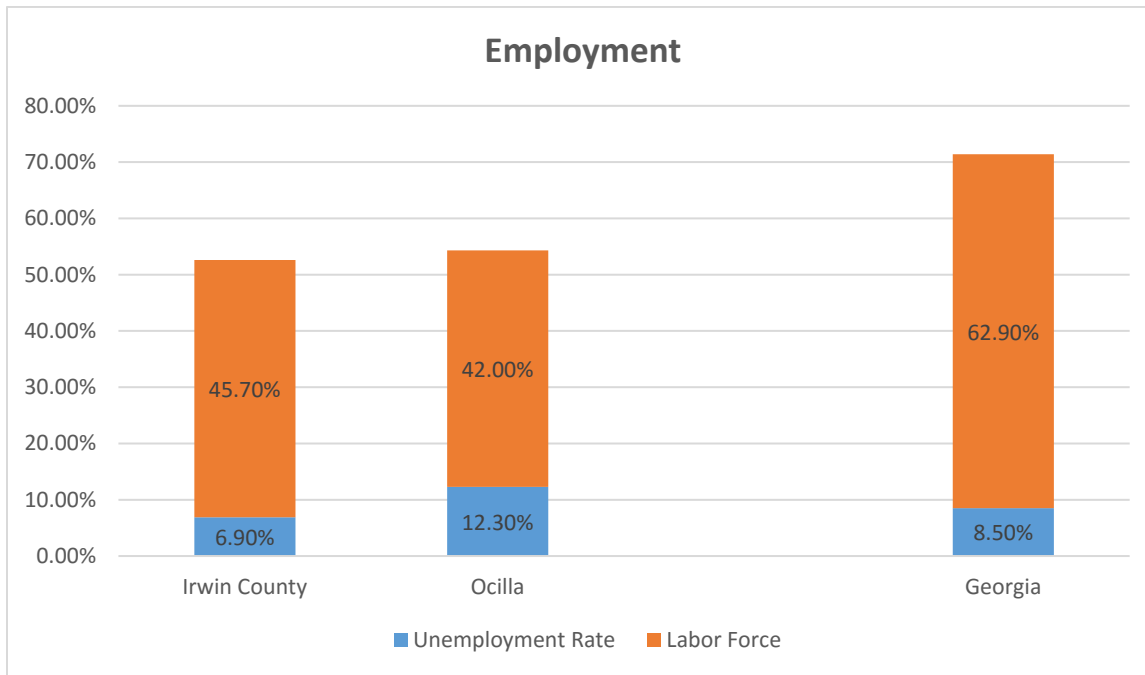


The median household income in Irwin County for 2016 is \$29,846, the median household income in the City of Ocilla is \$20,821. Median household income in Georgia is \$51,037.



An estimated 39.2% of Irwin County’s population and 24.9% of the City of Ocilla’s population live below the federal poverty level. An estimated 17.8% of Georgia’s population is living in poverty. In Irwin County, 34.4% of persons under age 18 live below

the poverty level and in the City of Ocilla 46.8% of persons under age 18 live below the poverty level. In Georgia, 25.4% of persons under age 18 live below the poverty level.



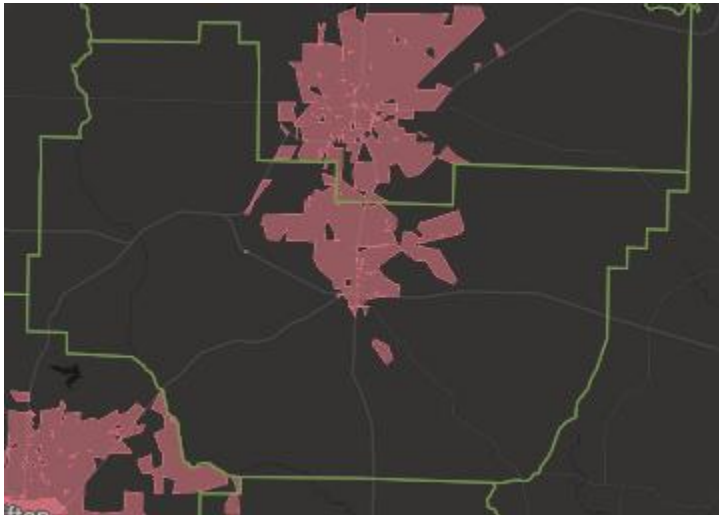
Irwin County’s estimated unemployment rate is 6.9% and the City of Ocilla’s unemployment rate is 12.3%. Georgia’s unemployment rate for 2016 was 8.5%. Among adults aged 16 and older, the rate of labor force participation is 45.7% in Irwin County and 42.0% in the City of Ocilla. Georgia’s labor force participation rate for those aged 16 and older is 62.9%.

## 4. Broadband Element

Broadband service in Ocilla and Irwin County is provided through DSL and satellite. There are 2 DSL providers and 3 Satellite providers. The communities are mainly served by two wired providers: Windstream and Mediacom Cable. Other providers have coverage in limited areas. There are 7 providers with 5 of those offering residential services and only Windstream and Mediacom offering business services. There is poor coverage, slow download and upload speeds, and restrictive package pricing.

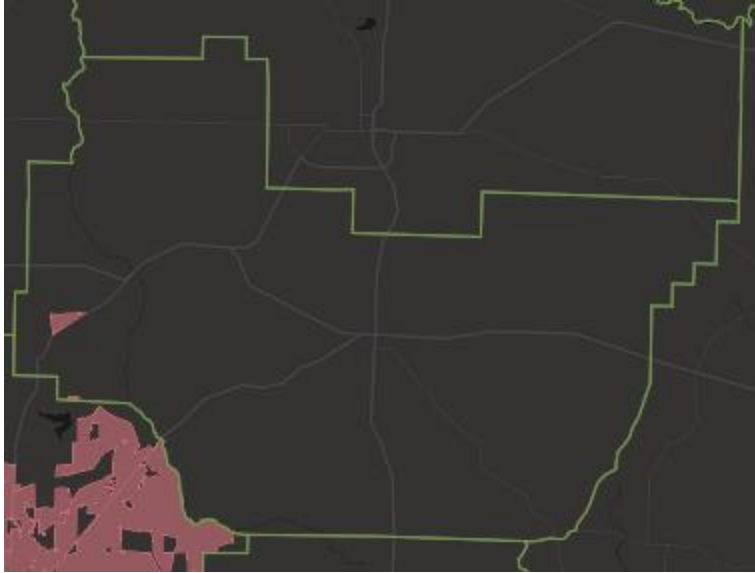
The Southern Georgia Regional Commission's 2014 *Digital Economy Plan* called for expanded broadband access in the Region along with strategies for the Region to remain competitive and maintain a qualified workforce in an increasingly digitized economy.

The infrastructure through which broadband is provided, and the condition of that infrastructure, is widely varied throughout the Region. DSL service is provided through telephone lines. Cable broadband is delivered through cable lines that often share poles with telephone and electric wires. As such, cable and DSL broadband infrastructure is vulnerable to damage from storms. While fiber optic lines are typically buried, fiber optic broadband service is not available. (See Broadband Maps below).

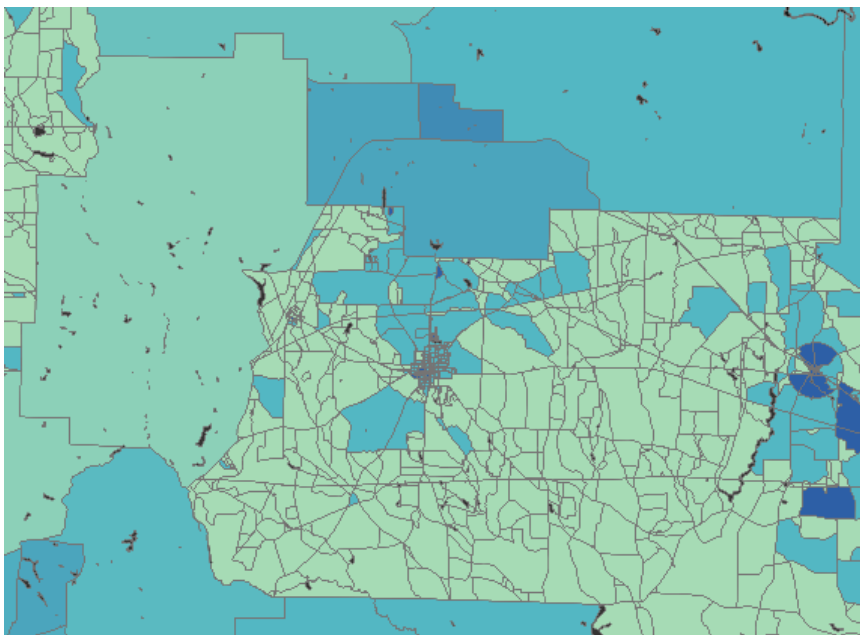


Coverage area: Mediacom Communications Corp.  
Source: [broadbandmap.fcc.gov](http://broadbandmap.fcc.gov)





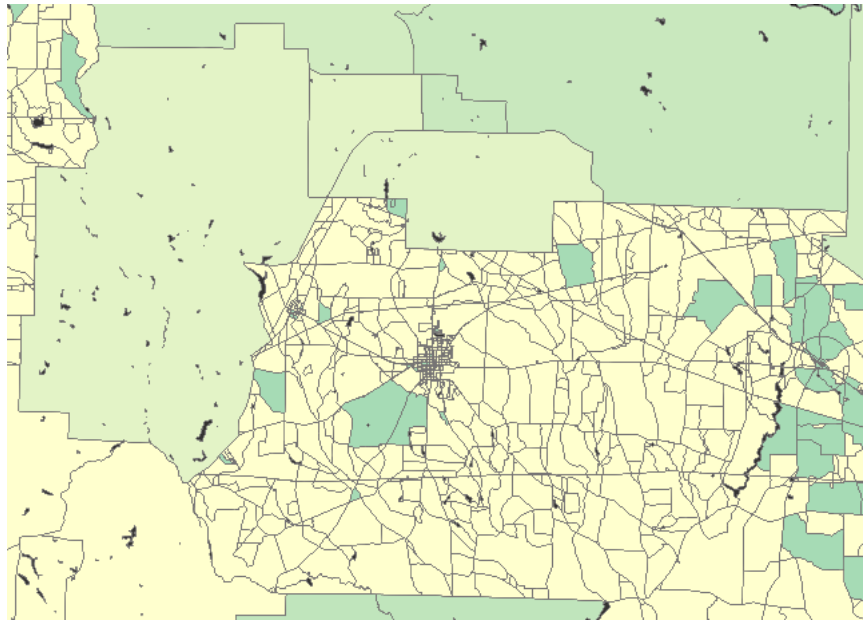
Coverage area: AT&T Inc.  
Source: broadbandmap.fcc.gov



**Number of Fixed Residential Broadband Providers**



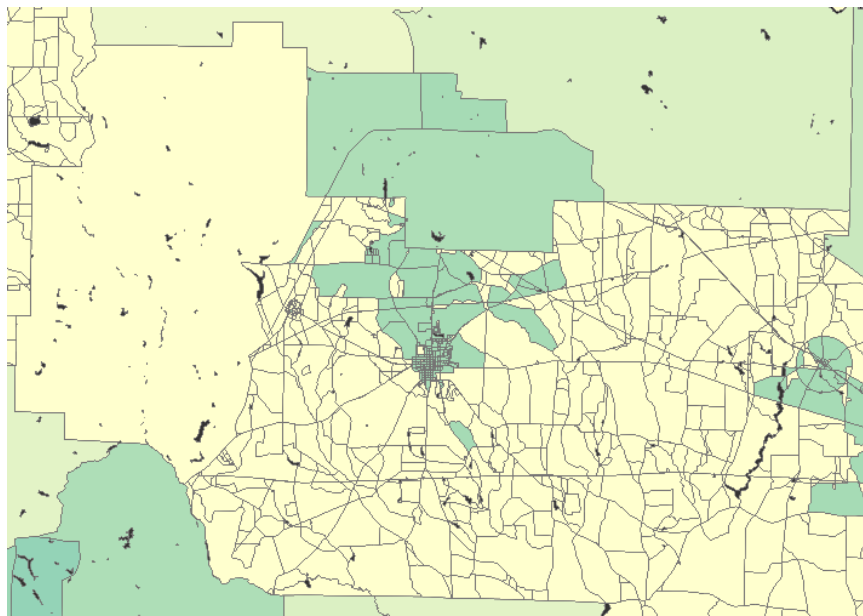
Source: broadbandmap.fcc.gov



Number of ADSL (Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line) Broadband Service Providers



