Draft 2024-2029 Irwin County and Ocilla Comprehensive Plan

Adopted February 5, 2024

sgrc SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION

IRWIN COUNTY AND OCILLA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2024-2028 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	
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I. Chapter 110-12-1. Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning

1. **Introduction**

Irwin County, Georgia is located in South Georgia within the boundaries of the 18-county Service Area of the Southern Georgia Regional Commission. It contains 122,806 acres or 363 square miles with a 2020 U.S. Census population of 9,667 and a Georgia Job Tax Credit ranking of Tier 1 status by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The county seat of Irwin County is Ocilla, the only incorporated city within the county, although there are several unincorporated communities namely: Irwinville, Mystic, Waterloo, and Wray.

The 2024 Irwin County and Ocilla Comprehensive Plan was prepared by Irwin County and Southern Georgia Regional Commission in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Chapter 110-12-1, Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning.

As required by the Local Comprehensive Planning Standards, the 2024 Irwin County and Ocilla Comprehensive Plan consists of the following elements:

1. Community Goals

2. Needs and Opportunities

3. Community Work Program

4. Broadband Element

5. Economic Development Element (Based on Tier 1 Job Tax Credit Rating)

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

3. Stakeholders were Identified

These include local governments of Irwin County and the City of Ocilla; local businesses and industries; the local school system; local healthcare agency; and the general public.

4. Identification of Participation Techniques

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.

5. Participation Program

The participation program 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 prior to transmittal to DCA. Stakeholders were invited to all the meetings for participation.

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.

Outreach to the public, local governments and other stakeholders and interested parties was accomplished by e-mail correspondence, direct communication, the project website, and updates provided at workshops and at other group meetings. Opportunity for public comment was provided at public hearings and at city and county commission meetings.

Following are photos and descriptions of the Kick-off Public Hearing, Workshop I, Workshop II, Workshop III, and the Final Public Hearing.

Kick-off Public Hearing

The public hearing kicking off the comprehensive planning process was held on Monday, March 6, 2023, in the Irwin County Commission meeting room located at 207 Irwin Avenue, Ocilla, Georgia 31774. 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.

Kick-off Public Hearing March 6, 2023, Irwin County Commission Meeting Room

First Workshop (Workshop I)

The first workshop was held on April 18, 2023, in the Ocilla City Commission meeting room located within the Ocilla City Hall at 111 north Irwin Avenue, Ocilla, Georgia 31774. The first workshop included a review of the Community Vision and Goals. A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis was performed with the group to begin determining current needs and opportunities. The SWOT Analysis can be found in the Appendix to this document.

Workshop I April 18, 2023, in the City Council meeting room City of Ocilla

Second Workshop (Workshop II)

The second workshop was held on May 9, 2023, in the Ocilla Community House located at 711 South Irwin Avenue. The purpose of the meeting was to review Needs and Opportunities and the Community Policies and add new ones where appropriate.

Workshop II May 9, 2023, at the Ocilla Community House on South Irwin Avenue

Third Workshop (Workshop III)

The third workshop was held on July 11, 2023, and was located at the Ocilla Community House at 711 S. Irwin Avenue. This workshop was utilized to update the Economic Development Element and the Land Use Element and Maps as desired by the local governments.

Workshop III July 11, 2023, at the Ocilla Community House on South Irwin Avenue

Final Public Hearing

Need photo here

The Final Public Hearing (Transmittal) was held January 29, 2024, at the Ocilla Community House located at 711 South Irwin Avenue, Ocilla, GA 31774 for the public to have an opportunity to view the draft version of the plan and to make comments on it. The public was invited to participate in the public hearing via an advertisement in the local Legal Organ newspaper – the Ocilla Star.

6. Consideration of Regional Water Plan and Environmental Planning Criteria

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

Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan

Irwin County is within the area of the Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan, which was adopted in June 2023.

Surface Water Resources, Counties, and Major Cities

Source: Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan

The Suwannee-Satilla Council has identified 13 goals for the region, as established November 11, 2009. It is important to note that the goals summarized below are not presented in order of priority but were assigned a number to identify specific goals addressed in the water management practice selection process (Section 6).

Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan Goals:

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

2. Manage groundwater and surface water to encourage sustainable economic and population growth in the region.

3. Manage the regions and state's water resources to preserve and protect 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 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.

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

In addition to addressing challenges, the Suwannee-Satilla Council identified several management practice recommendations to address forecast future uses. These recommendations include such practices as the additional sustainable development of groundwater and surface water in areas with sufficient water supply; best management practices for water quality issues such as non-point source runoff, nutrient loadings, and TMDLs in the region; and additional educational and ordinance practices. The selected management practices will over time address identified challenges and meet future uses when combined with practices for all shared resource regions.

Table ES-2 Short-Term Water Quantity Management Practices (0 – 10 Years)

Utilize surface water and groundwater sources within the available resource capacities
Water conservation
Data collection and research to confirm the frequency, duration, severity, and drivers of surface water challenges (forecast methodology assumptions and Resource Assessment modeling)
Evaluate and ensure that current and future surface water permit conditions do not contribute to challenges/low flow concerns
Encourage sustainable groundwater use as a preferred supply in regions with surface water challenges/low flow concerns
Identify incentives and a process to sustainably replace a portion of existing agricultural surface water use with groundwater use (for agricultural irrigation) to address challenges/low flow concerns
Evaluate the potential to use existing storage to address challenges/low flow concerns
Education to reduce shallow aquifer groundwater use where it impacts surface water in areas with challenges/low flow concerns

Table ES-3 Short-Term Water Quality Management Practices (0 – 10 Years)

Point Sources: - Support current permitting and waste load allocation process to improve treatment of wastewater and increase treatment capacity   - Data collection and research to confirm discharge volumes and waste concentrations as well as receiving stream flows and chemistry
Non-point Sources: - Data collection to confirm source of pollutants and causes; encourage stormwater ordinances, septic system maintenance, and coordinated planning   - Ensure funding and support for Best Management Practices programs by local and state programs, including urban, rural, forestry, and agricultural Best Management Practices
Non-point Source Existing Impairments: Total maximum daily load listed streams: Improve data on source of pollutant and length of impairment; Identify opportunities to leverage funds and implement non-point source Best Management Practices

Table 6-1 includes the Suwannee-Satilla Council's recommended management practices to address water quality challenges, including stream segments with limited localized dissolved oxygen assimilative capacity and insufficient wastewater permit capacity. Figure 6-2 illustrates the Suwannee-Satilla Council's recommended suite of surface water quality management practices in a phased approach. The Suwannee-Satilla Council addresses challenges by identifying and recommending specific actions to add/improve infrastructure and improve flow and water quality conditions. Management practices that help improve river flows may also help improve water quality.

Table 6-1 Recommended Surface Water Availability Management Practices in a Phased Approach
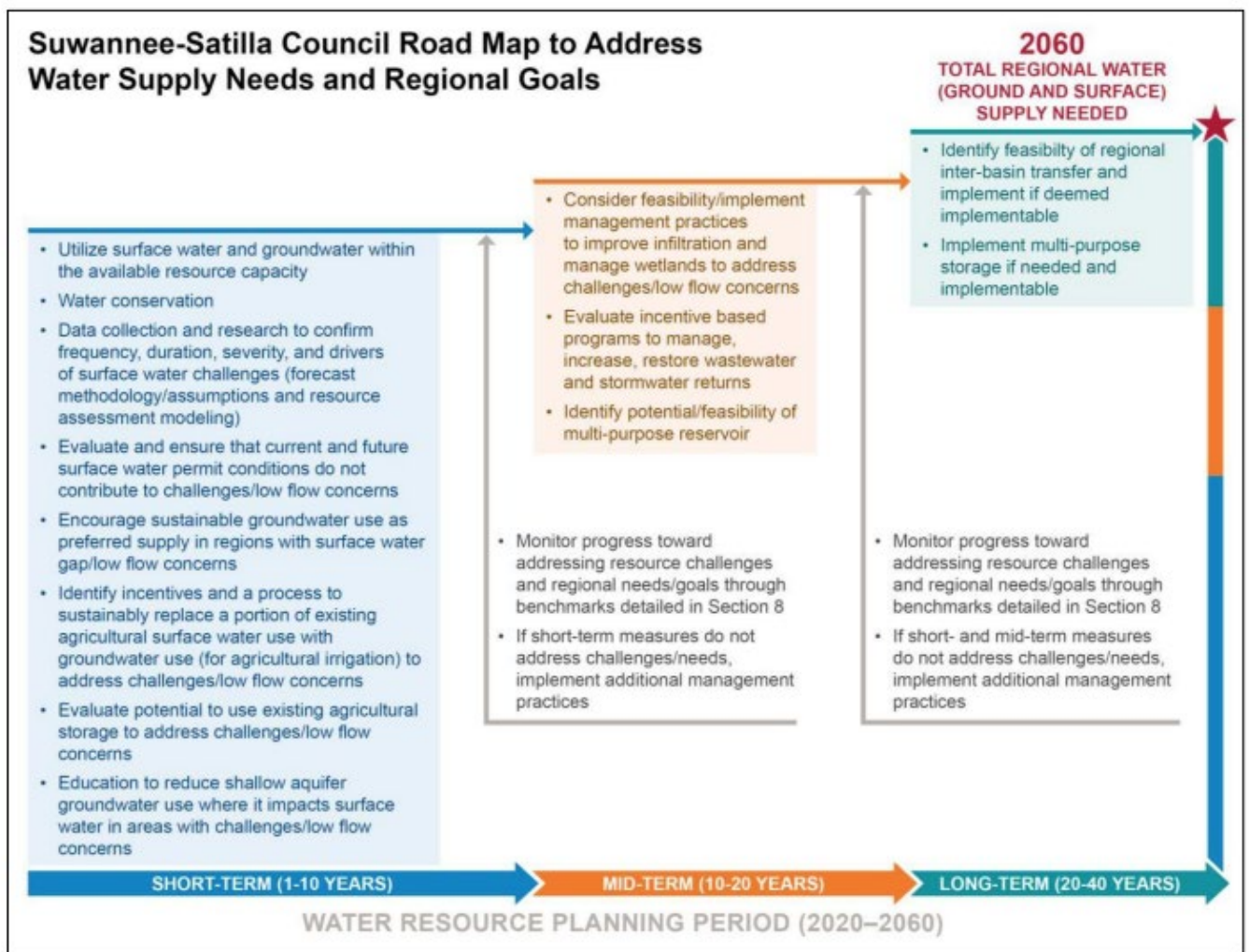
Table 6-2 Recommended Surface Water Quality Management Practices in a Phased Approach
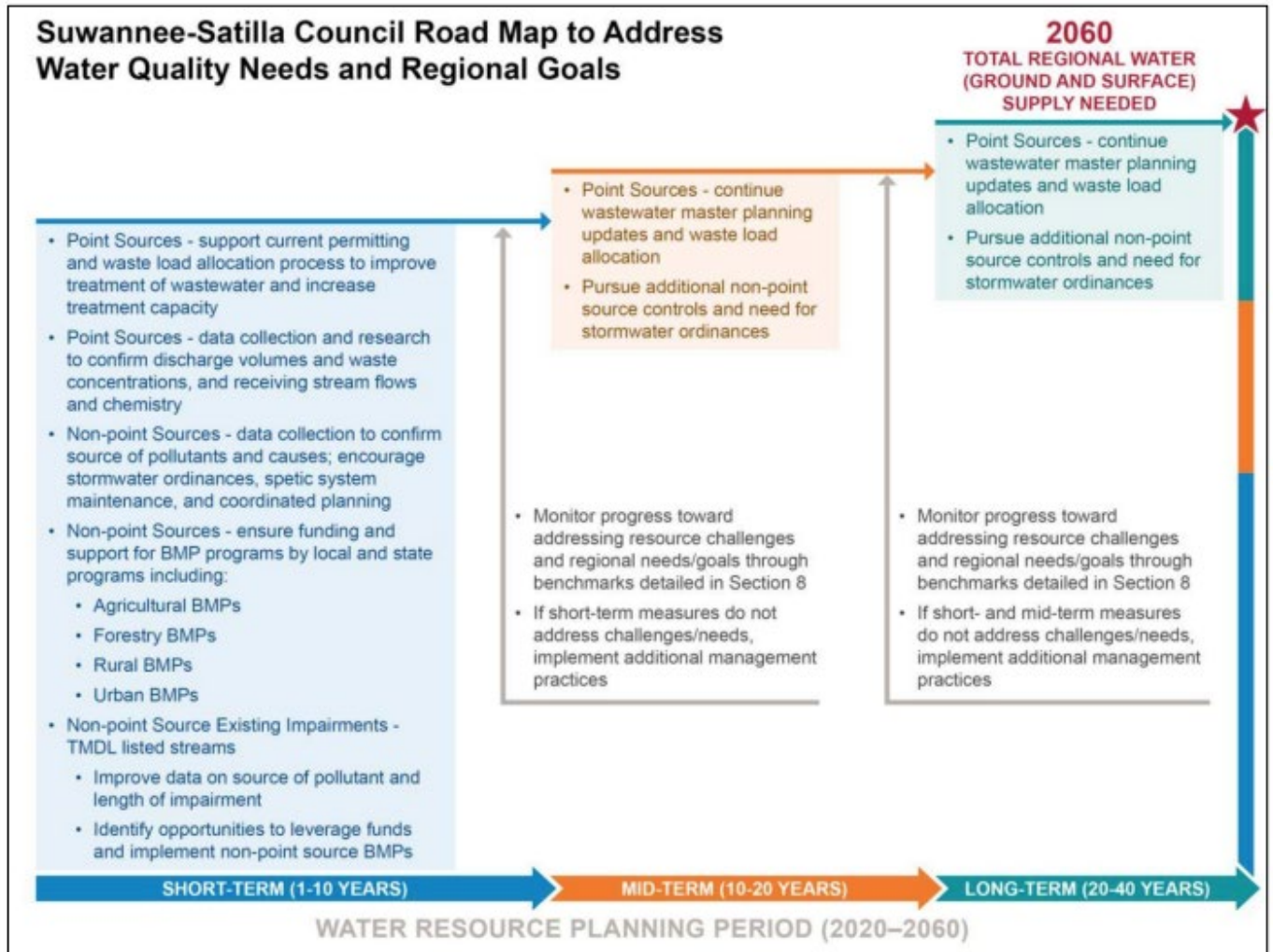
Chapter 391-3-16, Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria

