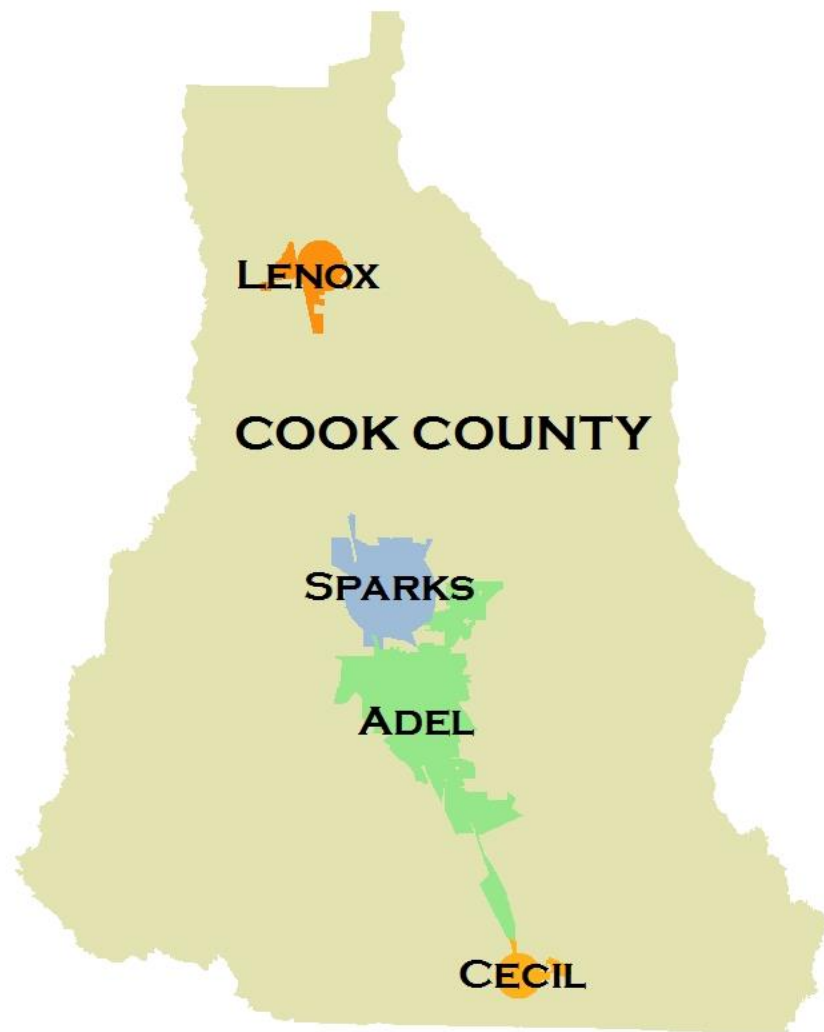


2020  
Joint Comprehensive Plan Update  
For  
Cook County, Georgia  
and the  
Cities of Adel, Cecil,  
Lenox, and Sparks



Prepared by:  
Cook County  
City of Adel  
City of Cecil  
Town of Lenox  
Town of Sparks

Photos courtesy of SGRC staff

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

### **1. Introduction**

The 2020 Cook County and Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks 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, effective October 1, 2018.

As required by the Minimum Standards, the 2020 Cook County and Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks Comprehensive Plan consists of the following elements:

- 1) Community Goals
- 2) Needs and Opportunities
- 3) Community Work Program
- 4) Broadband Services Element
- 5) Economic Development Element (as a community included in the 2019 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 Cook County and the Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks have also been integrated directly into their parallel components in this Comprehensive Plan.
- 6) 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 Cook County and the Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks. 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 communities:

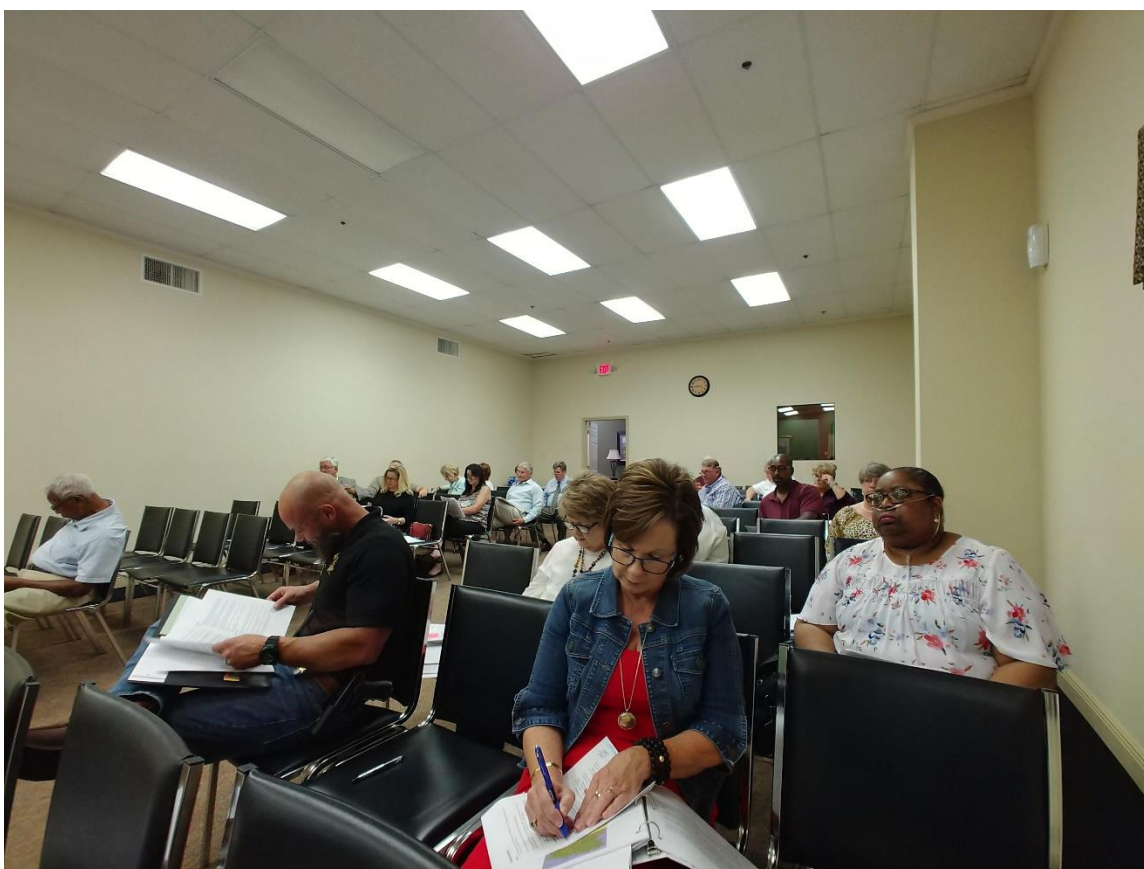
- Stakeholders were identified. These included the local governments' elected officials and staff; local educational institutions (Cook County Board of Education, Wiregrass Georgia Technical College); health care professionals; the Suwannee/Satilla Riverkeeper; the Chamber of Commerce and other organizations that deal with economic development; local businesses and industries; and the general public.
- Participation techniques were identified. Techniques used included public hearings and meetings open to the public with open discussion; printed public information in local newspapers; e-mail correspondence with stakeholders; individual meetings with local government officials; and information on the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's website, local government websites, and social media.
- A participation program was conducted. This included an initial public hearing to give an overview of the plan update and receive initial public comments; three workshops, open to the public, for the development of the plan update; and a final public hearing to receive any final public comments before transmitting the plan draft to DCA for review. Identified stakeholders were invited to all the meetings and attended, yielding specific input in plan content.
- Public participation activities were documented. The documentation of public participation activities is included in the Appendix to this plan, which contains sign-in sheets and published advertisements.

### **1st Public Hearing – “Kick-Off”**

The public hearing kicking off the comprehensive planning process was held on August 19, 2019 at the Cook County Commissioners’ meeting room, 1200 S. Hutchinson Ave., Adel, 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.

### **First workshop**

The first workshop was held on September 16, 2019. The purpose of the workshop was to update the goals, needs, and opportunities in the comprehensive plan. This was done through open discussion, using the goals, needs, and opportunities from the previous comprehensive plan as a starting point. SGRC staff took notes from the discussion, revised the goals, needs, and opportunities based on those notes, and shared the results with stakeholders via e-mail. Additional comments and edits were received via e-mail and were included by SGRC staff as part of the preparation of the draft plan document.



*First workshop.*

## **Second workshop**

The second workshop was held on October 7, 2019. The purpose of the workshop was to update the policies in the comprehensive plan. This was done through open discussion, using the newly revised goals, needs, and opportunities and the policies from the previous comprehensive plan as a starting point. SGRC staff took notes from the discussion, revised the goals, needs, and opportunities based on those notes, and shared the results with stakeholders via e-mail. Additional comments and edits were received via e-mail and were included by SGRC staff as part of the preparation of the draft plan document.



*Second workshop.*

### **Third workshop**

The third workshop was held on November 4, 2019. The purpose of the workshop was the review the Land Use Element and character area maps. This was done through open discussion and viewing of the maps in a setting where all attendees had the opportunity to make notes on the maps for suggested changes to the character areas. Notes from the discussion made by SGRC staff, and notes made on the maps, were then used by SGRC GIS staff to update the character area maps and incorporate the input from the workshop.



*Third workshop*

In the interim period between the second and third workshops, SGRC staff met with each of the local governments to develop and Report of Accomplishments and Community Work Program and to address any additional concerns related to the comprehensive plan update.

### **Final public hearing**

A final public hearing was held on [REDACTED] in order to present the final version of the plan to the community, receive any additional public input, and approve the transmittal of the draft plan to DCA. The plan was transmitted to DCA directly after the public hearing.

### **Adoption**

**(ADD ADOPTION PHOTO and adoption dates)**

### 3. 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 applicable to their area and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria (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

Cook County and the Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks are within the area of the Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan, which was adopted in September 2017.



Source: Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan

<https://waterplanning.georgia.gov/suwannee-satilla-water-planning-region>

The Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan has identified 13 goals, listed below, to implement its vision of managing water resources in a sustainable manner under Georgia's regulated riparian and reasonable use laws in order to support the state's and region's economy, protect public health and natural resources, and enhance the quality of life for all citizens, while preserving the private property rights of Georgia's landowners and considering the need to enhance resource augmentation and efficiency opportunities.

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

- 1) Manage and develop water resources to sustainably and reliably meet domestic, commercial, industrial, 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 issues 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:
  - a. Support and fund current permitting and waste load allocation process to improve the treatment of wastewater and increase treatment capacity.
  - b. Data collection and research to confirm discharge volumes and waste concentrations as well as receiving stream flows and chemistry
- 2) Non-Point Sources:
  - a. Data collection to confirm the source of pollutants and causes; encourage stormwater ordinances, septic system maintenance, and coordinated planning
  - b. 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:
  - a. Total maximum daily load listed streams: Improve data on the source of pollutant and length of impairment; identify opportunities to leverage funds, and implement non-point source Best Management Practices

Longer-term (20- to 40-year) water quantity and quality management practices include:

- Improve the infiltration and management of wetlands

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

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

The Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria 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 utility 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 regulations.

## **II. Plan Elements**

### **1. Community Goals**

- Goal 1:            Conserve and protect the functions and values of the natural resources of Cook County and the Cities for future generations' appropriate use and enjoyment.
- Goal 2:            Protect, preserve, and promote the historic and cultural resources of Cook County and the Cities through such measures as regulations, adaptive reuse, and tourism and education programs focused on historic preservation.
- Goal 3:            Improve the economy of Cook County and the Cities by developing and enhancing new and existing strengths that will draw new businesses, expand existing businesses, diversify the local economy, help Cook County compete in the regional economy, and ensure that overall community growth and development benefits all segments of the population.
- Goal 4:            Provide opportunities for homeownership and housing resources for all citizens of Cook County and the Cities through public/private partnerships.
- Goal 5:            Ensure the highest quality living environment possible through a mixture of compatible land uses and character areas reflecting the needs and desires of the local residents and their vision for Cook County and the Cities. This goal shall be implemented through strict enforcement of the zoning ordinances and building codes based on the objectives and policies that follow.
- Goal 6:            Ensure that needed community facilities and services such as water, sewer, broadband, solid waste, police, fire, and EMS are provided in an effective, environmentally sound, safe, and economic system, consistent with present demand and future growth.
- Goal 7:            Provide a safe and efficient transportation system which addresses the future needs of Cook County and the Cities for movement of people and freight, and which considers the social, economic, energy, and environmental effects of the transportation system.
- Goal 8:            Establish effective coordination measures among all pertinent public and quasi-public entities to best maintain Cook County's and the Cities' quality of life and resources.

## **2. Needs and Opportunities**

### **Natural Resources**

#### **Needs**

1. Water and groundwater conservation practices are not widespread in Cook County.
2. Local water resources need to be protected from potential statewide re-distribution efforts.
3. There are no existing tree planting campaigns or tree planting requirements in Cook County or the Cities of Cecil and Sparks.

#### **Opportunities**

1. Cook County needs to protect its groundwater resources to serve residents and businesses into the future. To protect groundwater recharge areas, implement management strategies which could include the following protection opportunities: wellhead protection program (Adel has already implemented a plan, and the City of Sparks has a wellhead protection ordinance); limit impermeable surfaces with maximum building footprints and maximum paving areas; require sewer service instead of septic systems, especially for non-residential.
2. Protect and preserve Reed Bingham State Park.
3. Continue with the implementation of the Wetlands Mitigation Bank.
4. Develop tree and landscape standards for the preservation and/or replacement of trees and vegetation as part of land development, to protect the existing native tree canopy and to encourage the planting of new trees and the preservation of green space.
5. Encourage protection and expansion of open space and green space and consider developing some standards for open space and green space provision.
6. The Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trails are valuable resources for recreation, and already have boat ramps and parking areas. Minimal investment is required to market these resources and boost tourism.

## **Cultural Resources**

### **Needs**

1. A comprehensive survey of historic buildings and sites has not been completed.
2. Cook County has many historic buildings that are empty, in poor condition, and in bad need of repair.
3. Funding is not available to restore historic buildings where needed, and great resources are lost when those buildings fall into disrepair.

### **Opportunities**

1. Underutilized historic buildings and structures throughout Cook County should be adaptively used. One example is the old shooting range in Adel that could benefit from restoration.
2. Cook County's cultural resources could be promoted and used to market the area, increasing economic and tourism opportunities in its communities, especially the Performing Arts Center, which is state-of-the-art, and the Cook County Historical Museum, which is housed in the old Post Office (a DNR grant has been secured to fund preservation of this last property).
3. Cook County has many historical churches that need to be inventoried and promoted as part of the cultural heritage of Cook County. Examples are the Presbyterian and Primitive Baptist churches on Route 41 south of Adel.
4. Public/private partnerships are a great vehicle for promotion and coordination of historic preservation projects.

## **Economic Development**

### **Needs**

1. Comprehensive marketing initiatives are needed to stimulate the local economy.
2. The number of local businesses and industries needs to be increased in order to attract jobs and workforce.
3. In order to provide a sustainable population base and workforce, initiative needs to be taken to provide quality education and job opportunities for the younger population to minimize the desire to leave the area.
4. The local workforce needs to be increased in order to attract more businesses and industries.

### **Opportunities**

1. Cook County has six interchanges with I-75 that could be better utilized to bring businesses and development into the County by making the areas more attractive and incentivizing development.
2. For the two main corridors that serve as entrances to the City of Adel, overlay zoning districts or similar measures could help to spur economic development.
3. The County has a diverse industry base that could be used to attract more industry.
4. The County is strong in agriculture, consisting mainly of produce, watermelons, cotton, corn, and peanuts. Additional niche products should be developed to ensure continued diversity.
5. Cook County is centrally located along I-75 halfway between Orlando and Atlanta. This is a good location to draw businesses seeking a maximum area of influence.
6. Two major rail lines, Georgia/Florida and Norfolk Southern, have routes through the County. Close proximity and easy access to both Brunswick and Savannah Ports are also good location factors for Cook County.
7. Cook County has 3,000 acres of developable land available for business.
8. The South Georgia Motorsports Park is located in Cook County, which is just one component of quality recreation opportunities within the County. These opportunities need to be coordinated countywide and marketed nationwide.
9. The airport runway length of 5500 feet may contribute significantly to the ability to attract businesses that rely on general aviation activities for employees and their business. A contract is underway to expand the runway by an additional 500 feet.
10. The rise in elderly population may enhance a community's economic base and provide a largely untapped knowledge and experience base for the labor market.
11. Wiregrass is helping to fill the education gap with knowledge programs and the Quick Start Program.
12. Broadband in general should be expanded in order to take advantage of the opportunities it provides.
13. The new hospital opening in October 2019 will provide an additional estimated 50 jobs, and will spur retail and commercial development along the adjacent corridor.

14. Opportunity Zones, New Markets Tax Credits, or similar programs could help to spur economic development.

## **Housing**

### **Needs**

1. Location and lack of maintenance of mobile home parks specifically, and rental properties in general, often result in substandard housing. Mobile homes are the only option for many low-income residents to own their home and possibly the land it is placed on.
2. Several areas within Cook County and its cities experience varying degrees of blight conditions that need to be addressed with a comprehensive enforcement and demolition program.
3. Sufficient housing for diverse population groups is lacking. Cook County and its cities need to adopt a comprehensive strategy to provide for additional diverse housing such as low-income housing and rentals, as well as quality low- to moderate-income housing.
4. Cook County lacks a strategy to address the issues and needs of a homeless population. As of fall 2019, 20 students in the Cook County school system are listed as homeless.
5. Projects for reinvestment and redevelopment of declining residential and commercial areas are lacking.
6. There is a lack of public housing in Adel.
7. Paving and drainage is still needed in some mobile home parks and in other areas.
8. There is a need for affordable multi-family housing that is senior-focused and targets low-income individuals (at or below 60% of the Area Median Income).

### **Opportunities**

1. Develop mechanisms to maintain the value of the existing and future housing stock, while also providing diverse, affordable, and quality housing.
2. Strategies need to be adopted to encourage maintenance of existing mobile home parks.
3. Older neighborhoods are perceived as providing quality character to the area and should be maintained and preserved in better shape.
4. Find and provide mechanisms to maintain the quality and number of mid- to high-level income housing.
5. Utilize the House of Grace, an all-male rehabilitation center and homeless shelter in Cook County, to address the needs of the homeless population.
6. A land bank could help to spur revitalization.
7. An Urban Redevelopment Plan could help to eliminate blight.
8. There is outside interest in building about 50 new units for senior housing. Also, a developer is interested in building new affordable housing units in the \$100,000 to \$150,000 range.
9. Paving and drainage has been completed in some mobile home parks, and more is underway.

Grants, such as CDBGs, can help to pay for this.

10. Construction of new public housing could provide much-needed quality housing options for some people.

## **Land Use**

### **Needs**

1. Encroaching development poses a threat to existing farmland, not only by turning existing farmland into residential subdivisions, but also by endangering neighboring farmland through co-location of incompatible uses.
2. Many buildings in Cook County and its cities are vacant. Infill development is needed for both residential and commercial/industrial buildings.
3. Population numbers are stagnant. The county needs to find ways to increase population growth.

### **Opportunities**

1. Protect existing farmland from development by developing incentives to keep farmland agricultural, and make it productive for farmers to do so. Require sufficient buffers or transitional areas to protect existing farm operations from negative perceptions and complaints about incompatible farming uses next to newer residential subdivisions or the location of concentrated animal feeding operations next to sustainable family farms or comparable farming operations.
2. No zoning or development should be approved that is not consistent with the comprehensive plan. A compatibility matrix should be established to provide an easy overview of what “Future Land Use Designations” and zoning categories are allowed.
3. Cook County is located in proximity to large attractions and larger city areas, but still provides a quality of life geared towards a more rural lifestyle. This characteristic needs to be preserved and enhanced.