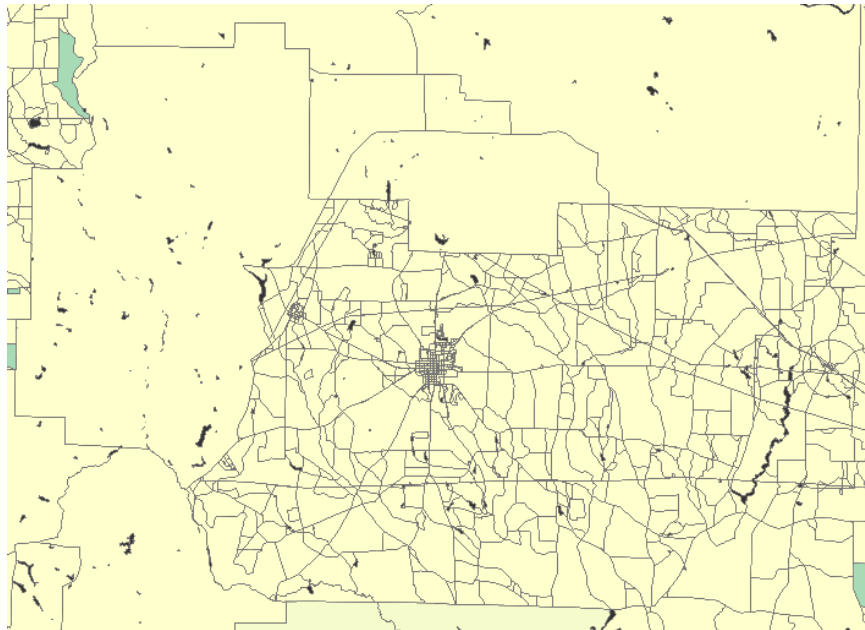
Source: broadbandmap.fcc.gov



Number of Cable Broadband Service Providers



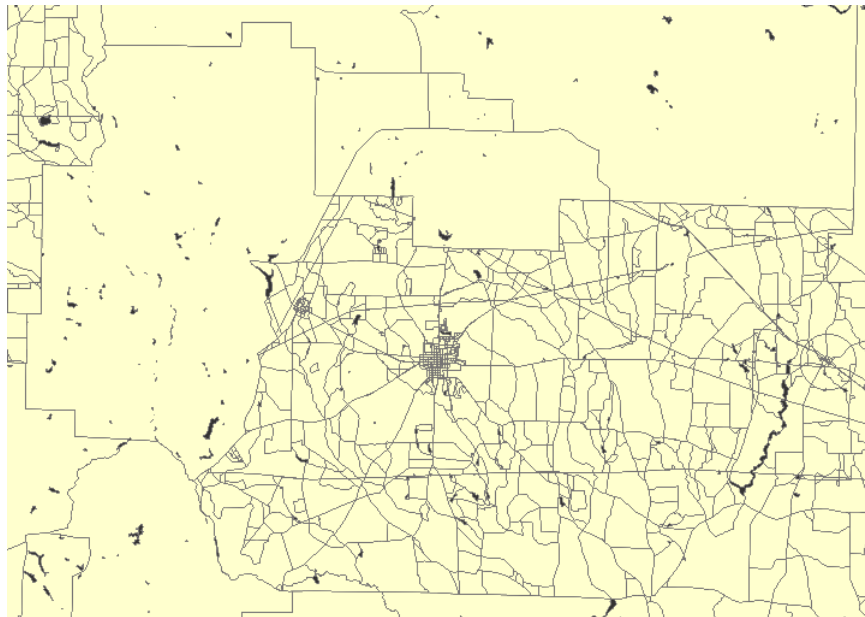
Source: broadbandmap.fcc.gov



Number of Fiber Optic Broadband Service Providers



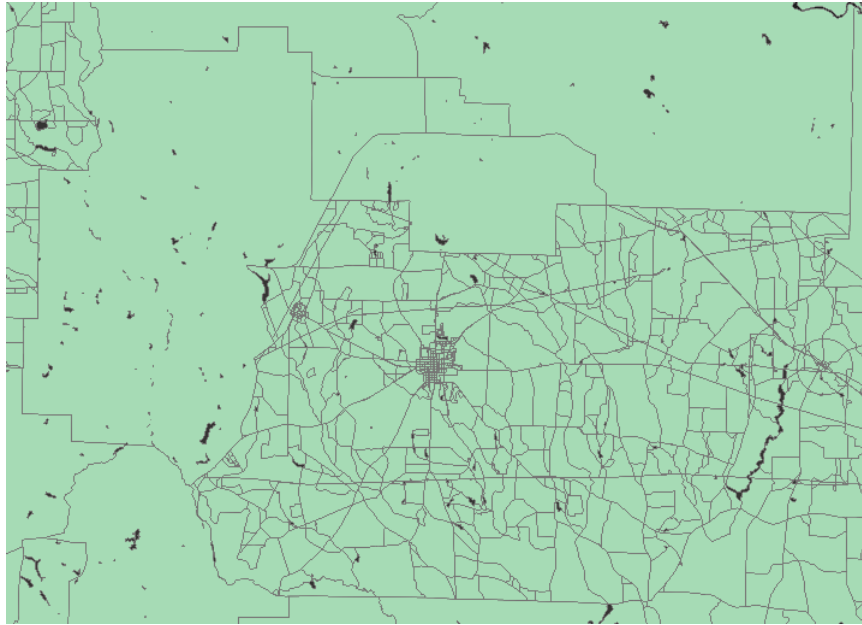
Source: broadbandmap.fcc.gov



Number of Fixed Wireless Broadband Service Providers



Source: broadbandmap.fcc.gov



Number of Satellite Broadband Service Providers



Source: broadbandmap.fcc.gov

The top speed available to consumers anywhere in the area is 200 Mbps (Megabits per second). The average download speed is 6.42 Mbps. This is 83.6% slower than the average in Georgia and 508.1% slower than the national average. The average download speed in Georgia is 39.12 Mbps.

60.3% of consumers in Ocilla only have access to 1 or fewer providers. Approximately 40% of Ocilla residents are served by multiple wired providers. Approximately 2,000 people in Irwin County have no access to any internet service.

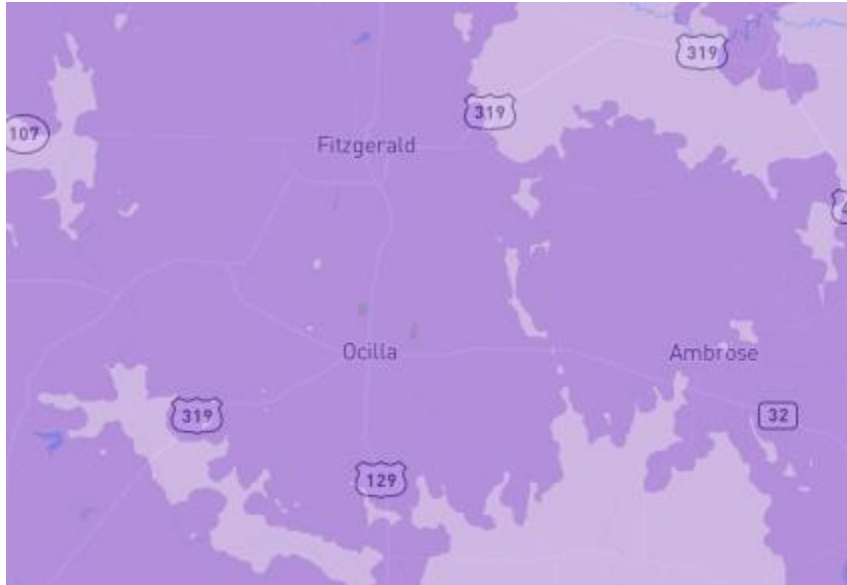
Mobile (3G/4G) broadband access is provided via cell phone towers throughout the County, with varying levels of coverage (see 3G/4G Broadband Maps on the following pages); most cell towers in the Southern Georgia Region are relatively newly constructed and are in excellent condition. Some areas of the Region are still without mobile coverage, including some populated areas.

Due to the increasing importance of broadband access in daily life, business, and recreation; broadband availability is increasingly likely to influence development patterns in Ocilla and Irwin County. Broadband should be included, along with other utilities and infrastructure, in all new developments. Broadband access will be a critical factor in determining the success of future developments of all types, including residential, commercial, and industrial.

Also, as broadband access has become crucial for so many people, the resiliency of broadband infrastructure will be a critical consideration for future hazard mitigation plans and

other plans dealing with disaster resiliency. Broadband outages are no longer just inconvenient; they can also take an economic toll on communities and regions.

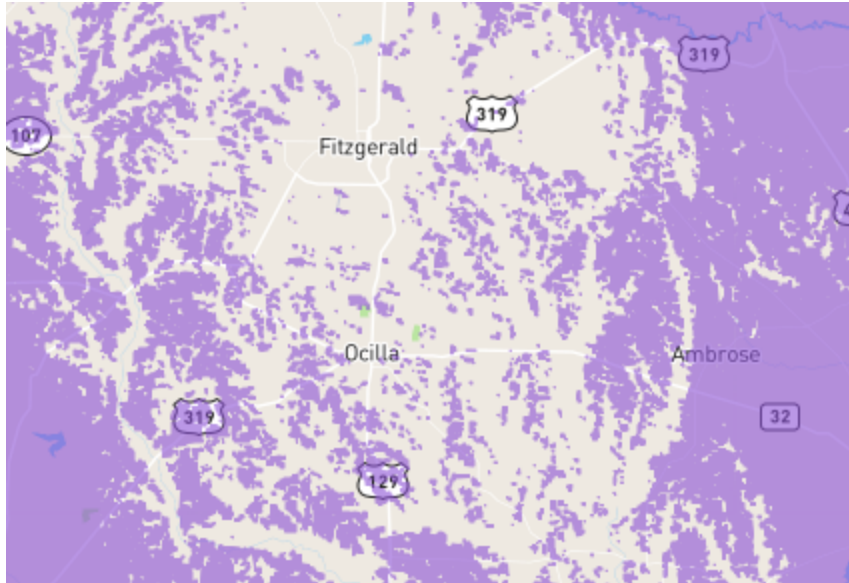
### Broadband Maps



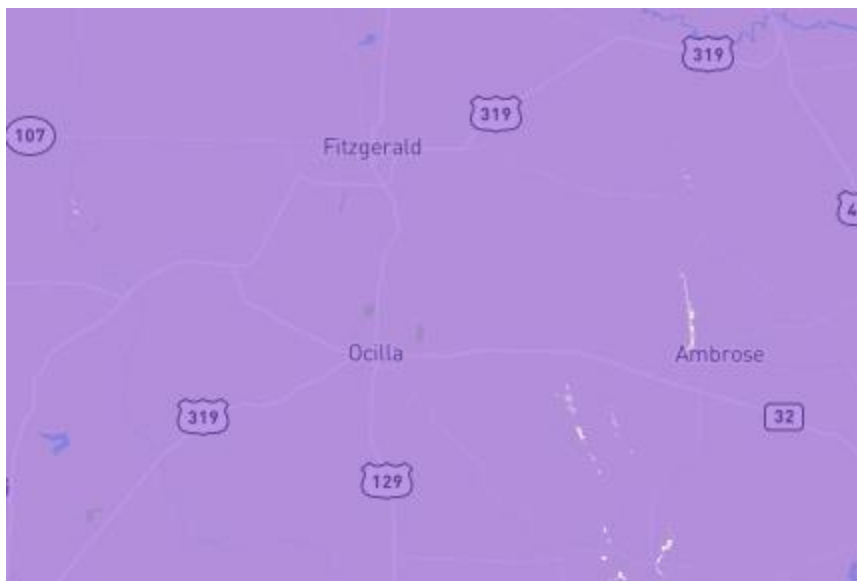
AT&T coverage. Darker color indicates both 3G and 4G; lighter color is 3G only.  
Source: [www.whistleout.com](http://www.whistleout.com)



Sprint coverage. Darker color indicates both 3G and 4G; lighter color is 3G only.  
Source: [www.whistleout.com](http://www.whistleout.com)



T-Mobile coverage (4G).  
Source: [www.whistleout.com](http://www.whistleout.com)



Verizon coverage (3G and 4G).  
Source: [www.whistleout.com](http://www.whistleout.com)

## **5. Consideration of DCA Community Quality Objectives**

The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has crafted a series of objectives dealing with a broad range of Needs that concern local governments. The objectives, which are listed below, are only recommendations, but provide local governments with a tool to guide them in the assessment of their needs and opportunities and in the development of their implementation activities. If they are used as such a tool by many of the local governments in their planning efforts, these objectives also have the potential to result in consistent planning projects and goals, which may translate into greater efficiency and a better quality of life for the residents.