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

The criteria require local governments to 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 before adopting a watershed plan, mining activities permitted by DNR, certain utility placements, unique forestry, or agricultural services.

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

II. Plan Elements

1. Community Vision and Goals

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

Vision

Irwin County and Ocilla are continuously striving towards providing and maintaining a welcoming small-town atmosphere with big town services characterized by well-planned communities where citizens and visitors alike enjoy shopping, eating, and entertaining locally. Downtown Ocilla will serve as a hub of commerce containing rehabilitated historic buildings and compatible new infill construction in an attractive and inviting space. Residential, commercial, and entertainment uses will fill the storefronts and help drive the local economy. Streets, sidewalks, bike trails, and greenways will all be well maintained and will connect important commercial, residential, and public uses.

The county's rich agricultural and forestry resources will be celebrated and in active production serving the local communities and markets as well as outside the county. The local economy will be vibrant and offer steady, competitive paying jobs for all segments of the workforce while emphasizing careers for high school and college graduates who wish to continue to make their home here. Partnerships among the County and the City will be expanded to promote the improvement of the quality of life in the community. Citizens will hold their community in high esteem and be proud to call Irwin County home.

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

Goal 2:   **CULTURAL RESOURCES** – To provide and protect cultural resources that serve the needs of local citizens now and in the future not only in the form of the built environment but also through high quality cultural events that improve quality of life.

Goal 3:   **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT –** To support a growing and balanced economy that bolsters the community's position as a regional economic engine, offering high-wage jobs by ensuring a high-level of workforce adequacy; and to ensure community growth and development, which benefits all segments of the diverse population.

Goal 4:   **HOUSING –** To encourage access to appropriate and affordable housing options for all residents of all income levels.

Goal 5:   **LAND USE -** To ensure that the County's anticipated growth occurs in a well-integrated yet organized fashion, which protects our community resources, promotes efficient use of infrastructure and support quality economic development.

Goal 6:   **TRANSPORTATION –** To promote well planned and maintained transportation facilities, which protect our community resources, promote efficient use of infrastructure and support quality economic development.

Goal 7:   **COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES –** To ensure the provision of infrastructure, community facilities, and public services that support efficient growth and development patterns and provide opportunities for local citizens to increase their health by recreating and/or walking/biking for pleasure or utility.

Goal 8:   **INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION –** To encourage coordination of planning efforts with other local service providers and authorities, neighboring communities, and state and regional planning agencies.

Goal 9:   **BROADBAND SERVICES –** To ensure broadband services are accessible throughout the communities and are consistent, reliable, and equitable.

2. Needs and Opportunities

The Needs and Opportunities as shown in this Section were developed in meetings through discussions with stakeholders and residents, experiences by stakeholders and residents, analysis of statistical data and information, and review and revision as applicable of the Needs and opportunities identified in the 2018 Update for Irwin County and the City of Ocilla.

    1. **Natural Resources**

Needs

1.1   **Updated Flood Plain Maps.** Correct existing flood plain maps are needed to replace the current maps, which are inaccurate by much as eleven feet, to protect flood areas, river corridors, and groundwater recharge areas from development.

1.2   **Development in Flood Hazard Areas.** Existing regulations need to be reviewed to ensure adequacy in reducing the amount of future development in identified flood hazard areas.

1.3   **Master Drainage Plan**. A countywide Master Drainage Plan is needed.

1.4   **Sustainable Water Management.** Sustainable management of water as a

resource, especially for agri-business, is required.

1.5   **Publicly Accessible Water.** There are no publicly accessible water bodies for boating, recreation, and fishing.

1.6   **Walking Trails.** There are no walking trails available.

1.7   **Land Acquisition.** There is no Land Acquisition Plan.

Opportunities

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

1.2   **Water management**. Promote more efficient use of surface irrigation and better water management to ensure long-term opportunities for sustainable development and quality of life for residents.

1.3   **Runoff Management.** Implement storm water retention ponds, wetlands, and bio-retention areas to manage runoff quality and flow rate and help support river flows.

1.4   **Seek Funding.**
        1. Apply for water quality grants to assist with reduction in runoff.
        2. Apply for grants from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to assist with recreational trails in natural areas.

1.5   **Increase Water Access.** Dredge the river to create more navigable waterways for public use such as boating, fishing, and recreation.

1.6   **Opportunities for Recreation.**   Build/Develop more opportunities, such as greenways/walking trails, for recreation in natural areas.

1.7   **Land Acquisition.** Develop a Land Acquisition Plan to preserve and protect forested and natural lands for the education, pleasure & recreation of the public.

2. **Cultural Resources**

Needs

2.1   **Inventory of Historic Places and structures.** There are many historical structures and places, including cemeteries, in Irwin County that are not identified nor inventoried.

2.2   **Historic Preservation**. Buildings are aging and deteriorating. More funding is needed to protect and rehabilitate local historic structures.

2.3   **Culture Resources Registry**.

        1. Irwin County and Ocilla are home to many cultural resources in the form of festivals, historic places, etc., however, no official registry or recognition of these cultural resources exists.

        2. Cultural opportunities are not listed on Facebook/Social Media.

2.4   **Underutilized Tourism Resources.**

        1. Irwin County and Ocilla contain many historic and cultural resources in need of promotion.

        2. There is no walking/driving tour of historic resource.

        3. There are no markers on important historic sites.

2.5   **School Renovations.** The old Ocilla Schoolhouse needs to be rehabilitated.

2.6   **Recreation.**

        1. There are not enough recreation areas.

2. There is a lack of funding to develop new recreational opportunities – the Recreation Department needs a larger budget.

3. Existing Public Parks need more equipment.

2.7   **Irwin County Chamber of Commerce.**   The Chamber of Commerce webpage does not list any cultural resources/festivals available in Irwin or Ocilla.

2.8   **Cultural Resources.**

1. Existing cultural resources need to be better maintained.

2. The existing cultural resources are not widely known or advertised.

3. There is not enough funding to develop new cultural resources.

2.9   **Volunteers.** The same few volunteers do all of the work.

Opportunities

2.1   **Inventory Historic** - Apply to the Georgia Historic Preservation Division for a Survey and Planning Grant to inventory historic resources in the Ocilla Historic District.

2.2   **Historic Preservation -** Explore grants and funding sources for a façade grant program for Downtown Ocilla.

2.3   **Cultural Resource Registry –** Upgrade the Chamber of Commerce webpage to include information on Cultural Resources available as well as festivals and activities for tourists.

2.4   **Tourism Resources** – The Historic Preservation Commission should develop a driving tour of historic resources in Ocilla.

2.5   **School Renovations** – Rehabilitate the old Ocilla Schoolhouse into a multi-use facility. The building could be utilized for Entrepreneur Incubator, Health and Wellness Center, Welcome Center, Local Museum, Artist's Studios, Meeting Facility, etc.

2.6   **Recreation.**

1. Create a new recreation position for a part-time Recreation Assistant.

2. Develop more recreation opportunities for adults and children utilizing new and existing spaces like lakes, rivers, parks, playgrounds, etc.

2.7   **Chamber of Commerce** – The Irwin County Chamber of Commerce should upgrade its website to contain information on local cultural resources, festivals and events, history of the city and county and local investment/development opportunities.

2.8   **Cultural Resources** – Inventory all public cultural resources in Ocilla and Irwin County and look into ways to better maintain, preserve and market these resources as tourist attractions.

2.5   **Volunteers.** Develop a local Volunteer Brigade to make it easier for people to volunteer one-time-a-year and grow participation in local events.

   3. Economic Development

Needs

3.1   **Job Opportunities.**

    1. More job opportunities are needed, especially higher-wage jobs.

    2. Job opportunities relevant to high school graduates and college graduates.

3.2   N**eed of Value-Added Products & Diversification.** Development of more value added products and diversification is needed for Agri-business and other industries.

3.3   **Innovative Economic Development**. More innovative economic development is needed.

3.4   **Industry.**

    1. Lack of industrial growth and available jobs.

    2. Lack of available space for industrial development

    3. Need brochure with specifications and information to help encourage industries to come into the county.

    4. Small local workforce to staff industries if they do come.

    5. Develop new industries in designated areas grouped so as to preserve valuable farmland for farming.

3.5   **Restaurants.** Not enough restaurants.

3.6   **Hotel.** No hotel in Ocilla and the one existing motel is not large enough to meet the needs.

3.7   **Downtown Ocilla.**

    1. Lack of businesses in Downtown – too many buildings being used for storage.

    2. Dark tinting on Downtown buildings hinders visibility and customers.

    3. Parking is a problem.

4. Local citizens don't strongly support local businesses.

5. Downtown needs beautification.

3.8   **Community.** Blighted buildings due to lack of Code Enforcement.