## **Community Facilities and Services**

### **Needs**

1. Countywide fire protection capabilities and resources are limited and need to be expanded to provide adequate fire protection for the county's residents and structures.
2. Recreation programs in Cook County are too fractured and need to be expanded with operation and coordination on a countywide level.
3. Expansion and modernization of the City of Adel's sewer system is necessary before additional development can be accommodated.
4. The City of Sparks needs a fire truck and more recreation facilities, especially for children and seniors.
5. Now that the old hospital has closed, identification of a reuse for the property is necessary.

### **Opportunities**

1. Establish a joint Capital Improvement Program that all the communities will update on a regular schedule, in order to aid in planning future investments.
2. Maintain adequate landfill capacity for Cook County and its residents.
3. Maintain all schools in their current condition. All schools in Cook County are fairly new.
4. Continue to utilize the new Boys & Girls Club and its Teen Center.
5. The hospital system is undergoing replacement and improvement.
6. A county-wide fire system could potentially increase efficiency. However, there is already a mutual aid agreement in place, and the City of Cecil is already served by the County Fire Department. The Town of Sparks intends to continue to maintain their own fire department.
7. The County now has an expanded landfill, with a separate construction and demolition landfill.
8. A new recreation complex is being built and will be an asset to the community.
9. Sewer, water, and gas capacity have been expanded.
10. The Board of Education is constructing a new stadium, tennis courts, track, and football field.
11. The lake behind the high school could be a good site for a community gathering place.

## **Transportation**

### **Needs**

1. The City of Adel needs a continuous east-west truck route through the city. The truck route needs to be tied in to the Alabama Road project. Required right-of-way needs to be identified early and preserved for future construction.
2. The transportation system (street network) in Cook County is aging and is in need of major improvements.
3. Adequate and safe transportation facilities are needed, such as sidewalks and bike lanes, to access destinations countywide without using a car.
4. Roads in the community need resurfacing, including State Highway 37.

### **Opportunities**

1. Develop and coordinate a plan with the railroad to relocate the switching yard into the industrial area to the south of Adel.
2. Develop a right-of-way corridor plan for future road construction planning.
3. Develop a bicycle and pedestrian master plan to address safety and improvements for sidewalks, trails, and bicycle paths.
4. Many roads have been resurfaced in the last 10 years.
5. Road improvements behind Walmart will be finished in 2020, and improvements from Exit 37 to Highway 76 will be finished in 2021.
6. The passing of T-SPLOST will lead to many improvements, including resurfacing the main arterial roads.

## **Broadband/Telecommunication**

### **Needs**

1. Many residents, students, and businesses lack adequate internet access due to lack of capacity, lack of availability, and lack of choices of service providers.
2. More of the County lacks cell tower coverage than has it.
3. Large areas of the County have no radio signal coverage for fire/police/EMS communications.

### **Opportunities**

1. Two 5G Verizon towers are being built.
2. Some fiber optic cables are being installed in Adel.
3. A 5-county project is underway, using \$9.5 million in CDBG disaster mitigation funds, to improve radio signal coverage for fire/police/EMS communications.
4. A new antenna is being constructed in northern Cook County to provide coverage to areas that are not currently covered.

### **3. Analysis of Data and Information**

#### Cook County (including the cities)

According to the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, the 2017 estimated population of Cook County (including the cities) is 17,190, an increase of 1.3% since the 2010 census. The population is 51.9% female and 48.1% male. 26.1% of the population is under age 18, and 15.1% is over age 65. The median age is 37.0. There are 7,354 households and 2.34 persons per household.

69.3% of the population is White, 27.3% Black or African American, 0.6% Asian, 0.3% American Indian and Alaska Native, 1.3% some other race, and 1.3% two or more races. Hispanic or Latino (of any race) are 5.8% of the population.

55.1% of the population aged 16 years and older is in the labor force. The unemployment rate is 3.2%. The median annual household income is \$35,539 and the per capita income is \$17,587. 24.2% of the population, 30.1% of those under 18, and 18.5% of those over 65 live in households with income below the federal poverty level.

#### Adel

According to the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, the 2017 estimated population of Adel is 5,291, a decrease of 1.2% since the 2010 census. The population is 52.2% female and 47.8% male. 22.9% of the population is under age 18, and 16.3% is over age 65. The median age is 37.7. There are 2,353 households and 2.25 persons per household.

49.2% of the population is Black or African American, 47.4% White, 0.5% American Indian and Alaska Native, 0.8% some other race, and 2.0% two or more races. Hispanic or Latino (of any race) are 5.1% of the population.

49.9% of the population aged 16 years and older is in the labor force. The unemployment rate is 2.8%. The median annual household income is \$29,601 and the per capita income is \$17,251. 30.8% of the population, 41.1% of those under 18, and 16.7% of those over 65 live in households with income below the federal poverty level.

#### Cecil

According to the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, the 2017 estimated population of Cecil is 387, an increase of 95.5% since the 2010 census. The population is 50.6% female and 49.4% male. 22.0% of the population is under age 18, and 17.8% is over age 65. The median age is 41.5. There are 198 households and 1.95 persons per household.

63.6% of the population is Black or African American, 35.1% White, 0.3% American Indian and Alaska Native, and 1.0% two or more races. Hispanic or Latino (of any race) are 0.0% of the population.

37.7% of the population aged 16 years and older is in the labor force. The unemployment rate is 1.5%. The median annual household income is \$38,125 and the per capita income is \$15,349. 44.0% of the population, 43.8% of those under 18, and 40.6% of those over 65 live in households with income below the federal poverty level.

#### Lenox

According to the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, the 2017 estimated population of Lenox is 727, a decrease of 33.2% since the 2010 census. The population is 58.5% female and 41.5% male. 22.8% of the population is under age 18, and 19.3% is over age 65. The median age is 39.2. There are 401 households and 1.81 persons per household.

69.2% of the population is White, 29.4% Black or African American, and 1.4% two or more races. Hispanic or Latino (of any race) are 6.3% of the population.

49.0% of the population aged 16 years and older is in the labor force. The unemployment rate is 3.3%. The median annual household income is \$24,412 and the per capita income is \$16,003. 39.5% of the population, 56.8% of those under 18, and 22.1% of those over 65 live in households with income below the federal poverty level.

### Sparks

According to the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, the 2017 estimated population of Sparks is 2,200, a decrease of 21.7% since the 2010 census. The population is 56.8% female and 43.2% male. 33.1% of the population is under age 18, and 14.2% is over age 65. The median age is 33.8. There are 942 households and 2.34 persons per household.

56.5% of the population is Black or African American, 35.5% White, 1.5% Asian, 1.0% American Indian and Alaska Native, 4.6% some other race, and 1.0% two or more races. Hispanic or Latino (of any race) are 5.0% of the population.

56.5% of the population aged 16 years and older is in the labor force. The unemployment rate is 4.9%. The median annual household income is \$24,390 and the per capita income is \$12,167. 34.3% of the population, 41.3% of those under 18, and 35.8% of those over 65 live in households with income below the federal poverty level.

For visualization of these data, see the charts in the Appendix.

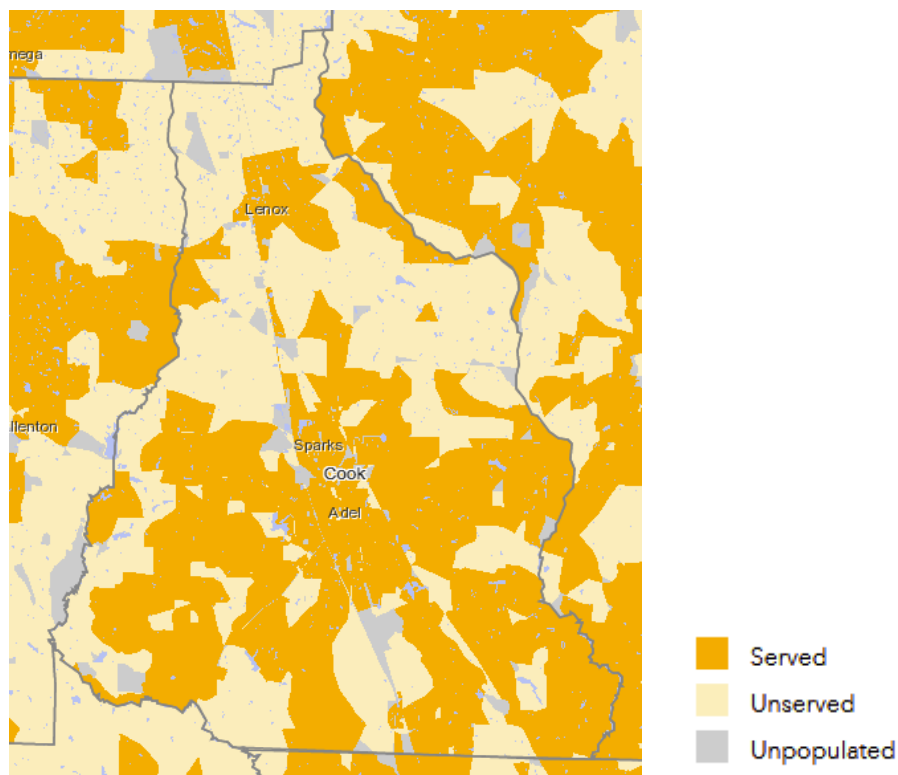
## 4. Broadband Services Element

### Existing Conditions

Due to Cook County's strategic location along the I-75 corridor, the community is in a position to play a vital role in the deployment of broadband across the state. During the past few decades, broadband services have become essential for education, employment, economic development, and overall quality of life. Therefore, broadband should be considered a necessary utility and should be regarded as having equal importance to other necessary utilities.

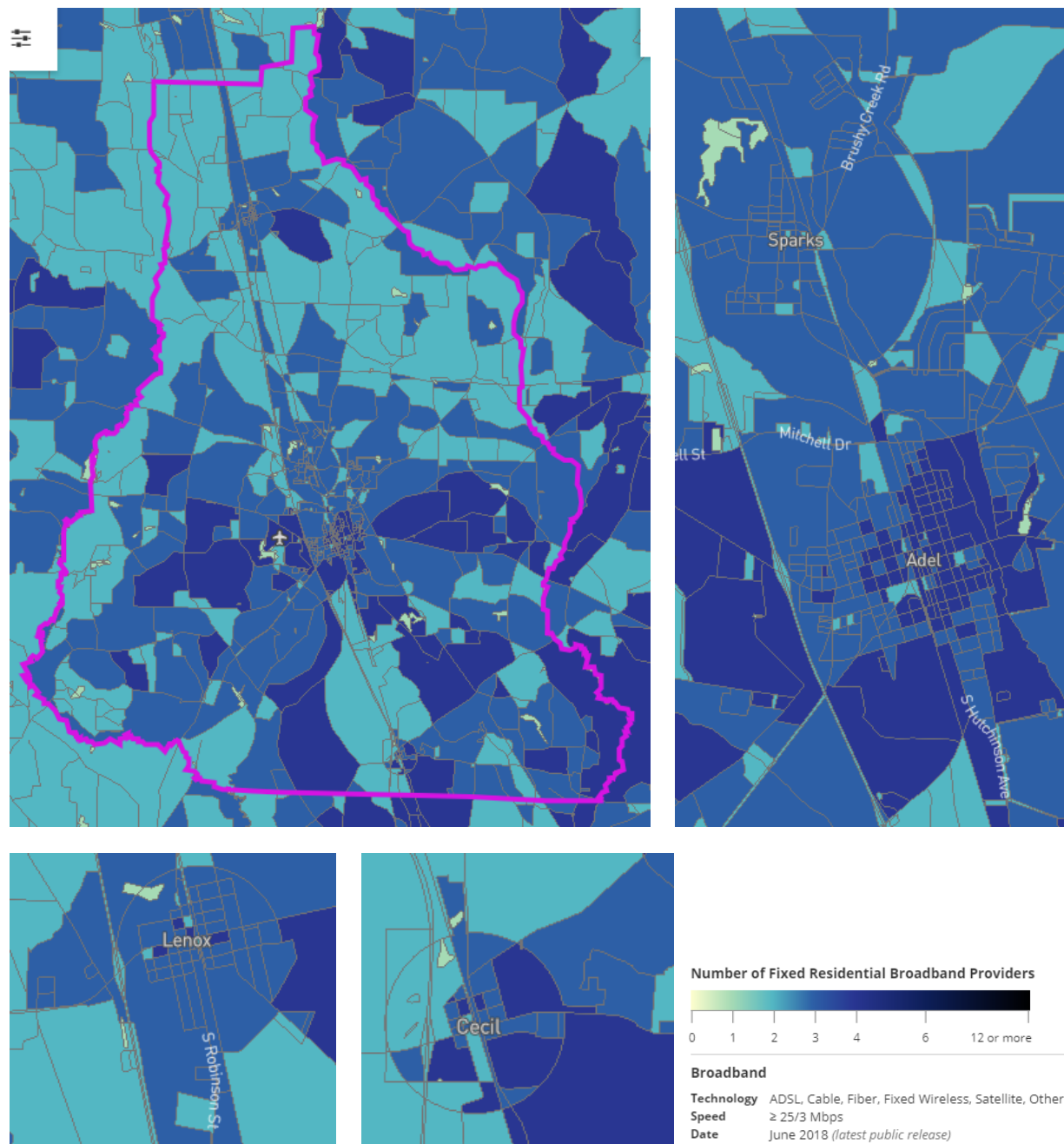
According to the Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative, there are 1,390 households in Cook County and the Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks that are not served by broadband. The unserved population is 3,327. There are 37 unserved businesses.

Figure 1 below shows the served and unserved areas of the community. County statistics are based on a fixed, terrestrial broadband definition of 25 Mbps (megabits per second) download speed and 3 Mbps upload speed, where the broadband service is available to at least one consumer (residential and business) in a census block. Populated census blocks that did not meet these criteria are indicated as "Unserved." Broadband data is based on the June 2017 Federal Communications Commission (FCC) form 477 data. Population and location data are from the US Census Bureau (2010 Decennial Census) and commercially available business listings (2014) of businesses with at least 3 employees and \$150,000 in annual sales.



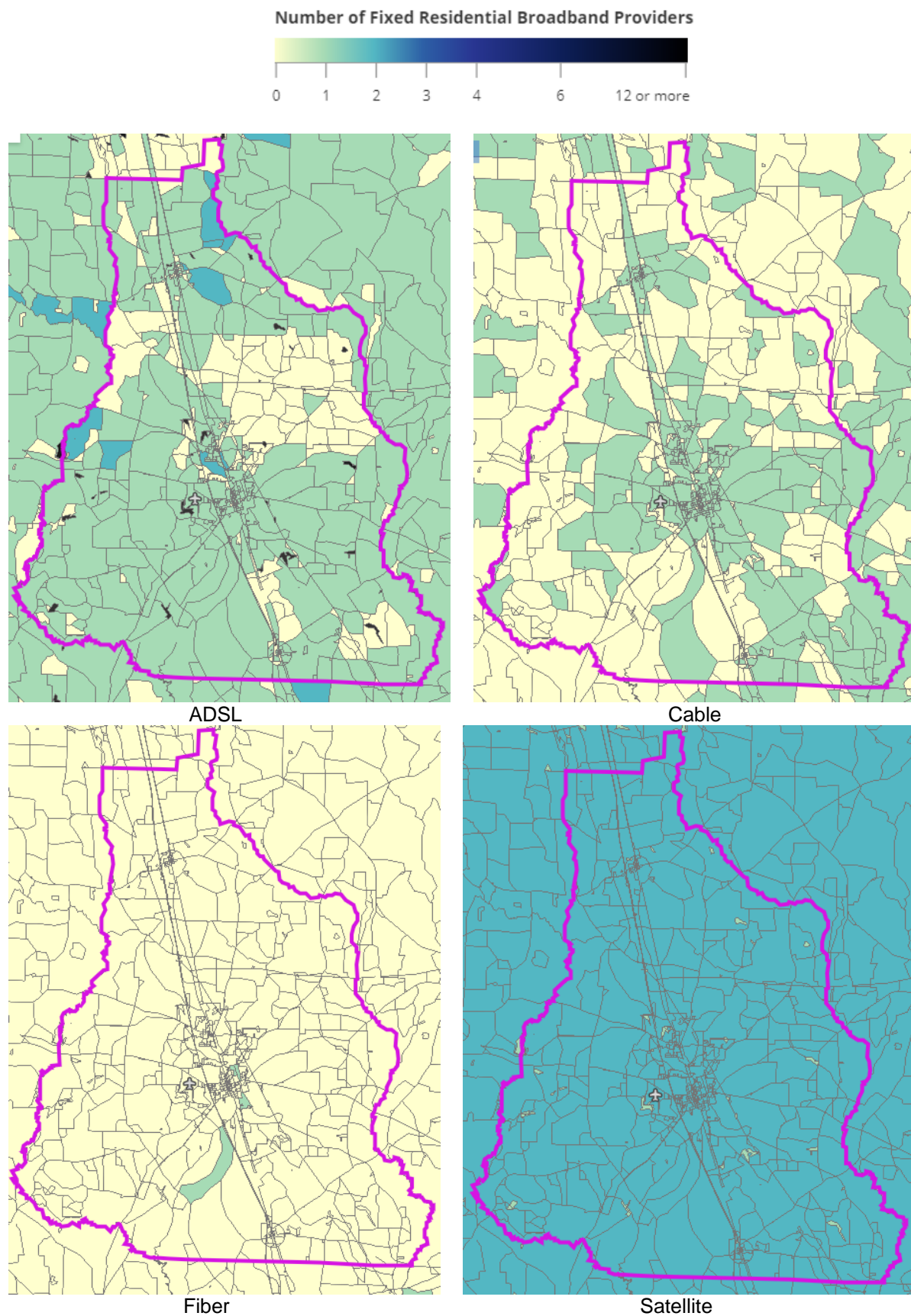
**Figure 1. Broadband Served and Unserved Areas of Cook County (Data source: Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative, <https://broadband.georgia.gov/maps/unserved-georgia-county>)**

Having multiple providers to choose from is beneficial to community residents and businesses because it helps to keep prices competitive and ensures that a range of different options will be available for subscribers. Figure 2 below shows the number of fixed residential broadband providers for all service technologies for which data are available (ADSL, cable, fiber, fixed wireless, and satellite).