### **1. Economic Prosperity**

Encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community. Factors to consider when determining suitability include: job skills required; long-term sustainability; linkages to other economic activities in the region; impact on the resources of the area; and prospects for creating job opportunities that meet the needs of a diverse local workforce.

#### **Best Practices recommended for Irwin County and City of Ocilla:**

- Research and create a source book to identify technical and financial assistance available for local businesses from regional, state and federal sources and make it available to local businesses.
- Track business needs of existing businesses to help with business retention.
- Tailor training programs to provide workforce skills needed by local businesses.

### **2. Resource Management**

Promote the efficient use of natural resources and identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the community. This may be achieved by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy generation; encouraging green building construction and renovation; utilizing appropriate waste management techniques; fostering water conservation and reuse; or setting environmentally sensitive areas aside as green space or conservation reserves.

#### **Best Practices recommended for Irwin County and City of Ocilla:**

- Create an inventory of environmentally sensitive areas such as groundwater recharge areas, river corridors and wetlands, as a first step to create a local strategy for minimizing negative impacts on water quality and quantity.

### **3. Efficient Land Use**

Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the periphery of the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the traditional core of the



community; designing new development to minimize the amount of land consumed; carefully planning expansion of public infrastructure; or maintaining open space in agricultural, forestry, or conservation uses.

**Best Practices recommended for Irwin County and City of Ocilla:**

- Create incentives such as tax breaks, code changes or other regulatory tools to encourage property owners to rehabilitate underutilized or vacant structures so that they can be put to new uses.
- Revise land development regulations to remove rigid parking requirements to reduce the number of unnecessary spaces in the community. This may include reducing the number of required parking spaces, or allowing shared parking between adjacent facilities.

**4. Local Preparedness**

Identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve. These prerequisites might include infrastructure (roads, water, and sewer) to support or direct new growth; ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired; leadership and staff capable of responding to opportunities and managing new challenges; or undertaking an all-hazards approach to disaster preparedness and response.

**Best Practices recommended for Irwin County and City of Ocilla:**

- Ensure consistency of Irwin County's and the City of Ocilla, land use/zoning ordinances with the adopted comprehensive plan.
- Pursue CDBG grants to implement needed infrastructure projects.
- Continue implementation of a Service Delivery Strategy.

**5. Sense of Place**

Protect and enhance the community's unique qualities. This may be achieved by maintaining the downtown as focal point of the community; fostering compact, walkable, mixed-use development; protecting and revitalizing historic areas of the community; encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community; or protecting scenic and natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

**Best Practices recommended for Irwin County and City of Ocilla:**

- Adopt manufactured home regulations to ensure compatibility of manufactured homes with surrounding single family residences and to regulate appearance, layout and location of manufactured homes.

**6. Regional Cooperation**

Cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions to address shared needs. This may be achieved by actively participating in regional organizations; identifying joint projects that will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer; or developing collaborative solutions for regional Needs such as protection of shared natural resources, development of the transportation network, or creation of a tourism plan.



**Best Practices recommended for Irwin County and the City of Ocilla:**

- Meet regularly with SGRC staff to discuss local priorities and projects and explore opportunities for assistance and coordination with regional efforts.

**7. Housing Options**

Promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource-efficient housing in the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development of a variety of housing types, sizes, costs, and densities in each neighborhood; promoting programs to provide housing for residents of all socioeconomic backgrounds, including affordable mortgage finance options; instituting programs to address homelessness Needs in the community; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure availability of adequate workforce housing in the community.

**Best Practices recommended for Irwin County and City of Ocilla:**

- Create an ordinance to allow very small single-family houses ("cottages") of 600-1,000 square feet in appropriate districts of the community. A cottage takes up a lot about half the size of a conventional new house, and its impact, in terms of traffic, stormwater, etc., is also about half. Cottages fill a need for affordable housing, especially for empty-nesters, retirees, young couples, or any 1-2 person household.
- Provide education on home loan assistance to foster rehabilitation and revitalization.

**8. Transportation Options**

Address the transportation needs, challenges, and opportunities of all community residents. This may be achieved by fostering alternatives to transportation by automobile, including walking, cycling, and transit; employing traffic calming measures throughout the community; requiring adequate connectivity between adjoining developments; or coordinating transportation and land use decision-making within the community.

**Best Practices recommended for Irwin County and the City of Ocilla:**

- Create a continuous, well maintained sidewalk network, especially around schools.
- Ensure safe, adequate and well-designed facilities for bicyclists.

**9. Educational Opportunities**

Make educational and training opportunities readily available to enable all community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, manage their finances, or pursue life ambitions. This can be achieved by expanding and improving local educational institutions or programs; providing access to other institutions in the region; instituting programs to improve local graduation rates; expanding vocational education programs; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure an adequately trained and skilled workforce.

**Best Practices recommended for Irwin County and City of Ocilla:**

- Ensure that all schools and libraries have adequate and efficient access to the internet to provide sufficient opportunities for on-line education and certification opportunities.

**10. Community Health**

Ensure that all community residents, regardless of age, ability, or income, have access to critical goods and services, safe and clean neighborhoods, and good work opportunities. This may be achieved by providing services to support the basic needs of disadvantaged residents, including the disabled; instituting programs to improve public safety; promoting programs that foster better health and fitness; or otherwise providing all residents the opportunity to improve their circumstances in life and to fully participate in the community.

**Best Practices recommended for Irwin County and City of Ocilla:**

- Develop a comprehensive listing of health services and assistance resources for local citizens.
- Coordinate with SGRC to participate in the GDOT 5311 program to provide public transportation to the nearest available public health facility.

## 6. Community Policies

Policies are developed to provide ongoing guidance and direction to Coffee County officials. They provide a basis for making decisions in implementing the Comprehensive Plan, including achieving the community vision and addressing the city's issues and opportunities. The policies are general in nature and should be used, in particular, during budget, permitting, and zoning decisions. Geographic-specific policies are discussed in conjunction with the Future Development Map for Irwin County.

These policies are organized around the Issues identified in the "Needs and Opportunities" section, and are further organized around the seven major topics of the plan:

1. Natural and Cultural Resources
2. Economic Development
3. Housing
4. Land Use
5. Transportation
6. Community Facilities and Services
7. Intergovernmental Coordination
8. Broadband Services

### Natural and Cultural Resources

**Goal: To provide for and promote the continued protection of our natural and cultural resources for current and future generations.**

#### Needs & Policies:

- 1.1: Updated Flood Plain Maps.** Correct existing floodplain maps are needed to replace the current maps, which are inaccurate by much as eleven feet, to protect flood areas, river corridors, and groundwater recharge areas from development.
- **Policy 1.1.1:** Make sure that the NFIP (National Flood Insurance Program) has adequately updated the maps for Irwin County and City of Ocilla.
- 1.2: Development in Flood Hazard Areas.** Existing regulations need to be reviewed to ensure adequacy in reducing the amount of future development in identified flood hazard areas.
- **Policy 1.2.1:** Review existing regulations with regard to development in flood hazard areas; if necessary, adopt a Floodplain Ordinance to regulate development in the flood hazard areas.
- 1.3: Master Drainage Plan.** A countywide Master Drainage Plan is needed.

- **Policy 1.3.1:** Seek funding to develop and implement a countywide Master Drainage Plan.
- 1.4: Inventory of Historic Places and Structures.** There are many historical structures and places, including cemeteries, in Irwin County that are not identified nor inventoried.
- **Policy 1.4.1:** Conduct a comprehensive survey which identifies all local historic buildings, places, potential historic districts, historic events and historic communities.
  - **Policy 1.4.2:** Encourage the County and City to expand the existing cultural resources survey to identify cultural resources located within the county. Historic property information previously surveyed and submitted to the Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division, could be used to supplement this survey as well as already conducted historic resource surveys for the City of Ocilla, which are available at the County Library, the City Clerk's office, and at the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.
  - **Policy 1.4.3:**
- 1.5: Historic Preservation.** More funding is needed to protect and rehabilitate local historical structures.
- **Policy 1.5.1:** Irwin County and the City of Ocilla should develop a local incentive or assistance program to encourage local building owners to take advantage of the voluntary historic designation process for their buildings. Such local incentives could be tax incentives, cash or in-kind, or restoration of such structure as considered by the County and City.
  - **Policy 1.5.2:** Builders should be encourage to preserve, redevelop or rehabilitate historically significant resources for all property they develop.
  - **Policy 1.5.3:** Identify and utilize available funding sources to implement the Historic Preservation Program. Pursue grant opportunities to complete needed historical renovations.
  - **Policy 1.5.4:** Investigate designation of a historic district.
  - **Policy 1.5.5:** Pursue funding to renovate the historic courthouse.
- 1.6: Culture Resources Registry.** Irwin County and Ocilla are home to many renowned local artists and musicians, but no official registry or recognition of these cultural resources exists.

- **Policy 1.6.1:** Conduct a comprehensive survey which identifies all the cultural resources in Greater Irwin County, including local artists. This inventory could be used to promote tourism in the area.
- 1.7: Underutilized Tourism Resources.** Irwin County and Ocilla contain many historic and cultural resources that need to be promoted.
- **Policy 1.7.1:** Expand the role of tourism in economic development by promoting festivities, events, and historical heritage in the community.
  - **Policy 1.7.2:** Develop an Ocilla/Irwin County website that will promote the community's historic and cultural resources.
- 1.8: School Renovations.** The old Ocilla Schoolhouse is in need of renovations. Develop this site for offices for the County and City. The Chamber of Commerce could also have their office at this site.
- **Policy 1.8.1:** Seek grant funding to renovate the old Ocilla Schoolhouse.
- 1.9: Sustainable Water Management.** Sustainable management of water as a resource, especially for agri-business, is required.
- **Policy 1.9.1:** Encourage citizen education and awareness through brochures and workshops to encourage water conservation.
  - **Policy 1.9.2:** Promote more efficient use of surface irrigation and better water management to ensure long term opportunities for sustainable development and quality of life for residents.
  - **Policy 1.9.3:** Implement storm water retention ponds, wetlands, and bio-retention areas to manage runoff quality and flow rate and help support river flows.
  - **Policy 1.9.4:** Apply for water quality grants that can reduce runoff.

## **Economic Development**

**Goal: To support a growing and balanced economy that bolsters the community's position as a regional economic engine, offering high-wage jobs by ensuring a high-level of workforce adequacy; and to provide community growth and development, which benefits all segments of the diverse population.**

### **Needs & Policies:**

- 2.1: Job Opportunities.** More job opportunities are needed, especially higher-wage jobs.

- **Policy 2.1.1:** Promote and support private economic investment from existing and new industry and businesses through financial and technical assistance to improve job opportunities.
- **Policy 2.1.2:** Support vocational and technical training programs that will provide a workforce serving the needs of existing and future industry in Irwin County and Ocilla and ensure a strong, viable, and local presence of the Technical College.
- **Policy 2.1.3:** Support more consistent broadband accessibility.
- **Policy 2.1.4:** Expand recruitment of businesses that will hire local graduates from the Quick Start training program and graduates from the trades' certification programs at Wiregrass.

**2.2 Need of Value-Added and Diversification.** Development of more value-added products and diversification is needed for agribusiness and other industries.