3.9   **Community Leadership**. Need a leadership program for new and upcoming community leaders.

Opportunities

3.1   **Promote & Support.**

1. Promote and support existing and expanding local businesses and industries therefore providing more jobs.

2. Work with existing employers to develop an inventory of employee skills and requirements needed for existing and new employees.

3. Develop Industry, Warehouse/Manufacturing facilities through strong local people utilizing appealing and aggressive marketing techniques.

3.2   **Local Retention of Graduates.** Expand recruitment of businesses that will hire local graduates from:

1. High school, trade schools, colleges, and universities.

2. Quick Start training program and graduates from the trades' certification programs at Wiregrass.

3. Create a Rural Experiential Learning Pilot program with area colleges.

4. Develop Entrepreneurship and Leadership classes in Primary, Elementary, Secondary and High Schools in Ocilla and Irwin County.

3.3   **Workforce**. Work with the local school system to encourage students to pursue degree programs in relevant and lucrative fields, such as science, technology, and engineering.

3.4   **Sustainable & Innovative**.

1. Promote and encourage sustainable and innovative agri-business opportunities.

2. Proactively work with the Commissioner of Agriculture to find agriculture-related businesses that fit the community.

3.5   **Grants Research.** Research grants that are available to assist businesses and tourism and pursue them as feasible.

3.6   **Downtown Expansions.**

1. Continue to promote Downtown Ocilla focusing on restaurants and retail.

2. Enforce Ocilla Zoning Code to restrict downtown buildings to be utilized for warehousing.

3. Beautify Ocilla by completing a Streetscape Program through the Downtown Area and throughout the City of Ocilla.

3.7 **Economic Development Director Position**. Continue supporting the Industrial Authority Economic Development Director Position.

3.8 **Leadership Academy**. Develop a local Leadership Program to teach new and potential community leaders about the important functions of the community and the functions of the local government.

4. Housing

Needs

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

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

4.3 **Affordable Housing.** There is a lack of Affordable Housing.

4.4 **Housing Market.**

1. There is a general lack of housing.

2. There are too many rental units and not enough home-owner occupied homes.

3. Building owners refuse to sell their unused land and buildings for adaptive re-use as housing.

4.5 **Mobile Home Parks.** Mobile Home Parks are experiencing maintenance issues.

Opportunities

4.1 **Funding Sources.** Continue to pursue CHIP, GICH and CDBG funds and other available grants to renovate appropriate housing.

4.2   **Code Enforcement**.   Continue a code enforcement program that will support homeowners in the maintenance and upkeep of blighted homes and properties.

4.3   **Cleanup of Blighted Homes & Properties.** City of Ocilla is actively cleaning up blighted homes and properties to revitalize neighborhoods and improve property value.

4.4   **Land Bank.** Create a Land Bank Authority.

4.5   **Property Taxes.** Increase local property taxes to give the County and City more operating funds that can be spent on housing development.

5. Land Use

Needs

5.1   **Zoning Enforcement**.

1. Both the City and County need better enforcement of their respective zoning codes, and need more resources to accomplish this task.

2. Zoning needs to be enforced.

5.2   **Housing Patterns.**

1. Housing patterns in Ocilla are erratic and not well planned.

2. Mobile Homes and Stick-built Homes are intermixed.

5.3   **Farmland.**   Prime Farmland in the County has been well-preserved and needs to continually preserved in the future.

5.4   **Solar.** Solar Development should be controlled so that it doesn't destroy valuable farmland, scenic land, and natural and cultural resources.

Opportunities

5.1   **Greenspace Program.** Develop a countywide Greenspace Program.

5.2   **Solar.**

1. Well-planned Solar developments can be an asset to the community.

5.3   **Land Acquisition.** Develop a Land Acquisition Plan to preserve and protect forested and natural lands for the education, pleasure & recreation of the public.

6. Transportation

Needs

6.1 **Public Transit.** The community needs public transit. The City of Ocilla has expressed a desire for rural public transit. Public transit is now available through "Let's Ride."

6.2 **Roads.**

1. The City still has dirt roads that need to be paved.

2. There are roads in the City and County that need maintenance.

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

6.4 **Airport.** There is no airport in Irwin County.

6.5 **Rail.** There is no rail availability in Irwin County.

6.6 **Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure.** There is no publicly available electric vehicle charging infrastructure in Irwin County or Ocilla.

Opportunities

5.1 **Public Transit**.

1. Federal programs and regional resources could help to fund public transit.

2. SGRC Regional Transit offers public transportation through the "Let's Ride" program at www.letsridesouthga.org.

6.2 **TSPLOST.** TSPLOST has been approved with funding for basic road resurfacing and maintenance.

6.3 **Electric Vehicle Charging Stations.** Develop new Electric Vehicle Charging Stations in Ocilla and at key locations throughout Irwin County.

6.4 **Road Repair/Upgrade.** Repair/Upgrade roads in Irwin County and the City of Ocilla.

7. Community Facilities and Services

Needs

7.1   **Infrastructure Improvements.** The City's existing water and sewer lines are very old and many of the pipes are rusty and leaking, and the sewer pond needs to be dredged.

7.2   **Funding Sources**. There is a lack of funding to repair the water and sewer system.

7.3   **Inventory.** There is a lack of a complete inventory of water and sewer system including valves, meters and manholes which makes identification of problems and solutions (including budgeting for improvements) very difficult and more expensive.

7.4   **GIS Data.**   There is a GIS inventory of some community infrastructure, but a more complete inventory is needed.

7.5   **Recreation Employment and Volunteers.**

        1. The Recreation Department has one full-time staff person and relies on volunteers to do the work. There is a need for more paid employees and volunteers.

        2. There is a general lack of Recreational Facilities for all ages.

        3. There is a great need for recreational opportunities for youth.

7.6   **Emergency System**. A countywide Early Warning Communication/Notification System is needed.

7.7   **CERT.** The "Community Emergency Response Team" (CERT) program needs to be implemented.

7.8   **Generators.** Portable and/or fixed generators are needed for all designated evacuation and emergency shelters and community water systems, as well as other critical facilities.

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

7.10   **Training.** There is a need to improve wildland fire training at the local fire department level.

7.11   **Senior Center.** The Senior Center needs to be upgraded and enhanced to encourage better client participation and use.

7.12   **Hospital.**

        1. The Hospital is struggling and is threatened with closure.

2. The medical care system is perceived as being weak.

7.13   **Event Facilities.** There is a lack of facilities for public and private events and the existing ones do not have updated technical capacities.

Opportunities

7.1   **Funding Resources.** Public finances are scarce to undertake much needed improvements to the public infrastructure. Review more opportunities for applications for state and federal funding sources to provide for the improvements.

7.2   **Local Grant Matches.** Research and implement sufficient private/public funding sources to act as local match for any state and Federal grants to increase the percentage of grants being awarded to Irwin County and the City of Ocilla.

7.3   **Community Partnerships.** Build on the active partnership between the local school board and the City and County.

7.4   **Volunteer Services.** Encourage volunteer opportunities and expand the local

        volunteer program through the development of a Volunteer Database.

7.5   **Designated "Firewise Community."** Become a designated "Firewise Community".

7.6   **Enforcement of Codes**. Enforce building, fire, and safety codes.

7.7   **Storm Ready**. Become a "Storm Ready Community."

7.8   **Unused Buildings.** Find opportunities to purchase and adaptively re-use existing vacant buildings for housing, event spaces, and recreational opportunities, etc. prior to purchasing land and constructing new ones.

7.9   **Senior Center.**

        1. Expand and enhance the existing Senior Center to make it more viable and increase use and attendance.

        2. Provide hot meals at the Senior Center.

7.10   **Hospital.** Look into expanding the Hospital and encourage it to offer more services.

7.11   **Event Facility.** Construct a new public event facility if an existing building cannot be secured and/or adaptively re-used as one.

8. Intergovernmental Coordination

Needs

1.1   **Collaboration.** Increased collaboration with neighboring counties is needed.

1.2   **Duplication of Services.** The City and County individually provide services that can be consolidated in a Service Delivery Strategy.

1.3   **ISO.** The ISO rating for the County is too high and needs to be lowered.

1.4   **School Board/City/County.** The School Board, the City of Ocilla and Irwin County do not communicate enough.

Opportunities

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

8.2   **Recreation Facilities.** The County and City could collaborate on Recreation Facilities and develop much better facilities together than separately.

8.3   **School Board/City/County.** Have joint meetings to discuss strategies for improvement of the local economy/workforce/retention of graduates/young people.

8.4   **ISO.** Reduce the ISO through the purchase of equipment and training programs for Fire Department employees.

8.5   **Police/Sheriff.** Potential consolidation of Ocilla Police and Irwin Sheriff's Departments for better service and reduce costs.

9. Broadband Services

Needs

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

Opportunities:

9.1   **Economic growth**. Better broadband services will improve the future for all citizens and businesses.

9.2   **Public/Private Partnerships**. Public/private partnerships could be developed to provide comprehensive broadband coverage that is consistent, reliable, and equitable.

9.3   **Broadband Coverage.** Broadband will cover Irwin County within two years with a 2-Gig speed available.

9.4   **Job Opportunities.** Job opportunities will be expanded for the entire county upon the installation of High-speed Internet throughout Irwin County.

3. Analysis of Data and Information

Following is a brief account of Irwin County and Ocilla demographic information.

2020 Population of Irwin County

27%

73%

Irwin County
City of Ocilla
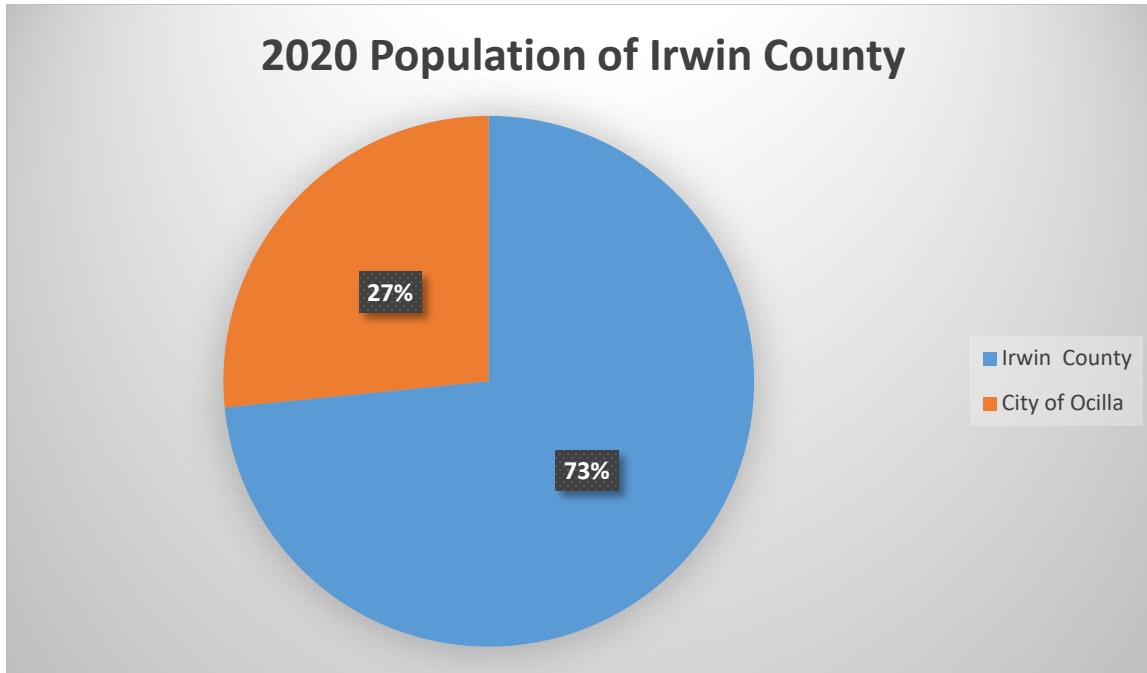
The 2020 population of Irwin County according to the U.S. Census Bureau was 9,666 compared to 9,538 in 2010, an increase of 128 people or +1.32%. The population of Ocilla as of 2020 was 3,498 compared to the 2010 population of 3,510, a decrease of 12 people or -.342%. Based on the total county population, the county accounts for approximately 73% as compared to the City of Ocilla at 27%.