**Figure 2. Number of fixed residential broadband providers in Cook County, with details of the cities. (Source: <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/>)**

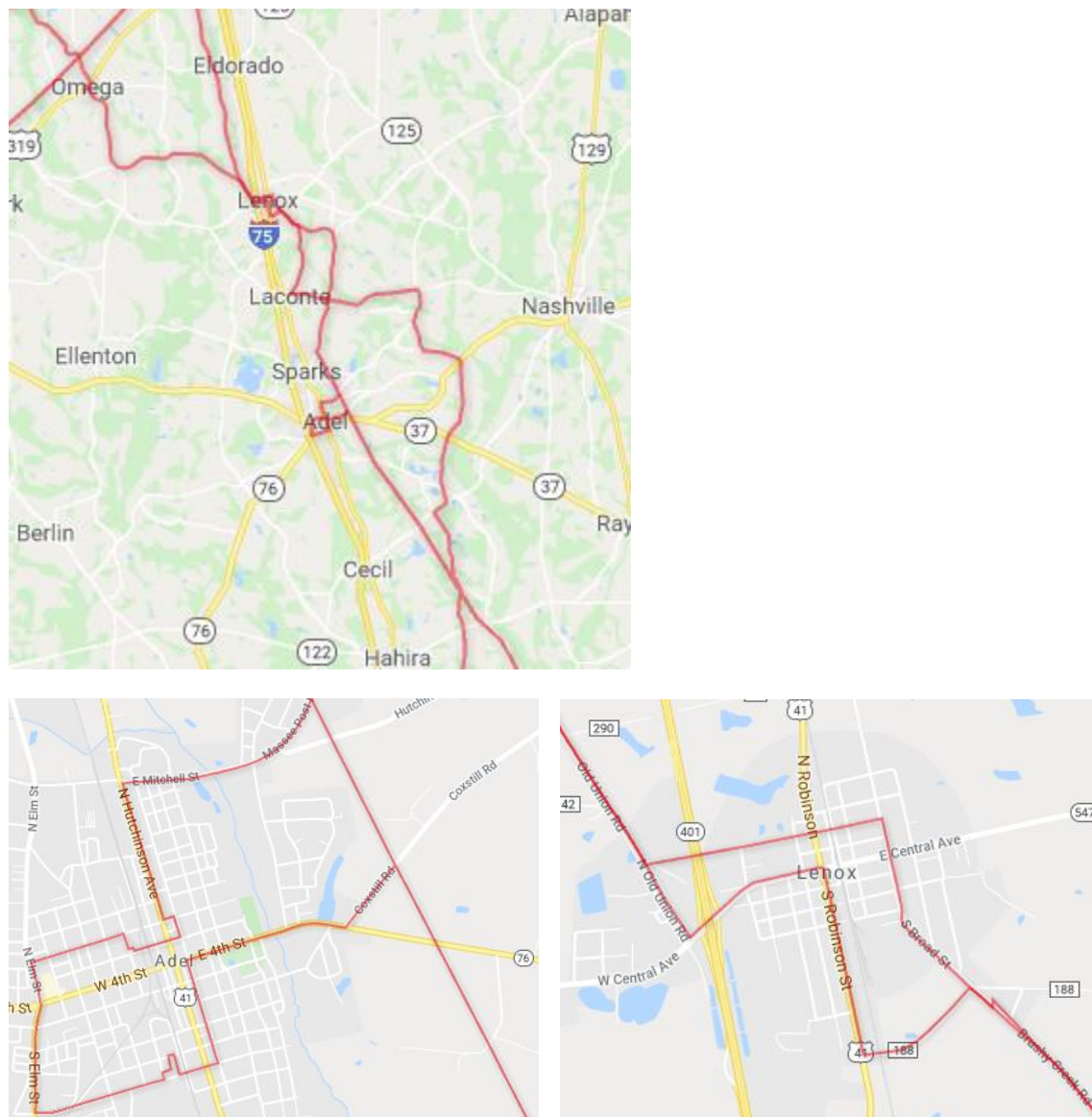
The map shows that there are between 2 and 4 broadband providers covering Cook County. Figure 3 shows the number of providers for individual service types (ADSL, cable, fiber, and satellite). According to the available data, there is no fixed wireless service in Cook County.



**Figure 3. Number of broadband providers of ADSL, cable, fiber, and satellite residential broadband service (Source: <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/>)**

Satellite broadband service is available throughout the entire county, but is typically more expensive than cable and ADSL service. Many of the more remote areas of the county have no option other than satellite for broadband service. While ADSL covers much of the county, the trend is for ADSL service to have slower download and upload speeds in the more remote areas.

Although residential fiber broadband service is available only in very limited areas of the county, the Georgia Public Web has fiber infrastructure traversing Cook County and passing through the Cities of Adel, Lenox, and Sparks (see Figure 4).



**Figure 4. Georgia Public Web fiber infrastructure, with details of the Adel and Lenox areas.**  
(Source: <https://gapublicweb.net/what-we-do/network/>)

4G mobile broadband coverage is also available throughout much of the county.

## **Broadband Action Plan**

A key goal of this Comprehensive Plan is to ensure that needed community facilities, including broadband, are provided effectively, consistent with present demand and future growth (see Section 1 of this plan, Goal 6). Moreover, this plan lists the following Needs and Opportunities related to broadband in Section 2:

### **Needs**

- Many residents, students, and businesses lack adequate internet access due to lack of capacity, lack of availability, and lack of choices of service providers.
- More of the County lacks cell tower coverage than has it.
- Large areas of the County have no radio signal coverage for fire/police/EMS communications.

### **Opportunities**

- Broadband in general should be expanded in order to take advantage of the opportunities it provides.
- Two 5G Verizon towers are being built.
- Some fiber optic cables are being installed in Adel.
- A 5-county project is underway, using \$9.5 million in CDBG disaster mitigation funds, to improve radio signal coverage for fire/police/EMS communications.
- A new antenna is being constructed in northern Cook County to provide coverage to areas that are not currently covered.

Furthermore, the following community policies in this plan relate to broadband:

<b>Need #1.</b>	<u>Many residents, students, and businesses lack adequate internet access due to lack of capacity, lack of availability, and lack of choices of service providers.</u>
Policy 1.1.	Continue to promote location and expansion of internet and broadband infrastructure in the community, as well as the education of the workforce in internet applications and skills.
Policy 1.2.	Pursue development of public/private partnerships to provide comprehensive broadband coverage that is consistent, reliable, and equitable
Policy 1.3.	Include consideration of broadband infrastructure in roadway projects where such infrastructure may be included in the right-of-way.
Policy 1.4.	Community-wide technology infrastructure should be considered a basic community facility and as such should be adequately planned for and implemented.
Policy 1.5.	Pursue "Broadband Ready Community" status.
<b>Need #2.</b>	<u>More of the County lacks cell tower coverage than has it.</u>
Policy 2.1.	Continue to promote location and expansion of mobile telecommunications infrastructure in the community.
Policy 2.2.	Review local regulations to ensure there are not excessive barriers to cell tower development. Consider adopting a Telecommunications Towers Ordinance, using the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's model ordinance as a template.
<b>Need #3.</b>	<u>Large areas of the County have no radio signal coverage for fire/police/EMS communications.</u>
Policy 2.1.	Pursue grants for upgrading radio communication systems.
Policy 2.2.	Encourage Cook County Commissioners and the Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks to participate in the South Central Area Regional Radio System, which is a 700-800 megahertz radio system for all first responders in the county. Identify funding sources for this multi-county regional radio system through state and federal grants.

The above needs, opportunities, and policies have been used to inform an action plan for the promotion of the deployment of broadband services into unserved and underserved areas of Cook County and the Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks. The specific action items in the action plan are listed below, and are cross-listed in the Community Work Programs of the appropriate jurisdictions (see Section 7).

### Broadband Action Steps

Activity	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Expand utility (gas, water, sewer, broadband) and/or transportation infrastructure to provide service to new and existing industry	x	x	x	x	x	City of Adel, Private Sector	\$500,000	Grants, Private Sector, General Fund
Utilize the EPA CUPP (College-Underserved Community Partnership Program) to have a broadband feasibility study done	x	x	x			Town of Lenox	Student volunteer time	Federal
Conduct a marketing campaign to promote location and expansion of internet and broadband infrastructure in the community, as well as the education of the workforce in internet applications and skills	x	x	x	x	x	Cook County Economic Development Commission	Staff time	EDC
Pursue "Broadband Ready Community" status		x	x	x	x	Cook County and Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks	Staff time	General funds
Review local ordinances and amend as needed to eliminate barriers to broadband deployment and encourage greater broadband coverage	x	x	x	x	x	Cook County and Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks	Staff time	General funds

## 5. Analysis of Consistency with DCA Quality Community Objectives

The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has crafted a series of objectives dealing with a broad range of issues 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. This section contains an analysis of the consistency of the community's current policies, activities, and development patterns with the Quality Community Objectives, and recommends related best practices as provided by DCA.

Quality Community Objective	Notes on consistency with Comprehensive Plan for Cook County and the Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks
<b>1. Economic Prosperity</b> 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.	Community activities, including economic development efforts, are consistent with this objective. Recommended best practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Business incubator</li> <li>- Corridor study</li> <li>- Downtown program</li> </ul>
<b>2. Resource Management</b> 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.	Land use element and goals and policies related to natural resources are consistent with this objective. Recommended best practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conservation easements</li> <li>- Heat mitigation</li> <li>- Pervious paving</li> <li>- Riparian buffers</li> <li>- Water resource protection</li> </ul>
<b>3. Efficient Land Use</b> 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.	The land use element and infrastructure-related goals and policies of this plan are consistent with this objective. Recommended best practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adaptive reuse</li> <li>- Brownfield redevelopment</li> <li>- Infill development program</li> <li>- Preserve agriculture land use</li> <li>- Urban redevelopment plan</li> </ul>
<b>4. Local Preparedness</b> 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.	Projects and policies in this plan, and local ordinances, are consistent with this objective. The community also has a multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan that is consistent with this objective, and capable leadership and staff. Recommended best practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All-hazards strategy</li> <li>- Comprehensive planning</li> <li>- Professional development-planning staff</li> <li>- Subdivision development standards</li> </ul>

Quality Community Objective	Notes on consistency with Comprehensive Plan for Cook County and the Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks
<p><b>5. Sense of Place</b> 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.</p>	<p>Projects and policies in this plan, and local ordinances, are consistent with this objective. Recommended best practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aesthetic overlay</li> <li>- Code enforcement</li> <li>- Design guidelines</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Regional Cooperation</b> 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 issues such as protection of shared natural resources, development of the transportation network, or creation of a tourism plan.</p>	<p>There is a high level of cooperation and collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions. Recommended best practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regional roundtable</li> <li>- Shared service agreements</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Housing Options</b> 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 issues in the community; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure availability of adequate workforce housing in the community.</p>	<p>Projects and policies in this plan, and local ordinances, are consistent with this objective. Recommended best practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Georgia Initiative for Community Housing</li> <li>- Housing for the disadvantaged</li> <li>- Housing for the elderly</li> <li>- Inclusionary zoning</li> <li>- Land bank</li> <li>- Mixed-income housing</li> </ul>
<p><b>8. Transportation Options</b> 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.</p>	<p>Transportation goals, policies, and projects are consistent with this objective. Recommended best practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete streets</li> <li>- Sidewalk/trail network</li> <li>- Improving street connectivity</li> <li>- Maximize use of on-street parking</li> <li>- Safe Routes to School</li> </ul>

Quality Community Objective	Notes on consistency with Comprehensive Plan for Cook County and the Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks
<p><b>9. Educational Opportunities</b>            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.</p>	<p>Goals, policies, and projects in this plan are consistent with this objective.            Recommended best practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public internet access</li> <li>- Transportation to educational facilities</li> <li>- Work ready program</li> </ul>
<p><b>10. Community Health</b>            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.</p>	<p>Goals, policies, and projects in this plan are consistent with this objective.            Recommended best practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transportation to services</li> </ul>

## **6. Community Policies**

The following policies, numbered to align with the Community Goals, were developed in conjunction with all stakeholders and are intended to provide a qualitative guidance to address the Needs and Opportunities identified in this Plan, and to provide a framework for the development of the Community Work Program. The Community Work Program then addresses the Needs and Opportunities through specific projects, for each of which the participants, anticipated cost, and time frame are identified.

### **Natural Resources**

Need #1.      Water and groundwater conservation practices are not widespread in Cook County.

- Policy 1.1.      Promote the protection of groundwater recharge areas and water quality.
- Policy 1.2.      Continue to assist the State and public/private groups in the protection of Reed Bingham State Park and other conservation areas, through in-kind services including but not limited to the river cleanup crew, publishing event notices, and Friends of Reed Bingham participation.
- Policy 1.3.      Continue to implement the Wetlands Mitigation Bank program.
- Policy 1.4.      Best Management Practices (BMPs) should be promoted to reduce stormwater runoff in all locations to maintain or improve water quality. Examples of structural BMPs may include but are not limited to: a) Bioretention; b) Sand Filter; c) Stormwater Wetlands; d) Wet Detention Basin; e) Filter Strip; f) Grassed Swale; g) Infiltration Devices; h) Restored Riparian Buffer; i) Dry Extended Detention Basin; j) Permeable Pavement Systems; k) Rooftop Runoff Management.
- Policy 1.5.      Protect Blueway (water trails) and Greenway Corridors along sensitive environmental areas to the maximum extent practicable.
- Policy 1.6.      Limit the type and size of developments permitted within the Agricultural and Conservation Character Areas.

Need #2.      Local water resources need to be protected from potential statewide re-distribution efforts.

- Policy 2.1.      Identify all opportunities to speak with state representatives regarding retention of local water resources.
- Policy 2.2.      Consider amending the local government codes to require the use of native and drought-tolerant vegetation that is adapted to existing climatic conditions in landscaping.
- Policy 2.3.      Continue to implement a public education program regarding various methods of water conservation at all levels including, but not limited to, municipal, agricultural, households, and businesses.
- Policy 2.4.      Coordinate with surrounding cities, counties, and the Water Council within the region to join political forces and protect local control of the water resources of South Georgia.

Need #3.      There are no existing tree planting campaigns or tree planting requirements in Cook County or the Cities of Cecil and Sparks.

Policy 3.1.      Consider the development and adoption of Tree Protection Ordinances for local governments that do not have such ordinances; consider establishing requirements for the preservation and replacement of trees and vegetation as part of land development to protect the existing native tree canopy; and encourage the planting of new trees and the preservation of green space.

Policy 3.2.      Coordinate with local nurseries to develop an annual Tree Planting Day within Cook County and its Cities.

## **Cultural Resources**

Need #1.      A comprehensive survey of historic buildings and sites has not been completed.

Policy 1.1.      Update and maintain the list of historic resources within Cook County identified in the Regionally Important Resources Plan.

Policy 1.2.      Investigate the feasibility of creating a comprehensive local historic preservation plan for Cook County.

Need #2.      Cook County has many historic buildings that are empty, in poor condition, and in bad need of repair.

Policy 2.1.      Continue to identify opportunities to adaptively reuse historic buildings and structures throughout Cook County.

Policy 2.2.      Encourage the rehabilitation of underutilized properties consistent with preserving their historic character and value through incentives, public assistance, education, and partnerships.

Policy 2.3.      Promote the use of conversion and façade easements through coordination with the Adel Downtown Development Authority.

Policy 2.4.      Take advantage of the Rural Zone designation.

Need #3.      Funding is not available to restore historic buildings where needed, and great resources are lost when those buildings fall into disrepair.

Policy 3.1.      Continue to research funding opportunities through independent means, as well as coordination with the Regional Commission in order to identify grants and loans available for the preservation and restoration of historical and cultural resources in the County.

Policy 3.2.      Protect historic and cultural areas and resources from demolition and encourage rehabilitation with appropriate incentives.

Policy 3.3.      Use websites, pamphlets, and advertising efforts to promote the County and Cities' cultural resources, especially the Performing Arts Center, the Cook County Historical Museum that is housed in the old Post Office, the SOWEGA Building, the historic courthouse, and all other properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Policy 3.4.      Take advantage of the Georgia Grown Trails (37 and 41) to market the County and Cities' cultural resources.

## **Economic Development**

Need #1.      Comprehensive marketing initiatives are needed to stimulate the local economy.

- Policy 1.1.      Continue to market the County's premier location along Interstate 75 between major metropolitan areas through advertisements, online marketing, and the development of marketing materials.
- Policy 1.2.      Continue to seek new ways to capitalize on the presence of two major rail lines and the airport within the County.
- Policy 1.3.      Continue to market the many recreational and tourism opportunities within the County, including the presence of the South Georgia Motor Sports Park, through promotion on the County's website, advertisement within regional recreational periodicals, and the development and distribution of Cook County Recreation pamphlets.
- Policy 1.4.      Continue to market the Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trails.
- Policy 1.5.      Foster public/private partnerships to rehabilitate quality commercial and mixed use developments and buildings.
- Policy 1.6.      Promote historic and cultural areas and resources as passive-use tourism and recreation destinations through websites, pamphlets, and advertising efforts.
- Policy 1.7.      Pursue corridor redevelopment plans and overlay zoning districts for Adel gateway corridors.
- Policy 1.8.      Continue to develop the new website for the City of Adel.

Need #2.      The number of local businesses and industries needs to be increased in order to attract jobs and workforce.

- Policy 2.1.      Coordinate with local businesses and agencies to identify ways to attract and retain more young, workforce age population to the area.
- Policy 2.2.      Encourage public/private partnerships between the County, the cities, local businesses, and the School Board for the development of work programs and career education programs such as a career academy for young adults.
- Policy 2.3.      Encourage local students to take advantage of the dual enrollment program.

Need #3.      In order to provide a sustainable population base and workforce, initiative needs to be taken to provide quality education and job opportunities for the younger population to minimize the desire to leave the area.

- Policy 3.1.      Encourage coordination between local schools and businesses so as to identify ways such as field trips and summer internships to develop interest and job opportunities for the local youth.
- Policy 3.2.      Coordinate with the school board to identify ways to improve local education services and facilities, where the county and cities can assist.

Need #4.      The local workforce needs to be increased in order to attract more businesses and industries.

Policy 4.1.      Coordinate with the Cook County Economic Development Commission and Chamber of Commerce to develop a list of target industries for Cook County that will provide year-round employment opportunities.

Policy 4.2.      Maintain and expand the inventory of the amount and location of developable lands within the County in all marketing materials, and provide the list on the website and within a marketing pamphlet to be provided for public distribution.

Policy 4.3.      Take advantage of federal Opportunity Zones.

## **Housing**

Need #1.      Location and lack of maintenance of mobile home parks specifically, and rental properties in general, often result in substandard housing. Mobile homes are the only option for many low-income residents to own their home and possibly the land it is placed on.

Policy 1.1.      Review the regulations that permit substandard structures in the cities and the county in order to assure that they will be maintained or demolished, and not pose a threat to the health, welfare, and safety of its residents and the general public.

Need #2.      Several areas within Cook County and its cities experience varying degrees of blight conditions that need to be addressed with a comprehensive enforcement and demolition program.

Policy 2.1.      Jointly consider adoption and implementation of the International Property Maintenance Code to give local municipalities code enforcement abilities and tools to encourage proper maintenance and clean-up of properties.

Policy 2.2.      Review and coordinate with the local municipalities to ensure that code enforcement resources are adequate, so that the implementation of any adopted and applicable property maintenance codes can be effectively accomplished.

Policy 2.3.      Seek partnerships with cooperative neighborhood and civic groups to further the elimination of dilapidated housing and encourage the maintenance of adequate housing stock.

Policy 2.4.      Pursue the completion and implementation of the City of Adel Urban Redevelopment Plan.

Policy 2.5.      Take advantage of the City of Adel's new City Marshall position and existing Property Maintenance Code.

Need #3.      Sufficient housing for diverse population groups is lacking. Cook County and its cities need to adopt a comprehensive strategy to provide for additional diverse housing such as low-income housing and rentals, as well as quality low- to moderate-income housing.

Policy 3.1.      Encourage the construction of quality and affordable housing for all age and economic groups within the County.

- Policy 3.2.      Participate in the Georgia Initiatives for Community Housing as applicable.
- Policy 3.3.      Encourage the location of support businesses such as quality grocery stores and other businesses supporting a neighborhood to attract quality housing.
- Policy 3.4.      Pursue CHIP, CDBG, and other grant programs for housing.

Need #4.      Cook County lacks a strategy to address the issues and needs of a homeless population. As of fall 2019, 20 students in the Cook County school system are listed as homeless.

- Policy 4.1.      Continue to support the House of Grace, rehabilitation center and homeless shelter in Cook County.
- Policy 4.2.      Coordinate with faith-based and non-profit organizations to develop and maintain new and existing programs which target the needs of the homeless community.

Need #5.      Projects for reinvestment and redevelopment of declining residential and commercial areas are lacking.