- **Policy 2.2.1:** Promote and support the development of diverse and innovative agri-business related industries.
- **Policy 2.2.2:** Promote the local winery. This can be a major asset to the community.
- **Policy 2.2.3:** Promote local fruit stands that brings awareness of locally grown products.
- **Policy 2.2.4:** Promote development of the new industrial park.

**2.3 Innovation Economic Development.** There is not enough innovative economic development taking place.

- **Policy 2.3.1:** Pursue development of a local business incubator.
- **Policy 2.3.2:** Provide more adequate broadband accessibility throughout the community to attract innovative development.

## Housing

**Goal:** To encourage access to appropriate and affordable housing options for all residents of all income levels.

### Needs & Policies:

**3.1: Substandard Housing.** Blighted/substandard homes/properties need to be renovated or demolished.

- **Policy 3.1.1:** Revise the City of Ocilla's and Irwin County's existing zoning ordinances and building codes to include uniform regulations for the location, minimum value, and/or age of manufactured homes and buildings.
- **Policy 3.1.2:** Continue to pursue Code Enforcement within neighborhoods to clean up trash, demolish unsafe and abandoned buildings and manufactured (mobile) homes, and require that homeowners and landlords be responsible for the upkeep of their property.
- **Policy 3.1.3:** Continue participation in the Community Home Investment Program (CHIP). Also apply for grants such as CDBG, and USDA.

**3.2 Housing Compatibility.** New homes that are being constructed in the City need to blend with the character of the area and neighborhood.

- **Policy 3.2.1:** Maintain the character of the existing neighborhoods when developing new housing.
- **Policy 3.2.1:** Adopt a landscaping ordinance to define individual responsibility for maintenance of properties and landscaping in the City or the County.
- **Policy 3.2.2:** Pursue creation of a Land Bank Authority.

## Land Use

**Goal:** To ensure that the County's anticipated growth occurs in a well-integrated yet organized fashion, which protects our community resources, promotes efficient use of infrastructure and supports quality economic development.

### Needs & Policies:

**4.1 Zoning Enforcement.** Both the City and County need better enforcement of their respective zoning codes, and need more resources in order to accomplish this.

- **Policy 4.1.1:** Investigate reallocation of resources in order to better enforce local zoning ordinances.
- **Policy 4.1.2:** Where feasible, strive for consistency between the City and County zoning codes in order to make it easier to share code enforcement resources.

## Transportation

**Goal:** To ensure that the County's anticipated growth occurs in a well-integrated yet organized fashion, which protects our community resources, promotes efficient use of transportation facilities and supports quality economic development.

**5.1: Public Transit.** The community needs public transit. The City of Ocilla has expressed a desire for rural public transit.

- **Policy 5.1.1:** An accessible, coordinated urban public transit system should be investigated.

**5.2 Roads.** The City and County still has dirt roads that need paving.

- **Policy 5.2.1:** Continue to seek funding through grants for paving and maintenance of roads. This will benefit school buses being able to continue their routes during bad weather.
- **Policy 5.2.3:** Transportation capacity should be carefully monitored to preserve capacity on roadways and highway safety concurrent with development.
- **Policy 5.2.4:** Industrial, commercial and residential growth should occur in areas where adequate public facilities such as water, sewer, and roads are provided.

**5.3 Sidewalks.** Irwin County and Ocilla have a need for the creation or improvement of sidewalks that are handicap accessible.

- **Policy 5.3.1:** Repair and improve existing sidewalks and install new sidewalks where they are needed.

## Community Facilities and Services

**Goal:** To ensure the provision of infrastructure, community facilities, and public services that support efficient growth and development patterns.

### Needs and Policies:

**6.1: Infrastructure Improvements.** The City's existing water and sewer lines are very old and many of the pipes are rusty and leaking, and the sewer pond is in need of dredging.

- **Policy 6.1.1:** Pursue improvements to the water and sewer public infrastructure in the County and City.



- 6.2 Funding Sources.** Lack of funding to repair water and sewer system.
- **Policy 6.2.1:** Continue to pursue grants to upgrade water and sewer public infrastructure in existing neighborhoods and to provide for future adequate capacity.
- 6.3 Inventory.** Lack of complete inventory of water and sewer system including valves, meters and manholes makes identification of problems and solutions (including budgeting for improvements) very difficult and more expensive.
- **Policy 6.3.1:** Develop an inventory of the entire water and sewer system with information on location, size, and condition of lines, valves, meters, manhole cover, fire hydrants, etc. to determine security and public health hazards.
- 6.4. GIS Data.** There is a GIS inventory of some community infrastructure, but a more complete inventory is needed.
- **Policy 6.4.1:** Continue to upgrade and inventory the data for the water, sewer, drainage, roads, and other facilities.
- 6.5 Recreation Employment and Volunteers.** The Recreation Department has one full-time staff and is relying on volunteers to do the work. There is a need for more paid employees and volunteers.
- **Policy 6.5.1:** Pursue funding for more paid employees and volunteers.
- 6.6 Emergency System.** A countywide Early Warning Communication/Notification System is needed.
- **Policy 6.6.1:** Seek funding for a countywide Early Warning Communication/Notification System.
- 6.7 CERT.** The “Community Emergency Response Team” (CERT) program needs to be implemented.
- **Policy 6.7.1:** Pursue funding to implement the CERT program.
- 6.8 Generators.** Portable and/or fixed generators are needed for all designated evacuation and emergency shelters and community water systems, as well as other critical facilities.
- **Policy 6.10.1:** Pursue grant funding to acquire and install generators.

**6.9 Recreational Protections.** Lightning warning and protection equipment is needed at outdoor recreational facilities countywide.

- **Policy 6.11.1:** Continue to seek grants for warning and protection equipment.

**6.10 Training.** Need to improve wildland fire training at the local fire department level.

- **Policy 6.12.1:** Continue to seek grants for training.

### **Intergovernmental Coordination**

**Goal:** To encourage coordination of planning efforts with other local service providers and authorities, neighboring communities, and state and regional planning agencies.

#### **Needs and Policies:**

**7.1: Collaboration.** Increased collaboration with neighboring counties is needed.

- **Policy 7.1.1:** Pursue increased collaboration with neighboring counties and communities.

### **Broadband Services**

**Goal:** To encourage the expansion of existing broadband services and to allow more providers within the communities.

#### **Needs and Policies:**

**8.1: Broadband access.** More affordable, accessible, and higher-speed broadband access is needed throughout all of Irwin County and the City of Ocilla, especially in underserved areas.

- **Policy 8.1.1:** Pursue development of public/private partnerships to provide comprehensive broadband coverage that is consistent, reliable, and equitable.
- **Policy 8.1.2:** Include consideration of broadband infrastructure in roadway projects where such infrastructure may be included in the right-of-way.
- **Policy 8.1.3:** Community-wide technology infrastructure should be considered a basic community facility and as such should be adequately planned for and implemented.

## 7. Community Work Program

### City of Ocilla 5-Year Short-Term Work Program Update Report of Accomplishments (2015-2019)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19
<b>CULTURAL RESOURCES</b>								
Establish a countywide Historic Preservation Committee	Staff Time	Ongoing	City/County	x				
Develop a Historic Preservation Ordinance	\$5,000	Ongoing (Combined with above project)	City	x				
Conduct a city-wide inventory of historic resources	\$7,500	Ongoing (Combined with inventory project in Irwin County work program)	City		x			
Develop a Plan to consolidate City and County Offices in the old Elementary School	Staff Time	Ongoing (reworded and combined with the project below)	City/County	x				
Complete the renovation of the Elementary School to serve as a Community Center	\$400,000	Ongoing (Combine with above project)	City		x			
Develop a Historic Tourism Website as part of the Chamber Website	\$1,000	Ongoing (continued in Irwin County work program)	Chamber of Commerce	x				
Develop a strategy to keep the Jeff Davis Memorial Park Open	\$45,000/year	Complete	City of Ocilla/Chamber of Commerce	x				
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>								
Financially support the Chamber of Commerce's activities for job retention, marketing and job training/education programs	\$500/year	Ongoing	Chamber/Industrial Development	x	x	x	x	x
Continue to support the Chamber's website to promote Irwin County in economic development	\$1,000/year	Ongoing	Chamber/Industrial Development	x	x	x	x	x
Design a brochure to market Greater Irwin County's economic advantages and historic tourism opportunities	\$750	Ongoing (continued as brochure/marketing project in Irwin County work program)	Chamber/Industrial Development		x			

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19
Develop an inventory of available lands for commercial/industrial development	\$1,000	Ongoing (combined into inventory project in Irwin County work program)	Chamber/Industrial Development	x	x			
Develop an inventory of available lands for residential development	\$1,000	Ongoing (combined into inventory project in Irwin County work program)	Chamber/Industrial Development		x	x		
Tear down old Osceola Motel for downtown redevelopment	\$2,000	Completed	City	x				
<b>HOUSING</b>								
Implement current CHIP applications and apply for new/rehab housing as needed to upgrade housing supply	\$1,000 per year plus Staff time	Ongoing	City	x	x	x	x	x
Implement current CDBG applications and apply for new/rehab housing as needed to upgrade housing supply and its infrastructure (roads, water & sewer system)	\$1,000 per year plus Staff time	Ongoing	City	x	x	x	x	x
Renovate 5 homes	\$1,000/home per year plus Staff time	Complete	City	x	x	x	x	x
Revise the City Zoning Ordinance	\$10,000 plus Staff time	Ongoing	City	x				
Apply for CDBG Program to upgrade the water system to provide city neighborhoods with sufficient fire flow	\$150,000	Ongoing	City		x			
<b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b>								
Plant 5 trees downtown every year	\$500/year	Ongoing (reworded in new work program)	City	x	x	x	x	x
Design and implement a countywide Master Drainage Plan to address Needs identified in the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan	\$1,000 Staff time (\$200,000)	Ongoing (continued in the Irwin County work program)	City/County			x	x	x
<b>LAND USE</b>								
Participate in the SGRC biannual Assessment meetings	\$1,000 Staff	Complete (continued as part of regular operations and not as a special project)	City, SGRC	x		x		x

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19
Develop a countywide Green Space Program	\$3,000 Staff	Ongoing (continued in the Irwin County work program)	City, County, SGRC				x	
Prepare for the full Comprehensive Plan Update due in February of 2014		Completed						
<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES</b>								
Inventory existing water, sewer and gas facilities and conditions	\$20,000	Ongoing	City/SGRC	x	x			
Extend the Water Main on Vo-Tech Drive to include all development	\$625,000	Ongoing	City				x	
Improve and Update the water main on Park Street	\$100,000	Ongoing	City			x		
Construct Water Main Loop in South Industrial Park	\$50,000	Ongoing	City				x	
Purchase two Police Vehicles	\$50,000	Ongoing	City	x	x			
Purchase two Utility Trucks	\$25,000 each	Ongoing	City	x				
Complete the TE Grant Project for Downtown	\$500,000	Completed	City	x				
Construct a new City Well	\$1.0 Million	Ongoing	City				x	
Utilize LMIG Program to resurface City Roads	Staff time	Ongoing	City	x	x	x	x	x
Implement a grading and maintenance program for alleyways within the City of Ocilla	Staff time	Ongoing	City	x	x	x	x	x
Construct the West 2nd street and water improvements	\$50,000	Completed	City	x				
Construct the TE sidewalk Hwy 32 Pedestrian safety lane	\$500,000	Ongoing	City	x				
Seek funding for a countywide Early Warning Communication/Notification System	Staff time	Ongoing (continued in Irwin County work program)			x	x		
Install auxiliary generators for all designated evacuation and emergency shelters and community water systems	\$100,000	Ongoing (continued in Irwin County work program)					x	x

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19
Install lightning warning and protection equipment at outdoor recreational facilities Countywide.	\$50,000	Ongoing (continued in Irwin County work program)		x				
Fund and implement the "Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)	\$75,000	Ongoing (continued in Irwin County work program)			x	x		
Become a designated "Storm Ready Community"	\$5,000, Staff time	Ongoing (continued in Irwin County work program)		x				
Improvements to the two City Parks as needed , siding for the Community Center and new roof for the Community House	\$15,000	Ongoing				x		