The City of Ocilla is composed of 2.6 square miles of area. The majority of the land area in Ocilla is dry with only .39% of the area consisting of water. As of the 2020 U.S. Census there were 1,258 households located in Ocilla with 670 families residing in the city.

The racial make up in the City of Ocilla is majority Black or African American at 51.14% compared to that of Whites at 1,110 or 31.73%. The next highest percentage of the population is that of Hispanic or Latino at 411 people or 11.75%. See the following chart for a detail of the Racial Composition of the City of Ocilla's population.

City of Ocilla Population by Age Range and Racial Make-up
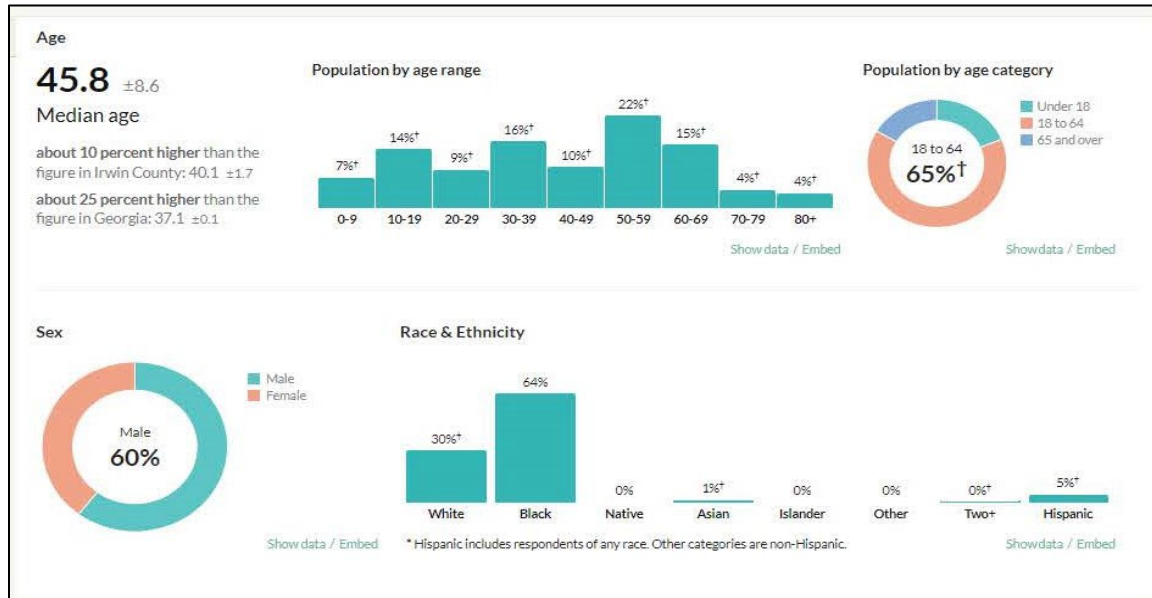
Source: Censusreporter.org

City of Ocilla Per Capita Income, Poverty Rate, and Means of Transportation
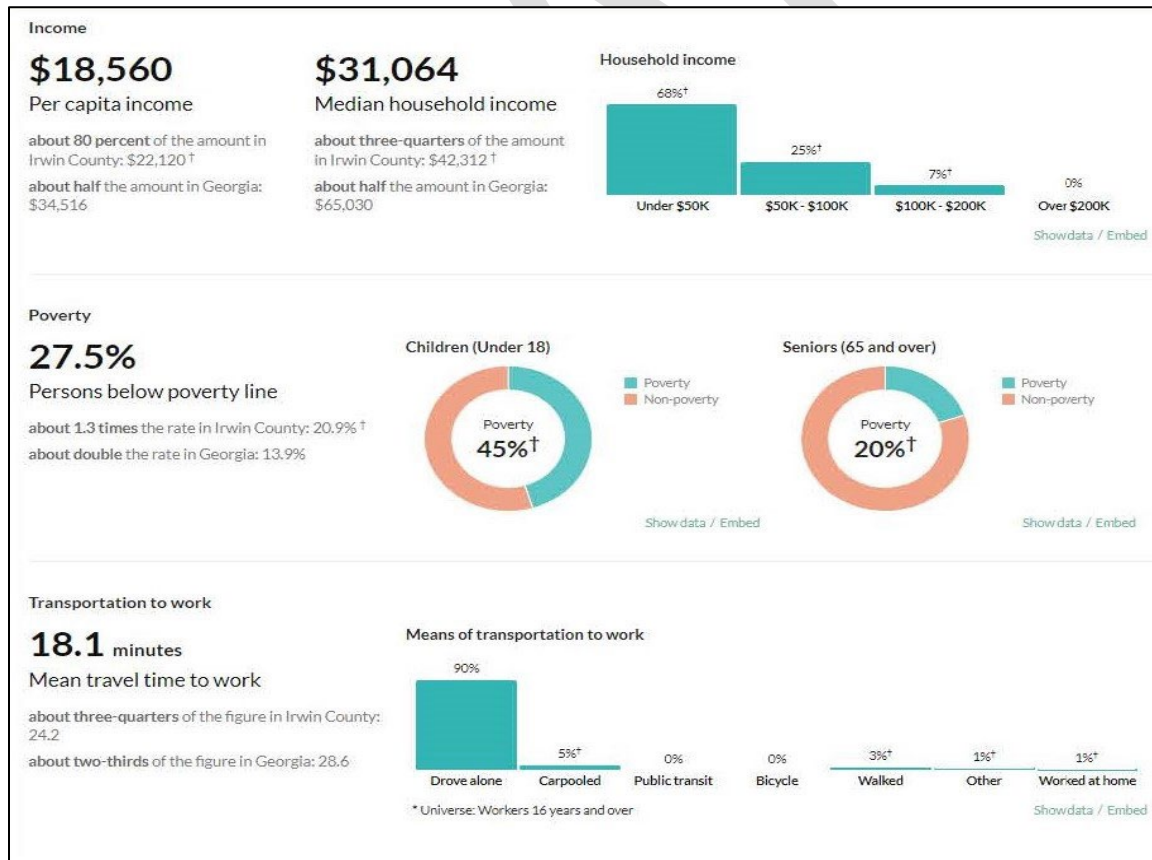
Source: Censusreporter.org

Irwin County Population by Age and Racial Make-up
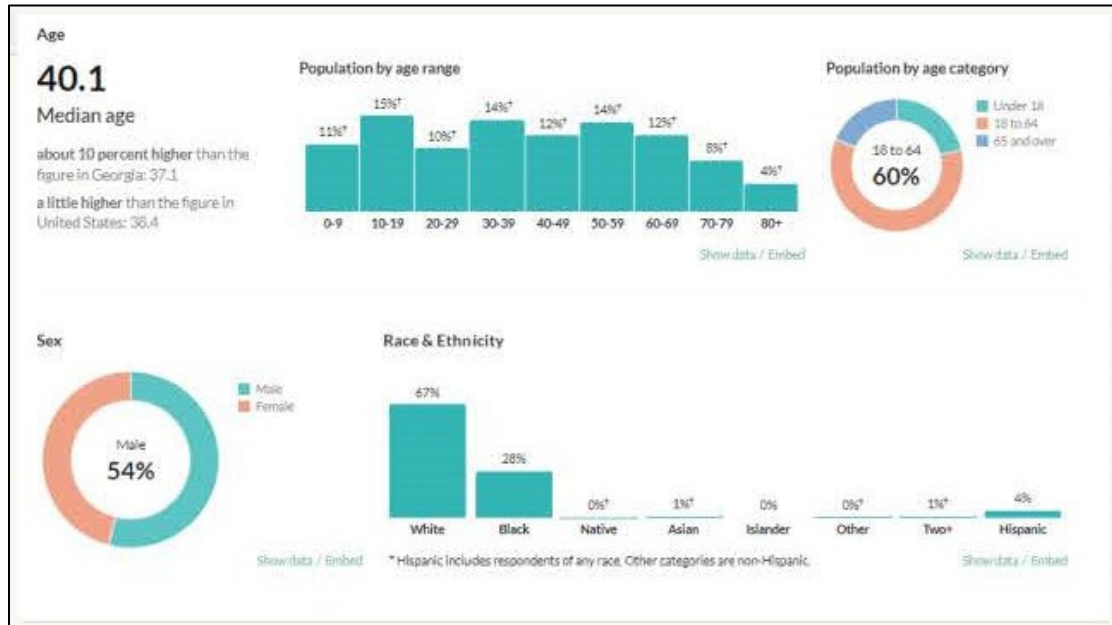
Source: Censusreporter.org

Irwin County Per-capita Income, Poverty Rate, and Means of Transportation
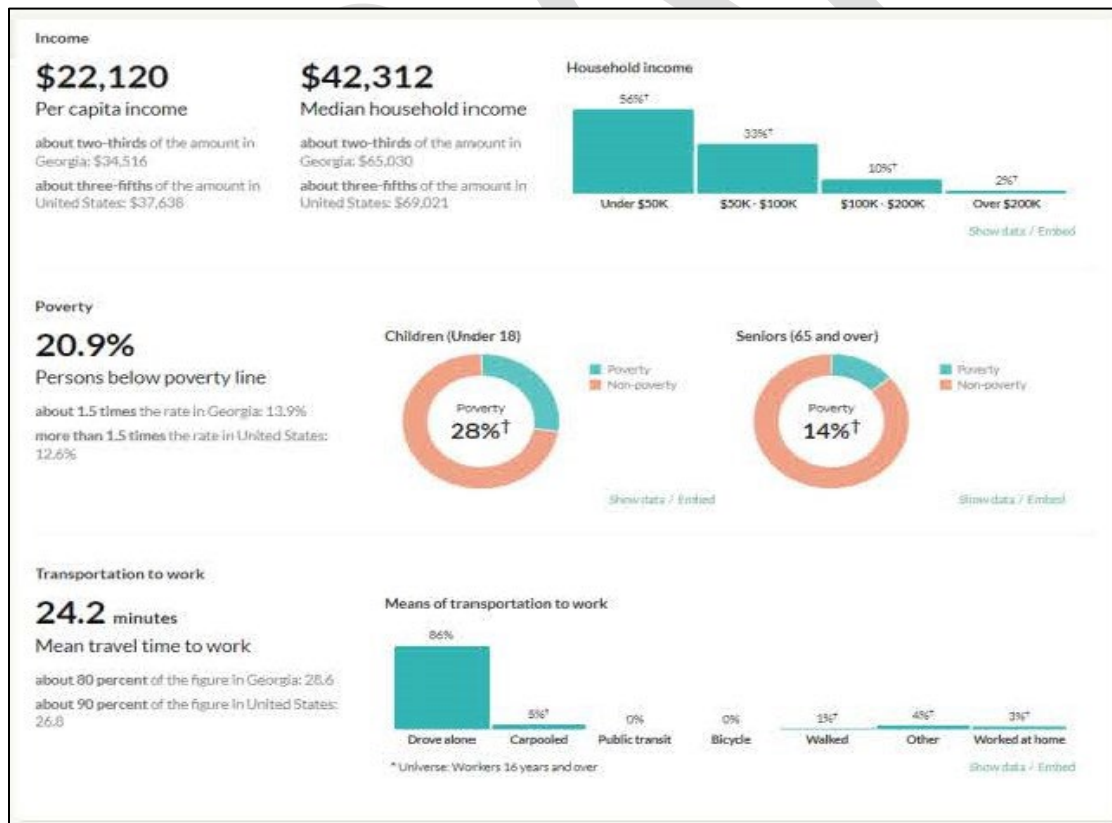
Source: Censusreporter.org

4. Broadband Element

In recognition of the importance of broadband infrastructure to the vitality of communities the Georgia legislature passed the Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Act (SB 402) I 2018. The Act provides for broadband services, planning, deployment, and incentives, along with other purposes. Comprehensive plans are also required to include the promotion of the deployment of broadband services.

