

*CITY OF OFFERMAN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
2017-2036*



Here at the City of Offerman many tasks are accomplished by volunteers working with staff in a variety of ways. Every job performed by a volunteer is an important contribution. Every volunteer gives up personal time and energy to assist others. It is this intense sense of community service that makes the City of Offerman great.

Your commitment and support are greatly appreciated.

Mayor Brenda Denison

City Council Members:

Mayor-Pro-tem - Larry Daniels

Councilmember - Tommy Colley

Councilmember - Fleming Milledge

Councilmember - Annette Thorne

Councilmember - Candice Thorne

Councilmember - Vanessa Cason

TABLE OF CONTENT

The City of Offerman Vision Statement	8
Introduction	9
Purpose	9
The Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan	9
Citizen Participation	10
Location	11
Community Affairs	11
Aquifers	12
Ground Water	12
Wetlands	13
Floodplains	13
Flood Control Strategies	13
Defining narrative for Character Areas	15
Residential	15
Agricultural/Forestry	16
Industrial	17
Commercial	18
City of Offerman Future Development Map	19
City of Offerman Assets	20
Issues facing the City of Offerman	20
The City of Offerman 2017-2036 Comprehensive Plan	21
Purpose	21
Commitment to Implementation	21
Implementation	21

Purposed Implementation Action	21
Implementation Goal	22
Housing	23
<i>Goal and Implementation</i>	23
Economic Development	25
<i>Goal and Implementation</i>	25
Natural and Historical Resources	28
<i>Goal and Implementation</i>	28
Community Facilities and Infrastructure	31
<i>Goal and Implementation</i>	31
Land Use	35
<i>Goal and Implementation</i>	35
Summary	38
Short Term Work Program 2017-2021	39
Implementation Goal	39
OFFERMAN: STWP Report of Accomplishments 2012-2016	40
<i>Housing</i>	40
<i>Community Facilities</i>	40
<i>Economic Development</i>	41
<i>Natural and Historic Resources Element</i>	41
<i>Land Use Element</i>	41
<i>Intergovernmental Coordination</i>	41
Five Year Short Term Work Program	42
<i>Housing</i>	43
<i>Economic Development</i>	43
<i>Community Facilities and Infrastructure</i>	44

<i>Natural and Historic Resources</i>	45
<i>Land Use</i>	45
<i>Intergovernmental Coordination</i>	46
Technical Addendum	47
Population	47
<i>Purpose</i>	47
<i>Historical Trends</i>	47
<i>Current Population Overview</i>	47
<i>Future Trends</i>	48
Economic Development	58
<i>Purpose</i>	58
<i>Economic Profile</i>	58
<i>Economic Base</i>	58
<i>Economy by Sector</i>	59
<i>Unemployment</i>	59
<i>Communities</i>	59
<i>Economic Climate</i>	60
<i>Training Resources</i>	60
<i>Economic Development Resources and Tools</i>	60
<i>Economic Development Assessment</i>	61
Natural and Historic Resources	63
Inventory of Specific Natural Resources Items	63
<i>Water Supply Watershed</i>	63
<i>Groundwater Recharge Areas</i>	63
<i>Wetlands</i>	64
<i>Protect River Corridors</i>	64

<i>Flood Plains</i>	64
<i>Soil Types</i>	64
<i>Steep Slopes</i>	64
<i>Prime Agricultural and Forest Lands</i>	64
<i>Plant and Animal Habitats</i>	64
<i>Major Park, Recreation and Conservation Areas</i>	65
<i>Scenic Views and Sites</i>	65
<i>Historic Resources</i>	65
A review of Specific Items to be Addressed	66
<i>Residential Resources</i>	66
<i>Commercial Resources</i>	66
<i>Industrial Resources</i>	66
<i>Institutional Resources</i>	66
<i>Rural Resources</i>	66
<i>Historical Archaeological and Cultural Resources</i>	66
Community Facilities	67
Purpose	67
Community Facilities Overview	67
<i>Specific Items to be Addressed</i>	67
<i>Transportation</i>	67
<i>Water Supply and Treatment</i>	68
<i>Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment</i>	68
<i>Solid Waste Management</i>	68
<i>Public Safety</i>	68
<i>Fire Protection</i>	68
<i>Hospitals and Public Health Facilities</i>	69

<i>Recreation</i>	69
<i>General Government</i>	69
<i>Educational Facilities</i>	69
<i>Libraries and Cultural Facilities</i>	70
<i>Community Center</i>	70
Land Use	71
<i>Purpose</i>	71
<i>Land Use Assessment-Current and Future</i>	72
Housing	74
<i>Purpose</i>	74
<i>Current Housing Assessment</i>	74
<i>Future Housing Assessment</i>	75

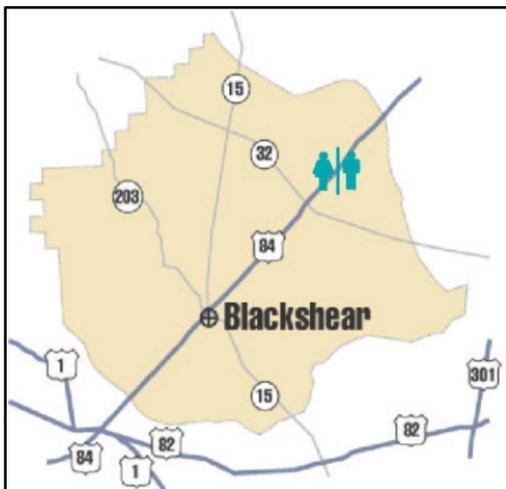
The City of Offerman Vision Statement

The City of Offerman is a community that encourages and promotes a diversified economy thru intelligent and thoughtful growth. By supporting sustainable development and maintaining its rural character, the city supports and constructs an environment that is uniquely appealing to business. Businesses locating within the city limits recognizes that the town is forward-looking and promotes opportunities for industries bringing family supporting jobs. The local community makes for an atmosphere that supports a defined rural historical sense of place, in a safe, friendly, and uniquely appealing community with an unsurpassed quality of life which is to be maintained by proper planning.

Introduction

Purpose

Figure 1



The City of Offerman's comprehensive plan provides an array of planning tools to guide and manage future development and growth through the year 2036.

The comprehensive plan demonstrates the city's commitment to its citizens, participation in and contribution to the coordinated planning process as set forth by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. By meeting the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures established as part of the legislation, the City of Offerman's Comprehensive Plan serves as a basis for decision making regarding economic development, environmental protection, provision

of community and public facilities and services, adequate and affordable housing and the pattern of future land use.

Under the rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), Chapter 110-12-1, Standards, and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, the City of Offerman is approved to plan at the minimal level.

The Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The City of Offerman Comprehensive Plan 2017-2036 provides justification for decisions to accomplish a coordinated and compatible development of land and improvements within its territorial authority.

The development of the comprehensive plan is a process through which citizen participation and thorough analysis are used to develop a set of strategies that establish as plainly and practically as possible the best and most appropriate future development of the area under the authority of the city council. A comprehensive plan aids the city council with policy decisions that result in the enchantment and preservation of the unique quality of life and culture and in adapting to future changes of use of an economic, physical, or social nature. The comprehensive plan guides the city council in the performance of its duties to help achieve sound planning. A comprehensive plan must promote the health, safety, order,

convenience, prosperity, and general welfare of the citizens, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development.

The purpose of the comprehensive plan is to:

- 1) Set goals and objectives for land development, suitability, and justification for decisions made by the governing body.
- 2) Ensure elements in the comprehensive plan are consistent.
- 3) Coordinate activities within the local government to ensure that all plans and future development are compatible.
- 4) Create conditions favorable to health, safety, mobility, transportation, prosperity, civic activities, recreational, educational, cultural opportunities, and historic resources.
- 5) Reduce the wastes of physical, financial, natural, or human resources which result from unexpected development, congestion, or scattering of the population.
- 6) Lessen the destruction or demolition of historic sites and other resources by reusing land and buildings and revitalizing areas.
- 7) Promote a sense of community, character, and identity.
- 8) Further the efficient utilization of natural resources, rural land, agricultural land, and scenic areas.
- 9) Focus development in existing developed areas and use infill development in vacant or underused land areas to create well designed and coordinated communities.
- 10) Advocate cost-effective utilization of community facilities, resources, and services.

Citizen Participation

On October 25, 2016, a public hearing was held to inform the local citizenry of the preparation of the plan, and to include their input in the community vision and future development map.

Location

The city is on the seam of two abutting Coastal Plain provinces; the Okefenokee Basin, characterized by low relief and numerous swamps and the Barrier Island Sequence, characterized by a step-like progression of terraces with marshes and poorly drained areas. The three wave-cut platforms found in the Offerman vicinity are the Penhloway, the Hawthorn, and the Sunderland; all formed primarily by alluvium washed from the uplands. The city exhibits two major soil classifications. The Leefield-Robertsdale-Pelham association is somewhat poorly drained soils on uplands, on large flats, and in slight depressions. The Irvington-Robertsdale-Leefield association is nearly level to gently sloping, moderately well drained and somewhat poorly drained soils on uplands. Cradled between the Satilla and Little Satilla Rivers, the city lies adjacent to a broad flood plain that includes much of the southwestern portion of Pierce County.

Community Profile

Figure 1 shows that Offerman is in Pierce County and approximately 12 miles from Blackshear. The city encompasses approximately 3.14 miles and straddles U.S. Highway 84.

In August of 1906, the town of Offerman was incorporated and repealed through legislative action in 1916. Nonetheless, the city remained viable throughout the years and had maintained its self-identify and sense of uniqueness as a community. A grassroots effort began in 1995 that resulted in the reinstatement of the town's charter and then return to its status as a city on July 1, 1996.

In 1886, the Southern Pine Company set up operations in the area called Kingsville in Pierce County and began construction of a rail line connecting Nicholls and Savannah, for the purpose of transporting timber via rail to the harbor.

The town of Offerman, known then as Kingsville, was established in 1887. By 1902 the rail line connected Savannah to Offerman, and Offerman to Nicholls. Offerman served as a junction for the ABC (east-west) and the ACL (north-south) railroads with one of the largest (at the time) lumber mills in South Georgia.