**Irwin County 5-Year Short-Term Work Program Update Report of Accomplishments**  
(2015-2019)

PROJECTS	REPORT ACCOMPLISHMENTS	OF	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19
<b>CULTURAL RESOURCES</b>							
Establish a county wide Historic Preservation Committee	Ongoing (continued in the City of Ocilla work program)		x				
Develop a Historic Preservation Ordinance	Ongoing		x				
Conduct a county-wide inventory of historic resources	Ongoing			x			
Develop a Historic Tourism Website as part of the Chamber Website	Ongoing (continued in the City of Ocilla work program)		x				
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>							
Design a marketing program and a brochure to market Greater Irwin County's economic advantages and historic tourism opportunities	Ongoing		x				
Develop an inventory of available lands for industry	Ongoing (combined with the project below)			x			
Develop an inventory of available lands for residential development	Ongoing (combined with the project above)			x			
Design a marketing program to promote agricultural products from local Farms	Ongoing		x				
Design an agri-tourism program to support local agricultural businesses	Ongoing				x		
<b>HOUSING</b>							
Implement a housing survey for housing conditions	Ongoing					x	
Implement current CHIP applications and apply for new/rehab housing as needed to upgrade housing supply	Ongoing		x				
<b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b>							
Develop and maintain an inventory for Environmentally Sensitive areas in the county	Ongoing					x	
Seek funding to develop and implement a countywide Master Drainage Plan to address Needs identified in the Pre-Disaster (PDM) Plan	Ongoing				x	x	x
<b>LAND USE</b>							
Develop a countywide Green Space Program	Ongoing					x	
<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES</b>							
Purchase 8 AED's for County facilities	Ongoing		x				
Reconstruct 2 Franks Road Bridges	Completed		x				

PROJECTS	REPORT ACCOMPLISHMENTS	OF	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19
Upgrade 1 Sheriff's Dept. vehicles per year	Ongoing (reworded as "public safety vehicles" in new work program)		x	x	x	x	x
Seek funding for a countywide Early Warning Communication/Notification System	Ongoing			x	x		
Install auxiliary generators for all designated evacuation and emergency shelters and community water systems	Ongoing				x		
Install lightning warning and protection equipment at outdoor recreational facilities countywide.	Ongoing			x			
Fund and implement the "Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)	Ongoing				x		
Become a designated "Storm Ready Community"	Ongoing		x				



**City of Ocilla 5-Year Community Work Program Update**  
(2019-2023)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
<b>CULTURAL RESOURCES</b>								
Establish a countywide Historic Preservation Committee and develop a Historic Preservation Ordinance	Staff Time/\$5,000	City/County	City/County	x	x	x		
Complete renovation of the Old Elementary School to serve as a Community Center and develop a plan to consolidate City offices in the building	\$400,000	City	City/Grants	x	x	x	x	
<b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b>								
Plant and maintain trees downtown as needed	\$500/Year	City	City/Grants	x	x	x	x	x
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>								
Financially support the Chamber of Commerce's activities for job retention, marketing and job training/education programs	\$500/Year	Chamber/City/County	Chamber/Industrial Development	x	x	x	x	x
Continue to support the Chamber's website to promote Irwin County in economic development	\$1,000	Chamber/City/County	Chamber/Industrial Development	x	x	x	x	x
<b>HOUSING</b>								
Implement current CHIP applications and apply for new/rehab housing as needed to upgrade housing supply	\$500,000	City	CHIP, City	x	x	x	x	x
Implement current CDBG applications and apply for new/rehab housing as needed to upgrade housing supply and its infrastructure (roads, water & sewer system)	\$500,000	City	CDBG, City	x	x	x	x	x
Revise the City Zoning Ordinance	\$10,000/Staff Time	City	City/SGRC	x				
Apply for CDBG Program to upgrade the water system to provide city neighborhoods with sufficient fire flow	\$150,000	City	CDBG/City	x	x	x		
Neighborhood Revitalization for clean-up, green space, parks, etc.	\$500,000	City	CDBG/CHIP, City	x	x	x	x	x
<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES</b>								
Inventory existing water, sewer and gas facilities and conditions	\$20,000	City/SGRC	City	x	x			
Extend the Water Main on Vo-Tech Drive to include all development	\$625,000	City	CDBG/City	x				

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
Improve and Update the water main on Park Street	\$100,000	City	CDBG, City	x				
Construct Water Main Loop in South Industrial Park and remaining 27 within the City	\$50,000/South Industrial Park \$10,000/ each remaining	City	CDBG, City	x	x	x	x	x
Purchase 2 Police Vehicles	\$50,000	City	Grants, City	x	x	x	x	x
Purchase 2 Utility Trucks	\$25,000	City	SPLOST, City, Grants	x	x	x	x	x
Construct a new City Well	\$1.0 Million	City	Federal, State, City	x				
Utilize LMIG Program to resurface City Roads	Staff Time	City	Sate, City	x	x	x	x	x
Implement a grading and maintenance program for alleyways within the City of Ocilla	Staff Time	City	City, County	x	x	x	x	x
Construct the TE sidewalk/ pedestrian safety lane on Highway 32	\$500,000	City	TE Grant	x				
Improve the two City Parks as needed, including siding for the Community Center and new roof for the Community House	\$15,000	City	City, County, SPLOST	x				
Construct local Firing Range for Public Safety force	\$100,000	City	City, Grants	x	x	x		
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>								
Continue to identify and pave all remaining dirt roads within the City	\$3,000,000	City	City, Grants	x	x	x	x	x

**Irwin County 5-Year Community Work Program Update**  
(2019-2023)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
Establish a countywide Historic Preservation Ordinance	\$5,500	City/County	City, County	x	x			
Conduct a county-wide inventory of historic resources	\$7,500	City/County	City, County			x	x	
Develop a Historic Tourism/cultural Website as part of the Chamber Website	\$1,000	Chamber	Chamber/Grants	x	x			
<b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b>								
Develop and maintain an inventory for Environmentally Sensitive areas in the county	\$4,500	County	General Funds	x				
Seek funding to develop and implement a countywide Master Drainage Plan to address issues identified in the Pre- Disaster (PDM) Plan	\$1,000/Staff	City/County	General Funds (PDM Project)	x	x	x		
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>								
Design a marketing program and a brochure to market Greater Irwin County's economic advantages and historic tourism opportunities	\$1,000	Chamber	City/County/Chamber	x	x			
Develop inventories of available lands for industry, residential development, and commercial development	Staff	Chamber	City/County/Chamber	x	x			
Design a marketing program to promote agricultural products from local Farms	Staff	Chamber	City/County/Chamber/	x	x			
Design an agri-tourism program to support local agricultural businesses	Staff	City/County/Chamber	City/County/Chamber	x	x	x		
Purchase and develop no more than 150 acres of land for new Industrial Park	\$5,000 per acre, not to include development	City/County/Chamber/ Industrial Development Authority	General Funds/Grants	x	x	x	x	x
<b>HOUSING</b>								
Implement a survey of housing conditions	\$4,500	County	County	x	x			
Implement current CHIP applications and apply for new/rehab housing as needed to upgrade housing supply	\$500,000	CHIP/County	County	x	x	x	x	x

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
<b>LAND USE</b>								
Develop a county-wide Green Space Program	\$3,000/ Staff	City/County/ SGRC	General Funds/Grant	x				
<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES</b>								
Purchase 8 AED's for County facilities	\$300/AED	County	General Fund	x	x			
Upgrade Public Safety Vehicles & Equipment	\$25,000/ annually	County	General Funds/USDA	x	x	x	x	x
Seek funding for a countywide Early Warning Communication/ Notification System	Staff Time	City/County	City/County/Grant (PDM Project)	x	x			
Install auxiliary portable and/or fixed generators (including transfer switches) for all designated evacuation and emergency shelters, community water systems, and other critical facilities	\$100,000 per generator	City/County	City/County/Grant (PDM Project)	x	x			
Install lightning warning and protection equipment at outdoor recreational facilities countywide	\$50,000	City/County	City/County/Grant (PDM Project)	x	x			
Fund and implement the "Community Emergency Response Team"(CERT)	\$75,000	City/County	City/County (PDM Project)	x	x			
Become a designated "Storm Ready Community"	\$5,000/ Staff	City/County	City/County (PDM Project)	x	x			
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>								
Continue to identify and pave all remaining dirt roads within the County	\$10,000,000	County	County/Grants	x	x	x	x	x

## 8. Economic Development Element

The 2018-2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), as developed by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission under a grant from the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, is hereby incorporated by reference into this Comprehensive Plan to serve as the Economic Development Element for Irwin County and the

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission's (SGRC) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) was designed to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen the regional economy. The SGRC CEDS analyzed the regional economy and serves as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives, a regional plan of action, and investment priorities and funding sources.

As a performance-based plan, this CEDS plays a critical role in adapting to global economic conditions by fully utilizing the region's unique advantages to maximize economic opportunity for its residents by attracting private investment that creates jobs. The SGRC CEDS is a regionally-owned strategy that is the result of a continuing economic development planning process developed with regional public- and private-sector participation. This plan sets forth the goals and objectives necessary to solve the economic development problems of the Southern Georgia region and clearly defines the measures of success.

The Southern Georgia CEDS gives an overview of the region, briefly describing geography, population, economy, labor and workforce development and use, education, transportation access, environment, and regional resources. It reviews the state of the regional economy and provides a list of achievable Goals and Objectives for the region, a Plan of Action to ensure success, and Performance Measures used to evaluate the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's successful development and implementation of the 2018-2022 CEDS. Implementation of the goals identified in this plan is significant to the economic future of the SGRC District.

Policies, Needs and opportunities, and Short-term Work Program implementation strategies located in the current Comprehensive Plans for each jurisdiction in our 18-county region were used extensively to develop the CEDS Goals and Objectives, Vital Projects, and Problems and Opportunities.

Included below are goals and objectives from the CEDS which are aligned with the current economic development goals of Irwin County and the City of Ocilla

**Goal 1: Promote economic development strategies that encourage entrepreneurship, support existing industries, attract new employers, and stimulate tourism.**

**Objectives:**

- Focus on ways to encourage and facilitate regional tourism.

**Goal 2: Protect, expand, and enhance critical infrastructure and connectivity for existing and future community growth.****Objectives:**

- Encourage local governments to implement the Southern Georgia Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.
- Identify areas where high speed internet and broadband are needed.
- Strive to provide industrial parks/properties with all the necessary infrastructure and transportation links to attract new and expanding businesses and industries to the area.
- Continue to monitor grant opportunities and inform local communities about upcoming deadlines and assist local governments in the grant preparation and application process.

**Goal 3: Facilitate growth and development of an educated, skilled, prepared workforce by utilizing available programs and resources.****Objectives:**

- Improve educational attainment by reducing high school dropout rates
- Market workforce development programs that enable youth and adults to pursue higher education opportunities.
- Support educational institutions to provide learning/skill development opportunities.
- Work closely with business and industry to ensure that the system is not only producing workers to meet its immediate needs, but making adjustments in anticipation of future needs and technological changes.

**Goal 4: Create an inviting sense of place through rural renewal and other strategies in order to retain population and to attract new members to our community.****Objectives:**

- Collaborate to develop county-wide historic preservation plans.
- Promote downtown areas for tourism and recreation.
- Increase code enforcement in communities surrounding downtown areas.
- Create welcoming, functional neighborhoods with “work, play, live” atmospheres to invite younger families to the region.
- Encourage local governments to participate in CHIP, CDBG, and USDA housing programs.

- Seek additional funding streams to address senior population program sustainability.
- Market unique aspects of communities to attract a younger population.

## 9. Land Use Element

### **Character Areas**

In keeping with State Minimum Planning Standards, every part of Irwin County and the City of Ocilla has been delineated into specific Character Areas. Character areas are intended to serve as guidance for future land use and land development. Each of the following character area narratives was developed based on stakeholder input, existing land uses, anticipated development, planned infrastructure improvements and expansions, and guidance found in the *State Planning Recommendations*. As with the Plan in general, these character area descriptions and goals should not be considered final. As the community gains a greater understanding of the role and value of character areas, their descriptions should be fine-tuned. Additionally, as the community continues to grow, specific character area depictions may need to be adjusted.