Irwin County and Ocilla recognize the importance of broadband expansion to their economic development and quality of life for all their residents. The provision of broadband services enables residents to access several vital services such as healthcare, economic opportunities, and education. Expansion of rural broadband and improvement in the provision of broadband services can address residents' out-migration concerns. Effective and efficient broadband enables internet-based businesses to succeed in the global economy. It is challenging to educate upcoming generations of students in web literacy and digital skills training without adequate broadband speed and connectivity. The Covid -19 pandemic has shown us the importance of home broadband availability, affordability, and quality as all students and many workers studied and worked remotely.

Served & Unserved Areas in Irwin County and the City of Ocilla
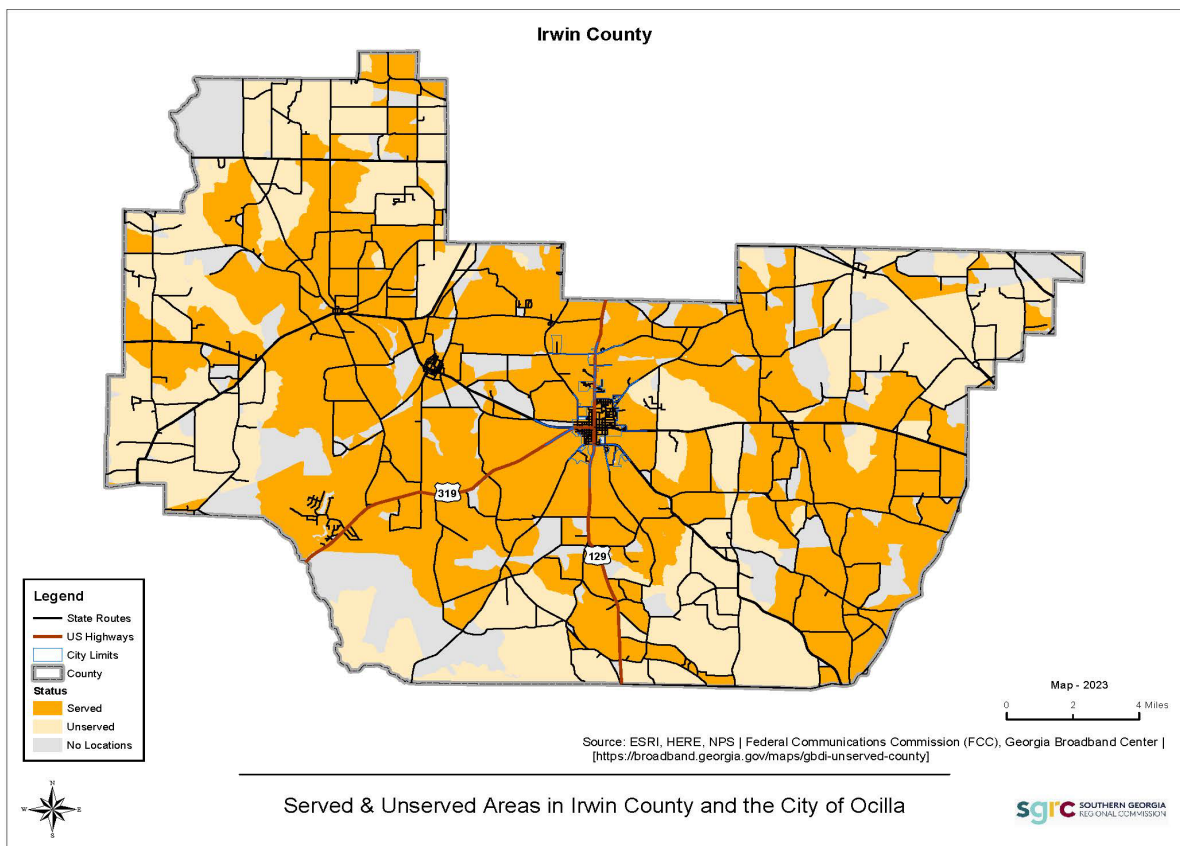
Source: SGRC ESRI, HERE, NPS, Federal Communications (FCC), Georgia Broadband Center

Irwin County

Unserved Locations: 743
Served Locations: 4,250
Percent Unserved: 15

Download County Data

Zoom to

Georgia Broadband Availability Map

Legend

Census Block Status

- Served
- Unserved
- No Locations

Unserved Locations

- Unserved at publication

Post Publication Impacts

- Impacted Blocks

Broadband Programs

- USDA Reconnect (Approved)
- FCC RDOF (Terrestrial)
- ARPA Grant Projects
- NTIA BIP (Approved)
- Capital Project Fund (R 1 & 2)

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs, https://broadband.georgia.gov/2023-georgia-broadband-availability-map

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs, https://broadband.georgia.gov/2023-georgia-broadband-availability-map

Georgia Broadband Availability Map

Legend

Census Block Status

- 🟧 Served
- 🟨 Unserved
- ⬜ No Locations

Unserved Locations

- 🔴 Unserved at publication

Post Publication Impacts

- 🟦 Impacted Blocks

Broadband Programs

- 🟩 USDA Reconnect (Approved)
- 🟩 FCC RDOF (Terrestrial)
- 🟩 ARPA Grant Projects
- 🟩 NTIA BIP (Approved)
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Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs, https://broadband.georgia.gov/2023-georgia-broadband-availability-map

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Georgia Broadband Availability Map

Legend

Census Block Status

- 🟧 Served
- 🟨 Unserved
- ⬜ No Locations

Unserved Locations
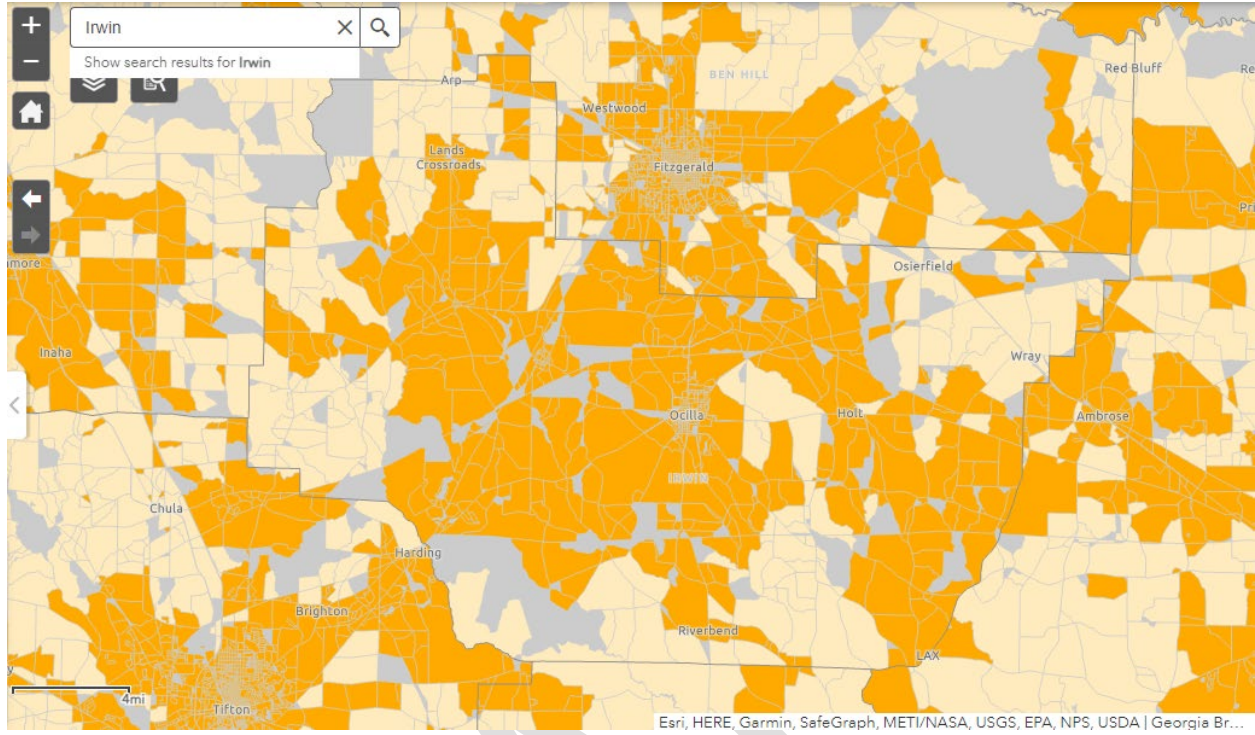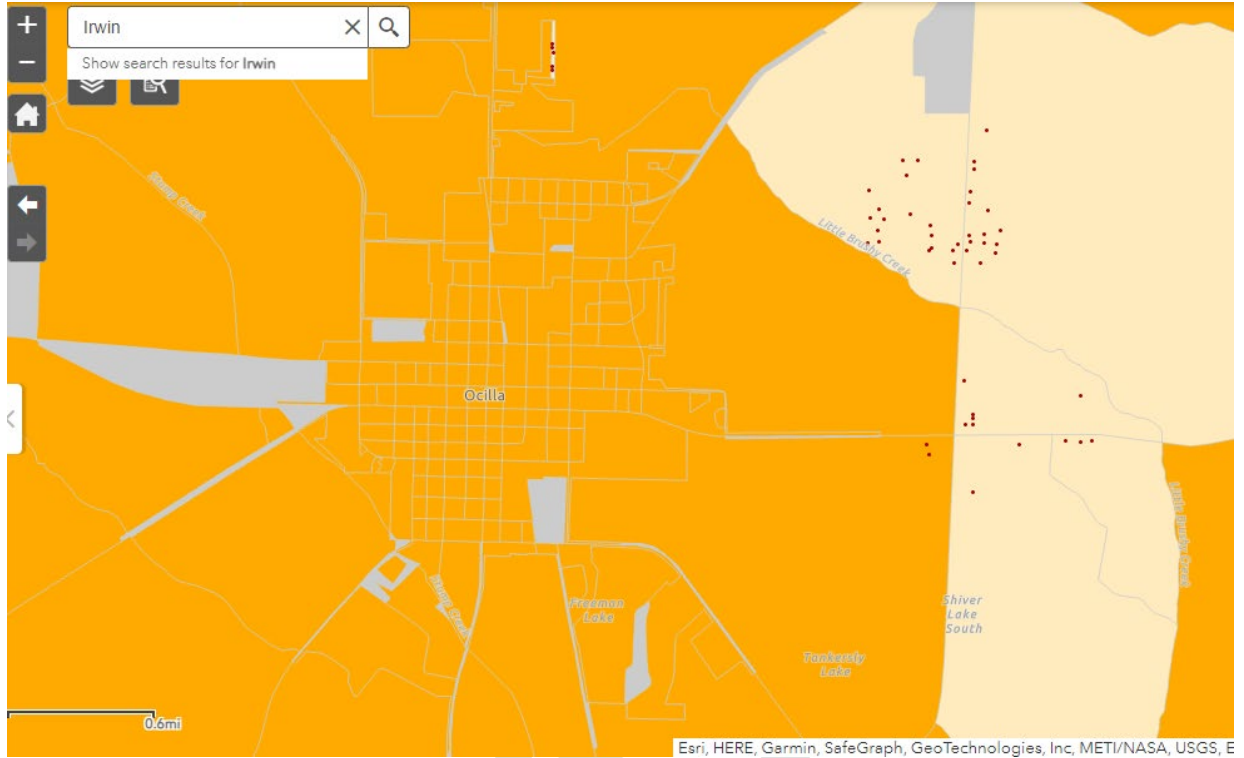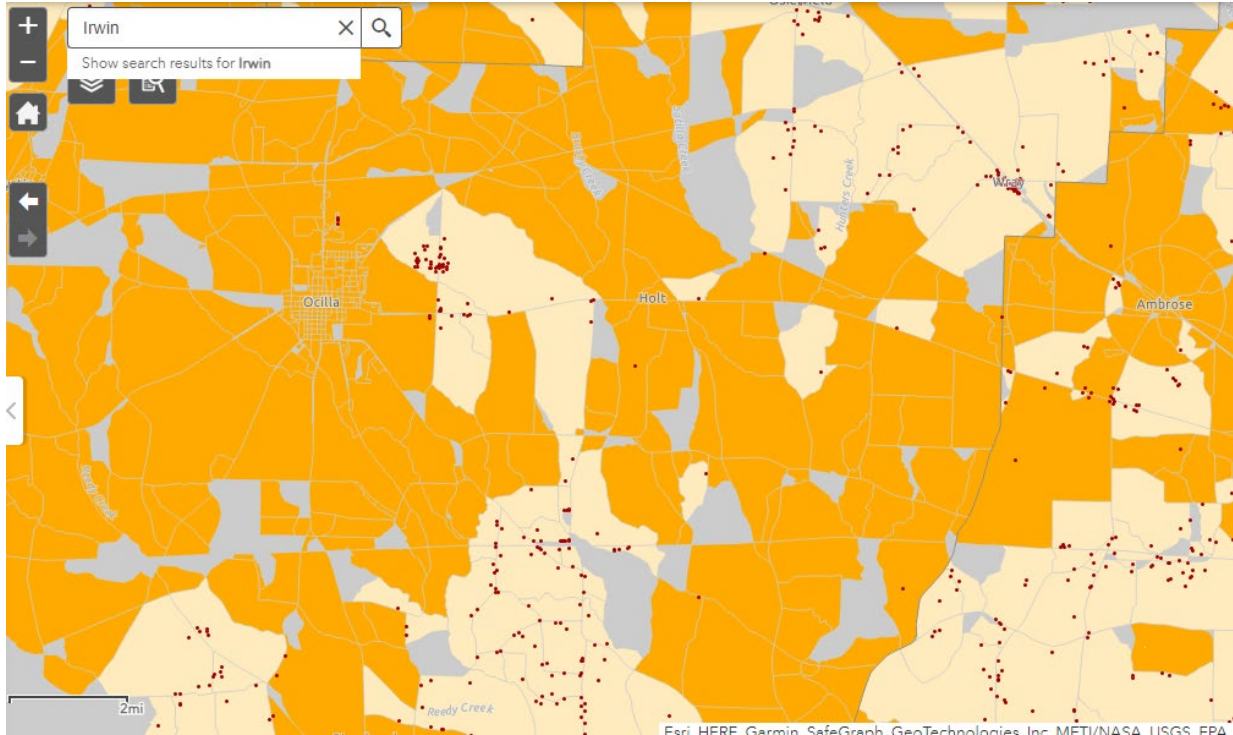
- 🔴 Unserved at publication