- Policy 5.1.      Inventory areas that are on the decline and in need of redevelopment and reinvestment.
- Policy 5.2.      Actively pursue grants and funding sources for the redevelopment of declining neighborhoods.
- Policy 5.3.      Consider the applicability of Tax Allocation Districts for larger areas that are in decline.
- Policy 5.4.      Annually review and apply for a Community Development Block Grant for applicable redevelopment projects and programs throughout the County.

Need #6.      There is a lack of public housing in Adel.

- Policy 6.1.      Rehabilitate existing public housing and add more units.
- Policy 6.2.      Encourage partnerships for the Low Income Tax Credit (LITC) program.
- Policy 6.3.      Take advantage of the multi-county Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) for funding.

Need #7.      Paving and drainage is still needed in some mobile home parks and in other areas.

- Policy 7.1.      Pursue funding opportunities for paving and drainage in areas of need.
- Policy 7.2.      Consider participation in the Georgia Transportation Infrastructure Bank (GTIB) program.

Need #8.      There is a need for affordable multi-family housing that is senior-focused and targets low-income individuals (at or below 60% of the Area Median Income).

- Policy 8.1.      Encourage the development of multi-family housing for low-income individuals with a focus on the needs of seniors.

## **Land Use**

Need #1.      Encroaching development poses a threat to existing farmland, not only by turning existing farmland into residential subdivisions, but also by endangering neighboring farmland through co-location of incompatible uses.

Policy 1.1.      Consider amending the County Code to provide land use regulations that new residential developments within the Agricultural Land Use Areas retain a minimum of 35% of the gross project area in common open space.

Policy 1.2.      Provide adequate buffering and setbacks between agricultural and non-agricultural uses to protect any agricultural uses from adverse impacts associated with the encroachment of non-agricultural development and protect agricultural uses from nuisance complaints created by agricultural operations. Ensure that Agricultural Best Management Practices are used.

Policy 1.3.      Provide land use regulations such that no non-agricultural development is permitted in the AU Land Use Areas that does not address all of its infrastructure impacts, both on-site and off-site. All such development should pay the entire cost of its fiscal impacts on public facilities and services.

Policy 1.4.      Conduct outreach campaigns to raise public awareness of the value and necessity of prescribed burns.

Need #2.      Many buildings in Cook County and its cities are vacant. Infill development is needed for both residential and commercial/industrial buildings.

Policy 2.1.      Develop incentives such as tax breaks, public assistance programs and reduced permitting fees for new businesses to locate within existing buildings, and for new and infill development to occur within the existing developed areas of the County and the cities.

Policy 2.2.      Provide land use regulations that ensure that any proposed zoning will be compatible with the underlying Land Use designations as shown in the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy 2.3.      Review and revise subdivision regulations, zoning codes, and design guidelines to encourage creative design, the creation of open space, mixing of uses, infill development, and higher density where appropriate, as well as the development of a sense of place.

Need #3.      Population numbers are stagnant. The county needs to find ways to increase population growth.

Policy 3.1.      Encourage participation in the 2020 Census.

## **Community Facilities and Services**

Need #1.      Countywide fire protection capabilities and resources are limited and need to be expanded to provide adequate fire protection for the county's residents and structures.

- Policy 1.1.      Coordinate between the county and the cities to identify all fire protection services needs and areas of potential collaboration, including grant applications.
- Policy 1.2.      Maintain and improve the existing standard of Fire Services in order to improve the County's ISO rating.
- Policy 1.3.      Pursue grant funding to expand fire protection resources, including the items listed in the 2019-2024 Hazard Mitigation Plan. This includes but is not limited to training, equipment, education, code enforcement, fire breaks, and additional fire tankers.

Need #2.      Recreation programs in Cook County are too fractured and need to be expanded with operation and coordination on a countywide level.

- Policy 2.1.      Consider developing a Parks & Recreation Master Plan identifying Parks & Recreation Areas in Cook County and cataloguing their needs for capital improvements such as pools, shelters, gazebos, picnic areas, and other active recreational amenities to be more fully utilized for social gatherings.
- Policy 2.2.      Continue to pursue grants from local, state, federal, and private organizations to plan and assemble the parks, greenway, and blueway network.

Need #3.      Expansion and modernization of the City of Adel's sewer system is necessary before additional development can be accommodated.

- Policy 3.1.      Develop a Wastewater Master Plan for the City of Adel, identifying growth areas within the City and estimates of the amount of capacity needed to accommodate future growth.
- Policy 3.2.      Research the applicability of the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority Public Sewer System Grants and the low-interest loans of the Georgia Fund programs for the expansion of Adel's sewer system.

Need #4.      The City of Sparks needs a fire truck and more recreation facilities, especially for children and seniors.

- Policy 4.1.      Pursue grant funding opportunities for fire protection, including a new fire truck, and for parks and recreation facilities.

Need #5.      Now that the old hospital has closed, identification of a reuse for the property is necessary.

- Policy 5.1.      Pursue adaptive reuse or redevelopment of the former hospital site.

## **Transportation**

Need #1.      The City of Adel needs a continuous east-west truck route through the city. The truck route needs to be tied in to the Alabama Road project. Required right-of-way needs to be identified early and preserved for future construction.

Policy 1.1.      Coordinate and combine to pursue the local east-west truck route with other future road projects.

Need #2.      The transportation system (street network) in Cook County is aging and is in need of major improvements.

Policy 2.1.      Continue to participate in the Georgia Department of Transportation's Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant Program (LMIG), formerly known as LARP.

Policy 2.2.      Develop a five-year road maintenance program, to be updated at regular intervals.

Policy 2.3.      Pursue sufficient right-of-way to accommodate sidewalks and bike and golf cart paths through such measures as the development of a countywide right-of-way acquisition and protection program.

Policy 2.4.      Encourage the development of the I-75 interchanges and the adjacent downtown areas into unique and identifiable areas that are connected to the overall County character through such measures as design guidelines, signage regulations, and consistency with an established design theme.

Policy 2.5.      Continue to participate in the Southern Georgia Regional Transportation Infrastructure Act (TIA) program.

Policy 2.6.      Consider participation in the Georgia Transportation Infrastructure Bank (GTIB) program.

Need #3.      Adequate and safe transportation facilities are needed, such as sidewalks and bike lanes, to access destinations countywide without using a car.

Policy 3.1.      Inventory and maintain all significant streets within Cook County with particular attention given to hazards, bottlenecks, and barriers to children walking or riding their bikes to school.

Policy 3.2.      Provide additional sidewalks, where necessary, to connect or complete either existing or proposed sidewalks in a manner that provides a complete bicycle/golf cart and pedestrian circulation system.

Policy 3.3.      Provide pedestrian access and open space within the historic and cultural areas and resources of the County.

Need #4.      Roads in the community need resurfacing, including State Highway 37.

Policy 4.1.      Pursue funding for roadway resurfacing.

## **Broadband/Telecommunications**

Need #1.      Many residents, students, and businesses lack adequate internet access due to lack of capacity, lack of availability, and lack of choices of service providers.

- Policy 1.1.      Continue to promote location and expansion of internet and broadband infrastructure in the community, as well as the education of the workforce in internet applications and skills.
- Policy 1.2.      Pursue development of public/private partnerships to provide comprehensive broadband coverage that is consistent, reliable, and equitable
- Policy 1.3.      Include consideration of broadband infrastructure in roadway projects where such infrastructure may be included in the right-of-way.
- Policy 1.4.      Community-wide technology infrastructure should be considered a basic community facility and as such should be adequately planned for and implemented.
- Policy 1.5.      Pursue “Broadband Ready Community” status.

Need #2.      More of the County lacks cell tower coverage than has it.

- Policy 2.1.      Continue to promote location and expansion of mobile telecommunications infrastructure in the community.
- Policy 2.2.      Review local regulations to ensure there are not excessive barriers to cell tower development. Consider adopting a Telecommunications Towers Ordinance, using the Southern Georgia Regional Commission’s model ordinance as a template.

Need #3.      Large areas of the County have no radio signal coverage for fire/police/EMS communications.

- Policy 2.1.      Pursue grants for upgrading radio communication systems.
- Policy 2.2.      Encourage Cook County Commissioners and the Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks to participate in the South Central Area Regional Radio System, which is a 700-800 megahertz radio system for all first responders in the county. Identify funding sources for this multi-county regional radio system through state and federal grants.

## 7. Community Work Program

### Cook County Report Of Accomplishments: FY2016 – FY2020

Activity	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Goal	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Status
<b>Cultural Resources</b>										
Participate in the Greater Cook County Historic Preservation Task Force when active	x	x	x	x	x	2	Historical Society, Chamber	Staff Time	General Fund/Grants	Complete
<b>Economic Development</b>										
Coordinate with the Airport Authority to grow the airport in response to business needs	x	x	x	x	x	6, 7, 10	County Airport Authority EDA	Staff Time	General Fund, Grants, Splost	Complete
Foster all EDC job prospecting, marketing of vacant spec buildings and land; job training & education programs	x	x	x	x	x	3	Chamber, IDA, EDC, County	Staff Time	General Fund, Grants, Private Sector funds	Complete
Support the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) efforts to prepare financial packages for existing and new businesses/industries	x	x	x	x	x	3	Chamber, IDA, EDC, County	Staff Time	General Fund, Grants, Private Sector funds	Complete
Support the development of the Industrial Corridor between I-75 and US 41 through incentives and marketing	x	x	x	x	x	3	Chamber, IDA, EDC, County	Staff Time	General Fund, Grants, Private Sector funds	Complete
<b>Natural Resources/Land Use</b>										
Develop Floodplain elevations for the County	x	x	x	x	x	1	County	Staff Time/GIS	General Funds, Grants	Complete
<b>Community Facilities</b>										
Lower ISO rating for unincorporated areas of Cook County	x	x	x	x	x	6	County	\$200,000-\$500,000	General Fund, Grants	Underway (completion FY2020)
Maintain and upgrade stormwater systems to meet current regulatory requirements and capacity needs.	x	x	x	x	x	6	County	\$200,000	General Fund, Grants	Complete
Improve solid waste management services	x	x	x	x	x	6	County	Staff Time	General Fund, Grants	Underway (completion FY2025)
Continue to maintain all roads and streets, including paving and resurfacing of dirt and asphalt facilities.	x	x	x	x	x	8	County	\$150,000	General Fund, Grants	Complete

Activity	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Goal	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Status
Plan and develop a new recreational complex and expand recreational services throughout the county	x	x	x	x	x	8, 10	County City	\$100,000	General Fund, Grants Splost	Underway (completion FY2021)
Coordinate with the City to expand water & sewer services in the County where needed	x	x	x	x	x	6	County	Staff Time	General Fund	Complete
Intersection Nell Purvis Rd and McConnell Bridge Rd	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	75,000	SPLOST/ LMIG/ General Fund	Complete
Intersection Evergreen Church Rd and Rountree Bridge Rd	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	75,000	SPLOST/ LMIG/ General Fund	Complete
Reed Bingham Park	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	75,000	SPLOST/ LMIG/ General Fund	Underway (completion FY2025)
Intersection McConnell Bridge Rd and Old Union	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	75,000	SPLOST/ LMIG/ General Fund	Complete
Daughtrey Rutland Rd	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	315000	SPLOST/ LMIG/ General Fund	Underway (completion FY2025)
Brushy Creek Church Rd	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	\$100,000	State Grants/ SPLOST General Fund	Underway (completion FY2025)
Beulah Church Rd	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	\$100,000	State Grants/ SPLOST / General Fund	Complete
Burnett Rd	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	\$50,000	State Grants/ SPLOST / General Fund	Underway (completion FY2025)
South Ave / County portion						7	County	25000	State Grants/ SPLOST / General Fund	Underway (completion FY2025)
Lydia and Green Streets	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	100000	State Grants/ SPLOST / General Fund	Underway (completion FY2025)
Billy Browning and William Browning Rds	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	100000	State Grants/ SPLOST / General Fund	Underway (completion FY2025)
Road Repair Policy	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	10000	COUNTY	Complete
Loren Rd	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	100000	State Grants/ SPLOST / General Fund	Underway (completion FY2025)
Roberts Rd	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	100000	State Grants/ SPLOST / General Fund	Complete
<b>Bridges:</b>										
Massee Post Rd over Brushy Creek	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	100000	State Grants/ SPLOST / General Fund	Underway (completion FY2025)
Brushy Creed Rd over Brushy Creek	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	50000	State Grants/ SPLOST / General Fund	Underway (completion FY2025)
Antioch Church Rd over Little River	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	25000	State Grants/ SPLOST / General Fund	Complete
Barneyville Rd over Brushy Creek	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	25000	State Grants/ SPLOST / General Fund	Underway (completion FY2025)
Barneyville Rd over New River	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	25000	State Grants/ SPLOST / General Fund	Underway (completion FY2025)

Activity	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Goal	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Status
Futch Rd over Lindsey Branch	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	25000	State Grants/ SPLOST / General Fund	Underway (completion FY2025)
Old Coffee Rd over Withlacoochee River	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	200000	State Grants/ SPLOST / General Fund	Underway (completion FY2025)
Boyette Rd over Bear Creek	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	100000	State Grants/ SPLOST / General Fund	Underway (completion FY2025)
Hutchinson Parrish over Youngs Mill	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	50000	State Grants/ SPLOST / General Fund	Underway (completion FY2025)
Rutland Bridge over New River	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	100000	State Grants/ SPLOST / General Fund	Underway (completion FY2025)
Whiddon Rowan Rd over Brushy Creek	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	100000	State Grants/ SPLOST / General Fund	Underway (completion FY2025)
Fellowship Rd over Hutchinson Mill Creek	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	50000	State Grants/ SPLOST / General Fund	Underway (completion FY2021)
Register Rd over Youngs Mill Creek	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	50000	State Grants/ SPLOST / General Fund	Underway (completion FY2025)
Lott Bridge Rd over Little River	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	50000	State Grants/ SPLOST / General Fund	Underway (completion FY2025)
Massee Post Rd over New River	x	x	x	x	x	7	County	150000	State Grants/ SPLOST / General Fund	Underway (completion FY2025)

## City of Adel Report Of Accomplishments: FY2016 – FY2020

Activity	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Goal	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Status
<b>Cultural Resources</b>										
Renovate the old Sowega Building	x					1	City/private	n/a	private	Underway (completion FY2025)
Annually re-evaluate goals and apply for State Funds to assist with HP projects in the City	x	x	x	x	x	1	City/private	n/a	grants	Complete
<b>Economic Development</b>										
Continue to support Industrial Development Authority's and Chamber of Commerce's efforts to prepare financial packages for existing and new businesses and industries in Greater Cook County	x	x	x	x	x	2	EDC, Chamber, IDA, County	Staff Time	General Funds	Complete
<b>Housing</b>										
Build Public Housing	x	x				4	Private	\$5,000,000	Private/Public	Complete
<b>Community Facilities &amp; Services</b>										
Continue to develop and expand countywide recreational services	x	x	x	x	x	6	City	varies by project	SPLOST	Complete
Annually update the gas system GIS database	x	x	x	x	x	6	City	\$5,000	General Fund	Complete
Extend the natural gas lines	x		x			6	City	\$1,400,000	SPLOST	Complete
Annually update the electric system GIS database	x	x	x	x	x	6	City	\$5,000	General Fund	Complete
Annually update the water system GIS database	x	x	x	x	x	6	City	\$5,000	General Fund	Complete
Upgrade the water & sewer systems in targeted neighborhoods	x					6	City	\$500,000	CDBG	Underway (completion FY2025)
Annually update the sewer system GIS database	x	x	x	x	x	6	City	\$5,000	General Fund	Complete
Expand the Wastewater Treatment Facility			x			6	City	\$1,000,000	Federal, State, CDBG, SPLOST	Underway (completion FY2025)
Replace Metering	x	x				6	City	\$1,500,000	General Fund	Complete

**City of Cecil Report Of Accomplishments: FY2016 – FY2020**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Status</b>
Coordinate with Cook County, Adel, Lenox, and Sparks to promote quality urban development/redevelopment/re use of all I-75 interchanges	x	x	x	x	x	6	Cecil	Staff Time	General Funds	Complete
Continue to participate in state loan and grant programs, and prepare applications for new projects.	x	x	x	x	x	6	Cecil	Staff Time	General Funds	Complete
Resurfacing of City streets	x					6	Cecil	Staff Time	General Funds	Underway (completion FY2025)

## Town of Lenox Report Of Accomplishments: FY2016 – FY2020

Activity	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Goal	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Status
<b>Economic Development</b>										
Coordinate with Cook County, Adel, Cecil, and Sparks to promote quality urban development/ redevelopment/ reuse of all I-75 interchanges	x	x				3	Town of Lenox	Staff Time	General Fund	Complete
Development of infill/vacant lots within the City	x					3	Town of Lenox	Staff Time /private	General Fund/ Private	Underway (completion FY2025, reworded in new work program)
Encourage more downtown development through marketing and incentives	x	x	x	x	x	3	Town of Lenox	Staff Time	General Fund	Complete
Expansion and development of the Scott Corbitt bio-fuels plant										Cancelled (firm went out of business)
<b>Transportation</b>										
Pave all local roads to meet the needs of the local neighborhoods and communities.	x	x	x	x	x	7	Town of Lenox	\$500,000	Federal, State, CDBG	Underway (completion FY2025, reworded in new work program)
Provide sidewalks along city streets					x	7	Town of Lenox			Underway (completion FY2025, reworded in new work program)
<b>Historic Resources</b>										
Preserve the old Elementary School, RESA			x	x		2	Town of Lenox	\$75,000	CDBG, Splost	Complete (new roof implemented)
<b>Community Facilities &amp; Services</b>										
<b>Fire Protection</b>										
Update all fire hydrants within the City				x	x	6	Town of Lenox	\$70,000	GEMA, Georgia Rural Water Grants	Underway (completion FY2025)
<b>Public Utilities</b>										
Provide natural gas lines for city residents		x	x	x		6	Town of Lenox/Cook County	based on engineering and design	CDBG, Splost	Underway (completion FY2025)
<b>Public Water &amp; Sewer System</b>										
Refurbish and repair all old water lines within the City		x	x	x		6	Town of Lenox	\$500,000	CDBG	Underway (completion FY2025)
Continue expansion of the water and sewer systems to underserved neighborhoods and areas	x	x	x	x	x	6	Town of Lenox	\$500,000	CDBG	Underway (completion FY2025)

Activity	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Goal	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Status
Construct a new Wastewater Treatment Plant				x	x	6	Town of Lenox	\$6,000,000	USDA	Underway (completion FY2025)
Continue to maintain public sewer and stormwater services including dredging of holding drainage ponds	x	x	x	x	x	6	Town of Lenox	\$10,000	General Fund	Complete (continued as part of regular operations, not as a special project)
Dredge the oxidation pond			x	x		6	Town of Lenox	\$10,000	General Fund	Underway (completion FY2025)
<b>Parks and Recreation Facilities</b>										
Construct a walking track within the city.	x					7	Town of Lenox	\$45,000	Splost	Complete
<b>Government Buildings</b>										
Refurbish and update City Hall and other older buildings, to be identified later, as funds and/or grants become available.			x	x	x	8	Town of Lenox	\$500,000	CDBG	City Hall Complete. Other buildings underway (completion FY2025)