A grits mill and cotton gin were also in operation as were several mercantile establishments. By 1905 the lumber mill was closed but the city survived and in 1906 was issued a charter by the state legislature.

Without the lumber mill and associated businesses, the people relied on the rural nature of the community to provide food staples and retail goods and produce. Cotton and tobacco contributed to the economic viability along with turpentine and cane syrup production. Offerman, through the ensuing decades, typified the hundreds of small, rural towns and

communities that dot the South Georgia landscape.

Aquifers

Precipitation is the principal source of ground water in the southeast Georgia region. Recharge is the process by which precipitation infiltrates soil and rock, adding to the volume of water stored in pores and other openings within the aquifers.

An underground layer of rock known as aquifers provides water to the surface through natural springs or by pumping. Recharge occurs throughout most of Georgia's land area--the rate or amount of recharge reaching underground aquifers varies from location-to-location depending upon geologic conditions. The Floridan aquifer is the principal source of water supply for most of southeast Georgia. This aquifer is in the limestone deposits of the upper and middle Eocene strata, is one of the most productive in the world, and a natural resource for the region.

Some of the sediments that underlie the area are more conducive to recharging than others. These "permeable" sediments, which are quickly recharged by precipitation, are known as groundwater recharge zones. These areas have the greatest vulnerability to pollution of ground water from the surface and near surface activities of man. Pollution from sources located within the recharge area has the potential of not only polluting ground water in the immediate vicinity but affecting a significant portion of the aquifer.

The principal recharge areas for the Floridan aquifer systems are north and west of Offerman. One recharge area is near Offerman beginning approximately ten miles to the east of Wayne County and stretching north-northeast across much of Wayne County into Long County. Currently, no recharge areas are in the city limits.

Ground Water

There is an ample supply of groundwater throughout Satilla River Basin. The limestone formed during the middle Eocene and the Oligocene ages are the principal artesian aquifer providing groundwater throughout the region. The two water-bearing zones within this aquifer system are the Oligocene and Ocala Limestone series. The upper zone is the Oligocene Series, and the lower area includes the basal part of the Ocala Limestone formation. The subjacent area included the basal parts of the Ocala Limestone and the Avon Park Limestone. The quality of water from this system is usually hard to very hard, slightly alkaline and moderately high in dissolved solids. The entire town and its respective businesses use either shallow or deep wells for all water needs as there is no public water system. Pollution of this available resource would have a catastrophic effect on the availability of fresh water in Offerman. Another potential cause for such disruption would be from salt-water intrusion which has already occurred in the area around Brunswick, The explosion of growth in the narrow coastal band increased the utilization of the existing water resources and as a general lowering of ground levels.

Wetlands

Freshwater wetlands, as defined by federal law, are "those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions." Wetlands include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas. Wetlands are important ecosystems valued as wildlife habitat and nurturing areas for many avian species. They also provide storage for excess storm water and function as reservoirs for surface water supplies. Three criteria define wetlands: soil composition, hydrology, and associative vegetation. U.S. Department of the Interior National Wetlands Inventories maps delineates Pierce County wetlands. Local governments should use these maps for land use management.

The Department of Natural Resources' Environmental Protection Division Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria section 391-3-16-.03 defined the procedures for protecting wetlands.

Floodplains

Floodplains are a water channel and the relatively flat areas adjoining the channel which have been or may be covered by floodwater. Extensive floodplains border all rivers (Little Satilla) and waterways near Offerman. In Pierce County, these flood-prone lands constitute 38 percent of the county providing favorable conditions for the growth of pine and hardwood forests. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Insurance Rate Maps depict floodplains. Construction is limited in the flood plains by both Federal and State regulations. The Georgia Department of Human Resources' "Rules and Regulations for on-site sewage management systems" prohibits septic systems in flood plains.

Flood Control Strategies

The following strategies can help in local flood hazard management:

- Local ordinance regulating new construction in flood plains should stress design standards to limit changes in flood storage and prescribe flood proofing practices to reduce flood caused property damage;
- The control approach should not only look to eliminate future development within the flood plains in the long term. However, also manages growth outside flood plains that also affect storm water runoff;
- All development applications should be required to incorporate the use and

maintenance of natural systems for flood control and storm water management to the maximum extent possible;

- Developers should be encouraged to build at higher elevations and when necessary require that the developer have a certified engineer submit a certificate of project feasibility;
- Local governments should ensure the provision of adequate flood insurance for existing development in flood plains and flood-prone areas while discouraging new development and redevelopment that requires increased flood insurance coverage.

Offerman is a stable community, and its citizens widely support its existence. The city's location and size are the predominant factors around which to shape an effective, comprehensive plan. As aforementioned, the prevalence of wetlands and moderately to poorly drained soil types will dictate much of the city's future development.

Some forms of commercial and industrial endeavors will not be acceptable should they threaten the current water table with pollution or reduce the capacity of water available to residents through high volume usage for production.

Currently, the city has no intention of developing a water system because all citizens within the city limits have fresh water wells. The absence of public water and sewerage systems has had little effect on the city's ability to attract feeder and niche industries. Currently, existing factors determining the construction of a public water system: 1) Economy of scale and 2) Current industry does not demand an interconnected water system.

The city's population of approximately 440 people is a constraining factor when considered as a tax base and as a potential workforce pool. The US Census does show that the population is expected to remain stable through the next five years with little deviation from the baseline of 440. With this relatively small population and limited funding, efficient use of resources is of the utmost importance.

Currently, elected officials and staff has demonstrated great resourcefulness in coping with the day-to-day operations and services in a fiscally responsible manner. This model of responsible government must continue for the city to remain a viable community.

Defining Narrative for Character Areas

Residential



The predominant use of land within this category is for single-family and multifamily dwelling units. Low-density housing development is encouraged in the residential character area to maintain the city's rural atmosphere. Within the city limits, infill development and utilization of vacant sites will be supported for new development if available. Moreover, when appropriate, encourage clustering if community water is available.

New residential construction will take street proximity and connectivity, along with commercial area proximity into consideration to maintain a safe interactive community atmosphere where residents will have access to the town's facilities and commercial developments. No specific Quality Community Objectives addressed.

Agricultural/Forestry



This land is primarily agriculture of varying types and is the most rural area of the town. No specific Quality Community Objectives addressed.

Industrial



This category is for land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade services, mining, or mineral extraction activities, or other similar uses.

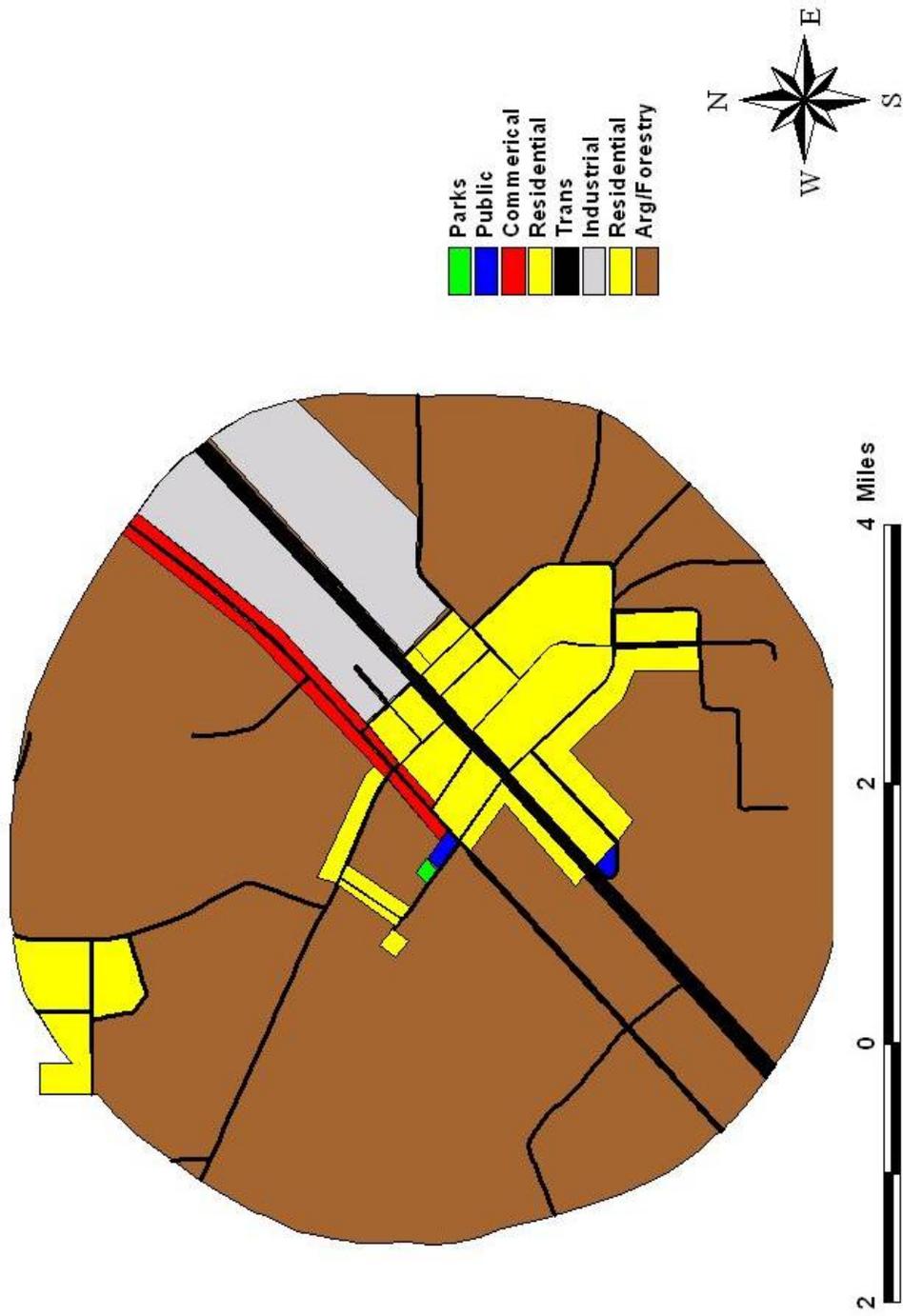
Careful selection of industry types and size of construction within this area are so as not to interfere with the safe, rural small town characteristic and environment which the city defines itself by the redevelopment of existing industrial areas instead of new construction will be firstly considered. No specific Quality Community Objectives addressed.