Each Character Area narrative has a unique **Description** stating either the existing or desired qualities for that area. (Please note the associated picture for each area represents the current state of the specific area and should not be construed to necessarily represent the desired state, although for some descriptions this may be the case.) The stated **Development Strategy** should serve as a guide for all development and redevelopment taking place in the Character Area. Adherence to these development strategies will ensure consistent and complimentary development, which promotes a greater sense of place and overall improved quality of life. The listing of **Permitted Zoning Districts** provides guidance as to the type of land uses encouraged within each Character Area. While many of the differences between uses can be masked through site design and development standards, there are certain uses which are incompatible with surrounding uses and should not be permitted. As required by the State, the **Quality Community Objectives** demonstrate the unique ideals established for each Character Area. The **Implementation Measures** are the specific activities or programs which could take place within each of the Character Areas. While the suggested list of measures may or may not currently exist in Irwin County and the City of Ocilla, their implementation in appropriate areas would help achieve the established objectives and overall development strategy for each Character Area. In most cases, these measures should be considered joint efforts between the local government, development community, and citizens alike.



## Agricultural/Forestry Character Area



### **DESCRIPTION:**

These are areas intended for detached single-family residential uses and prime agriculture areas that maintain rural character. Residential lots should be large (no less than 1 acre), or homes should be clustered on smaller lots to preserve large tracts of natural areas and open space. Setbacks, residential landscaping to include foundation plantings, and site design should be employed in order to maintain rural character, with plentiful open space and wooded areas. The land in Irwin County is approximately 95% agricultural, dedicated to farming, including fields, lots, pastures, livestock production, and specialty farms.

**APPROPRIATE LAND USE:**

Agricultural farm operations and related activities, forestry, natural resources conservation, groundwater recharge areas, low-density residential development accessory to agricultural or farm operations of varying sizes.

**DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:**

Preserve the rural/agricultural character of these areas by maintaining very low density residential development primarily accessory to farm operations and large lot sizes. Use of conservation easements to protect environmentally sensitive areas should be encouraged. Roadways in these areas should be widened only when required to meet public safety standards.

**PERMITTED ZONING DISTRICTS:**

- AU – Agricultural Use

**QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) Economic Prosperity
- 2) Resource Management
- 3) Sense of Place

**IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:****Conservation Easements**

Encourage owners of key properties (such as those in environmentally sensitive areas, included in the local greenspace plan, or designated for agricultural use in the comprehensive plan) to utilize conservation easements or sale of development rights to preserve their land from future development. Conservation easements allow private landowners to donate the development rights of their property to a qualified conservation organization or government agency, in exchange for tax savings. The sale of development rights is an arrangement whereby private landowners sell the development rights of their property to a qualified conservation organization or government agency. In both cases above, giving up development rights permanently protects a property from development and thereby ensures it remain as green space or farmland.

**Sidewalk/Trail Network**

Promote physical activity in your community by creating or improving sidewalks and trails that connect to important destinations such as schools, public facilities, employment centers, parks, recreation areas.

**Preserve Agriculture Land Use**

Help contain sprawl development by preserving agricultural lands in your community. This may be accomplished through any combination of the following: 1) Establish an agriculture zoning district with very large minimum lot size requirements (at least 20 acres). 2) Require an agricultural buffer for all new non-agricultural development adjacent to designated agricultural land. This will minimize future potential conflicts between ag and non-ag land uses. 3) Require a waiver when land use, building or occupancy permits are applied for on non-agricultural land abutting or within 1,000 feet of agricultural land.

This waiver would specify that the applicant understands agricultural land exists near the subject property and agricultural operations are ongoing adjacent to the existing or proposed use. 4) Develop a program to assist local farmers in selling their products or otherwise profiting from their farms. These programs include agri-tourism, farmers' markets, farm festivals, and related activities.

### **Commercial Character Area**



#### **DESCRIPTION:**

This land use is intended for areas in Irwin County or the City of Ocilla that contain retail establishments, offices, highway commercial establishments, and other similar uses.

#### **APPROPRIATE LAND USE:**

The dominant land use in this area is commercial. This includes a wide variety of sales and services that best accommodate the needs of the community and the traveling public.

#### **PERMITTED ZONING DISTRICTS:**

General Business District (G-B) and Rural Commercial (R-C) – County.

Neighborhood Commercial District (N-C), General Business District and Central Business District (C-B-D) - City.

#### **QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) Economic Prosperity

- 2) Resource Management
- 3) Efficient Land Use
- 4) Sense of Place
- 5) Transportation Options
- 6) Community Health
- 7) Housing Options

**IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:**

Downtown Program - Actively support and participate in programs that promote healthy business downtown such as Downtown Development Authorities, Better Hometown, and Main Street. Encourage and develop broadband connectivity.

Infill Development Program - Develop a comprehensive strategy for encouraging infill development in particular areas of the community, while also regulating this development to ensure protection of quality of life in affected neighborhoods. This strategy should include a) development incentives, improvements to public facilities and services, and streamlined regulations to encourage infill development; b) guidelines for appropriate design, density and location of new infill projects.

## **Industrial Character Area**



### **DESCRIPTION:**

Development in this category includes manufacturing and wholesale, as well as warehousing and similar uses. The two industrial parks are located in this character area, as is the landfill.

### **APPROPRIATE LAND USE:**

Agricultural Industries, Construction Services, Manufacturing, Millwork, Motor Freight Transportation and Warehousing, Wholesale Trades, Airport, Transportation/Communication/Utilities, and other similar uses.

### **DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:**

Provide an environment suitable for light and heavy manufacturing, wholesale, and warehousing activities that may impose undesirable noise, vibration, odor, dust, or other offensive effects on the surrounding area, together with other non-residential uses complementary to industrial surroundings.

### **PERMITTED ZONING DISTRICTS:**

Allowable zoning districts in this category: Heavy Industrial, Light Industrial. Wholesale-Light Industrial District (WLI) and Heavy Industrial District (H-I) – County/City.

### **QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) Economic Prosperity

### **IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:**

#### **Targeted Industry Analysis**

Strategically choose which types of business to recruit and support using relevant community characteristics to determine the best fit for local job needs, workforce skills, or to complement existing businesses. Also consider recent growth rates for various industries, in the region, the state, and the U.S. Encourage and develop broadband connectivity to maintain sustainable economic growth.

**Stormwater Management**

Develop and implement a local stormwater management plan that includes: 1) Incentives for low impact development (LID) which uses innovative site design techniques to collect and drain or evaporate stormwater runoff onsite, rather than routing it into a typical stormwater collection system. LID techniques include bioretention, permeable pavers, tree box filters, rain barrels, disconnected downspouts, narrower streets, infiltration swales, rooftop gardens, bioretention cells and rain gardens. 2) Requirements that impervious surfaces not exceed a certain maximum percentage of total lot size, in particular sections of the community, particularly those that drain most directly into water supply streams or reservoirs.



## Mixed Use Character Area



### **DESCRIPTION:**

The Mixed Use character area contains activity centers in Irwin County and the City of Ocilla, which have an intricate mix of uses contributing to a working balance for smaller geographic areas. Greater regulatory flexibility is intended to encourage innovative design, high quality development and redevelopment, and a walkable environment.

The City of Ocilla character areas consist of industrial flanking the city on the north and south ends, with the center of the city consisting of mixed use surrounded by residential. The residential category is comprised of both single and multi-family dwelling units and encompasses approximately 50% of the area of the City of Ocilla. The remaining 50% is divided between Industrial, which is for manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing, etc.; Mixed Use, which contains office, service, retail sales and entertainment facilities which are usually located as a single use in one building; and Public/Institutional, which consists of the County Courthouse, libraries, schools, post office, fire stations, and police stations. The unincorporated communities of Mystic and Irwinville are 100% mixed use character area; their existing land use is approximately 75% single-family residential and 25% commercial/industrial.

### **DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:**

Provide guidelines and infrastructure to enhance the connectivity and accessibility of these areas in order to ensure business success while minimizing adverse impacts on neighborhoods and the environment. Continue to ensure adequate buffering between uses. Endeavor to strike a balance between encouraging economic development and preserving agricultural land and open space.



**PERMITTED ZONING:**

A-U Agricultural Use, R-1 Single Family Residential, R-R Rural Residential, R-1A Single Family Residential, R-20 Single Family Residential, WLI Wholesale-Light Industrial District, H-I Heavy Industrial District and G-B General Business District. (County)

SA Suburban Agriculture, R-14 Single Family Residential, R-8 Residential, M-R Multiple Residential, R-8-M Residential, R-P Residential Professional, N-C Neighborhood Commercial District, G-B General Business District and C-B-D Central Business District. (City).

**QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) Sense of Place
- 2) Efficient Land Use
- 3) Transportation Options
- 4) Community Health

**IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:**

**Sidewalk and Pedestrian Network Planning** – Addressing deficiencies in the sidewalk network promotes healthy neighborhoods and commercial areas where pedestrians can safely travel.

**Infill Development Program** - A comprehensive strategy for encouraging infill development in particular areas of the community, while also regulating this development to assure the quality of life in affected neighborhoods.

**Traffic Calming** - Physical improvements designed to decrease traffic speed and increase the pedestrian-friendliness of roadways.

**Mixed-Income Housing** - Encouraging affordable housing developments thereby creating viable communities with increased levels of property maintenance and security, as well as social services to support the population.

**Community Housing Partnership** - Create a partnership with the local public housing agency, nonprofits and neighborhood organizations, using tools available to agencies, non-profits, and governmental bodies to create safe and affordable housing for people.

## **Parks/Recreation/Conservation Character Area**



### **DESCRIPTION:**

Land in this area is dedicated for active or passive recreational uses and for areas that require special protection from development due to unique historical or natural resources and characteristics. Jeff Davis Memorial Park is located in this character area.

### **DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:**

Protect the areas from any negative impacts of development. Provide natural buffers within and along developments adjacent to the Park. Conservation of sensitive environmental areas should be encouraged or required.

### **PERMITTED ZONING:**

Agriculture Use (AU) and Conservation (SA).

### **QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) Resource Management
- 2) Regional Cooperation
- 3) Efficient Land Use
- 4) Sense of Place

### **IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:**

Conservation Easements - Encourage owners of key properties (such as those in environmentally sensitive areas, included in the local greenspace plan, or designated for agricultural use in the comprehensive plan) to utilize conservation easements or sale of development rights to preserve their land from future development. Conservation

easements allow private landowners to donate the development rights of their property to a qualified conservation organization or government agency, in exchange for tax savings. Sale of development rights is an arrangement whereby private landowners sell the development rights of their property to a qualified conservation organization or government agency. In both cases above, giving up the development rights permanently protects a property from development and thereby ensures that it remains as green space or farmland.

Tourism Strategy - Plan a tourism initiative and marketing campaign based on the community's existing heritage and cultural resources. The strategy might also entail employing well-designed logo and tourist-oriented directional signage systems, to help tourists find the services they need. Heritage and Cultural tourism are key components of economic success in Georgia.

Green Space Plan - Develop, adopt, and implement a green space plan that provides for connectivity of permanently protected green space throughout the community. Setting aside the greenspace can be done through direct purchase by the local government, purchase of the development rights to the land only, or by working with local land trusts to focus their efforts to acquire conservation easement in the areas identified in the local greenspace plan.

## **Public/Institutional Character Area**



### **DESCRIPTION:**

This character area consists of large sites of a public or institutional type, such as schools, colleges and universities, large churches, hospitals, and government facilities.

### **DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:**

Development of new facilities within this character area should take place at a scale that is compatible with surrounding uses. New developments should be accessible by a variety of transportation options.

### **PREDOMINANT LAND USE:**

- Public/Institutional

### **PERMITTED ZONING DISTRICTS:**

- Public/Institutional

### **QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:**

**Local Preparedness:** Identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve. These prerequisites might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to support or direct new growth; ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired; leadership and staff capable of responding to opportunities and managing new challenges; or undertaking an all-hazards approach to disaster preparedness and response.

**Educational Opportunities:** Make educational and training opportunities readily available to enable all community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, manage their finances, or pursue life ambitions. This can be achieved by expanding and improving local educational institutions or programs; providing access to other institutions in the region; instituting programs to improve local graduation rates; expanding vocational education programs; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure an adequately trained and skilled workforce.