## Town of Sparks Report Of Accomplishments: FY2016 – FY2020

Activity	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Goal	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Status
<b>Land Use</b>										
Revise the City's Zoning Ordinance	x					5	Town of Sparks	Staff Time	General Funds	Complete
Revise the City's Zoning Map	x					5	Town of Sparks	Staff Time	General Funds	Complete
<b>Economic Development</b>										
Coordinate with Cook County, Adel, Cecil and Lenox to promote quality urban development/redevelopment/re use of all I-75 interchanges	x	x				3	Town of Sparks	Staff Time	General Funds	Complete
Develop a Downtown Development Authority				x		3	Town of Sparks	25,000/year	General Funds	Underway (completion FY2025)
Purchase vacant downtown property			x			3	Town of Sparks	Staff Time and TBA	General Funds	Underway (completion FY2025)
<b>Community Facilities &amp; Services</b>										
Apply for a grant to put a new well on the East side of the City	x					6	Town of Sparks	\$15,000	CDBG	Complete
Continue to expand the water systems to underserved neighborhoods and areas		x				6	Town of Sparks	\$25,000/year	CDBG	Underway (completion FY2025)
Continue to maintain public water infrastructure, including replacement as needed	x					6	Town of Sparks	\$25,000/year	General Funds, CDBG	Complete (continued as part of regular operations and not as a special project)
Conduct a complete Inflow and Infiltration Study				x		6	Town of Sparks	\$30,000	General Funds	Underway (completion FY2025)
Upgrade all sewer and stormwater systems to meet current regulatory requirements.	x	x	x	x	x	6	Town of Sparks	\$25,000/year	General Funds	Underway (completion FY2025)
Continue to maintain public sewer and stormwater services	x	x	x	x	x	6	Town of Sparks	\$18,000	General Funds	Complete (continued as part of regular operations and not as a special project)
Stormwater Drainage Improvements			x			6	Town of Sparks	\$15,000	General Funds	Underway (combined with sewer/ stormwater item in new work program)
Develop a second entrance/exit to the Fox Run subdivision				x		6	Town of Sparks	\$12,000	General Funds	Complete

Activity	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Goal	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Status
Continue to maintain all roads and streets, including paving and resurfacing of dirt and asphalt facilities.	x	x	x	x	x	6	Town of Sparks	\$24,000/year	General Funds	Underway (reworded in new work program)
Develop a network of local roads and streets to meet the needs of the local neighborhoods and communities	x	x	x	x	x	6	Town of Sparks	Staff Time	General Funds	Complete

**Cook County Community Work Program: FY2021 – FY2025**

Activity	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Goal	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
<b>Natural Resources</b>									
Update and improve floodplain maps	x	x	x	x		1	Cook County, EMA, FEMA	\$50,000	FEMA, General Fund
Seek funding to develop and implement a countywide Master Drainage Plan	x	x	x	x		1	Cook County	Staff time	General Fund
Review and update storm water run-off, watershed plans, and effectiveness of present drainage ditching, culverts, storm water, and sanitation network.	x	x	x	x		1	Cook County	Staff time	General Fund
Review existing regulations to ensure adequacy in reducing the amount of future development in identified flood hazard areas.	x	x	x	x		1	Cook County	Staff time	General Fund
Review and amend the Adel, Lenox, Cecil, Sparks, and Cook County Building Codes as required due to mandatory changes in the National Flood Insurance Program.	x	x	x	x		1	Cook County, City of Adel, City of Cecil, Town of Lenox, Town of Sparks	Staff time	General Fund
Cap wells not in use and increase wellhead waterproofing.	x	x	x	x		1	Cook County	\$100,000	Grants, General Fund
Investigate methods to reduce Non-Point Source pollution, such as increasing grass growth along waterways.	x	x	x	x		1	Cook County	\$100,000	Grants, General Fund
<b>Economic Development</b>									
Purchase property for a new Industrial Park and provide infrastructure (roads, rail, water, sewer, gas, etc.) for development	x	x	x	x	x	3	Economic Development Commission	\$10,000,000	Grants, EDC
<b>Community Facilities &amp; Services</b>									
Lower ISO rating for unincorporated areas of Cook County	x					6	Cook County	\$500,000	Grants, General Fund
Implement improved solid waste management services	x	x	x	x	x	6	Cook County	Staff time	Grants, General Fund

Activity	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Goal	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Plan and develop a new recreational complex and expand recreational services throughout the county	x					6	Cook County	\$500,000	Grants, SPLOST, General Fund
Acquire property and construct new courthouse			x	x	x	6	Cook County	\$2,000,000	Grants, General Fund
Expand Sheriff's office and jail, including new evidence room			x	x	x	6	Cook County	\$2,000,000	Grants, General Fund
Construct new fire station for the Evergreen area (west side of County)			x	x	x	6	Cook County	\$500,000	Grants, General Fund
Upgrade communication capabilities among first responders, law enforcement, and other critical personnel and departments	x	x	x	x		6	EMA, Police/Sheriff's Departments, Fire Departments	\$100,000	Grants, General Fund
Acquire and install weather alert sirens or equivalent early warning infrastructure	x	x	x	x		6	EMA	\$150,000	Grants, General Fund
Acquire all terrain vehicles for firefighting	x	x	x	x		6	EMA, GA Forestry Commission, County and Cities' Fire Departments	\$200,000	Grants, General Fund
Develop an ordinance to enforce burn permits at the local level	x	x	x	x		6	Cook County Code Enforcement	Staff time	General Fund
Acquire more fire tankers (2000 to 3000 gallons) for local fire departments	x	x	x	x		6	EMA, County and Cities' Fire Departments	\$500,000	Grants, SPLOST, General Fund
<b>Transportation</b>									
Extend airport runway by an additional 500 feet	x					7	Cook County, Airport Authority	\$2,000,000	Grants, Airport Authority, General Fund
Build new hangars at airport, and add fence around extended runway	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County, Airport Authority	\$2,000,000	Grants, Airport Authority, General Fund
<b>Roads</b>									
Regrade/resurface approximately 30 miles of roads as needed	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$1,000,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund
Resurface Daughtrey Rutland Rd.	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$315,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund
Resurface South Ave. (County portion)						7	Cook County	\$25,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund
Resurface/pave roads that provide access to Reed Bingham State Park	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$200,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund

Activity	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Goal	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Resurface Antioch Road	x					7	Cook County	\$1,949,300	T-SPLOST
Resurface Val-Del Road		x	x	x		7	Cook County	\$2,007,500	T-SPLOST
Pave Burnett Rd.	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$50,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund
Pave Lydia and Green Streets	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$100,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund
Pave Billy Browning and William Browning Roads	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$100,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund
Pave Brushy Creek Church Rd.	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$100,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund
Pave Loren Dr.	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$100,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund
Pave Harrell Rd.	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$100,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund
Pave Siska Lane, Hawk Lane, and Bobwhite Lane	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$150,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund
<b>Bridges</b>									
Repair/rebuild Massee Post Rd. bridge over Brushy Creek	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$100,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund
Repair/rebuild Massee Post Rd. bridge over New River	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$150,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund
Repair/rebuild Brushy Creek Rd. bridge over Brushy Creek	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$50,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund
Repair/rebuild Barneyville Rd. bridge over Brushy Creek	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$25,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund
Repair/rebuild Barneyville Rd. bridge over New River	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$25,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund
Repair/rebuild Futch Rd. bridge over Lindsey Branch	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$25,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund
Repair/rebuild Old Coffee Rd. bridge over Withlacoochee River	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$200,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund
Repair/rebuild Boyette Rd. bridge over Bear Creek	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$100,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund
Repair/rebuild Hutchinson-Parrish Rd. bridge over Youngs Mill Creek	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$50,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund
Repair/rebuild Rutland Bridge Rd. bridge over New River	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$100,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund
Repair/rebuild Whiddon-Rowan Rd. bridge over Brushy Creek	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$100,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund
Repair/rebuild Fellowship Rd. bridge over Hutchinson Mill Creek	x					7	Cook County, GDOT	\$50,000	State, SPLOST, Grants, General Fund
Repair/rebuild Register Rd. bridge over Youngs Mill Creek	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$50,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund

Activity	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Goal	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Repair/rebuild Lott Bridge Rd. bridge over Little River	x	x	x	x	x	7	Cook County	\$50,000	SPLOST, Grants, General Fund

## City of Adel Community Work Program: FY2021 – FY2025

Activity	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Goal	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
<b>Cultural Resources</b>									
Renovate the old Sowega Building	x					1	City of Adel, Private Sector	\$1,000,000	Grants, Private Sector
Improve Downtown area with a central park and fountain, streetscaping, and additional parking	x	x	x			1	City of Adel	\$400,000	Grants, General Fund
Pursue Main Street designation	x	x				1	City of Adel	Staff time	General Fund
<b>Economic Development</b>									
Provide infrastructure and incentives for development (such as a hotel and conference center) at Exits 37 and 39	x	x	x	x	x	3	City of Adel	\$500,000	Grants, General Fund
<b>Housing</b>									
Rehabilitate and/or reconstruct existing public housing units	x	x	x	x	x	4	City of Adel	\$1,000,000	Grants, Private Sector
Construct new affordable housing units, including housing for seniors	x	x	x	x	x	4	City of Adel	\$1,000,000	Grants, Private Sector
Renovate 10 homes of low-income residents	x	x	x			4	City of Adel	\$500,000	CHIP, CDBG, Grants
<b>Land Use</b>									
Perform corridor studies for Exit 37 and 39 gateway areas			x	x		5	City of Adel	\$100,000	General Fund
Create zoning overlay districts for Exit 37 and 39 gateway areas			x	x		5	City of Adel	Staff time	General Fund
<b>Community Facilities &amp; Services</b>									
Upgrade the water & sewer systems in targeted neighborhoods	x	x	x	x	x	6	City of Adel	\$500,000	CDBG / Grants
Expand utility (gas, water, sewer, broadband) and/or transportation infrastructure to provide service to new and existing industry	x	x	x	x	x	6	City of Adel, Private Sector	\$500,000	Grants, Private Sector, General Fund
Expand the Wastewater Treatment Facility		x	x			6	City of Adel	\$1,000,000	Federal, State, CDBG, SPLOST, Grants
Expand, build new, or relocate City Hall				x	x	6	City of Adel	\$1,000,000	Grants, General Fund

Activity	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Goal	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Construct new fire station	x	x	x	x		6	City of Adel	\$2,000,000	General Fund, Grants
<b>Transportation</b>									
Realign Cox Still Road		x				7	City of Adel	\$500,000	General Fund, Grants
Resurface and improve MJ Taylor Road; add curb and gutter; relocate road entrance depending on GDOT needs			x			7	City of Adel, Cook County, GDOT	\$1,000,000	Grants, GDOT, General Fund
Resurface Patterson Street from Massee Post Road to City limits	x					7	City of Adel	\$400,000	General Fund, Grants
Extend and pave Alabama Road, creating truck route and connecting through to Highway 76 and Old Quitman Road	x					7	City of Adel	\$3,312,000	T-SPLOST
Tillman Road Bypass Phase 3 Improvements		x	x	x		7	City of Adel	\$4,900,000	T-SPLOST
Turn Lanes at New Recreation Facility on SR 37		x	x	x		7	City of Adel	\$500,000	T-SPLOST

**City of Cecil Community Work Program: FY2021 – FY2025**

Activity	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Goal	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
<b>Community Facilities &amp; Services</b>									
Upgrade water meters		x	x				City of Cecil	\$50,000	General Fund, Grants
Purchase police uniforms	x				x		City of Cecil	\$3,000	General Fund, Grants
Purchase updated computers for police cars	x				x		City of Cecil	\$5,000	General Fund, Grants
<b>Transportation</b>									
Resurface 1 mile of City streets	x		x		x	7	City of Cecil	\$150,000	General Fund, Grants
Improve street paving and drainage to address flooding issues	x	x	x				City of Cecil	\$500,000	General Fund, Grants

**Town of Lenox Community Work Program: FY2021 – FY2025**

Activity	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Goal	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
<b>Cultural Resources</b>									
Implement additional renovations to the historic Elementary School (Regional Educational Service Agency) building		x	x			2	Town of Lenox	\$500,000	Grants, General Fund
<b>Economic Development</b>									
Provide public infrastructure and incentives for the development of approximately 10 vacant lots	x	x	x	x	x	3	Town of Lenox	\$200,000	Grants, General Fund
Provide public infrastructure and incentives for high-quality development and industry, especially around the I-75 exit	x	x	x	x	x	3	Town of Lenox	\$200,000	Grants, General Fund
Conduct a marketing campaign to advertise and incentivize Downtown development	x	x	x	x	x	3	Town of Lenox	Staff time	General Fund
<b>Land Use</b>									
Revise zoning ordinance to address non-conforming lots	x					5	Town of Lenox	\$5,000	General Fund
<b>Community Facilities &amp; Services</b>									
Update approximately 30 fire hydrants	x	x	x	x	x	6	Town of Lenox	\$100,000	GEMA, Georgia Rural Water Grants
Provide natural gas lines for city residents	x	x	x	x	x	6	Town of Lenox	\$100,000	CDBG, Grants, SPLOST
Refurbish and repair all old water lines within the City	x	x	x	x	x	6	Town of Lenox	\$500,000	CDBG, Grants
Continue expansion of the water and sewer systems to underserved neighborhoods and areas	x	x	x	x	x	6	Town of Lenox	\$500,000	CDBG, Grants
Construct a new Wastewater Treatment Plant		x				6	Town of Lenox	\$6,000,000	USDA, Grants
Dredge oxidation pond and drainage ponds	x				x	6	Town of Lenox	\$20,000	General Fund
Construct an additional walking track or trail		x	x	x		6	Town of Lenox	\$50,000	Grants, SPLOST, General Fund
Purchase new fire truck, turnout gear, and Jaws of Life	x		x		x	6	Town of Lenox	\$1,000,000	Grants
Renovate approximately 3 Town government buildings		x	x	x	x	6	Town of Lenox	\$150,000	CDBG, Grants, SPLOST

Activity	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Goal	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Utilize the EPA CUPP (College-Underserved Community Partnership Program) to have a broadband feasibility study done	x	x	x			6	Town of Lenox	Student volunteer time	Federal
<b>Transportation</b>									
Taylor Street Paving	x					7	Town of Lenox	\$276,900	T-SPLOST
E. Revels Street Paving	x					7	Town of Lenox	\$450,000	T-SPLOST
Resurface approximately 3 miles of streets as needed		x	x	x	x	7	Town of Lenox, GDOT	\$1,000,000	State, Federal, Grants, General Fund
Implement street paving, curb and gutter, and/or drainage improvements to address flooding on Martin Luther King Jr St., Clements Ave., and other areas as needed	x	x	x	x	x	7	Town of Lenox	\$1,000,000	CDBG, Grants
Construct approximately 1 mile of sidewalks	x	x	x	x	x	7	Town of Lenox, GDOT	\$100,000	State, Federal, Grants, General Fund

**Town of Sparks Community Work Program: FY2021 – FY2025**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
<b>Economic Development</b>									
Create and support a Downtown Development Authority	x	x	x	x	x	3	Town of Sparks	\$25,000 per year	General Fund
Purchase and renovate vacant Downtown properties	x	x	x	x	x	3	Town of Sparks	\$500,000	Grants, General Fund
<b>Housing</b>									
Renovate approximately 10 homes	x	x	x	x	x	4	Town of Sparks	\$500,000	CHIP, CDBG, Grants
Renovate approximately 10 existing affordable housing units	x	x	x	x	x	4	Town of Sparks	\$500,000	CHIP, CDBG, Grants
Construct approximately 10 new affordable housing units	x	x	x	x	x	4	Town of Sparks	\$1,000,000	Grants, Private Sector
<b>Land Use</b>									
Create an Urban Redevelopment Plan to facilitate the elimination of blight	x						Town of Sparks	\$5,000	General Fund
<b>Community Facilities &amp; Services</b>									
Expand water service to underserved neighborhoods and areas	x	x	x	x	x	6	Town of Sparks	\$125,000	CDBG, Grants, General Fund
Update/upgrade water service lines	x	x	x	x	x	6	Town of Sparks	\$125,000	CDBG, Grants, General Fund
Update/upgrade all sewer systems and stormwater drainage systems to meet current regulatory requirements.	x	x	x	x	x	6	Town of Sparks	\$125,000	CDBG, Grants, General Fund
Conduct a complete Inflow and Infiltration Study	x	x	x	x	x	6	Town of Sparks	\$30,000	General Fund
Develop facilities for City Park, including playground, walking track, restrooms, water fountains, and power	x	x	x	x	x	6	Town of Sparks	\$300,000	Grants, General Fund
Purchase new fire truck and air pack system		x	x				Town of Sparks	\$500,000	Grants, General Fund
<b>Transportation</b>									
Lovett Street Sidewalks and Resurfacing	x					7	Town of Sparks	\$588,000	T-SPLOST
Elm Street Sidewalks and Resurfacing	x					7	Town of Sparks	\$715,000	T-SPLOST

Activity	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Goal	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Resurface or pave approximately 3 miles of roads	x	x	x	x	x	7	Town of Sparks	\$1,000,000	Grants, General Fund

## 8. Economic Development Element

The 2018-2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), developed by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) 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 Cook County and the Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks.

The SGRC's 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 CEDS contains an analysis of the regional economy and serves as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives, a regional plan of action, investment priorities, and funding sources.

As a performance-based plan, the CEDS plays a critical role in adapting to global economic conditions by fully utilizing the region's unique advantages to maximize economic opportunities for its residents by attracting job-creating private investment. The 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. The CEDS 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 the 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 strategy's successful development and implementation.

Policies, needs, opportunities, and projects drawn from the current comprehensive plans for each jurisdiction in the 18-county SGRC region were used extensively to develop the CEDS Goals and Objectives, Vital Projects, Problems, and Opportunities. Conversely, the CEDS was also used to provide guidance for developing the goals, opportunities, policies, and projects in this local Comprehensive Plan.

Goals, needs and opportunities, policies, and community work program projects related to economic development can be found in the "Economic Development" subsections of the relevant sections of this Comprehensive Plan (goals in Section 1, needs and opportunities in Section 2, policies in Section 6, and work program projects in Section 7).

Furthermore, included below are goals, objectives, and strategies from the regional CEDS that are strongly aligned with the current economic development goals of Cook County and the Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks.

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

#### Objectives:

Promote regional collaboration for even stronger networks between 18 counties.

#### Strategies:

- Strengthen and expand existing entrepreneurial support networks in rural areas.
- Promote business and entrepreneur learning opportunities.
- 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:

Improve broadband access in rural communities.

#### Strategies:

- Develop small cells in communities without reliable broadband access.
- Provide incentives for broadband.

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

Objectives:

Develop a well-trained professional, technical, and skilled workforce capable of accommodating new industry and maintaining existing industry.

Strategies:

- Improve educational attainment by reducing high school dropout rates.
- Market workforce development programs that enable youth and adults to pursue higher education opportunities.

Launch workforce initiatives to align training and educational opportunities to target industries for critical, in-demand occupations.

Strategies:

- Facilitate the incorporation of applied economics, soft skills, and work ethics in the middle and high school classrooms to prepare students with job-ready knowledge

Improve efforts to prepare workers for available jobs.

Strategies:

- 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:

Revitalize downtowns throughout the region.

Strategies:

- Collaborate to develop county-wide historic preservation plans.
  - Promote downtown areas for tourism and recreation.
  - Increase code enforcement in communities surrounding downtown areas.
- Facilitate vibrant, attractive communities.

Strategies:

- Rehabilitate dilapidated housing throughout the region.
  - Encourage local governments to participate in CHIP, CDBG, and USDA housing programs.
- Develop strategies for creating and sustaining a diverse population.

Strategies:

- 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 Cook County and the Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks was 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 provided by the State of Georgia. The character areas were initially developed as part of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, and were updated during the 2015 Comprehensive Plan update and again during the current 2020 Comprehensive Plan update.

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 predominant land uses are listed as part of the description.

The **Vision for the Future** describes the types, forms, styles, and/or patterns of development that are intended for the area. Adherence to this vision will ensure consistent and complimentary development, which promotes a greater sense of place and overall improved quality of life.

The **Implementation Measures** are the specific activities or programs which could take place within each of the character areas. In most cases, these measures should be considered joint efforts between the local government, development community, and citizens alike. The Implementation Measures include the listing of permitted zonings for each character area, providing guidance for future zoning changes and development decisions.