Commercial



This category is for land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, and service and entertainment facilities. As with the industrial area, the city will carefully consider and encourage redevelopment within existing commercial areas located near U.S. 84. No specific Quality Community Objectives addressed.

City of Offerman Future Development Map



City of Offerman's Assets

- Safe community
- Ample green space
- Low-density residential development
- Comprehensive building and inspection codes
- Post office for town
- Fire station for the town
- Garbage service
- Community Education Center
- Excellent transportation networks
- Large industrial area

Issues facing the City of Offerman

- Infrastructure development and maintenance
 - Paving and resurfacing of roads.
 - Maintenance of canal and drainage systems
 - Lack of bike and walkways.
 - Lack of equipment to maintain city property.

The City of Offerman 2017-2036 Comprehensive Plan

Purpose

The aim of the implementation element is to provide direction and recommendations for implementation of the City of Offerman 2017-2036 Comprehensive Plan and continued planning.

Planning is a continuous process. Completion of the project is by no means an end in itself. The city's plan is a living document and must continually be scrutinized to ensure that its goals, objectives and policy statements continue to reflect changing community needs and attitudes.

The plan is the guide for government officials and citizens in making decisions about land use and development. The plan is comprehensive in the manner that it identifies the myriad of factors related to future community growth; analyzes the relationships between these factors; proposes what needs to be done about them, and recommends goals and objectives for using the city's resources in the most efficient and effective ways.

The local government has established an aggressive, yet realistic, program for implementing the plan.

A comprehensive plan is a document that should be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure that its goals, objectives, and policy statements are actionable.

Commitment to Implementation

It is important to note that successful implementation of this plan relies on many non-traditional resources. The many hours committed by citizens in shaping the Comprehensive Plan attest to their desire for attaining their vision/mission statement for the City of Offerman.

Implementation

The City of Offerman Comprehensive Plan 2017-2036

Proposed Implementation Actions

Perhaps the most important method of implementing the City of Offerman Comprehensive Plan 2017-2036 comes from the day-to-day commitment by elected and appointed officials, staff members and citizens.

The plan is a useful and capable tool to direct the city's future. Officials, staff, and residents display the program on the DCA website for viewing and referencing.

Developing and proposing an implementation plan will make the program successful, dynamic and a powerful tool for guiding the city's future growth. The goal is to achieve the objectives outlined within the document.

These concrete steps developed after an analysis of the targets and objectives may call for the formation of a new committee, or identify the need for a particular study. In addition to such "new" initiatives, the continuation of ongoing local policies and programs will remain in many instances.

The following implementation goal will guide the proposed objectives and actions. While the proposed implementation actions are not legally binding like the zoning code and subdivision regulations, the proposals are tremendously important to the plan's successful application and are a vital supplement to its goals, objectives, and policies.

Implementation Goal

Encourage the use of the City of Offerman Comprehensive Plan 2017-2036 as the implementation tool for the City of Offerman.

Housing

Goals & Implementation

Goal 1

Ensure that resident has access to adequate and affordable housing with a suitable living environment for all residents.

Objective 1.1

Prevent the deterioration of neighborhoods and when appropriate support rehabilitation plans and encourage the replacement of old structures.

Policy 1.1.1

Support programs that encourage ownership and pride in neighborhoods.

Objective 1.2

Ensure safe and livable condition for the citizens of Offerman.

Policy 1.2.1

Support the building and code enforcement program.

Objective 1.3

The city shall use local ordinances, grants and housing standards to eliminate substandard housing.

Policy 1.3.1

The city shall address the need for affordable housing by utilizing the following potential funding sources:

Grants

- a. Volunteer efforts
- b. State and federal projects

Policy 1.3.2

The city shall implement housing rehabilitation through the Community Development Block Grants, Community Housing Improvement Program funds and other funding sources that may become available.

Policy 1.3.3

Develop programs and ordinances to prevent blighted areas through condemnation and rehabilitation initiatives.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goals & Implementation

Goal 1

To create an economic climate that promotes economic diversity and growth by encouraging a stable local economy compatible with planned growth, economic opportunities, and prosperity for all residents with an improved quality of life.

Objective 1.1

The city with the support of local organizations will continue to promote employment opportunities for community residents.

Policy 1.1.1

The city will promote the availability of employment for all that desire it by taking the following steps.

- a. Coordinating with public and private agencies to identify and help individuals requiring special assistance to obtain and maintain employment;
- b. Encouraging local employers to provide labor market information; and
- c. Support public schools and local community colleges to determine what vocational and professional training is necessary and available for the current and future labor market needs with the possibility of setting up satellite programs in or near the community.

Objective 1.2

The city will continue to encourage cooperation and assist with private and public efforts to attract new employers and expand existing business firms in the community.

Policy 1.2.1

The city should continue to sponsor economic activities that will enhance the local economy. Incentives should be considered as a provision for job creation when appropriate.

Objective 1.3

The city shall encourage the conservation and enhancement of the natural and cultural resources of the city.

Policy 1.3.1

The city will pursue economic development without endangering the quality of life within the city.

Objective 1.4

Along U.S. Hwy 84 the city will pursue a business corridor.

Objective 1.5

The city will cooperate with local community organizations to formulate an economic development strategic plan.

Policy 1.5.1

A short and long-term economic development plan that is separate but compliments the city's comprehensive plan.

- a. If possible, submit a list of projects, when feasible, that includes their relative priority, timing, and cost.
- b. Each project should have an impact statement that takes into consideration the City of Offerman's Comprehensive Plan 2017-2036.
- c. Businesses should be encouraged to locate in areas that maximize the use of existing infrastructure.

Objective 1.6

The city will support organizations that enhance economic development/growth and develop implementation strategies.

Policy 1.6.1

Support local economic development authorities.

Policy 1.6.2

Support Pierce County's Chambers of Commerce

Objective 1.7

Encourage and support programs and the development of programs that attract businesses that are compatible with the city's goals, natural resources, and unique geological features.

Policy 1.7.1

Support programs that attract businesses that are compatible with our goals, natural resources, and unique geological features.

NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Goals & Implementation

Goal 1

To preserve the abundant natural resources, particularly the purity of the aquifer, groundwater, and arable land, through aggressive enforcement of wetlands codes and building site applications.

Objective 1.1

Enforcement of City and State Codes

Policy 1.1.1

Continue to support the Code Enforcement Program.

Objective 1.2

Protect the 100-year floodplains from development that would negatively affect water quality.

Policy 1.2.1

Develop a Growth Management Plan to limit growth in potential flood areas, and that recognizes the significant cultural and natural resources

Policy 1.2.2

Enforce the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Part V Ordinances.

Objective 1.3

Identify and protect wetlands in the city limits from development that would have an adverse impact on water quality.

Objective 1.4

Protect freshwater including the water quality of the Satilla River and tributary creeks by controlling erosion and sediment runoff.

Policy 1.4.1

Develop a program to stabilize and pave dirt roads that are a large source of runoff and produce large amounts of sediment.

Policy 1.4.2

Identify and protect wetland areas from development that would have any adverse impact.

Objective 1.5

Ensure future development occurs only in areas with soil types that will be compatible with the prescribed use.

Objective 1.6

Support Programs and agencies that promote and protect the historic resources of the city.

Policy 1.6.1

Encourage owners of historical sites to rehab and place them on the National Register

Objective 1.2

Achieve designation as a Certified Local Government

Policy 1.4.1

Restrict the density of development in all areas not served by adequate water facilities.

2 Goal

To maintain compliance with the Georgia Solid Waste Management Act and ensure continued collection and disposal of all residential and commercial customers through commercial waste contractors.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Goals & Implementation

Goal 1

Ensure the delivery of cost efficient services that will match the future needs of the residents, businesses, and industries.

Objective 1.1

Support the development of infrastructure systems that will encourage and support growth.

Policy 1.1.1

The city council will encourage infill types of developments.

Policy 1.1.2

Annually review and inventory government services and facilities.

Objective 1.2

Encourage and support efforts to plan and coordinated the development of infrastructure and public facilities within the county.

Policy 1.2.1

Support and coordinate development with the Pierce County Planning Commission.

Objective 1.3

Continue to support the Pierce County Public Library and ensure appropriate, cost effective facilities for arts and cultural activities as the city continues to grow.

Policy 1.3.1

Increase the public funding of the city's library when possible to reflect increasing demands for services.

Policy 1.3.2

Continue to provide computers for public use at city hall.

Objective 1.4

Ensure excellence in public safety, public works, and health services as the community continues to grow in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

Policy 1.4.1

Continue to support the Pierce County's EMA HAZMAT team.

Policy 1.4.2

Continue to upgrade all emergency services equipment when possible.

Policy 1.4.3

Purchase, repair or replace equipment and property as required.

Policy 1.4.4

Maintain or constructed new facilities to improve or meet current LOS.

Policy 1.4.5

Encourage the city to develop facilities and infrastructure jointly when appropriate.

Policy 1.4.6

Purchase land for future city projects.

Objective 1.5

When possible to provide for adequate cost effective parks and recreation areas for all citizens, utilizing the natural environment and existing resources to the maximum extent.

Policy 1.5.1

When possible ensure that special needs groups (elderly, children/youth, physically impaired) have available to them those amenities, services and a safe environment that will provide the maximum quality of life possible. We accept that it is incumbent upon us to be alert for opportunities to enhance or create programs, activities, facilities to accomplish this general goal.

Goal 2

A safe, convenient and efficient motorized and non-motorized transportation system shall be available for all residents of Offerman.

Objective 2.1

Provide for safe and efficient transportation systems that support desired growth patterns

Policy 2.1.1

Encourage all new construction to develop pathways or sidewalks to maintain community connectivity.