Post Publication Impacts

- 🟦 Impacted Blocks

Broadband Programs

- 🟩 USDA Reconnect (Approved)
- 🟩 FCC RDOF (Terrestrial)
- 🟩 ARPA Grant Projects
- ▨ NTIA BIP (Approved)
- 🟩 Capital Project Fund (R 1 & 2)

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs, https://broadband.georgia.gov/2023-georgia-broadband-availability-map

Service providers in Irwin County

#1	EarthLink Fiber				45% availability

EarthLink

Speed up to: **5 Gbps**
Price from: **$54.95**
User Review: ★★★★½
📞 (833) 906-5086
View Plans

EarthLink Fiber provides Fiber Internet and DSL Internet services in Ocilla, GA.

#2	Viasat				95.15% availability

Viasat

Speed up to: **150 Mbps**
Price from: **$49.99**
User Review: ★★★½☆
📞 (866) 606-9068
View Plans

Viasat provides Satellite Internet and Phone services in Ocilla, GA.

#3	HughesNet				97.83% availability

HughesNet

Speed up to: **25 Mbps**
Price from: **$54.99**
User Review: ★★★★☆
📞 (855) 768-8973
View Plans

HughesNet provides Satellite Internet and Phone services in Ocilla, GA.

#4	Windstream				51.63% availability

kinetic by windstream. Authorized Agent

Speed up to: **8 Gbps**
Price from: **$39.99**
User Review: ★★★½☆
📞 (844) 394-9875
View Plans

Windstream provides Fiber Internet, Cable Internet, DSL Internet, Copper Internet and Phone services in Ocilla, GA.

#5	Xtream by Mediacom				76.5% availability

XTREAM POWERED BY Mediacom | AUTHORIZED RETAILER

Speed up to: **150 Mbps**
Price from: **$29.99**
User Review: ★★½☆☆
📞 (855) 973-4046
View Plans

Xtream by Mediacom provides Cable Internet, Television and Phone services in Ocilla, GA.

Source: https://www.broadbandsearch.net/service/georgia/ocilla?search=31774

The infrastructure through which broadband is provided, and the condition of that infrastructure, is widely varied throughout the Region. DSL service is provided through telephone lines. Cable broadband is delivered through cable lines that often share poles with telephone and electric wires. As such, cable and DSL broadband infrastructure is vulnerable to damage from storms. While fiber optic lines are typically buried and less vulnerable to damage.

Internet Provider Types in Ocilla

Cable
100%
Coverage

DSL
100%
Coverage

Internet Speed Availability in Ocilla

3 Mbps
100%
Availability

10 Mbps
100%
Availability

25 Mbps
100%
Availability
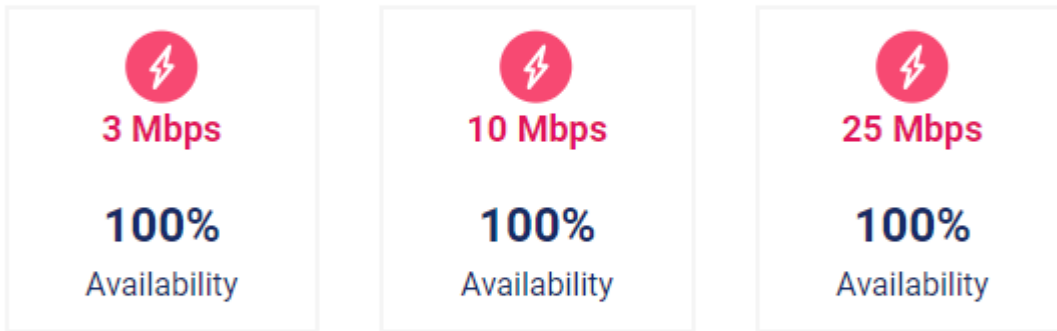
Broadband Internet Availability
(Internet faster than 25 Mbps)

100%	89%	79%
31774	Georgia	USA
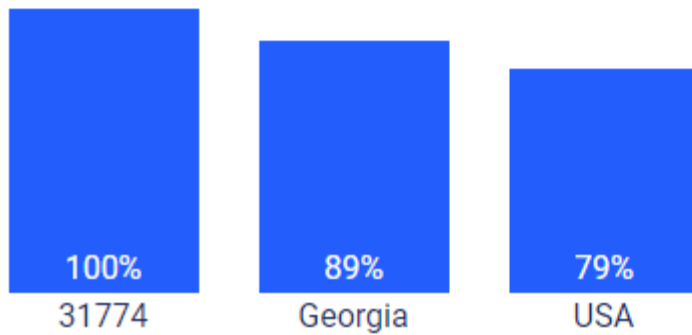
Source: HighSpeedInternet.com, https://www.highspeedinternet.com/ga/ocilla?zip=31774

Compare Ocilla, GA Internet Providers Ranked by Maximum Fastest Speed

	Provider	Max Mbps Download	Type
1.	Windstream	8 Gbps	Fiber Internet, Cable Internet, DSL Internet, Copper Internet and Phone
2.	EarthLink Fiber	5 Gbps	Fiber Internet and DSL Internet
3.	Viasat	150 Mbps	Satellite Internet and Phone
4.	Xtream by Mediacom	150 Mbps	Cable Internet, Television and Phone
5.	HughesNet	25 Mbps	Satellite Internet and Phone

Your Best Internet Service Option By Usage

- Best Provider for Overall Usage - Xtream by Mediacom
- Best Provider for Fast Speeds - Xtream by Mediacom
- Best Provider for Gaming - Windstream
- Best Provider for Streaming - Windstream
- Best Provider for Availability - HughesNet

Fastest Internet Speeds in Ocilla, Georgia

- Windstream - 8 Gbps ** Fast Download **
- EarthLink Fiber - 5 Gbps
- Viasat - 150 Mbps

Internet Provider Types in Ocilla, Georgia

- Cable Internet - 76.5%
- DSL Internet - 51.44%
- Satellite Internet - 100%

Widest Coverage Providers in Ocilla, Georgia

- HughesNet - 97.83%
- Viasat - 95.15%
- Xtream by Mediacom - 76.5%

Below is a list of the Fiber Internet options in Ocilla, Georgia with up to Gigabit connections. Search Fiber-optic internet plans and internet packages.

1. **Windstream** - 8 Gbps - Fiber Internet, Cable Internet, DSL Internet, Copper Internet and Phone
2. **EarthLink Fiber** - 5 Gbps - Fiber Internet and DSL Internet
3. **Cyberonic** - 11 Mbps - Fiber Internet, Cable Internet, DSL Internet, Copper Internet and Fixed Wireless Internet

Here are the internet providers that have the best availability in Ocilla, Georgia, ranked by quality of service and fast speeds.

1. **Xtream by Mediacom** - 150 Mbps - Cable Internet, Television and Phone
2. **HughesNet** - 25 Mbps - Satellite Internet and Phone
3. **Viasat** - 150 Mbps - Satellite Internet and Phone
4. **Windstream** - 8 Gbps - Fiber Internet, Cable Internet, DSL Internet, Copper Internet and Phone
5. **EarthLink Fiber** - 5 Gbps - Fiber Internet and DSL Internet

Source: https://www.broadbandsearch.net/service/georgia/ocilla?search=31774

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

Also, as broadband access has become crucial for so many people, the resiliency of broadband infrastructure will be a critical consideration for future hazard mitigation plans and other plans dealing with disaster resiliency. Broadband outages are no longer just inconvenient; they can also take an economic toll on communities and regions.

Broadband 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. Moreover, this plan lists the following Issues and Opportunities related to broadband.

 Needs:

We need digital broadband and communications in a manner that ensures the current and future needs of residents, businesses, and industry within Irwin County and the City of Ocilla are met.