### **IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:**

- Implement a balance of transportation options and design.

- Encourage development of essential facilities in locations where they can be conveniently accessed.
- Encourage development of new public/institutional uses at a scale that is compatible with surrounding uses.

## Residential Character Area



### **DESCRIPTION:**

Development in this area is predominantly residential, ranging from single-family to multi-family densities. Uses also allowed include public and private schools, churches, and other uses as permitted within the zoning districts within this area.

### **DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:**

The focus should be reinforcing stability by encouraging more home ownership and maintenance or upgrade of existing properties. Vacant properties in the neighborhood offer an opportunity for infill development of new, architecturally compatible housing. Strong pedestrian and bicycle connections should also be provided.

### **PREDOMINANT LAND USE:**

The dominant land use in this area is residential. A mix of uses, including neighborhood commercial and office would be suitable as well. It is recommended that all communities identify a central point to act as a gathering point for the immediate community.

**PERMITTED ZONING DISTRICTS:**

Single-Family Residential (R-1, R-1A, and R-20/County), Rural Residential (R-R/County)

Single Family Residential (R-14/City), Residential (R-8 City), Residential (R-8-M/City) and Multi-Family/Mixed Family (M-R/City).

**QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:**

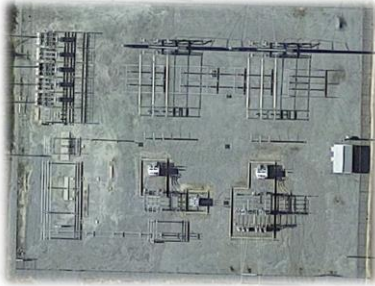
- 1) Sense of Place
- 2) Housing Options

**IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:****Rehabilitate Codes**

Adopt building codes with standards appropriate to the renovation of older buildings. Typical building codes were written with new construction in mind, and strict application of these codes to older buildings significantly increases renovation costs. Rehabilitation codes help keep costs down, thereby encouraging rehabilitation of older properties.



## Transportation/Communication/Utilities Character Area



### **DESCRIPTION:**

The purpose of this character area is to recognize the transportation or utility use of a property. This designation is applied when appropriate, subject to the existing or intended specific use of the property.

### **DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:**

Provide and protect an environment that is suitable for utilities, transportation and communication facilities, together with uses that can be compatible with utility, transportation, and communication facility surroundings and to provide an environment that will protect such uses from encroaching incompatible development.

### **PREDOMINANT LAND USE:**

Roads, railways, airports, and utilities infrastructure including power substations.

### **PERMITTED ZONING DISTRICTS:**

Any zoning district is permitted within this area.

### **QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:**

- **Economic Prosperity:** Encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community. Factors to consider when determining suitability include: job skills required; long-term sustainability; linkages to other economic activities in the region; impact on the resources of the area; and prospects for creating job opportunities that meet the needs of a diverse local workforce.
- **Local Preparedness:** Identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve. These prerequisites might include infrastructure (roads, water, and sewer) to support or direct new growth; ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired; leadership and staff capable of responding to opportunities and managing new challenges; or undertaking an all-hazards approach to disaster preparedness and response.

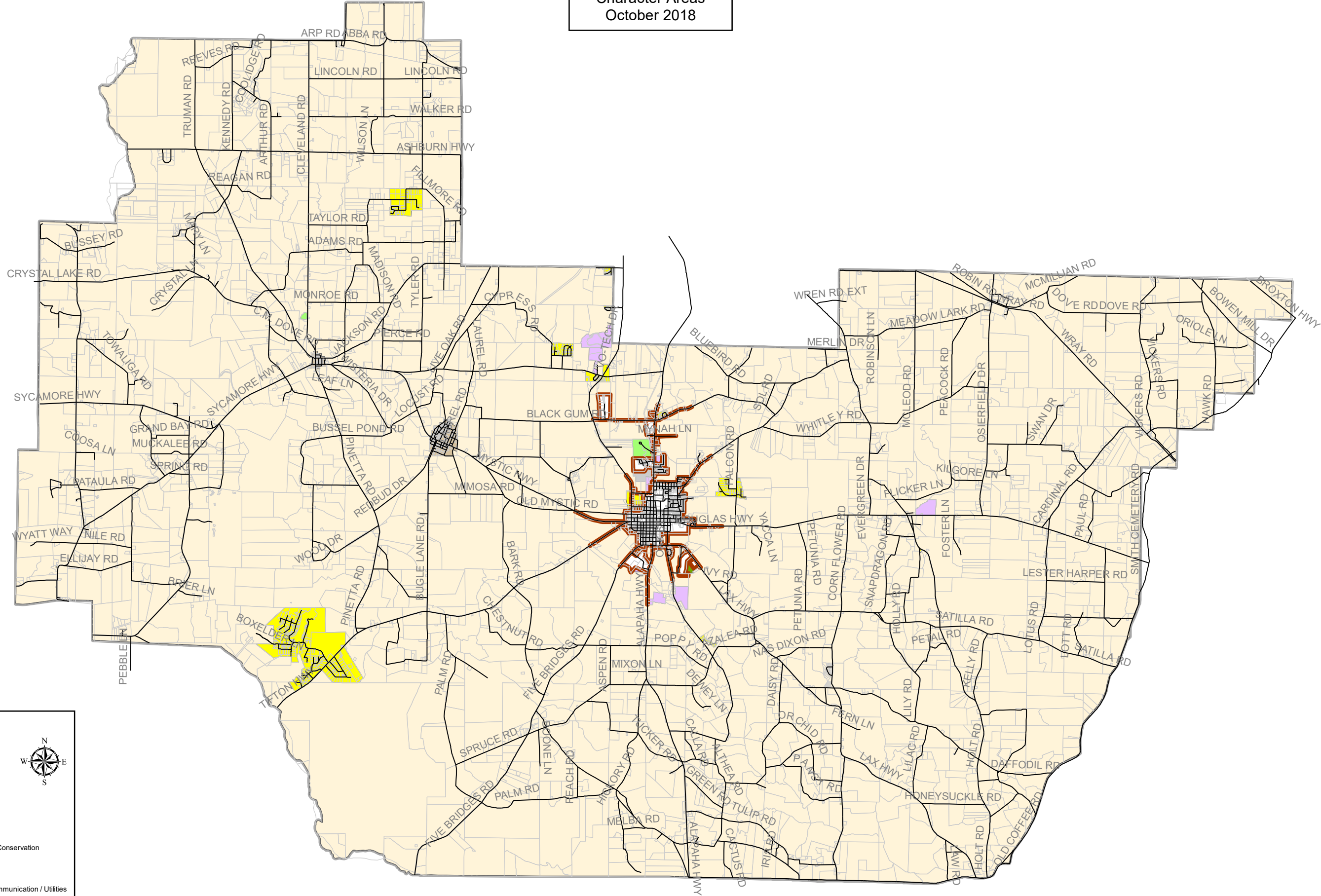
### **IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:**

- Analyze impact of additional traffic flow.
- Identify and plan for improvement needs along key transportation corridors



## **Character Area Maps**

Irwin County  
Character Areas  
October 2018



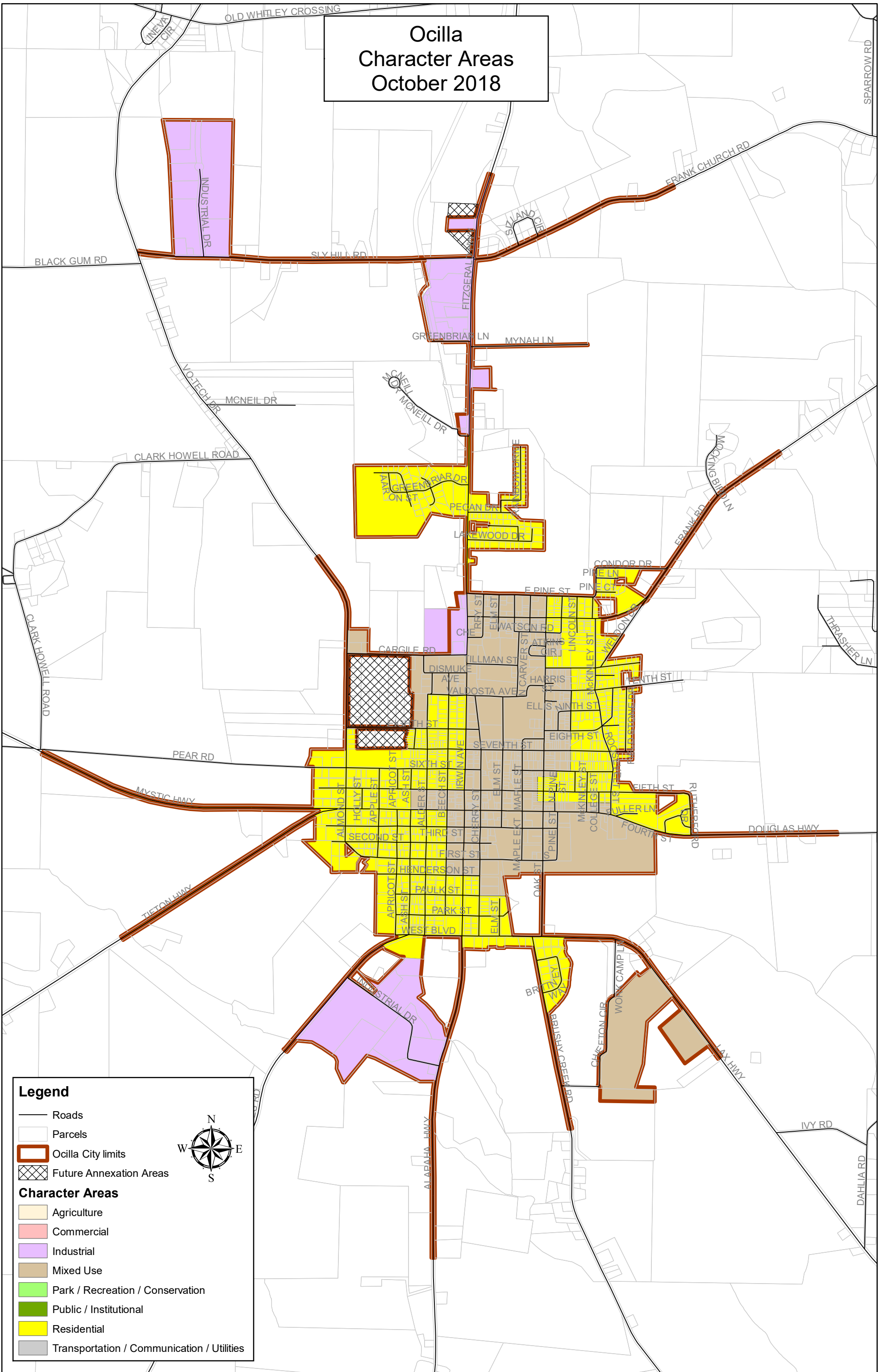
**Legend**

- Roads
- ▭ Parcels
- ▭ Ocilla City limits

**Character Areas**

- ▭ Agriculture
- ▭ Commercial
- ▭ Industrial
- ▭ Mixed Use
- ▭ Park / Recreation / Conservation
- ▭ Public / Institutional
- ▭ Residential
- ▭ Transportation / Communication / Utilities
- ▭ County Boundary

# Ocilla Character Areas October 2018



## Legend

- Roads
  - Parcels
  - Ocilla City limits
  - Future Annexation Areas
- Character Areas**
- Agriculture
  - Commercial
  - Industrial
  - Mixed Use
  - Park / Recreation / Conservation
  - Public / Institutional
  - Residential
  - Transportation / Communication / Utilities



**Appendix**

**Sign-In Sheets  
Public Hearing Notices  
Transmittal Letters  
Adoption Resolutions**

**Southern Georgia Regional Commission**  
**Irwin County and the City of Ocilla**  
**Comprehensive Plan Update – Kick Off Meeting**  
**Monday, July 2, 2018**  
**5:45 PM**