Policy 2.1.2

Encourage developers to connect bicycle paths and walking systems to existing systems.

Policy 2.1.3

Support and encourage the GDOT to maintain the current LOS for transportation routes.

Policy 2.1.4

Develop and enforce standards for the construction and maintenance of transportation systems and drainage systems.

Policy 2.1.5

Continue to support drainage and paving unpaved roads as funding is available.

Policy 2.1.6

Support rural public transportation systems.

Policy 2.1.7

Support the Joint Pierce and Ware County Transportation Committee

Goal 3

Provide for an efficient, economical and environmentally sound solid waste disposal system.

Objective 3.1

Support and encourage the development of strategies to management waste.

LAND USE

Goal & Implementation

Goal 1

Promote Offerman as an excellent place to live. Ensure the preservation and the improvement of the quality of life that currently exists through the expansion of economic development. Ensure the orderly and efficient development of land, water and other unique resources in and around the city. Preserve our heritage and small town values.

Objective 1.1

The city shall make available or schedule for availability public facilities for future growth and urban development as to manage growth and to study urban intensities for impact within the Cities.

Policy 1.1.1

The city shall examine the effect of residential, industry and commercial developments and limit or suggest locations that are appropriate for the intensity level.

Policy 1.1.2

The city will maintain a balance between economic development and housing by monitoring and requesting impact statements when appropriate.

Objective 1.2

Offerman will continue to support and encourage land uses that are supportive of the future development map.

Policy 1.2.1

Develop instruments to ensure coordination between population densities and land use patterns.

Policy 1.2.2

The city shall regulate the location of land development consistent with topography and soil conditions and the availability of facilities and services.

Policy 1.2.3

The city will restrict development within unsuitable areas prone to flooding, improper drainage or other areas as identified within the Part V ordinances or maps located in the Historical and Cultural Resources Element.

Objective 1.3

Offerman shall continue to identify and designate blighted areas that are feasible for redevelopment or renewal.

Policy 1.3.1

The city shall request federal and state funds to redevelop and renew any identified blighted areas, where the local government find there is a competitive feasibility to receive such funding.

Objective 1.4

Offerman shall continue to coordinate, through established processes, with agencies responsible for the implementation of any regional or state resource planning and management plan.

Policy 1.4.1

The city shall require that all proposed developments subject to the provisions of any regional or state resource planning and management plan shall be consistent with such plan.

Objective 1.5

Offerman shall protect all endangered flora and fauna from adverse impacts due to loss of critical habitat.

Objective 1.6

Offerman shall develop a base map

Policy 1.6.1

Develop base map with parcel layer and a land use overlay.

Policy 1.6.2

Require CADD and shapefiles for all designed projects within the city limits to be submitted for placement on the base map.

Summary

City officials recognize the need for short-term assessment and evaluation of the comprehensive plan and its accompanying Short Term Work Program (STWP). In addition to the prescribed five-year update, the city should perform a yearly review of all projects included in the STWP.

The yearly review and list of accomplishments will be completed and attached as an addendum to the plan for each of the first five-years. At the time of this five-year update, the city council can decide whether or not to continue the yearly updates.

SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM 2017-2021

The efficacy of a joint planning effort is contingent on the items outlined in the plan that in turn reflect the direction the community has chosen to follow. Developing a viable plan in the dynamic political, fiscal, social and physical environment is challenging, to say the least.

New goals set forth by this update serve to provide a framework for future decision making about multiple issues in the city and Pierce County.

The STWP Update and Report of Accomplishments both deal with specific goals, policies and objectives within the confines of general categories of interest entitled: Housing, Economic Development, Public Facilities and Infrastructure, Natural and Historic Resources, and Land Use.

These chapters are set forth by the Georgia Planning Act and are the essential for all comprehensive planning efforts in the state. In the Report of Accomplishments, several projects not specifically mentioned in the original work program are included to show various unplanned accomplishments made in the area. Many of these new achievements helped to set the stage for the new Short Term Work Program.

Implementation Goal

Encourage the use of the City of Offerman Comprehensive Plan 2017-2036.

OFFERMAN: STWP REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2012-2016

HOUSING

	Activity	Status	Explanation
1	Provide funding for the building and code enforcement program	Underway	Underway: Continued through years 2017-2021.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

	Activity	Status	Explanation
1	Construct a multipurpose building to provide educational services, senior center and after school programs. Also, to be used as a public information center and for community events.	Not Accomplished	Not Accomplished: No funding source.
2	Purchase land for future city projects.	Not Accomplished	Not Accomplished: No property acquired
3	Purchase and update equipment for fire department.	Underway	Underway: Program continued throughout 2017-2021.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	Activity	Status	Explanation
1	Recruit new local businesses	Underway	Underway: Program continued throughout 2017-2021.
2	Work with the Pierce County EDA for business recruitment.	Not Accomplished	Not Accomplished: Not member of EDA

3	Develop for the Pierce County EDA a database, with pictures and Lat/Longs showing locations suitable for business development.	Not Accomplished	Not Accomplished: Resources to complete the task are not available due to lack of funding
---	--	------------------	---

NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES ELEMENT

Activity	Status	Explanation
Develop a program to stabilize and pave dirt roads that are a large source of runoff and produce large amounts of sediment.	Completed	Completed: An unimproved roads maintenance program is in place.

LAND USE ELEMENT

Activity	Status	Explanation
Review Land Use Codes annually	Not Accomplished	Not Accomplished: Lack of funds.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Activity	Status	Explanation
Pursue intergovernmental cooperation when cost effective	Underway	Underway: Program continued throughout 2017-2021.
When appropriate promote the sharing of services	Underway	Underway: Program continued throughout 2017-2021.
Participate in committees, groups, and organizations promoting intergovernmental cooperation.	Underway	Underway: Program continued throughout 2017-2021.

Five Year Short Term Work Program

The STWP identifies specific implementation actions the local government intends to take during the interim planning period. The plan should include any ordinances, administrative processes, community improvements or investments, financing arrangements, or other programs or initiatives to be put in place to implement the plan. The STWP includes the following information for each listed activity:

A brief description of the events:

- Timeframe for undertaking the activity
- Responsible party for implementing the activity
- Estimated cost (if any) of implementing the activity
- Funding source if applicable

Short Term Work Program 2017-2021

HOUSING

Project Number/Policy	Annual Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Implementation Year	Responsibility
1. Policy 1.2.1 Provide funding for the building and code enforcement program.	\$1000	Administrative and user fees	2017-2021	City and user fees

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Project Number/Policy	Annual Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Implementation Year	Responsibility
2. Policy 1.7.1 Provide funding for programs that attract businesses that are compatible with our goals, natural resources, and unique geological features.	\$500	General Funds	2017-2021	City
3. Policy 1.7.1 Recruit new local businesses	\$100	General Funds	2017-2021	City

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Project Number/Policy	Annual Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Implementation Year	Responsibility
4. Policy 1.5.1 Phase one: Collect funds for the constructing of a multipurpose building to provide educational services, senior center programs and after school programs. Also to be used as a public information center and for community events	\$100,000	General Funds, CDBG, and SPLOST	2017-2021	City
5. Policy 1.4.6 Purchase land for future capital projects	\$1,000	General Funds	2017-2021	City
6. Policy 1.5.1 Purchase recreational equipment for park	\$500	DNR and General Funds	2017-2021	City
7. Policy 2.1.5 Drainage and Street Improvements	\$25,000	General Funds, CDBG, and SPLOST	2017-2021	City
8. Policy Purchase equipment to help maintain streets and right-aways	\$5,000	General Funds	2017-2021	City
9. Policy 1.4.2 Purchase equipment for fire department	\$1,000	General Funds, Local assistance grants and Homeland Security Grants	2017-2021	City

10. Policy 2.1.1 Develop pathways or sidewalks to maintain community connectively	\$2,000	General Funds	2017-2021	City and Developers
---	---------	---------------	-----------	---------------------

NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES ELEMENT

Project Number/Activity	Annual Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Implementation Year	Responsibility
11. Policy 1.8.1 Inventory structures that are at least 50 years of age to determine if they are of historical significant.	\$100	General Funds	2017-2021	City

LAND USE ELEMENT

Project Number/Activity	Annual Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Implementation Year	Responsibility
12. Policy 1.6.1 Develop a base map with the parcel and land use layers.	\$100	General Funds	2017-2021	City, volunteers, and staff
13. Policy 1.6.1 Require contractors to submit CADD and shapefiles when the project involves improvements on public property.	\$100	General Funds	2017-2021	City

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Project Number/Activity	Annual Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Implementation Year	Responsibility
14. Policy 1.1.1 Purse intergovernmental cooperation when cost effective.	N/A	N/A	2017-2021	City
15. Policy 1.1.2 Promote the sharing of services.	N/A	N/A	2017-2021	City
16. Policy 1.1.3 Participate in committees, groups, and organizations promoting intergovernmental cooperation.	N/A	N/A	2017-2021	City

TECHNICAL ADDENDUM

POPULATION

Purpose

The population is a critical element of comprehensive planning. Every aspect of planning, whether it be transportation and roadway enhancement, utilization of natural resources or future land use, involves population data. The ability to predict demographic trends is necessary to understand a community's past and present and to facilitate the planning process.

Historical Trends

One of the fundamental pieces of information to be learned from the population analysis is the long-term trend in population growth. One way of measuring this is to determine absolute growth or decline.

The city has only 10 years of information from which to establish growth trends. It would be accurate to state that the population, in general, has remained constant and continued to grow slowly. The average annual growth rate from 2000-2015 has been approximately 1%. **Table 1** shows the 2015 population at about 440.

Current Population Overview

It is hard to assess the validity of any population projections as extrapolative values due to the unique nature of Offerman. The city is similar to other small cities within the region and follows the general pattern of slow to slow-to-moderate (1.7% per year) growth forecast for the area.

Although some communities in South Georgia, for example, Kingsland, St. Mary's, Ludowici and Hinesville have undergone rapid and expansive growth during the past two decades due to the ever changing military mission at Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base and the 3rd ID at Fort Stewart, Ga.