Maps of the character areas for Cook County and the Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks are included in the Appendix.

## **Agricultural Character Area**

### **Description**

The Agricultural Character Area is intended for those areas outside of the urban service areas which are associated with agricultural farm operations and associated activities, forestry, natural resource conservation, groundwater recharge areas, and very low-density residential development accessory to agricultural or farm operation of varying sizes.

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



### **Vision for the Future**

Preserve farming and conservation options as a viable and important part of Cook County industry by maintaining very low density residential development primarily accessory to farm operations and right-to-farm principles. 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.

### **Implementation Measures**

- Allow only the following zoning districts:
  - Agricultural
  - Rural Residential
  - Rural Commercial
  - Public/institutional
- Provide for buffers between agricultural and non-agricultural uses
- Allow Conservation Easements to be provided



## **Airport Character Area**

### **Description**

This area consists of the Cook County Airport and associated public properties around the airport. The area is intended to provide an environment suitable for air transportation and associated freight, warehousing, and wholesaling activities that may create undesirable noise, vibration, odor, dust, or other such effects on the surrounding areas. The Cook County Airport is located on GA Highway 37 in the northwest corner of Cook County.

Predominant land use: Airport transportation facility and associated uses.

### **Vision for the Future**

Encourage the expansion of the airport to foster economic development and redevelopment, while providing guidelines to minimize adverse impacts on neighborhoods and the environment.

### **Implementation Measures**

- Allow only the following zoning districts:
  - Public/Institutional



## Cecil Character Area

### Description

These are land areas within the small incorporated city of Cecil. The area is characterized by a small, centralized compilation of smaller-lot residential and commercial uses, with great diversity and flexibility of uses. The intent of the Cecil Character Area is to encourage a continuation of the diverse land uses within the City, and attract additional uses to the area.

Predominant land uses: General residential and commercial uses.

### Vision for the Future

Encourage a compatible mix of uses to attract new development and continue the small-town character of the area.



### Implementation Measures

- Allow only the following zoning districts:
  - Commercial
  - Residential
  - Public/Institutional
  - Industrial
  - Agricultural



## City Residential Character Area

### Description

These areas are located within the incorporated cities, with small- to medium-size residential lots in a more urban setting.

Predominant land uses: Single-family, with some multi-family/duplex, as well as neighborhood-level amenities such as parks, schools, places of worship, and small-scale commercial development.

### Vision for the Future

Reinforce neighborhood stability by encouraging homeownership and maintenance or upgrading of existing structures. Preserve historic assets whenever practicable. Preserve a walkable environment with neighborhood-level amenities.



### Implementation Measures

- Allow only the following zoning districts:
  - Single-family Residential
  - Multi-family Residential
  - Neighborhood Commercial
  - Residential Professional
  - Public/Institutional
  - Planned Development
- Support implementation of Urban Redevelopment Plans, where applicable
- Continue to pursue grants related to neighborhood stabilization and revitalization



## Commercial Character Area

### Description

These areas consist of mostly automobile-oriented commercial development, such as grocery stores, gas stations, hotels, and large-scale retail.

Predominant land use: Commercial.

### Vision for the Future

Improve the aesthetics of commercial corridors that serve as a “gateway” to communities. Encourage and maintain higher-intensity commercial uses while continuing to develop a more walkable and appealing environment.

### Implementation Measures

- Allow only the following zoning districts:
  - General Business
  - Residential Professional
  - Public/Institutional
  - Multi-family Residential
  - Planned Development
- Support implementation of Urban Redevelopment Plans, where applicable
- Consider zoning overlay districts for commercial corridors



## Conservation Character Area

### Description

The Conservation Character Area is intended to identify those areas which contain environmentally sensitive wetland and/or upland areas and/or are home to endangered species. Conservation Character Areas in Cook County include the No Man's Friend Swamp, the Cecil Bay Wetland, the Withlacoochee River Corridor, Little River Corridor, New River Corridor, Reed Bingham State Park, Bear Creek, Giddens Mill Creek, and Morrison Creek.



Predominant land uses: Conservation areas contain significant natural resources, such as groundwater recharge areas, state parks, floodplains, wetlands, watersheds, wildlife management areas, and other environmentally sensitive areas not suitable for development of any kind.

### Vision for the Future

Protect water quality and groundwater recharge areas, and protect significant natural resources such as wetland and upland habitat areas. Promote eco-tourism (which is also good for the local economy), especially along the rivers and at Reed Bingham State Park.

### Implementation Measures

- Allow only the following zoning districts:
  - Environmental Resource
- Establish Greenway and Blueway Corridors: These are areas of predominantly environmentally sensitive lands which are mostly linear in nature and will serve to protect native wetland and upland habitats as well as groundwater recharge areas from development. This can be achieved by:
  - Placing the lands under voluntary conservation easements
  - Providing conservation incentives such as clustering
  - Establishing Greenway and Blueway Corridor Protection Maps to ensure that future development is aware of the County's plans
  - Purchasing the most sensitive lands for public protection. Funds are scarce but could be found through donations, SPLOST funds, grants, or low-interest loans through programs such as the Georgia Land Conservation Program or even a special voter-approved tax assessment specifically for that purpose.
- Restrict the type of development permitted and the size of lots permitted
- Establish Conservation Subdivision design opportunities
- Consider Conservation Overlay zoning districts



## Downtown Core Character Area

### Description

These are the traditional central business districts of the incorporated cities.

Predominant land uses: Downtown commercial uses, professional offices, governmental uses, mixed use buildings, and appropriate public spaces such as small parks.

### Vision for the Future

Preserve, restore, and reuse historic buildings. Encourage private investment and development. Expand green and civic spaces. Promote aesthetical appeal, streetscaping, and walkability.

### Implementation Strategies

- Allow only the following zoning districts:
  - Downtown Commercial
  - General Business
  - Residential Professional
  - Public/Institutional
  - Multi-family Residential
  - Planned Development
- Support implementation of Urban Redevelopment Plans, where applicable
- Continue to pursue funding for downtown revitalization
- Support the efforts of agencies focused on downtown/main street development



## Industrial Character Area

### Description

These areas are intended to 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 areas, together with other non-residential uses that may be necessary with industrial surroundings. The existing and proposed industrial areas in Greater Cook County are located primarily between I-75 and US-41, and at the South Cook Industrial Park.

Predominant land uses: Agricultural industries, construction services, manufacturing, millwork, freight transportation and warehousing, wholesale trades, and similar uses.



### Vision for the Future

Provide 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.

### Implementation Measures

- Allow only the following zoning districts:
  - Warehouse/Light Industrial
  - Heavy Industrial
  - Public/Institutional
- Support the efforts of economic development organizations to continue bringing additional industrial development to these areas



## Interchange Character Area

### Description

These are the areas that surround the interchanges with I-75 and provide commercial, tourist, or other gateways into the community. These serve as an important first impression and access into the community. The intent of the Interchange Character Area is to encourage the development of attractive amenities relevant to Interstate travel, develop attractive gateways into the incorporated cities, and provide services to the residents, business community, and traveling public.

Predominant land uses: Hotels, commercial and institutional uses, entertainment, services, and restaurants.



### Vision for the Future

Continue to improve the aesthetics of these areas as gateways to the community. Encourage competitive amenities oriented toward those traveling on the interstate, while also ensuring that the area provides needed amenities to the residents of the community.

### Implementation Measures

- Allow only the following zoning districts:
  - General Business
  - Public/Institutional
  - Wholesale/Light Industrial
  - Planned Development
- Support implementation of Urban Redevelopment Plans, where applicable
- Consider zoning overlay districts for commercial corridors



## **Motorsports Park Character Area**

### **Description**

This area covers the South Georgia Motorsports Park, located along Highway 41 in south Cook County. While the motorsports park does not currently include much associated commercial use, this character area has been established in order to encourage such development.

Predominant land use: Entertainment Events.

### **Vision for the Future**

Encourage and maintain higher-intensity commercial areas that are not compatible with residential areas due to their high automobile orientation, and promote a greater mix of uses (such as retail and services to serve industry employees) to reduce automobile reliance/use on site.

### **Implementation Measures**

- Allow only the following zoning districts:
  - General Business
  - Public/Institutional
- Provide for regulations to address public health, welfare, and safety issues.
- Provide for public/private partnerships to construct quality commercial/entertainment development.



## Public/Institutional Character Area

### Description

This area consists of government and institutional land uses, including schools, libraries, hospitals, places of worship, parks, government offices, and other similar uses.

Predominant land use: Institutional.

### Vision for the Future

Preserve, restore, and reuse historic buildings. 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.



### Implementation Measures

- Allow only the following zoning districts:
  - Public/Institutional



## **Rural Residential Character Area**

### **Description**

These are areas of lower-density, larger-lot residential development located in the unincorporated areas of Cook County. These areas have a mix of lower density residential development and active agricultural uses.

Predominant land uses: Agricultural and single family residential, with amenities such as parks, places of worship, and smaller-scale commercial development.

### **Vision for the Future**

Preserve the rural character of these areas through low-density development standards. Preserve compatibility between agricultural activities and residential land use.

### **Implementation Measures**

- Allow only the following zoning districts:
  - Agricultural
  - Rural Residential
  - Rural Commercial
  - Single-family Residential
  - Public/institutional
  - Planned Development
- Ensure that water, sewer/septic, and road infrastructure is provided concurrent with development.
- Use subdivision regulations to encourage open space and road connectivity in new developments.
- Protect existing agricultural uses from encroachment through right-to-farm policies.



## Suburban Neighborhood Character Area



### **Description**

These areas typically consist of suburban residential subdivision development, with single-family residences on medium-size lots.

Predominant land uses: single family residential. Neighborhood-level amenities may be present, such as parks, places of worship, smaller schools, and limited commercial development appropriate to the surrounding area.

### **Vision for the Future**

Preserve the residential character of these areas while providing the appropriate nearby amenities. Encourage street connectivity and continue to develop a walkable environment.

### **Implementation Measures**

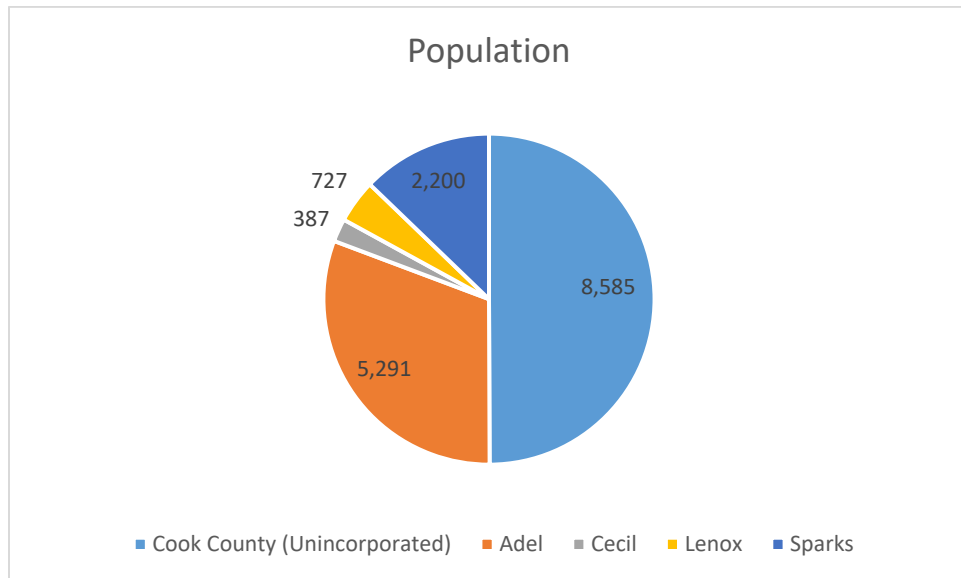
- Allow only the following zoning districts:
  - Single-family residential
  - Neighborhood commercial
  - Public/institutional
  - Planned Development



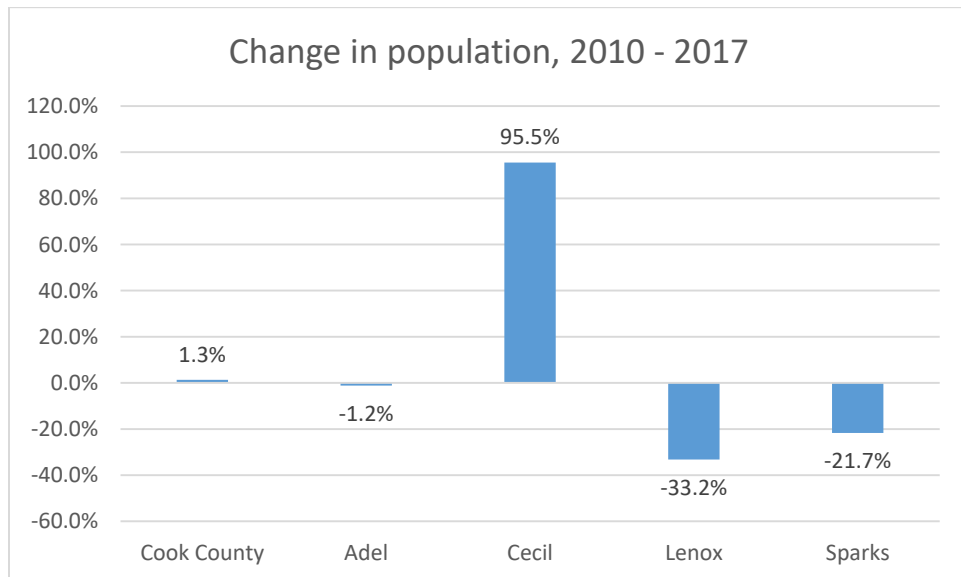
# **Appendix**

**Data Charts  
Character Area Maps  
Sign-in Sheets  
Public Hearing Notices  
Transmittal Letters  
Adoption Resolutions**

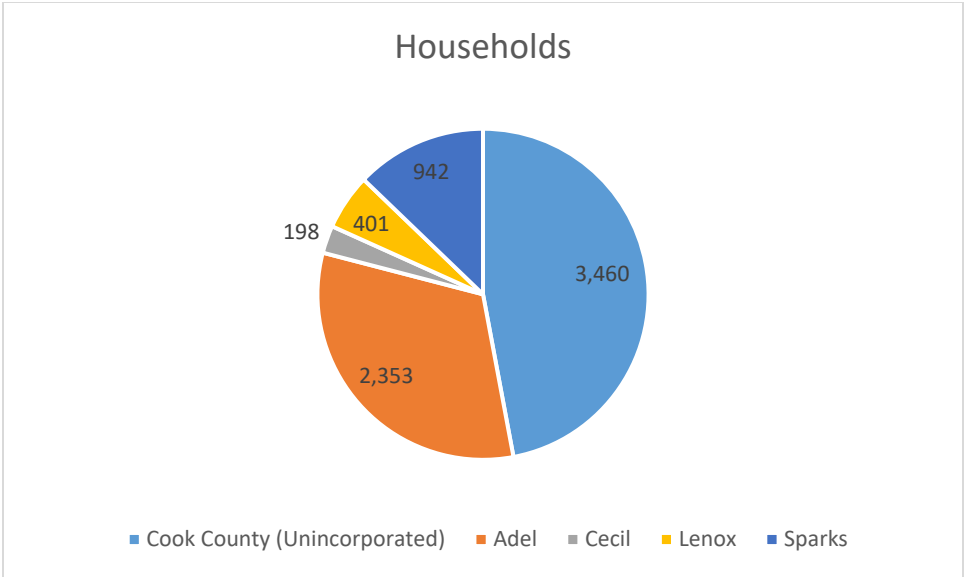
## Data Charts



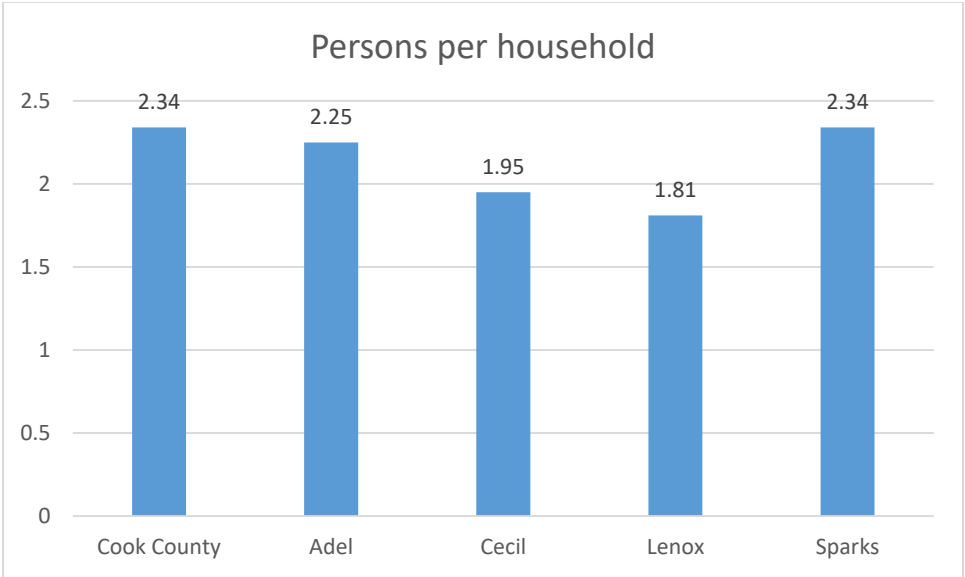
*Chart 1. Population*



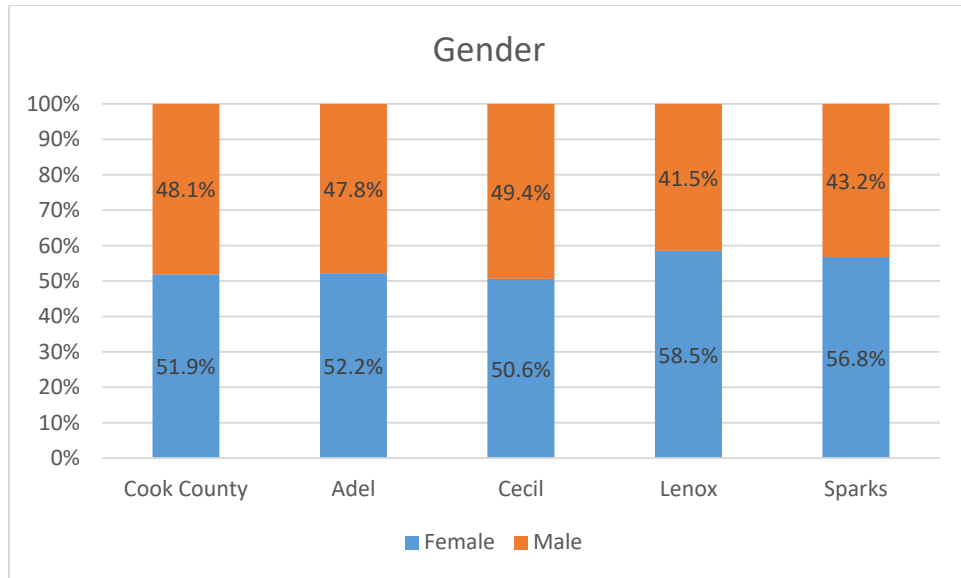
*Chart 2. Change in population, 2010–2017*