Opportunities:

A. More affordable broadband services may enable greater opportunity for citizens and businesses

The partnership of both public and private companies could provide comprehensive broadband coverage that is equitable, reliable, and consistent.

The following issues and community policies in this plan relate to the provision of broadband infrastructure.

Need: Digital broadband and communications services provided in a manner that ensure that the current and future needs of residents, businesses, and industry within Irwin County and the City Ocilla are met.

Policy 9.1.4:   Enable public and private partnerships to reduce the cost of broadband services in Irwin County.

The above issue and policy has been used to inform an action plan to support the deployment of broadband services into unserved and underserved areas of Irwin County and the City of Ocilla.

Broadband Action Plan

Activity	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Provide communitywide adequate high-speed broadband access.	Irwin County and the City of Ocilla	$1 – $10 million	General Fund, SPLOST, grants, and private funding
Adopt a Broadband Ordinance	Irwin County and the City of Ocilla	Staff Time	General Fund
Apply for Broadband Ready Certification	Irwin County and the City of Ocilla	Staff Time	General Fund
Review and reduce local obstacles to development and rollout of broadband infrastructure	Irwin County and the City of Ocilla	Staff Time	General Fund

5. Consideration of DCA Quality Community Objectives

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

1. Economic Prosperity

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

Best Practices recommended for Irwin County and City of Ocilla:

- Track business needs of existing businesses to help with business retention.

- Tailor training programs to provide workforce skills needed by local businesses.

- Retain local graduates in the workforce by soliciting companies and businesses to Irwin County that need high school graduates, trade school graduates, and college and university graduates.

2. Resource Management

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

Best Practices recommended for Irwin County and City of Ocilla:

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

- Update flood plain maps

- Promote more efficient use of surface irrigation and better water management to ensure long-term opportunities fur sustainable development and quality of life for residents.

3. Efficient Land Use

Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the periphery of the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the traditional core of the community; designing new development to minimize the amount of land consumed; carefully planning expansion of public infrastructure; or maintaining open space in agricultural, forestry, or conservation uses.

Best Practices recommended for Irwin County and City of Ocilla:

- Well planned solar developments not located on prime farmland can be an asset to the community
- Develop a countywide greenspace program

4. Local Preparedness

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

Best Practices recommended for Irwin County and City of Ocilla:

- Ensure consistency of Irwin County's and the City of Ocilla, land use/zoning ordinances with the adopted comprehensive plan.

- Pursue CDBG grants to implement needed infrastructure projects.

- Better enforcement of zoning codes

- Update the Irwin County/Ocilla Hazard Mitigation Plan regularly

5. Sense of Place

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

Best Practices recommended for Irwin County and City of Ocilla:

- Promote Irwin County and Ocilla's cultural resources and festivals

- Promote Irwin County and Ocilla's historic resources

- Explore grants and funding sources for the façade grant program for Downtown Ocilla

- Rehabilitate the old Ocilla Schoolhouse into a multi-use facility to be used as a Welcome Center, local museum, entrepreneur incubator, wellness center, and a place for local functions and events

6. Regional Cooperation

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

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

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

7. Housing Options

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

Best Practices recommended for Irwin County and City of Ocilla:

- Provide education on home loan assistance to foster rehabilitation and revitalization.

- Continue to pursue CHIP, GICH, and CDBG funds and other available grants to renovate appropriate housing.

- Create a Land Bank Authority

- Clean up blighted homes and properties

8. Transportation Options

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

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

- Create a continuous, well maintained, handicap accessible sidewalk network, especially around schools.

- Ensure safe, adequate and well-designed facilities for bicyclists.

- Encourage the development of electric vehicle charging infrastructure in Irwin County and Ocilla.

9. Educational Opportunities

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

Best Practices recommended for Irwin County and City of Ocilla:

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

- Develop Entrepreneurship and Leadership classes in Primary, Elementary, and secondary and High Schools in Ocilla and Irwin County.

- Work with the local school system to encourage students to pursue degree programs in relevant and lucrative fields such as science, technology, and engineering.

- Expand recruitment of businesses that will hire local graduates from high school, trade schools, colleges, and universities.

10. Community Health

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

Best Practices recommended for Irwin County and City of Ocilla:

- Develop a comprehensive listing of health services and assistance resources for local citizens.

- Promote the local hospital and its health programs to remain a benefit to the local community

- Coordinate with SGRC to participate in the GDOT 5311 program to provide public transportation to the nearest available public health facility.

- Promote walking and biking as a healthy lifestyle for pleasure and fitness

6. Community Policies

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

These policies are organized around the Issues identified in the "Needs and Opportunities" section, and are further organized around the nine Goals set by Irwin County and the City of Ocilla:

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

1. Natural Resources

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

Needs & Policies:

1.1:   Updated Flood Plain Maps. Correct existing floodplain maps are needed to replace the current maps, which are inaccurate by much as eleven feet, to protect flood areas, river corridors, and groundwater recharge areas from development.

   o   **Policy 1.1.1:**   Maintain participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and make sure that the NFIP has adequately updated the maps for Irwin County and City of Ocilla.

1.2:   Development in Flood Hazard Areas. Existing regulations need to be reviewed to ensure adequacy in reducing the amount of future development in identified flood hazard areas.

   o   **Policy 1.2.1:**   Review existing regulations with regard to development in flood hazard areas; if necessary, adopt a Floodplain Ordinance to regulate development in the flood hazard areas.

1.3:   Master Drainage Plan. A countywide Master Drainage Plan is needed.

   o   **Policy 1.3.1:**   Seek funding to develop and implement a countywide Master Drainage Plan.

1.4:   **Sustainable Water Management.** Sustainable management of water as a

   resource, especially for Agri-business, is required.

o **Policy 1.4.1:** Encourage citizen education and awareness through social media channels, brochures, and workshops and other means to encourage water conservation.

o **Policy 1.4.2:** Promote more efficient use of surface irrigation and better water management to ensure long term opportunities for sustainable development and quality of life for residents.

o **Policy 1.4.3:** Implement storm water retention ponds, wetlands, and bio-retention areas to manage runoff quality and flow rate and help support river flows.

o **Policy 1.4.4:** Apply for water quality grants that can reduce runoff.

1.5   Increase Public Water Access. Promote public access to local water resources through the construction of boat ramps, public fishing areas and parks with water resources.

o **Policy 1.5.1** Construct a public boat ramp on county-owned lands in an area of the county with good river access. Dredge the river at this point to offer good boating access.

1.6   Recreation Opportunities. Develop more recreation opportunities in Ocilla and Irwin County.

o **Policy 1.6.1** Develop and construct greenways with walking and biking opportunities in Ocilla and Irwin County. Utilize TAP Funding and local funding as needed.

1.7   Land Acquisition Plan. Acquire pristine natural land for the appreciation, enjoyment, and recreation of local citizens.

o **Policy 1.7.1** Develop a local Land Acquisition Plan for the conservation and preservation of pristine natural woodlands, wetlands, and waterways in Irwin County and for the purpose of public enjoyment, recreation, and the development of trails.

2. Cultural Resources

Goal: To provide and protect cultural resources that serve the needs of local citizens now and in the future not only in the form of the built environment but also through high-quality cultural events that improve quality of life.

Needs & Policies:

2.1:   Inventory of Historic Places and Structures. There are many historic structures and places, including cemeteries, in Irwin County that are not identified nor inventoried.

- o   **Policy 2.1.1:**   Conduct a comprehensive Historic Resources Survey which identifies all local historic resources in Irwin County.

- o   **Policy 2.1.2:**   Conduct a comprehensive survey of historic resources within the Ocilla Local Historic District utilizing CLG (Certified Local Government Funds) from the State of Georgia Historic Preservation Division CLG Grant Fund.

- o   **Policy 2.1.3**:   Conduct a comprehensive Survey of Historic Resources in Ocilla, outside of the Local Historic District, for the purpose of documentation of important historic resources, potential National Register nominations, and potential future expansion of the Local Historic District.

2.2:   Historic Preservation. Buildings are aging and deteriorating. More funding is needed to protect and rehabilitate local historic structures.

- o   **Policy 2.2.1:** Irwin County and the City of Ocilla should acquire, as necessary, key historic community buildings and rehabilitate them for public use needs.

- o   **Policy 2.2.2:** Property owners and Builders should be encouraged to preserve, redevelop, or rehabilitate historically significant resources during the development process. This could be accomplished through making the Permit Process easier for Developers of Historic Buildings.

- o   **Policy 2.2.3:**   Identify and utilize available funding sources to implement identified important historic preservation projects in Irwin County and Ocilla. Pursue grant opportunities to assist with needed stabilization and rehabilitation.

- o **Policy 2.2.4:**   Preserve the Irwin County Courthouse through continued high-quality maintenance and historically appropriate upgrades to keep the building viable as a fully-functioning courthouse for today and generations to come.

- o **Policy 2.2.5:**   Support the Historic Preservation Commission in their work to protect the historic resources in the Ocilla Local Historic District. Direct proposed rehabilitation projects within the Local Historic District to follow the Certificate of Appropriateness process established by the City of Ocilla and carried out by the Historic Preservation Commission.

2.3:   **Culture Resources Registry**. Irwin County and Ocilla are home to many renowned local artists and musicians, but no official registry or recognition of these cultural resources exists.

- o **Policy 2.3.1:**   Conduct a comprehensive survey that identifies all the cultural resources in Greater Irwin County, including local artists. This inventory should be used to promote tourism in the area through printed and Social Media such as City, County, and Chamber of Commerce websites.

2.4:   **Underutilized Tourism Resources.** Irwin County and Ocilla contain many historic and cultural resources that need to be promoted.

- o **Policy 2.4.1:**   Expand the role of tourism in economic development by promoting festivities, events, and historic heritage in the community. Develop an Ocilla/Irwin website that will promote the community's historic and cultural resources.

- o **Policy 2.4.2:**   Develop a Walking and/or Driving Tour of historic resources for both Irwin County and Ocilla in printed and digital format.

- o **Policy 2.4.3**   Identify important historic buildings, sites and places in Ocilla and Irwin County and place historic markers identifying the name and date of construction of the resource and other information as needed.

2.5:   **School Renovations.** The old Ocilla Elementary Schoolhouse needs to be stabilized and rehabilitated for community use.

o **Policy 2.5.1:**   Seek grant funding, local funding, and/or public/private partnership to rehabilitate the old Ocilla Schoolhouse.

o **Policy 2.5.2:**   Develop this building for use a community center to host an Entrepreneur Incubator, Health and Wellness Center, Welcome Center, Local History Museum, Artist's Studios, space for dance/cultural arts classes, space for community meeting room, spaces for other local needs cited, and offices for management and staff.

2.6:   Recreation. Develop more recreational opportunities in Irwin County and Ocilla.

o **Policy 2.6.1:**   Seek grant funding, and/or local funding, to rehabilitate/expand equipment in existing recreation facilities and develop new ones as needed and appropriate within Irwin County and Ocilla.

2.7:   Irwin County Chamber of Commerce Webpage. The Chamber of Commerce webpage does not list any cultural resources/festivals available in Irwin County or Ocilla.

o **Policy 2.7.1:**   Encourage the Irwin County Chamber of Commerce to develop a section on their website to showcase local cultural resources/festivals to promote tourism. Provide funding for the development or upgrade to the site, if necessary.

2.8:   Cultural Resources. Available Cultural Resources are under-promoted and under-maintained and more Cultural Resources should be developed.

o **Policy 2.8.1:**   Inspect existing Cultural Resources in Irwin County and Ocilla and identify maintenance issues. Provide for repairs and upgrades as necessary.

o **Policy 2.8.2:**   Showcase existing Cultural Resources on the City, County and Chamber of Commerce websites to raise local citizen's and tourist's awareness of their availability.