East of the city, closer to the coast, a population surge has occurred along the Georgia shoreline. The City of Offerman may well feel a ripple effect from this increase around them, but it is hard to forecast how much of an effect it will have if any.

Regarding comprehensive planning, the slow growth model seems best suited to describe future conditions in the city. The previously noted lack of accumulated data concerning population makes it harder to establish past trends with any merit for any of the population-related categories. The baseline throughout this plan is the U.S. Census data for 2010.

Future Trends

One of the most important factors to consider for local government planning is the anticipated future size and composition of the population. Future growth within the community was simply projected based on current information, and the cohort method was used to examine age groups.

Table 2 using the Georgia Department of Community Affairs forecasted numbers shows an approximately 5 percent growth rate in Pierce County from 2010-2030. It would be unwise to assume the same rate of increase for Offerman. It is the intent and purpose of this plan to present accurate baseline data to formulate a precise profile of the current nature of Offerman with more emphasis on empirical evidence than conjectured trends. In this case, a less than rigid format is used to address the challenge of establishing a precise profile of Offerman.

Chart 1 shows the city’s average growth from 2010-2030 to be approximately 1.7%. This growth rate will continue unless a significant event occurs.

Georgia’s overall average growth rate from 2010-2030 is approximately 6.6%. The average growth rate annually from 1980-2005 for Georgia was almost 9.9%. Georgia will continue to outpace the growth rate of Offerman. Current trends and projections indicate that the rate of increase in Offerman will not experience dramatic changes, and will continue to remain at levels substantially lower than the State’s growth rates.

Table 1
Total Population

Category	1980-2005					
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
Georgia	5,457,566	5,967,891	6,478,216	7,332,335	8,186,453	8,868,675
Pierce	11,897	12,613	13,328	14,482	15,636	16,571
Offerman	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	403	406
Blackshear	3,222	3,243	3,263	3,273	3,283	3,298
Patterson	763	695	626	627	627	593
Waycross	19,371	17,891	16,410	15,872	15,333	14,324

Source: 2000 U.S. Census & Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. Analysis: Georgia DCA

Table 2
Population Projection

Category	2210-2030				
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Georgia	10,069,700	11,076,619	12,189,252	13,426,590	12,017,838
Pierce	18,704	19,963	21,190	22,443	23,563
Offerman	441	440	442	446	448
Blackshear	3,314	3,329	3,344	3,359	3,375
Patterson	559	525	491	457	423
Waycross	13,314	12,305	11,295	10,286	9,276

Source: 2000 U.S. Census & Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. Analysis: Georgia DCA

The city reflects the county trend in the distribution of population by age group. The City of Offerman, as much of the southeast Georgia region, will experience an increase in people forty and over as baby boomers mature. The population in the city will grow slowly and remain stable as shown in **Charts 1 & 2**.

Chart 1

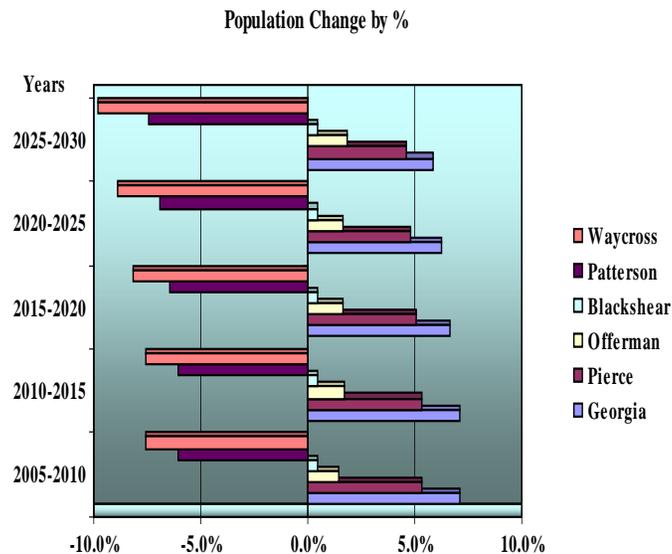


Chart 2

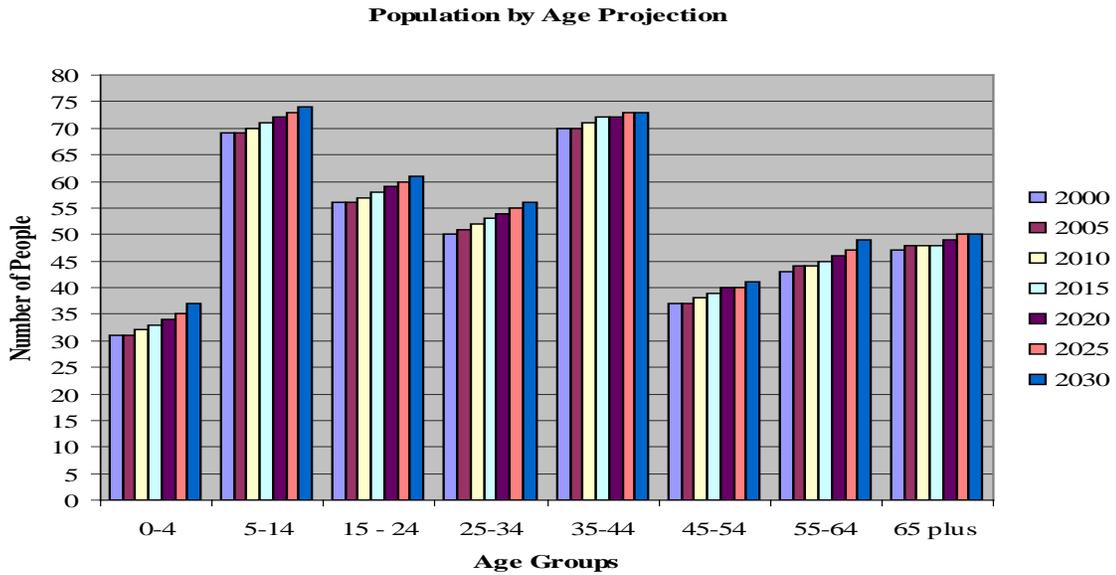
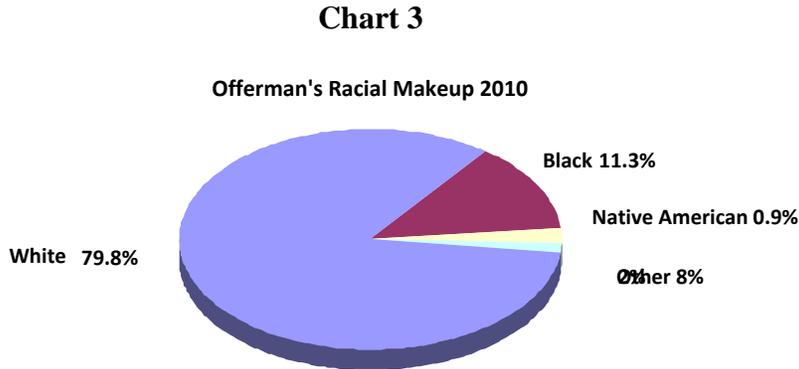


Chart 3 depicts that in 2010, 342 Caucasians, 50 African-Americans, 1 Native American, 3 Asian, and 58 individuals that are racial groups.



Source: 2010 US Census

Historically, Pierce County demonstrated a slight edge in population for females as evidenced by the 1970 Census (51.2% female to 48.8% male) and the 1980 Census (51.5% to 48.5%). **Table 3** shows that by 1990, a change had occurred with men holding the slight edge at 50.7% to 49.3%.

Offerman in 1998, had a population split of 52.5% females to 47.5% male. **Charts 4, 5, and 6** depicts graphically that this trend will likely continue over the twenty-year period of the Plan.¹

TABLE 3
POPULATION BY SEX

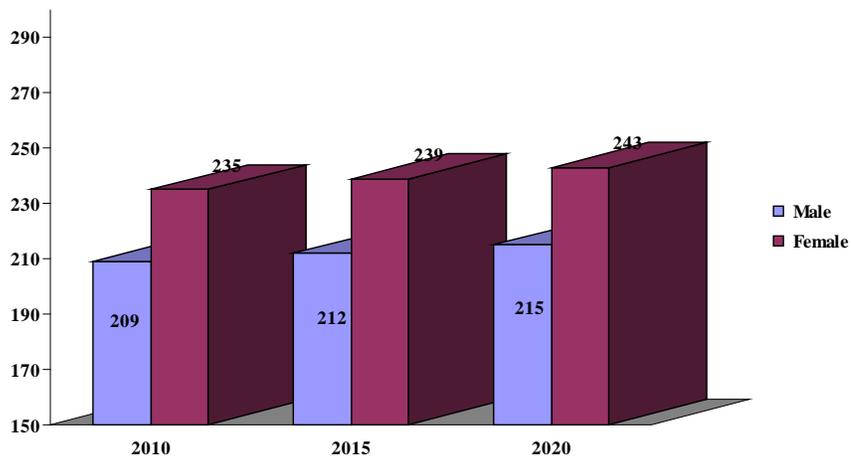
Offerman	1990	1995	2000	2005
<i>Male</i>	No data	200	203	206
<i>Female</i>	No data	224	227	231
Pierce				
<i>Male</i>	6,715	6,815	6,917	7,021
<i>Female</i>	N/A	7,219	7,327	7,437
Georgia				
<i>Male</i>	3,382,864	3,595,984	3,811,531	4,063,350
<i>Female</i>	3,582,675	3,808,383	4,048,311	4,303,354

Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

¹ This subsection, population by sex, was not updated. Table 3 was modified and charts used to depict 2010-2020.