Name	Organization	Phone	Email
Patricia Baxler	ICBOC	229-468-9441	irwinderk@mediacomb.net
Joey Whittier	'	'	irwincoc@mediacomb.net
Christy Deane Chris Paulk	"	229-468-7061 229-425-0947	1phabstracts@yahoo.com chrispaulk@gmail.com
Al & Sue	"	229-468-7852	—



**Southern Georgia Regional Commission  
Workshop #1**

Irwin County and City of Ocilla Comprehensive Plan Update  
 "Goals, Issues and Opportunities"  
 Tuesday, August 7, 2018  
 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Name	Organization	Title	Email
Ariel Godwin	SGRC	Planner	agodwin@sgrc.us
Patricia Battle	Irwin County Board of Commissioners	County Clerk	irwinclerk@irwincountygov.net
Lee Martin	Irwin County Board of C.	Supervisor of Road	leemartin@irwincountygov.net
Doneth Hendley	City of Ocilla FD	Firefighter	dohendley@ocillafire.com
Joe Thompson	Irwin EMS, EMT, and Fire	Assistant Director	jthompson@irwinems.net
Matt Seale	City of Ocilla	Mayor	mattseale@cityofocilla.net
Arlene Paxon	Irwin Co/ City of Ocilla	Commer	arlene.paxon@irwinc.com
Josey Whitten	Irwin Co Com	Comm.	jwhitten@irwinc.com

Southern Georgia Regional Commission  
 2nd Workshop  
 Irwin County and the City of Ocala Comprehensive Plan Update  
 Tuesday, September 4, 2018  
 10:00 AM

Name	Organization	Title	Phone	Email
Terry Edwards	Irwin County EMS/ RMA	Director	229-425-5687 229-468-9594	terry@irwincountyga.net
Trey Leblanc	Thruway Co. Loan	Chairman	229-468-9444	irwinco@mediscap.com
Matt Seale	City of Ocala	Mayor	329-468-5141	mayor@cityofocilaga.net

irwinco@mediscap.com

**Southern Georgia Regional Commission**  
**Irwin County and the City of Ocilla**  
**Joint Comprehensive Plan Update Workshop #3**  
**"Land Use Element"**  
**October 2, 2018**

Name	Organization	Title	Email
Jacy Whitely	Irwin Co.	Clerk	jacy@irwincountyga.net
ANDY STOTT	ALAMBER	PRESIDENT	ALAMBER@windstream.net
Matt Seale	City of Ocilla	Mayor	mayor@cityofocillaga.net
Terry Edwards	Irwin Co EMS/EMM	EMM Director	icem@windstream.net
Janelle Hylke	SGRC		



cation and awareness, and enhanced research.

Advocates also urged their members of Congress to support a \$425 million increase for research funding at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) on Alzheimer's disease for fiscal year 2019, an increase that is necessary to address the mounting public health crisis and cost of Alzheimer's, the most expensive disease in America.

Alzheimer's is the only leading cause of death in America without a way to prevent, cure, or even slow its progression. Consequently, in

Alzheimer's Association is also commemorating the annual



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### Kick Off - Joint Public Hearing For Irwin County and the City of Ocilla Comprehensive Plan Update

A public hearing will be held at 5:45 p.m. on Monday, July 02, 2018, at the Irwin County Courthouse to announce the beginning of the 2019 Joint Comprehensive Plan Update for Irwin County and the City of Ocilla. The purpose of this hearing is to brief the community in the process to be used to develop the Comprehensive Plan, announce opportunities for public participation in development of the plan and obtain input on the proposed planning process.

Persons with special needs relating to disability access or foreign language should contact the County Clerk a Irwin County Commission Office at (229) 468-9441. Persons with hearing disabilities may consider using the Georgia Relay Service at 1-800-255-0135.

All persons are invited to attend the public hearing. If you would like more information, please contact the Irwin County Board of Commissioners at (229) 468-9441.

*Lh/Am@sgre.us*

to everyone," said Ashley Miller, Executive Director of the Chamber, "Our hope is to give adults something fun to look forward to that night before the Trick or Treating begins."

The first ever year for this cook off already has six participants but they are hoping to add more.

"My goal is at least 10 participants. I want to encourage all of our locals to come out and cook, but also I'd like to open it up to people all across South Georgia," said Miller. Participants must pre-register with the Chamber by the 29th and agree to the rules.

Winners will be selected by people's choice and the top three will receive a decorated basket of goodies. To sample the chili,

peanut butter, crackers, instant macaroni, etc. All other donated food will go to the Sheppard's Pantry Food Bank.

The benefiting organizations are thrilled to receive the donations.

"The food pantry really needs this," said Ben Baker, local preacher and manager of the Sheppard's Pantry. "We are a small community but we serve people everyday and resources are limited."

To find out more about the Backpack Buddies program please contact Mrs. Patricia Harris at 229-567-2461 or to find out about the Food Bank, contact Ben Baker at 229-567-3655. To register for the competition or find out more about the food drive, please call the Chamber at 229-567-9696.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

A public hearing to review and transmit the Joint 2019 Irwin County and City of Ocilla Comprehensive Plan Update to the Southern Georgia Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for review will be held at 6:00 P.M. on Monday, November 12, 2018 at the County Commission Meeting Room 207 South Irwin Avenue Ocilla, GA 31774. Residents are invited to attend and participate in the planning process. Copies of the Plan Update are available for public review at the County Commission office and at the City Hall of each city, and for download at the SGRC website: <http://www.sgrc.us/community-and-economic-development.html>.

*Persons with special needs relating to disability access or foreign language should contact Irwin County at (229) 468-9441. Persons with hearing disabilities may consider using the Georgia Relay Service, at (Voice) 1-800-255-0135.*

**All persons are invited to attend the public hearing. If you would like more information, please contact Loretta Hylton, SGRC Planner, at (229) 333-5277**

## City Council Meeting Has Short Agenda

The Ocilla Mayor and City Council's October meeting was uneventful, as Mayor Matt Seale presented an ordinance pertaining to "derelict and blighted property" for review, and the council approved the annual Hazard Mitigation Plan. An executive session to discuss "personnel" was held, but no action was publicly taken.

November's meeting is set for Tuesday, November 12.

## Protection Hotline Up & Running

It was announced on Friday, October 19, that the Georgia Voter Protection Hotline is now assisting voters in five different languages, Chinese, English, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Thanks to bilingual volunteers, the Georgia Voter Protection Hotline is now able to help even more Georgia voters.

## PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

### 2019 Community Development Block Grant

The City of Ocilla is considering applying to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) of up to \$750,000 (single activity) or \$1,000,000 (multi-activity). These funds must be used to primarily benefit low and moderate income persons.

The activities for which these funds may be used are in the area of housing, public facilities, and economic development. More specific details regarding eligible activities, plans to assist displaced persons (if any), the estimated amount of funds proposed to be used for activities to benefit low and moderate income persons, and the rating system will be provided at a public hearing, which will be held at 1:00 P.M. on October 30, 2018, at Ocilla City Hall, 111 N. Irwin Avenue, Ocilla, Georgia, 31774.

The purpose of this hearing will be to obtain citizen input into the development of the application and to review progress on the previous CDBG grant(s), if applicable. The City of Ocilla is committed to providing all persons with equal access to its services, programs, activities, education and employment regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability or age. Persons with special needs relating to handicapped accessibility or foreign language should contact Ms. Lucile Middlebrooks, before October 30, 2018. This person can be located at the Ocilla City Hall, 111 N. Irwin Avenue, Ocilla, Georgia, and is available between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. & 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays, or you may call 229-468-5141. Persons with hearing disabilities may consider using the Georgia Relay Service, at (TDD) 1-800-255-0056 or (Voice) 1-800-255-0135.



MATT SEALE  
Mayor  
mayor@cityofocillaga.net

LEMORA MOSES  
Mayor Pro-tem

MIXON & MIXON  
City Attorney

LUCILE MIDDLEBROOKS  
City Clerk  
cityclerk@cityofocillaga.net

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mona W. Paulk • Patrice Y. Williams-Manley • Lemora Moses • Noah W. Griffin • Kaye D. Clayton

Deanna Hall, Assistant Accounting Clerk • Quanneisa Harris, Front Desk Clerk • Ayanna Smith, Front Desk Clerk

111 N. Irwin Avenue P.O. Box 626 Ocilla, GA 31774 (229) 468-5141 (229) 468-9447 FAX

November 12, 2018

To: Southern Regional Commission  
327 W. Savannah Ave  
Valdosta, Georgia 31601

Re: Comprehensive Plan Update Submittal

The City of Ocilla has completed an update of its Comprehensive Plan and is submitting it with this letter for review by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission and the Department of Community Affairs.

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(s) covering our area and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria (O.C.G.A. 12-2-8) and taken them into consideration in formulating our plan.

If you have any questions concerning our submittal, please contact me, **Lucile Middlebrooks** at 229-468-5141 or email at [cityclerk@cityofocillaga.net](mailto:cityclerk@cityofocillaga.net)

Sincerely,



Lucile Middlebrooks

City Clerk

City of Ocilla



COMMISSIONERS:

JOEY WHITLEY, Chairman  
ALDENE TYSON, Vice Chairman  
LARRY HARPER  
CHRIS PAULK  
BILLY ZORN

# State of Georgia, Irwin County

OFFICE OF

## County Commissioners

PATRICIA BATTLE, County Clerk

ALISA JOHNSON, Deputy Clerk

207 SOUTH IRWIN AVENUE SUITE 2  
OCILLA, GEORGIA 31774  
PHONE (229) 468-9441  
FAX (229) 468-9672

WARREN L. MIXON  
Attorney

LEE MARTIN  
Road Superintendent

JERRY EDWARDS  
EMA/EMS Director

November 12, 2018

To: Southern Regional Commission  
327 W. Savannah Ave  
Valdosta, Georgia 31601

Re: Comprehensive Plan Update Submittal

Irwin County has completed an update of its Comprehensive Plan and is submitting it with this letter for review by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission and the Department of Community Affairs.

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(s) covering our area and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria (O.C.G.A. 12-2-8) and taken them into consideration in formulating our plan.

If you have any questions concerning our submittal, please contact **Patricia Battle, County Clerk, 207 South Irwin Avenue, Ocilla, GA 31774, 229-468-9441, [irwinclerk@mediacombb.net](mailto:irwinclerk@mediacombb.net)**

Sincerely,



Joey Whitley, Chairman  
Irwin County Board of Commissioners

Southern Georgia Regional Commission  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing  
 Irwin County and the City of Ocilla Comprehensive Plan Update  
 Monday, November 12, 2018  
 6:00 PM

Name	Organization	Title	Phone	Email
Joy White	Irwin Co. Comm.	Chairman	229-468-9441	
Dorothy K	Irwin Co. Com.	BOC		
Jerry Edwards	EMS/EMA	Director		
Billy Horn	Irwin Co. Comm.	BOC		

**IRWIN COUNTY**  
**RESOLUTION TO ADOPT**  
**2019 JOINT IRWIN COUNTY AND**  
**CITY OF OCILLA**  
**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**

**WHEREAS**, Irwin County has completed the 2019 Joint Irwin County and City of Ocilla Comprehensive Plan Update;

**WHEREAS**, this document was prepared according to the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, Chapter 110-12-1, Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning effective January 1, 2013;

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED**, that Irwin County does hereby adopt the 2019 Irwin County and City of Ocilla Comprehensive Plan Update.

Adopted this 4 day of February, 2019.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joey Whitley, Chairman  
Irwin County Board of Commissioners

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ATTEST: Patricia Battle, County Clerk

**RESOLUTION TO ADOPT  
2019 JOINT IRWIN COUNTY AND  
CITY OF OCILLA  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**

**WHEREAS**, City of Ocilla has completed the 2019 Joint Irwin County and City of Ocilla Comprehensive Plan Update;

**WHEREAS**, this document was prepared according to the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, Chapter 110-12-1, Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning effective January 1, 2013;

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED**, that the City of Ocilla does hereby adopt the 2019 Irwin County and City of Ocilla Comprehensive Plan Update.

Adopted this 5<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2019.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Matt Seale, Mayor  
City of Ocilla



\_\_\_\_\_  
ATTEST: Lucile Middlebrooks, City Clerk