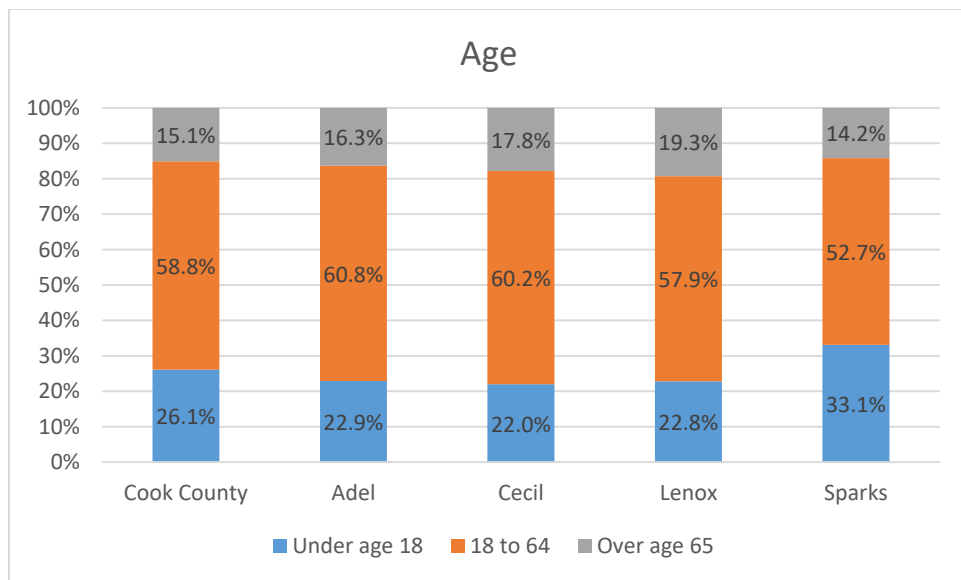
*Chart 3. Number of households*



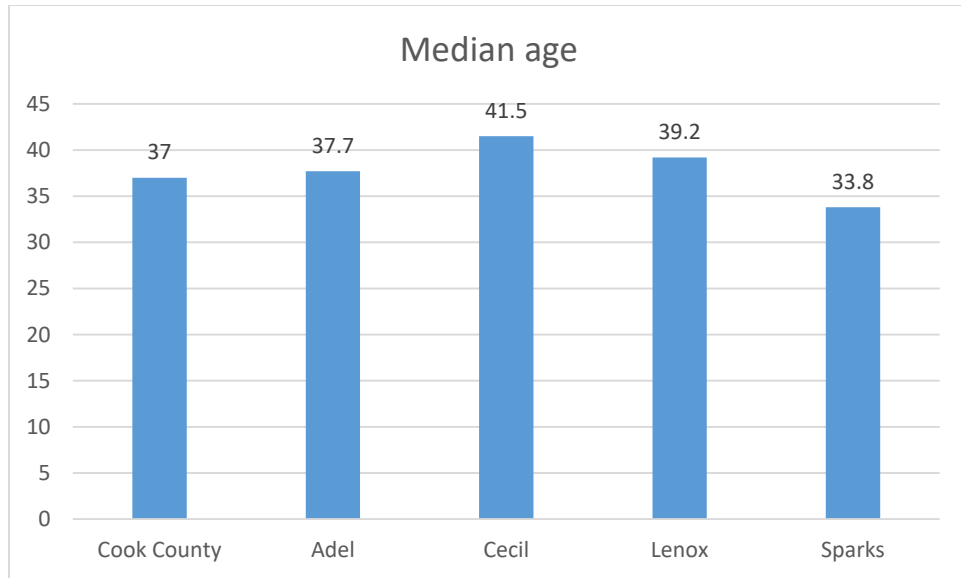
*Chart 4. Number of persons per household*



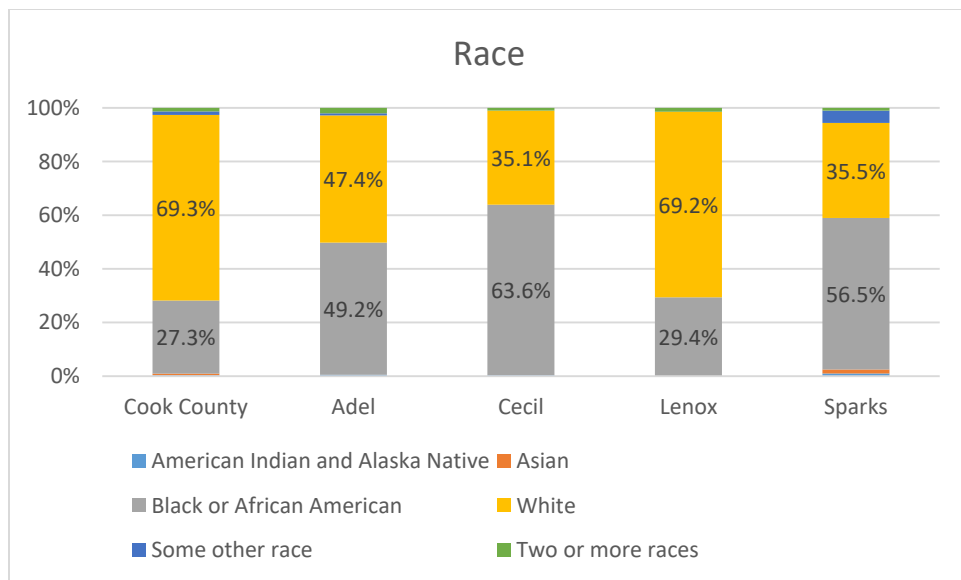
*Chart 5. Gender*



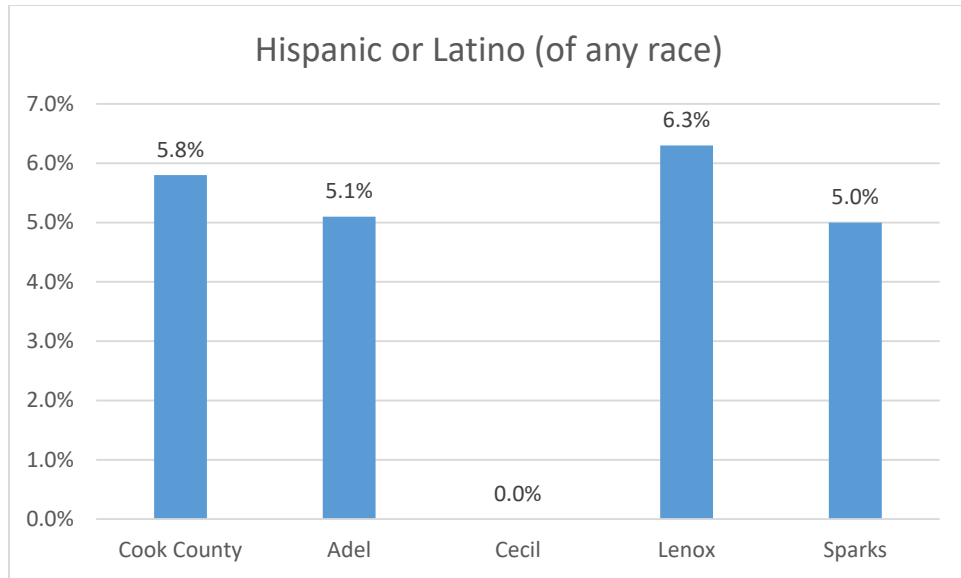
*Chart 6. Age distribution*



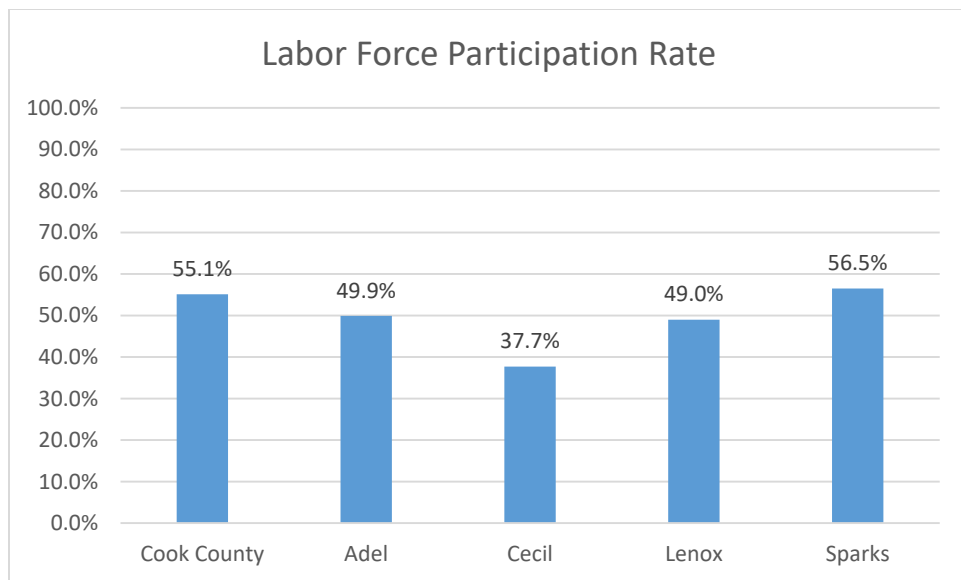
*Chart 7. Median age*



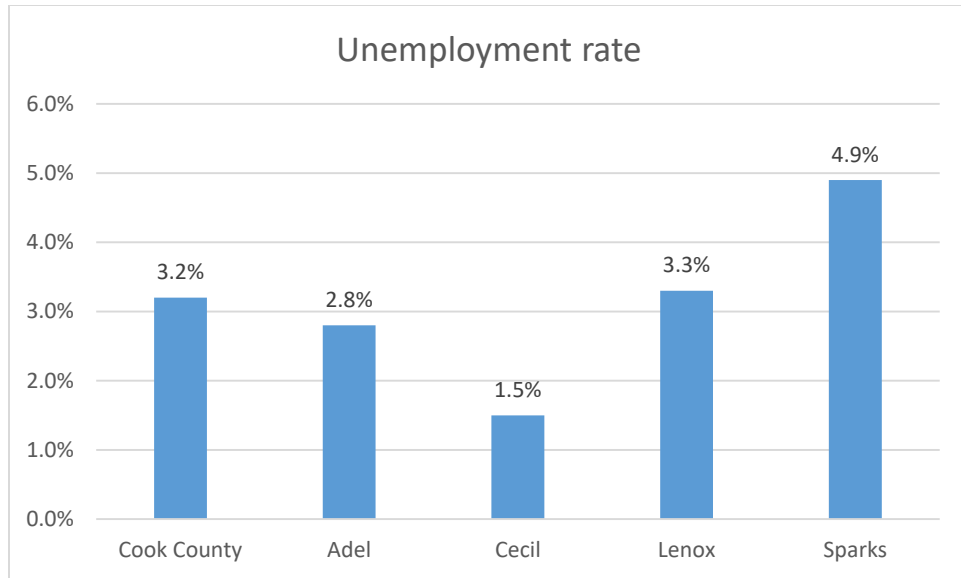
*Chart 8. Race*



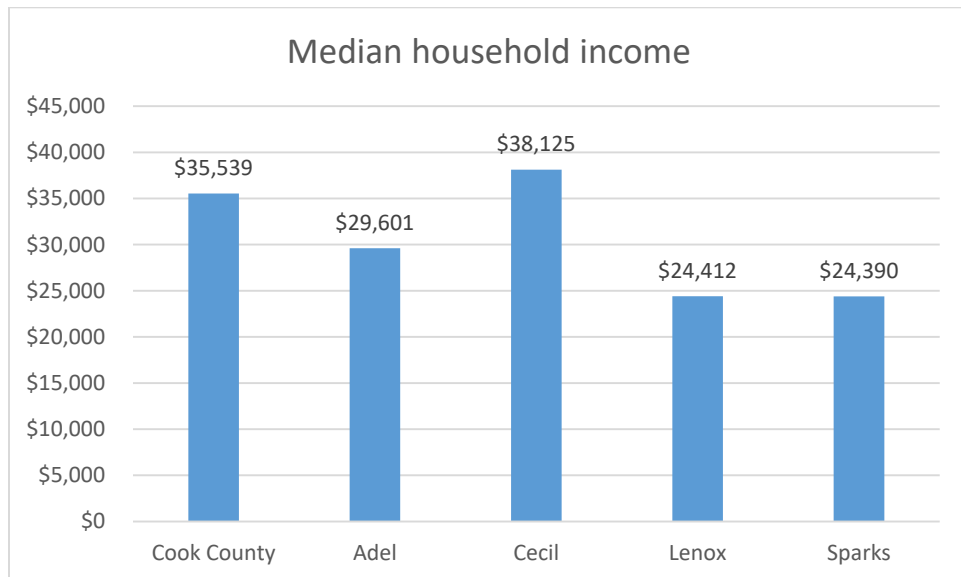
*Chart 9. Hispanic/Latino population*



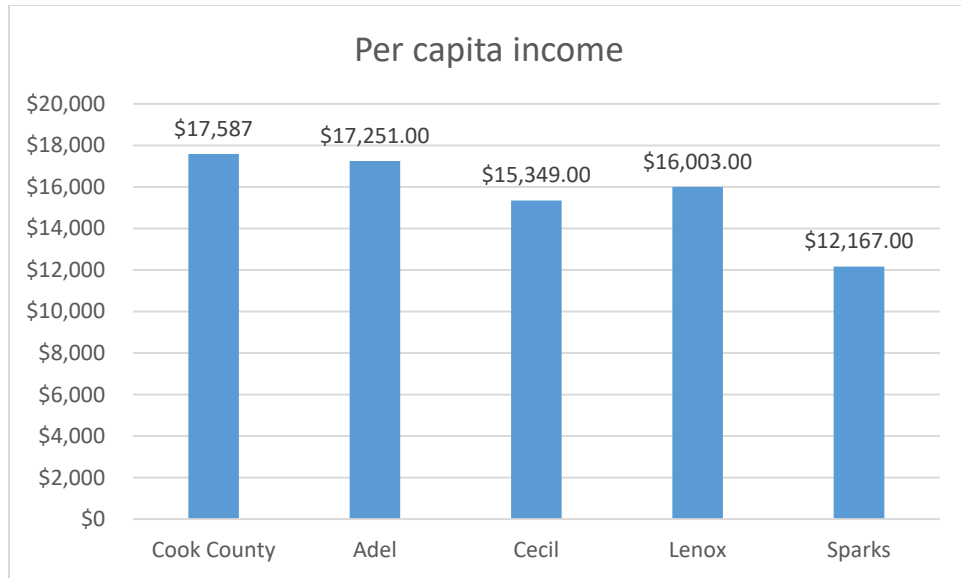
*Chart 10. Rate of labor force participation for those age 16 and older*



*Chart 11. Unemployment rate*



*Chart 12. Median household income*



*Chart 13. Per capita income*

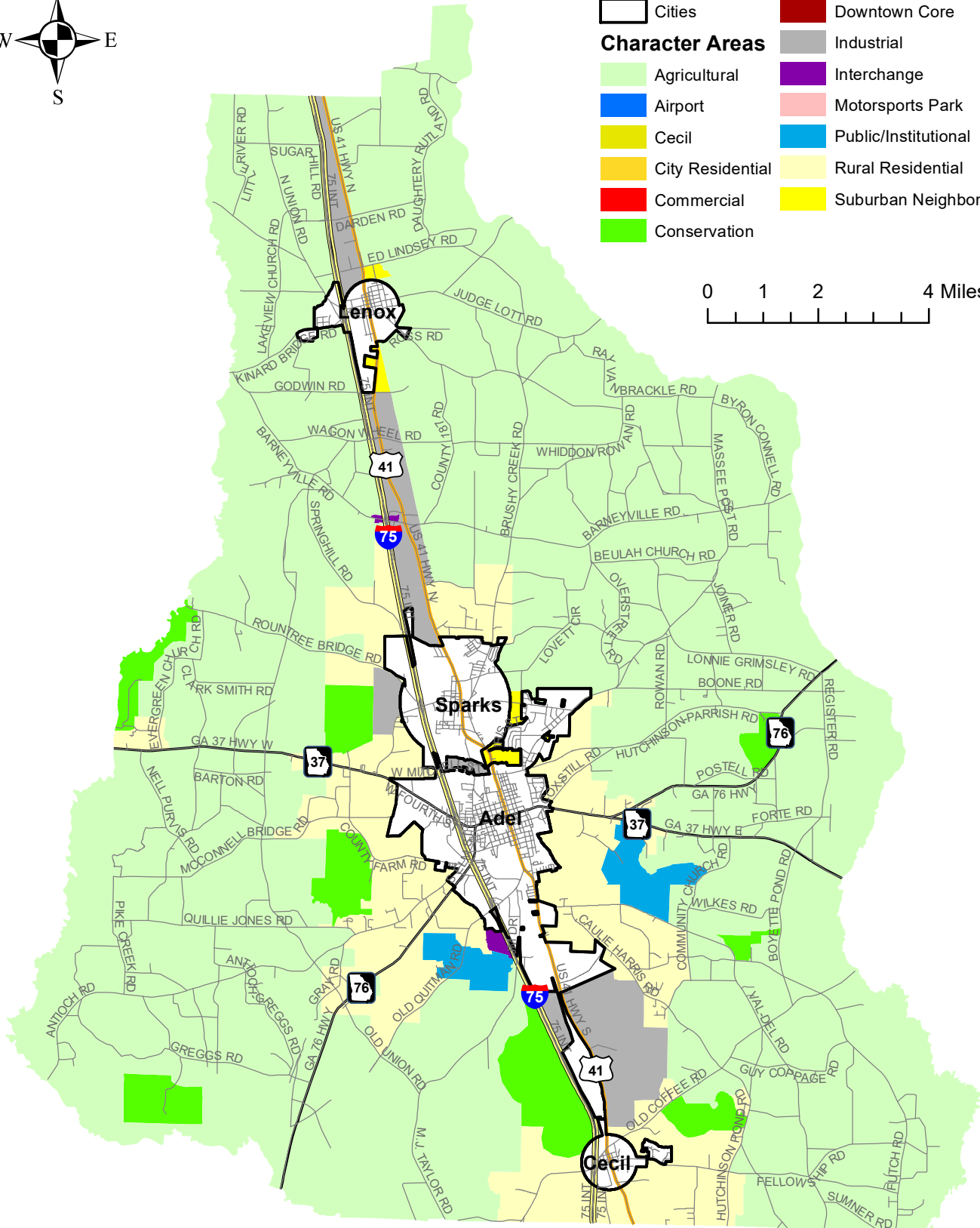
# COOK COUNTY CHARACTER AREAS



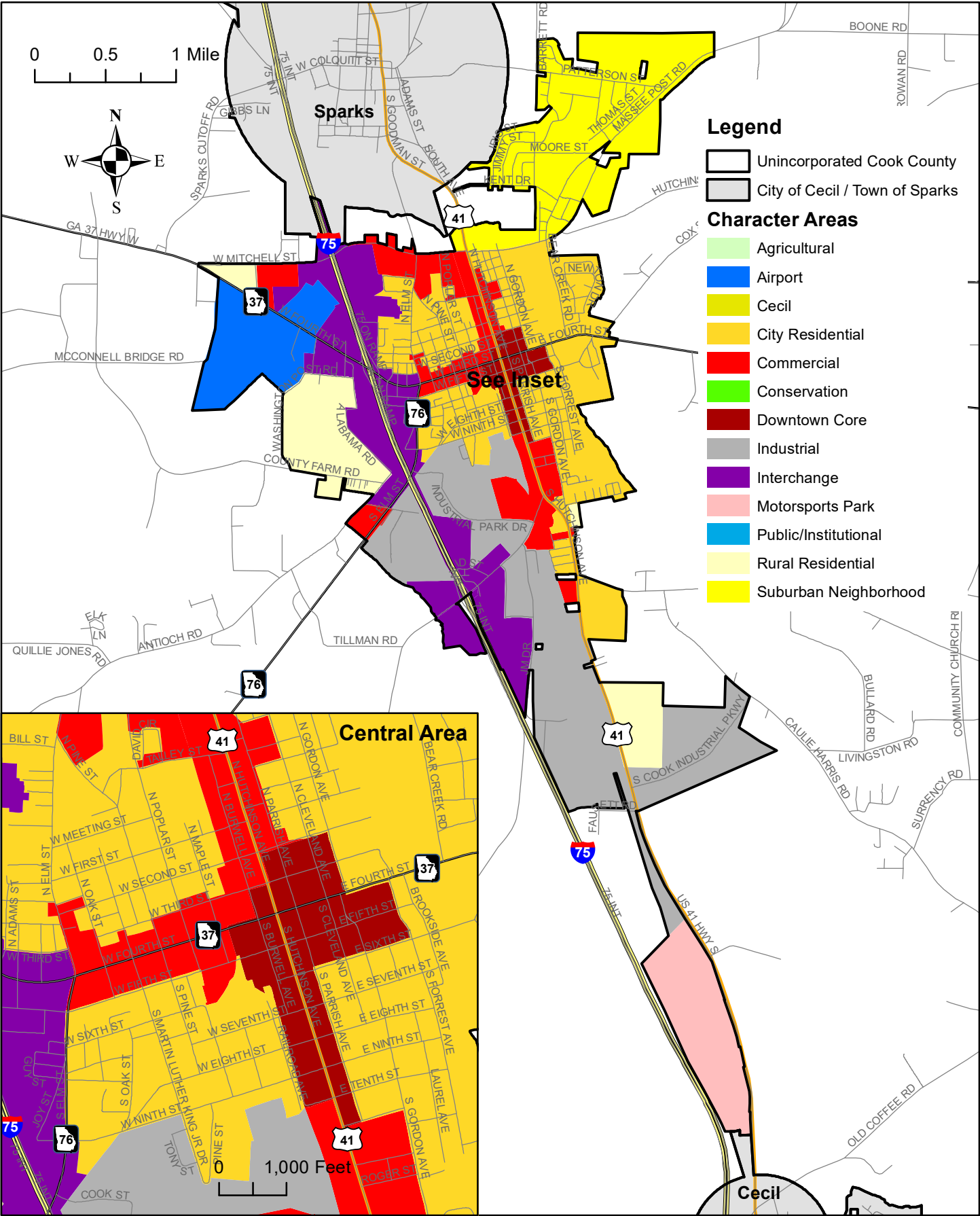
## Legend

Cities	Downtown Core
<b>Character Areas</b>	Industrial
Agricultural	Interchange
Airport	Motorsports Park
Cecil	Public/Institutional
City Residential	Rural Residential
Commercial	Suburban Neighborhood
Conservation	