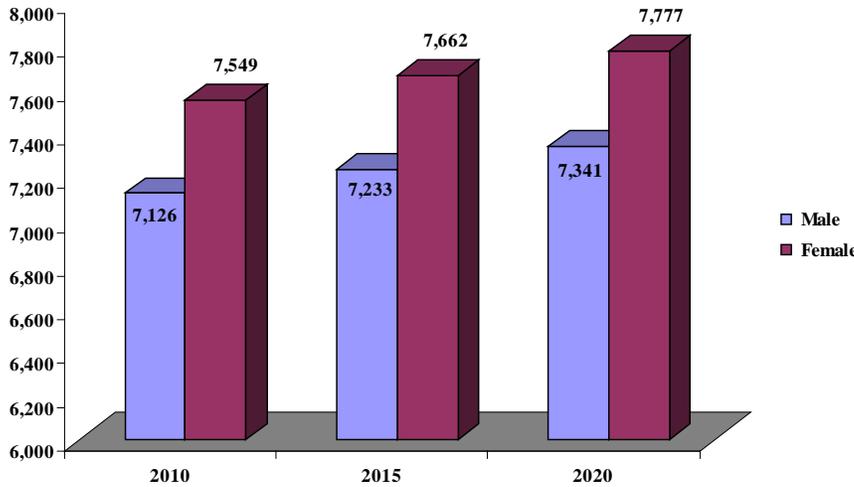
Chart 4

Offerman's Population by Sex 2010-2020



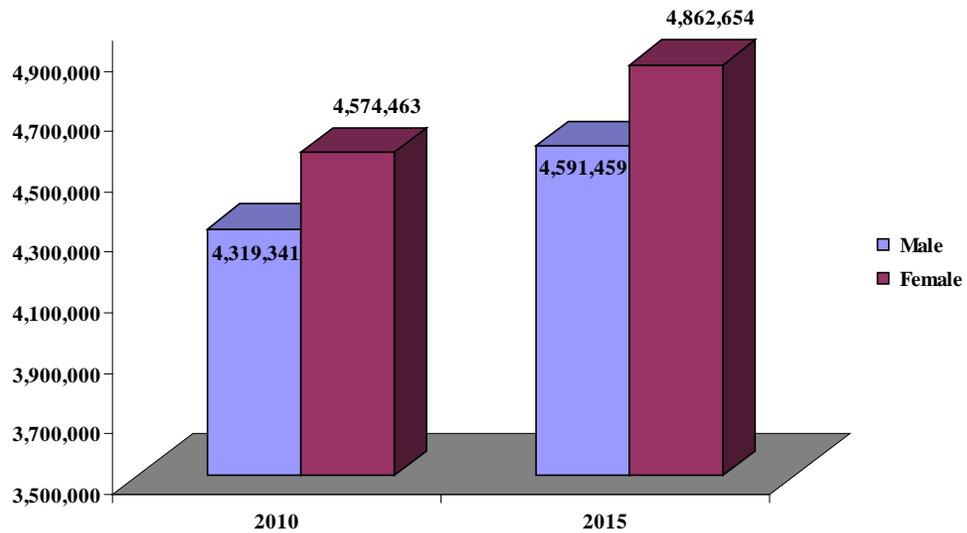
Source: 2000 U.S. Census & Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. Analysis: Georgia DCA

Chart 5 Pierce County's Population by Sex 2010-2020



Source: 2000 U.S. Census & Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. Analysis: Georgia DCA

Chart 6 Georgia's Population by Sex 2010-2015



Source: 2000 U.S. Census & Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. Analysis: Georgia DCA

To obtain data on educational attainment a single question is asked, "What is the highest grade of school completed, or the highest degree received?" This subsection contains information on education found within Pierce County, adjacent counties and the state of Georgia. Students living in the city attend Pierce County schools. According to the Service Delivery Strategy, the Pierce

County Board of Education is the entity that is charged with education all citizens within Pierce County.

Tables 7 – 8 shows the level of education attained for the surrounding area. The City compares favorably to Pierce County, surrounding counties and the state in educational attainment. More students are staying in the school system longer. Approximately 63% of Offerman’s residents in 2000 had a High School Diploma or General Education Diploma (GED), and nearly 5% have attended college. Within the city alone, about 70% of adults have a High School Diploma/GED or higher.

The education attainment levels in the city are a good match with the skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to participate in the workforce. The Pierce County Board of Education has worked hard to provide an excellent technical curriculum for individuals who are pursuing vocational programs or college.

Table 7
Offerman: Education Attainment

Category	<u>1980</u>		<u>1990</u>		<u>2000</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Less than 9th grade	N/A		N/A		28	16.8
9th to 12 grade	N/A		N/A		22	13.2
High school graduate (includes GED)	N/A		N/A		105	62.9
Some College	N/A		N/A		8	4.8
Associate degree	N/A		N/A		1	0.6
Bachelor's degree	N/A		N/A		3	1.8
Grad/Professional Degrees	N/A		N/A		0	0.0

2000 US Census

Table 8

Educational Attainment Comparison

For Persons Age 25 and Over

Category	<u>Persons Age 25 and Over</u>			<u>% With High School Diploma or Higher</u>			<u>% With Bachelor's Degree or Higher</u>		
	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>
Atkinson	3,322	3,679	4,503	24.5	51.5	57.2	N/A	6.4	6.9
Bacon	5,203	5,730	6,525	29.5	58.1	67.6	N/A	6.6	6.6
Berrien	7,779	8,782	10,451	27.9	57.5	66	N/A	7.5	9.4
Brantley	4,715	6,609	9,282	36.9	64.1	72.4	N/A	5.8	6.2
Charlton	3,804	5,002	6,404	30.7	56.2	65.1	N/A	6.4	6.4
Clinch	3,552	3,652	4,380	21.8	46.2	58.8	N/A	6.7	10.5
Coffee	14,527	17,427	22,798	23.5	58	65	N/A	11.1	10.1
Pierce	6,676	8,266	10,131	30.5	60	69.8	N/A	6.3	10.1
Ware	21,359	22,611	23,380	26.7	61.1	70.4	N/A	10.4	11.1
Offerman	N/A	N/A	240	N/A	N/A	65.4	N/A	N/A	1.3
Georgia	4,023,420	4,023,420	5,179,487	27.4	70.9	78.6	N/A	19.3	23.4

Source: SEGRDC 2004 Technical Staff Report & 2000 US Census

The Georgia Department of Education 2003-2004 Annual Report Card on K-12 Public Schools indicates that the 2002-2004 dropout rates in Pierce County are similar to the State rates. The years of education completed across the board in Pierce County has continued to increase from approximately 30% to nearly 70% in 2000. This trend will continue well into the planning horizon.

The 2003-2004 Annual Report Card on K-12 Public Schools shows SAT scores were below the State and National average. Differences may be reflective of cultural (rural VS. urban) rather than a deficiency in the overall educational system.

Table 9 depicts that the number of households in the City of Offerman will increase, but at a slower rate than is predicted for the county, region, and state. **Table 10** depicts that the average size per household will continue to decrease slowly.

Table 9

Number of Households 1996-2020

Year	City	County	State
1996	159	5,062	1,641,303
1997	159	5,125	2,746,239
1998	160	5,191	2,746,239
1999	160	5,161	2,806,239
2000	164	5,326	2,913,536
2005	169	5,616	3,201,910
2010	174	5,932	3,507,181
2015	180	6,277	3,830,086
2020	185	6,342	4,102,319

Table 10

Average Size of Household 1970-2010

Year	City	County	Region	State
1970	N/D	3.4	3.5	3.3
1980	N/D	3.2	3.0	2.8
1985	N/D	2.9	2.9	2.7
1990	N/D	2.8	2.9	2.7
1995	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.6
2000	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.6
2005	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.5
2010	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.4

Source: Pierce County Comprehensive Plan 2010

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Purpose

The economic development element of the plan will provide an inventory and assessment of the labor force and economic base existing in the city, with comparisons to regional and state figures. The purpose of this data will be to establish baseline information that will facilitate the targeting of future needs for training, outline the employment status of residents and assess the labor force available for future economic development. Economic development is rarely an isolated mechanism, but rather a component of a complexity of factors that fall within a regional context. Thus the economic development of the city is contingent upon the economic development of the surrounding region.

Economic Profile

The city has relied historically on agriculture and timbering with a preponderance of small farms and self-employed timbermen. Before 1950, most residents did some form of agricultural activity to supplement income. However, this practice declined as economic opportunities outside of the community improved. With the economy growing and construction blooming individuals used to working with their hands traveled outside of the community to support their families.

Nonetheless, this practice is not as prevalent as it once was. As the availability of jobs grew in rural South Georgia so did opportunities and wages. During the last twenty years, the city has been able to secure a large wood chipping mill, a mining facility, train engine repair facility and a large trucking company due to the availability of transportation networks.

The securing of these operations have created opportunities for the citizens of the city and the surrounding communities. Individuals, in the past, look outside of the community for work. However, during the last two decades, this trend has been slowing. Now, people seeking work within the community can find a job that matches their skill sets.

Economic Base

The economic base is that part of the local economy that brings in money from outside of the community. Although the computation of the economic base is complex, understanding the principal is not. Any business that brings in dollars from consumers outside the city is an economic base industry. Moreover, any entity that just recycles local money is not part of the economic base.

The City of Offerman's economic base is changing. The city at one time was considered a commuter town. A commuter town is a community that is primarily residential in character, with

most of its residents commuting to a nearby town or city to earn their livelihood.

During the last two decades, this trend has slowly changed. Individuals from nearby communities now commute to the city for employment opportunities. This trend will likely continue due to feeder industries developing to support current industrial operations.

Economic by Sector

Because of growth in the region and quick access to excellent transportation systems, the city has a higher percentage of individuals working in the construction, manufacturing, and public sector than the state.

At the county and regional level agriculture and agriculture-related services decreased, continuing the trend of the last several decades. Manufacturing, retail trade, and services showed the most gain regionally. The city currently relies on out-of-town jobs and the market forces that drive those sectors. Nonetheless, this trend is slowly changing because several large industries have relocated to the city.

Unemployment

The city exhibits a seasonal shift in unemployment associated with the construction and forestry industries. Historically, countywide unemployment has been above the state's average. Data is lacking for Offerman in this category.

Commuting

Pierce County, historically, has evidenced a significant percentage of persons commuting to work outside the county. By 1990, more than 56.4% of the workforce worked outside of Pierce County. Exact data for the city is lacking. However, one can assume that the percentage is at least 50%, but probably more due to the relatively few jobs in Offerman proper. The seasonal shifts in the construction sector also contribute to a fluctuating database for commuters.

Economic Climate

The city's investment capital is limited, and efforts should be made to stimulate or recruit industries and commerce that have low risk/high yield expenditure of resources. The community must achieve a balance between community facilities and the selection of industrials willing to locate to the city. The vision statement demonstrates the city's commitment to its citizens and the growth of its community.

The city's commercial interest includes a wood-chipping yard, mining facility, heavy locomotive refurbishing, and repair facility, truck dispatching, and repair facility, several cabinet shops, and several small retail businesses. Nonetheless, the city is lacking a "central business area" or a "shopping district." This trend will continue because the surrounding communities are larger and offer more shopping opportunities to purchases goods.

Training Resources

There are two traditional technical schools within commuting distance of Offerman; Coastal Pines Technical College in Waycross, approximately 35 miles away and Coastal Pines Technical College in Jesup, about 25 miles away. South Ga College, a two-year unit of the University of Georgia system offers post secondary educational studies as does Georgia Southern, a four-year institute in Statesboro some 70 miles from Offerman and 90 miles to the west is Valdosta State University.

The existing transportation network does provide adequate access to educational and training opportunities for those with personal transportation. An unskilled labor force is a negative factor for any incoming industrial or commercial interests. The need for continued education, in not only Offerman but the entire region, is a high priority if the successful recruitment of business is to occur.

Economic Development Resources and Tools

The city does not have an organized development authority through which to establish a concerted effort to recruit new business and industry. Currently, the Pierce County Chamber of Commerce and the Pierce County Industrial Development offer services to the city as well as the other municipalities in Pierce County.

The South Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) administers a regional small business development center located in both Valdosta and Waycross. This agency provides economic development assistance to cities, counties, industries, and individuals throughout the region through such functions as grant writing and administration, revolving loan programs, small business incubator programs and planning and development assistance to local governments.

The ADC, housed at the SGRC, administers the SBA7a and 504 Loan Program, Community Development Block Grant Employment Incentive Program (CDBG-EIP) Loan Funds, a Rural Economic and Community Development Revolving Loan Fund, and an Economic Development Administration (EDA) Revolving Loan Fund.

Economic Development Assessment

The city is at a crossroads regarding economic development. Emerging from decades of labor intensive agribusiness and timbering into a scenario where manufacturing, processing, and services have become prevalent. Concurrent with diversification is the increasing need for a well-educated and a technically proficient workforce.

If the slow-to-moderate growth model is accepted, then some "ripple effect" can be expected across the board, affecting both population and economic elements. The availability of land in and around the city offers some leverage in attracting new residents as well as business.

As previously noted, because of existing land types and drainage factors some forms of development will not be easy. Although land is available, there is also pre-existing constraints that will influence land use with relation to economic development.

Pierce County's status as a "commuter community" is projected to continue because of its proximity to larger industrialized communities. Such communities are top heavy with residents and housing units but lack a broad base of industrial and commercial support that is typically the foundation of the tax structure.

Since the city is a member of the Pierce County community, it also shares in this situation. Earlier it was discussed that most land is family owned and pass from family member to family member(s). By default, this limits growth and the population of the city.

The sectors that appear to be strongest countywide are services, manufacturing, mining, heavy rail repair, transportation, and construction. The weakest sectors countywide are wholesale and retail.

The city must make wise decisions when it comes to development and the types of business and industries that are allowed to locate or develop within the city. Currently, the population density per square mile does not support the development of a municipal water system. It is a wise for the city to review the comprehensive plan at a minimum of five-year intervals and if possible annually.

In summary, economic development will be co-dependent on local government's ability to maintain an excellent transportation network and the availability of land. The city performs three critical functions: 1) demonstrates government's commitment to providing services; 2) encourages

existing businesses to grow and; 3) maintains a superior quality of life which encourages workers to live in the area.

NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Purpose

To inventory local natural and historic resources to determine the manner in which they will yield maximum long-range benefits to the community.

Natural Resources

The most valuable natural resources found in the city area are arable land. Lands that are favorable to timber production and agriculture, and good availability of fresh water. Historically, the city has utilized these resources in a judicious and prudent manner reflective of its tradition as predominantly farming and agriculturally-oriented community.

As mentioned, the city residents rely on shallow or deep wells for all watering needs. In the past, this never posed a problem. However, great care should be taken in the future to protect the water table from any pollution associated with, not only industrial development but residential as well. At some point in time, if the population density should increase without the advent of a public water system and accompanying sewerage system, the carrying capacity of the localized shallow water pockets may not be able to provide enough water without the introduction of more deep wells.

A significant problem will be an overabundance of septic tanks. An excessive amount of septic tanks in this area may lead to groundwater pollution or contamination of existing shallow wells. If industrial or commercial interests located in the city puts unusually high demands on water resources, this could lead to contamination or water shortage, and render wells useless.

Inventory of Specific Natural Resource Items

Water Supply Watershed

There are no water supply watersheds in the city.

Groundwater Recharge Areas

The closest significant groundwater recharge area is due east of the city in Wayne County. This area runs in a northeasterly direction throughout the length of Wayne County. Another recharge area is in Pierce County at the extreme western end near the Ware County line.

Wetlands

USGS topographical maps (Screven Quadrangle) show that within the city limits and the adjacent land there is a considerable amount of wetlands forming an arc running in the direction north and northeast, where it abuts the banks of the Little Satilla River. Due south and east of the city is a vast stretch of wetlands known as Zero Bay which extends to the Pierce and Wayne Counties line and beyond. To the west, upland pine forest habitat is the predominant eco-habitat.

Protected River Corridors

There are none within the city limits or adjacent to it.

Flood Plains

Although the floodplain associated with the Little Satilla River is relatively close, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development flood insurance maps show the town within the minimal risk area.

Soil Types

Offerman exhibits two major soil classifications:

- Leefield-Robertsdale-Pelham and Irvington-Robertsdale-Leefield.

Steep Slopes

There are no steep slopes in the Offerman area.

Prime Agricultural and Forest Land

These are lands defined as areas which primarily include productive agricultural land with long-term economic viability to produce crops, timber, livestock, poultry, and dairy or nursery products. In Offerman, while there is arable land suitable for some crop production and grazing the two principal soil types exclude it from being classified as having prime agricultural land.

Plant and Animal Habitats

Offerman's rural nature, forested lands, wetlands, and farms provide an abundance of habitat for a variety of wildlife indigenous to the region. There is no currently recognized unique plant or

animal habitats in the city.

Major Park, Recreation and Conservation Areas

There are no federal, state, or regional parks in the Offerman area. The Little Satilla River Wildlife Management Area's eastern border at some points is less than two miles from the Offerman city limits.

Scenic Views and Sites

There are no currently recognized scenic views or sites in Offerman or the adjacent area.

Historic Resources

Offerman, with its one-hundred-year history, has several historically interesting structures. Most are small vernacular structures situated near the CSX rail line. Unfortunately, there do not appear to be enough to form a historic district.

Time has taken its toll on many buildings from the early decades of the century. The majority of these buildings have been destroyed by fire or are in a state of decay.

A REVIEW OF SPECIFIC ITEMS TO BE ADDRESSED:

Residential Resources

Except for the houses above, there are no notable residential structures.

Commercial Resources

None

Industrial Resources

None

Institutional Resources

None

Rural Resources

Some older farm-related structures are in a state of ill-repair.

Historic, Archaeological and Cultural Resources

Several cemeteries date back to the nineteenth century. There are no historical landscapes, battlegrounds or ancient ruins within the city limits. Although the city has a colorful history associated with the timber boom of the early 1900's and the accompanying development of the rail network, little remains to mark this era.

The Offerman Depot was destroyed by fire, thought to be arson, on the morning of October 26, 1910. The Offerman Hotel, built in 1907, is gone. There are no reminders of the various saw mills, cane grinding operations or tobacco barns prevalent during the same era. A bid to locate the district agricultural college in the city failed; Douglas prevailed, and that institution is now South Georgia College. By 1915 the boom times had faltered, like a wildfire out of fuel, and the city fell victim to the vicissitudes of a rapidly shifting economy. One year later the city's charter was repealed by legislative action.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Purpose

This element provides an inventory of public facilities and services; to assess their adequacy for serving present and future population and economic needs; to identify future needs and goals, and to outline a strategy for providing the desired level of public facilities and services throughout the planning period.

Community Facilities Overview

The city faced with a variety of challenges that a nascent community must address. Currently, the businesses and industrial operations that have located within the city are not water or sewer intensive.

Nonetheless, this does not mean that the city should not pursue water and sewerage at some point in time. Any population growth will also hinge on the availability of water and wastewater as well as affordable housing, availability of land, proximity to employment sectors, educational opportunities, adequate public safety, and recreational facilities.

Specific Items to be addressed:

- **Transportation Network**

U.S. 84 gives access to the neighboring towns of Waycross, Jesup and either Brunswick or Savannah. Intersecting U.S. 84 near Offerman, state Route 32 offers access to Brunswick and Douglas. Interstate 95, accessible via state Route 32, is 40 miles to the east. Regarding road classification, U.S. 84 is the only arterial in the Offerman area. Three roadways, Birmingham Avenue, Lincoln Loop and Offerman Loop, serve as collectors and the remainder; unpaved roads are at best local function roads. The local transportation infrastructure consists of many unimproved roadways and several paved highways. The prevalence of dirt roads and the ensuing maintenance costs associated with them dictates that the improvement of these byways should be a priority. The obvious benefits would be fewer maintenance costs and safer transit.

- **Water Supply and Treatment**

Private wells meet local watering needs

- **Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment**

Septic tanks handle sewerage.

Solid Waste Management

The city has complied with the Georgia Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act of 1990 and currently has privatized pickup via Southland Waste.

Public Safety

Pierce County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement services and the Georgia State Patrol patrols U.S. 84. The Georgia State Patrol provides assistance under a mutual aid agreement with Pierce County. The Pierce County Sheriff's Department handles all Emergency 911 via dispatch some 12 miles away.