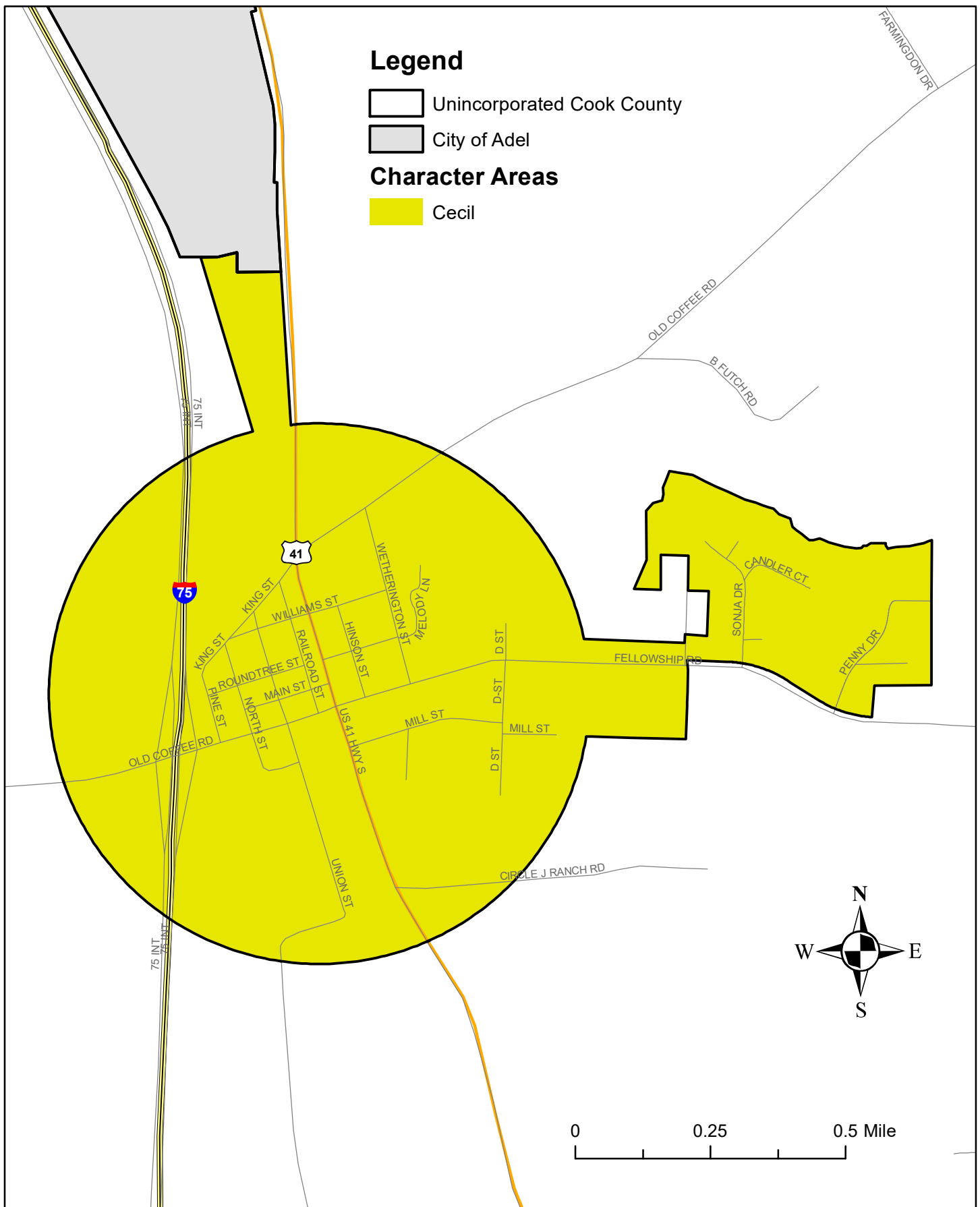
0 1 2 4 Miles



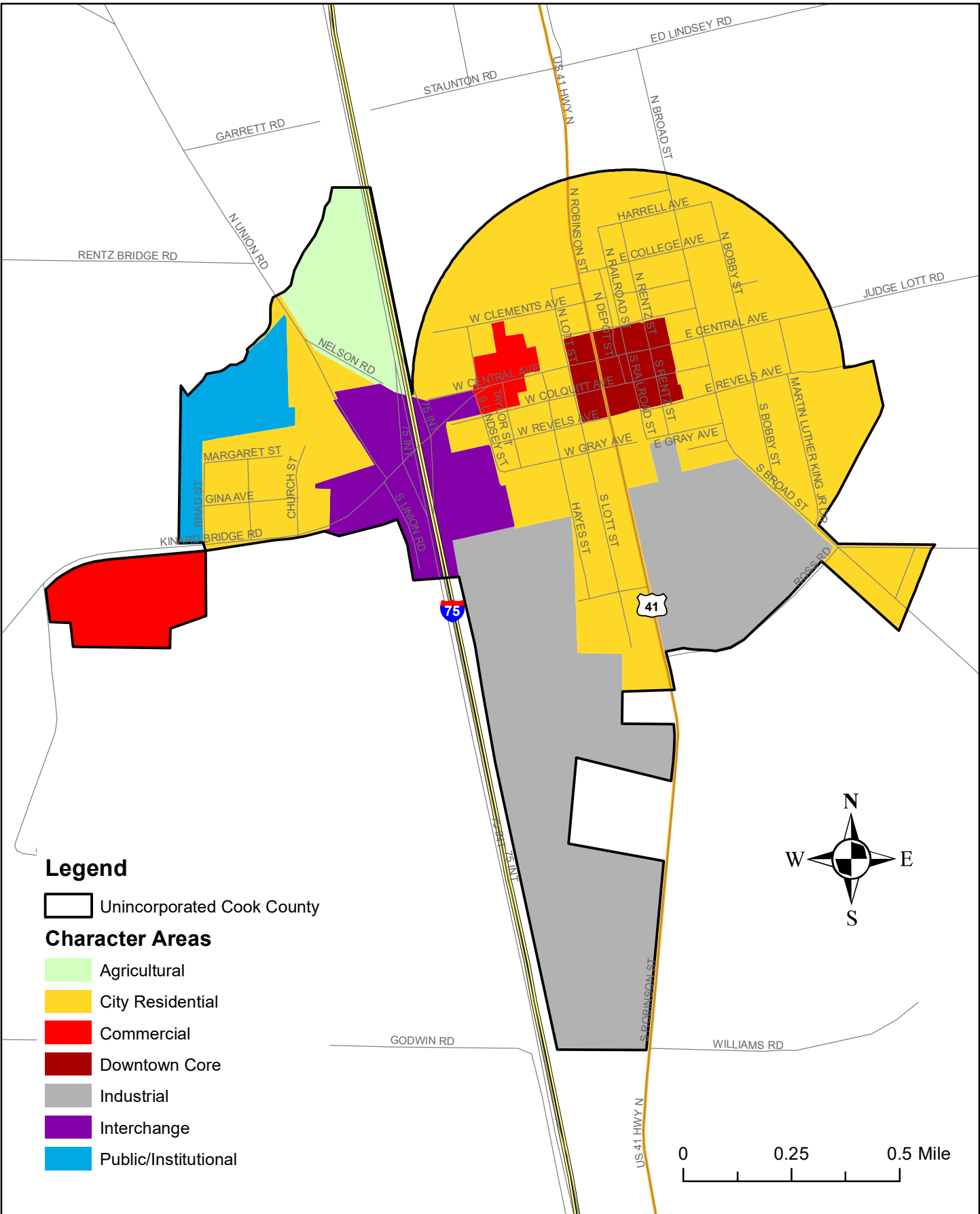
# CITY OF ADEL CHARACTER AREAS



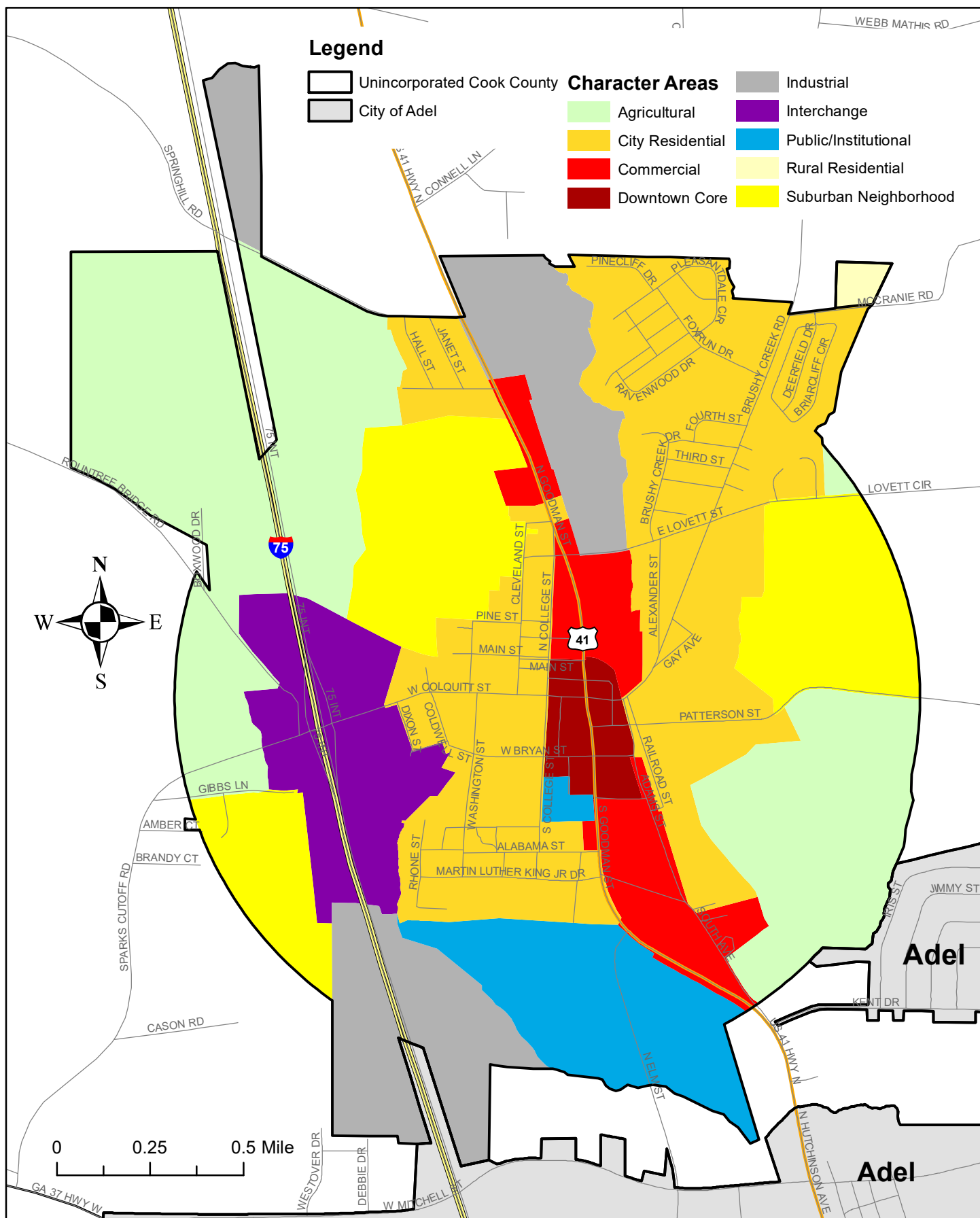
# CITY OF CECIL CHARACTER AREAS



# TOWN OF LENOX CHARACTER AREAS



# TOWN OF SPARKS CHARACTER AREAS



## **Kick Off – Joint Public Hearing For Cook County and Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks Comprehensive Plan Update**

A public hearing will be held at 5:30 PM on Monday, August 19, 2019, in the Cook County Commissioners Conference Room, located at 1200 Hutchinson Avenue, Adel, Georgia, to announce the beginning of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update for Cook County and Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks. The purpose of this hearing is to brief the community on 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. Person with special needs relating to disability access or foreign language should contact the Vicki Parrish, County Clerk at Cook County Commission Office at (229) 896-2266. 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 Cook County Board of Commissioners at (229) -896-2266 or Loretta Hylton at the Southern Georgia Regional Commission at (229)333-5277.

**Southern Georgia Regional Commission**  
**Cook County and the Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks**  
**Kickoff for 2020 Comp Plan Update**  
**Date: 8/19/2019**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Email</u>
Vicki Parrish	Cook County	Clerk	vicki@cookcountysga.us
Faye Hughes	"	Administrator	cookgov@windstream.net
Lindsey Parrish	"	Chair	parrish.lindsey@yahoo.com
Jeff Latta	"	Vice-Chair	jbl1787@windstream.net
Andie Rowe	"	Commissioner	rrowe@rrowelet@yahoo.com
Dwight Auer	"	Commissioner	<del>hughes4750@</del> hughes

**Southern Georgia Regional Commission**  
**Cook County and the Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks**  
**Workshop 1 for 2020 Comp Plan Update**  
**Date: 9/16/2019**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Email</u>
Debra Robinson	Cook County Government Commissioner	Commissioner	ddr065@hotmail.com
Ariel Godwin	SGRC	Planner	agodwin@sgrc.us
Elizabeth Backe	SGRC	Planning Dir.	ebacke@sgrc.us
Teresa Barber	Lenox	City Clerk	cityoflenox@gmail.com
Sonya Philpot	Sparks	City Clerk	sophilpot@bellsouth.net
Heather Green	Adel Chamber	President	heather.green@adelchambers.org
John Hythe	City of Adel		
Rhonda Rowe	City of Adel		
Johnny West	Cook County Fire/EMA	Chief EMA Director	Johnny.west@cookcountyga.us
Audie Rowe	Cook Co Comm	Comm.	rrowe4@yahoo.com

**Southern Georgia Regional Commission**  
**Cook County and the Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks**  
**Workshop 1 for 2020 Comp Plan Update**  
**Date: 9/16/2019**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Email</u>
Sharon Haras	Community		Sharon@quickconsulting.biz
Budd Duke	Adel		
Pat Bush	Community		patbush45@gmail.com
Dwight Purvis	CCC	Com.	Hayman4250@yahoo.com
Don Quarter	WNALS		contact@suwannee.net
Jeff LANE	County Commissioner		jbl178@windstream.net
Lindsey Parrish	County Comm		parrish.lindsey@yahoo.com
Bill Tillman	Wiregrass GA Tech	Director of Cook Co	b.tillman@wiregrass.edu
LISA COLLINS	CK. CO EDC	EX Dir.	lisacollins@cookcountyledc.com

**Southern Georgia Regional Commission**  
**Cook County and the Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks**  
**Workshop 2 for 2020 Comp Plan Update**  
**Date: 10/7/2019**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Email</u>
Corey Hull	SGRC		chull@sgrc.us
Ariel Godwin	SGRC	Planner	agodwin@sgrc.us
Henry P. Balf	CITY OF LENOX	MAYOR	
Rhonda Rowe	City of Adel	City Clerk	rrowe@southlink.us
John Flythe	City of Adel	City Manager	jflythe@windstream.net
Eliza Backe	SGRC	Prog. Dir.	ebacke@sgrc.us
Vicki Parrish	CCBOC	Co. Clerk	vicki@cookcountygga.us
Dwight E. Purvis	BOC	Com	Hayman4750@yahoo.com
Paddy Duka	Adel		
Sharon Harg	Chamblee	Citizen	sharon@quickconsulting.biz

**Southern Georgia Regional Commission**  
**Cook County and the Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks**  
**Workshop 2 for 2020 Comp Plan Update**  
**Date: 10/7/2019**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Email</u>
Debra Robinson	Government	Cook County Commissioner	ddr065@hotmail.com
Teresa Barber	City of Lenox	City Clerk	cityoflenox@gmail.com
Randy Lane	City of Adel	Community Development	randy.lane314@yahoo.com
Heather Green	Adel Chamber	President	heather.green@AdelCookChamber.org
Bill Tillman	Wiregrass	Director of Econ Develop	bill.tillman@wiregrass.edu
Jay Hugh	Cook County	Co Admin	cookgov@windstream.net
John S. Quirke	WWALS	General Manager	contact@sawcuneechamber.org
Audie C. Rowe	Cook Co Comm	Comm-	rrowe64@yahoo.com

**Southern Georgia Regional Commission**  
**Cook County and the Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks**  
**Workshop 3 for 2020 Comp Plan Update**  
**Date: 11/4/2019**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Email</u>
Debra Robinson	County	County Commissioner	ddr065@hotmail.com
Ariel Godwin	SGRC	Planner	agodwin@sgrc.us
C. Strom	SGRC	Asst. Dir.	cstrom@sgrc.us
Rhonda Rowe	Adel	City Clerk	rrowe@southlink.us
Randy Lane	Adel	Comm. Dev.	randy.lane314@yahoo.com
Teresa Barber	Lenox	City Clerk	cityoflenox@gmail.com
Sonya Philpot	Sparks	City Clerk	sbphilpot@bellsouth.net
Eliza Backe	SGRC	Plng. Dir.	ebacke@sgrc.us
Erica McDelland	SGRC	Env. Proj. Mgr.	emcdelland@sgrc.us
Dwight E. Purvis	CCC	CCC	Hayman 4750@yahoo.com.

**Southern Georgia Regional Commission  
Cook County and the Cities of Adel, Cecil, Lenox, and Sparks  
Workshop 3 for 2020 Comp Plan Update  
Date: 11/4/2019**

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