Fire Protection

Big Creek volunteer fire department serves the city. Big Creek is one of eight county volunteer fire departments serving the county. The city's fire protection insurance rating is nine (9). The city hall also houses fire department equipment.

Offerman/Big Creek Volunteer Fire Department

Inventory

- 1984 GMC Pickup
- 1990 Kenworth T400 Model Truck W/tanker unit
- 1985 Chevrolet Fire Truck W/ Tanker Pump
- 1981 GMC Class An Engine Pumper
- Floating pump
- 2 Smoke removal fans

The town has a 15-member Community Emergency Response Team certified. Six of them are volunteer firefighters. All have had hazmat, disaster medical operations, disaster team organization, Fire, and Rescue training.

Hospitals and Public Health Facilities

There are no hospital facilities in Pierce County. The closest to the city is Wayne Memorial County Hospital in Jesup. Also serving the Offerman area is the Satilla Regional Medical Center in Waycross and the Southeast Georgia Medical Center in Brunswick. The Pierce County Health Department in Blackshear also provides services accessible by Offerman.

Recreation

Offerman has recently completed a multi-use recreation area on land adjacent to the city hall. The Pierce County Recreation Department also provides services such as softball, basketball and football leagues open to residents of all county municipalities.

General Government

The City of Offerman has a mayor and a six-member city council. The legislative authority of the city is vested in this assemblage. The Chief Executive's (Mayor) powers and duties are to preside at all meetings of the council, be city's official representative for all procedural or ceremonial purposes, to take affidavits and administer oaths, sign, on behalf of the city, all written and approved contracts, ordinances, and other instruments executed by the city which by law are required to be in writing, vote on all matters brought before the council and be counted toward a quorum as any other council member, prepare and submit to Council a recommended annual operating and capital budget and to fulfill other executive or administrative duties as the council shall, by ordinance, establish.

Educational Facilities

There are no schools in the city. The city is within the jurisdiction of the Pierce County Board of Education. The Patterson Elementary School provides education for K-5, Pierce County's Middle School and High School provides secondary education for all residents of Offerman.

Libraries and Cultural Facilities

The City of Offerman has a small library at City Hall, and the Pierce County Library in Blackshear is available. The Okefenokee Regional Library in Waycross offers the most comprehensive library services in the area.

Community Center

Serving as the hub for future community facilities is the city hall completed December 1998 by the community. An accurate reflection of the city's "can-do" spirit and the essence of small towns everywhere is this facility. A product of the people and for the people.

The construction cost of the community center was \$25,000. Currently, the structured appraised for \$69,000. It was citizen participation in both supplies and labor donated that made this possible. The entire complex contains city hall and the fire department, a walking track, basketball court, park benches, covered picnic shelter and a baseball/softball field.

The community center contains a small library, computer workstations for public use. This community center marks a singular advancement for the city and local government's ability to provide community facilities for the population. Modest by many standards, it nonetheless demonstrates government's commitment to solidifying a cohesive infrastructure capable of responding to the needs of the people.

The community facilities currently being provided by the City of Offerman are adequate for the needs of the community. Fire protection (all volunteer) is acceptable because of the city's efforts to modernize firefighting equipment, vehicles, and station house continuously.

Although the transportation network is adequate, some improvements are needed. Local, State and Federal funding (if applicable) will address these improvements.

LAND USE

Purpose

This element provides the city the opportunity to inventory existing land use patterns and trends based on community needs and desires. The development of goals, policies, and strategies for land use are designed to strike a balance between effective and efficient delivery of public services. Moreover, to protect and preserve vulnerable natural and historic resources, and respect for individual property rights.

The accepted land use categories sanctioned by the State of Georgia are:

Residential – single family and multi-family dwelling units-634 acres.

Commercial - non-industrial business uses including retail sales, office, service and entertainment-58 acres

Industrial - manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing, and similar industrials-42 acres

Public/Institutional - city halls, police and fire stations, libraries, post offices, schools, and other institutional entities-4 acres.

Transportation/Communication/Utilities - power plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, and other services-14 acres.

Parks/Recreation/Conservation - public or private - playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreational centers, and similar government entities-4 acres.

Agriculture/Forestry - farming (fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, livestock production), aquaculture or commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting-1246 acres.

Undeveloped - woodlands or fields (not in crop use, livestock or timber production), undeveloped portions of residential subdivisions and industrial parks, water bodies, and similar other underdeveloped areas-0 acres.

Land Use Assessment - Current and Future

The city is similar to other rural communities in South Georgia in that the absence of public water and wastewater treatment systems dictates that great care should be taken to maintain the integrity of the groundwater system in the area.

The City of Offerman's current building permit and code enforcement program is a step towards a more comprehensive land use strategy. The city's current land use pattern is residential south of U.S. 84, a commercial "strip" along and slightly to the north of U.S. 84 and the remaining north of U.S. 84 as agricultural/forestry.

Most of the residential sites are on, what has been, agricultural land. If unregulated residential development continues a sprawling pattern, already in evidence, may expand to the detriment of the local government's ability to provide services.

The need for controlled residential development will be necessary to augment the initiation of public water and sewerage service. An effort should be made to cluster future commercial growth along the existing corridor on U.S. 84.

No encroachment of existing residential areas will be allowed. Great care will be taken to ensure that no industrial development will jeopardize the community.

Since the city's current land use sectors are relatively discrete, it would be logical to continue this pattern. Four distinct residential areas exist. One on the south side of U.S. 84, and the other three on the north side of U.S. 84.

No public water and sewage services are within the city. The Construction of houses will continue on parcels of land one acre or more. This practice will continue into the foreseeable future.

The existing commercial strip along U.S. 84 is well situated and will be able to absorb more businesses. Future development of the commercial strip would be a logical step achieved through the expansion of the zone in either direction along U.S. 84.

The previously discussed City Hall and municipal park complex will be an excellent hub for public/institutional land use. Currently, there is room to expand if the need for such should occur.

There is an overlap between the Public/Institutional and the Recreational/Park/Open Space categories due to the placement of the "park area" adjacent to the City Hall. This overlap appears to have no negative aspects. The city has an abundance of potential park areas.

The city will develop these open spaces into recreation sites when fiscal parameters allow. Indeed, in spite of many obstacles, the city has demonstrated its commitment to providing quality, safe public recreation facilities.

The vast majority of land area in and around the city falls under the Agricultural/Forest/Mining category. Although only four individuals are known as agriculturists, they own a significant portion of the total amount of the Ag/F/M lands. Several fields are unused, due either to rotational crop schedules or owner's choice.

Currently, there are two areas of industrial land use, east of town off U. S. 84 is the ITT Wood Chipping Facility and the Southern Ionics mining facility. Due west is Progressive Rail Locomotive Services. Any future industrial development should occur in proximity to these established areas of Industrial land-use.

HOUSING ELEMENT

Purpose

This element provides the city the opportunity to inventory and assess its existing housing stock to determine if it is adequate and serving the community. Most housing is either manufactured or site-built. Of the 193 homes in the city 60 are manufactured homes. Approximately 86 homes in the city are post-eighties.

It is a good possibility that most of these homes need minor repairs. Out of the 193 homes, 30 predates 1939. These homes are in fair to poor condition and with minor repairs can remain useful.

In 2015, the median dollar value of homes was \$98,000 countywide. In the City of Offerman, the median dollar value of homes is approximate \$62,800. The value within the city reflects only structural appraisal. Due to the unusually large parcels of land associated with homes within the city, the total value of the property should be much higher.

Current Housing Assessment

A centralized residential section south of U.S. 84 exists that has approximately 193 homes. Manufactured homes make up a majority of the structures with site-built homes scattered throughout the community.

There are little subdivision-style residential parcels due to the lack of public sewage and water services available. The average residential parcel is reminiscent of older rural farm sites comprised of a home and several outbuildings that serve as either livestock shelters or crop storage facilities. Every residence must rely on a well(s) for all watering needs and a septic tank for sewage disposal.

Housing in the city is typical of most small farming communities; agriculture or livestock with an abundance of personal gardens and large parcels with older homes. A centralized hub does exist centered around the backdrop of the old rail depot.

Although the population has remained relatively stable with little growth since the development of 2007 comprehensive plan, there is a need to continue to support construction codes and guidelines, particularly on floodplains and wetlands for future housing sites. As stated elsewhere in this plan the city is located beyond the 500-year event of the adjacent floodplain of the Little Satilla River.

Due to many wetlands and poorly drained soil types within Pierce County, septic tank failure during wet periods is not unusual. While it is possible to meet the state guidelines (Rules and Regulations for On-site Sewage Management Systems) for installation of a septic tank system in a wetlands area, there is a high frequency of failure due to soil saturation.

The Georgia Uniform Codes Act of 1989 established eight mandatory codes that are effective state-wide. These regulations include, 1) Standard Building Code, 2) Standard Gas Code, 3) Standard Mechanical Code, 4) Standard Plumbing Code or Georgia State Plumbing Code, 5) National Electrical Code, 6) Georgia State Energy Code for Buildings, 7) CABO One and 8) Two Family Dwelling Code,

Nonetheless, local governments are not required to adopt the regulations by ordinance. Moreover, they must develop an agency with administrative procedures, and penalties for enforcement. All new construction in Offerman should meet the state-mandated standards and existing countywide standards where appropriate.

[Future housing Assessment](#)

The quality and availability of housing units in Offerman are above average. However, due to the reliance on wells and septic tanks, the choice of where to build new homes is limited.

For example, if construction is allowed in areas where density is already high then a risk of contamination from the overabundance of septic tanks is high. This situation should be conducive for an efficient system to control new site development for building residential units.

The city's growth depends on the availability of land. Most land within the city is locality owned and passed to and from family members. Moreover, this applies to most rural communities. A portion of these property owners is absentee landowners.

As in the past, the growth pattern will be slow. Moreover, the availability of land will be sporadic; leading to a mixture of new and existing homes within the community with no established pattern of development. To maintain the viability of the community, all citizens must participate and believe in the vision statement outlined in the plan.