2.9:   Volunteers. A small group of local citizens seem to do all of the work to produce festivals in the community.

o   **Policy 2.9.1:**   Encourage the development of a Local Volunteer Brigade for the City and County to split up the work of developing local festivals amongst a larger group of people to make it easier to volunteer one-time-a-year and grow participation in local events.

3. Economic Development

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

Needs & Policies:

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

o   **Policy 3.1.1:**   Promote and support private economic investment from existing and new industry and businesses through financial and technical assistance to improve job opportunities.

o   **Policy 3.1.2:**   Support vocational, technical, and collegiate training programs that will provide a workforce serving the needs of existing and future industry in Irwin County and Ocilla.

o   **Policy 3.1.3**:   Institute leadership programs in all branches of the public school system including primary, elementary, and secondary levels.

o   **Policy 3.1.4:**   Support more consistent broadband accessibility.

o   **Policy 3.1.5:**   Expand recruitment of businesses that will hire local graduates from the Quick Start training program, graduates from the trades' certification programs at Wiregrass, and also graduates from colleges and universities.

3.2   Need of Value-Added and Diversification. Development of more value- added products and diversification is needed for Agri-business and other industries.

o **Policy 3.2.1:**   Promote and support the development of diverse and innovative Agri-business related industries.

o **Policy 3.2.2:**   Promote the local winery. This can be a major asset to the community.

o **Policy 3.2.3:**   Promote local farmer's markets that bring awareness of locally grown products.

o **Policy 3.2.4:**   Promote development of the new industrial park.

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

o **Policy 3.3.1:**   Pursue development of a local business incubator.

o **Policy 3.3.2:**   Provide more adequate broadband accessibility throughout the community to attract innovative development.

o **Policy 3.3.3:**   Support an Economic Development position and office for Irwin County and Ocilla.

3.4   **Industry.** Develop more industries while ensuring they are high-quality and offer jobs and professions with high wages.

o **Policy 3.4.1:**   Encourage companies to locate in Irwin County and Ocilla that provide high-wage jobs and professions for local citizens.

o **Policy 3.4.2:**   Explore potential sites and locations for acquisition for future industrial development.

o **Policy 3.4.3**   Develop a brochure/information packet for Industrial Developers interested in potential location in Irwin County/Ocilla.

- o **Policy 3.4.4**   Encourage growth of the number of local workforce in relation to local needs.

- o **Policy 3.4.5**   Develop industrial locations/parks on areas of land not designated as "Prime Farmland," as possible.

3.5   **Restaurants.** There are not enough restaurants in Irwin/Ocilla.

   Policy 3.5.1:   Encourage more restaurants to come to the Irwin County and Ocilla.

3.6   **Hotel.** Visitor lodging is limited in Irwin County and Ocilla with only one motel and some campsites.

- o **Policy 3.6.1:**   Both Irwin County and Ocilla should investigate the need for additional local hotel/motels based on the existing and future needs.

3.7   **Downtown Ocilla.** Downtown Ocilla is experiencing a lack of businesses due to a number of issues.

- o **Policy 3.7.1:**   The City of Ocilla can utilize the local Zoning Code.

- o **Policy 3.7.2:**   The City of Ocilla may want to assist downtown business owners with a training course on designing businesses to attract customers.

- o **Policy 3.7.3:**   The City of Ocilla should consult with Georgia Department of Transportation or hire a Transportation Engineering Firm to study the circulation, parking, and safety of motorists and pedestrians in Downtown Ocilla.

- o **Policy 3.7.4:**   Continue scenic beautification and upgrades to Downtown Ocilla and on a city-wide basis.

- o **Policy 3.7.5:**   Actively seek new businesses for Downtown Ocilla and for the city as a whole.

3.8   **Community Blight in Irwin County and Ocilla.**   Blighted buildings deter tourism and encourage vandalism.

o   **Policy 3.8.1:**   Irwin County and Ocilla should enforce local codes to discourage building owners from allowing their buildings to fall into such a condition as to be blighted.

4. Housing

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

Needs & Policies:

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

o   **Policy 4.1.1:**   Revise the City of Ocilla's and Irwin County's existing zoning ordinances and building codes to include uniform regulations for the location, minimum value, and/or age of manufactured homes and buildings.

o   **Policy 4.1.2:**   Continue to pursue Code Enforcement within neighborhoods to clean up trash, demolish unsafe and abandoned buildings and manufactured (mobile) homes, and require that homeowners and landlords be responsible for the upkeep of their property.

o   **Policy 4.1.3:**   Continue participation in the Community Home Investment Program (CHIP). Also apply for grants such as CDBG, and USDA.

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

o   **Policy 4.2.1:**   Maintain the character of the existing neighborhoods when developing new housing.

o   **Policy 4.2.2:**   Adopt a landscaping ordinance to define individual responsibility for maintenance of properties and landscaping in the City or the County.

    o   **Policy 4.2.3:**   Pursue creation of a Land Bank Authority for the county.

4.3   **Affordable Housing.** There is a lack of Affordable Housing in Irwin County and Ocilla. Identify potential areas for housing development and explore development opportunities.

    o   **Policy 4.3.1:**   Consult the Georgia Department of Community Affairs 2022 Housing Needs Assessment for recommendations on all types of housing needs in Irwin County and Ocilla.

4.4   **Local Housing Market.** There is a general shortage of local housing available.

    o   **Policy 4.4.1:**   Explore housing development options with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs through their various programs.

    o   **Policy 4.4.2:**   Review local Permitting Processes to ensure that they are not restricting local housing development through unnecessary or extensive requirements.

4.5   **Mobile Home Parks.** Mobile home parks are experiencing maintenance issues.

    o   **Policy 4.5.1:**   Consider amending the mobile home park development regulations in an effort to increase maintenance enforcement capabilities.

5. Land Use

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

Needs & Policies:

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

- **Policy 5.1.1:** Investigate reallocation of resources in order to better enforce local zoning ordinances if needed. Consider a Zoning Official position.

- **Policy 5.1.2:** Where feasible, strive for consistency between the City and County zoning codes in order to make it easier to share code enforcement resources.

5.2   Housing Patterns in Ocilla: Housing patterns in Ocilla are not well planned.

- **Policy 5.2.1:** Review the local Zoning Ordinance to ensure that it contains requirements for the orderly development of new neighborhoods and subdivisions.

- **Policy 5.2.2** Review the local Zoning Ordinance to ensure that mobile homes are allowed only in designated mobile home parks and not intermixed in neighborhoods with single-family stick-built residential structures. Ensure that when a non-conforming mobile home is demolished or removed that a new one is not allowed to take its place.

5.3   Farmland. Protect prime farmland in Irwin County today and in the future.

- **Policy 5.3.1:** Encourage farmers and landowners to voluntarily protect farmland (including Prime Farmland) in Irwin County through purchased conservation easements, donated conservation easements, and through the Conservation Use Valuation Assessment (CUVA), a ten-year temporary protection tool.

5.4   Solar. Solar farms are quickly developing in Georgia and can be assets or detriments depending on how they are approached and managed on the local level.

- o **Policy 5.4.1:**   Irwin County and Ocilla should adopt, and adapt to local needs, the State of Georgia Model Solar Ordinance that determines how and where to site different types of solar projects.

- o **Policy 5.4.2:**   Irwin County and Ocilla should strongly consider the economic, cultural, and scenic value of its farmland and prime farmland before allowing solar developments in Agricultural Zoning.

6. Transportation

<u>**Goal:**</u> **To promote well planned and maintained transportation facilities, which protect our community resources, promote efficient use of infrastructure and support quality economic development.**

6.1:   Public Transit. The community needs public transit. The City of Ocilla has expressed a desire for rural public transit. An accessible, coordinated urban public transit system is available through the SGRC Regional Transit Program for all Irwin County and Ocilla residents.

- o   **Policy 6.1.1:**   Continue to participate in and promote the public transit system offered through SGRC Transit.

6.2   Roads. The City and County still have dirt roads that need paving.

- o **Policy 6.2.1:** Continue to seek funding through grants for paving and maintenance of roads. This will benefit school buses being able to continue their routes during bad weather.

- o **Policy 6.2.2:** Transportation capacity should be carefully monitored to preserve capacity on roadways and highway safety concurrent with development.

- o **Policy 6.2.3:**   Industrial, commercial, and residential growth should occur in areas where adequate public facilities such as water, sewer, and roads are provided.

o   **Policy 6.2.4:**   Conduct a Condition Assessment of all roads in Irwin County and Ocilla and prioritize a list for improvements.

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

o   **Policy 6.3.1:**   Repair and improve existing sidewalks and install new sidewalks where they are needed.

6.4   **Airport.**   There is no airport in Irwin County.

o   **Policy 6.4.1:**   Conduct a feasibility study to explore the need and benefits of a local airport in Irwin County.

o   **Policy 6.**4.2:   Consider consulting with the Georgia Airport Association for advice and direction on the development of a local airport.

o   **Policy 6.**4.3:   Ask the County Attorney to look into the requirements for the development of an Airport Authority.

6.5   **Rail.**   There is no rail service in Irwin County.

o   **Policy 6.5.1:**   Consult with the Georgia Department of Transportation Intermodal Division concerning planning and project development for freight, passenger, and commuter rail operations within the state, and the development of the State Rail Plan, which identifies long-range freight and passenger needs.

6.6   **Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure.** There are no public Electric Vehicle Charging Stations located in Irwin County or Ocilla.

o   **Policy 6.6.1:**   Explore the process of public/private development of public Electric Vehicle Charging Stations in Irwin County and Ocilla.

7. Community Facilities and Services

<u>Goal:</u> **To ensure the provision of infrastructure, community facilities, and public services that support efficient growth and development patterns and provide opportunities for local citizens to increase their health by recreating and/or walking/biking for pleasure or utility.**

Needs and Policies:

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

- o **Policy 7.1.1:**   Pursue improvements to the public water and sewer infrastructure in the County and City – potentially through Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) loans and grants.

- o **Policy 7.**1.2:   Utilize the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority's Lead Service Line funding sources to eradicate lead water service pipes in the County and City.

7.2 **Funding Sources.** Lack of funding to repair water and sewer system.

- o **Policy 7.2.1:**   Continue to pursue grants from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to upgrade water and sewer public infrastructure in existing neighborhoods and to provide for future adequate capacity. Explore Capacity Building opportunities with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

7.3 **Inventory.** Lack of complete inventory of water and sewer system including valves, meters and manholes makes identification of problems and solutions (including budgeting for improvements) very difficult and more expensive.

- o **Policy 7.3.1:**   Develop an inventory of the entire water and sewer system with information on location, size, and condition of lines, valves, meters, manhole cover, fire hydrants, etc. to determine security and public health hazards.

7.4.   GIS Data.   There is a GIS inventory of some community infrastructure, but a more complete inventory is needed.

- o **Policy 7.4.1:**   Continue to upgrade and inventory the data for the water, sewer, drainage, roads, and other facilities.

7.5   Recreation Employment and Volunteers. The Recreation Department has one full-time staff and is relying on volunteers to do the work. There is a need for more paid employees and volunteers.

- o **Policy 7.5.1**:   Pursue funding for more paid employees and volunteers.

7.6   Emergency System. A countywide Early Warning Communication/Notification System is needed.

- o **Policy 7.6.1:**   Seek funding for a countywide Early Warning Communication/ Notification System.

7.7   CERT.   The "Community Emergency Response Team" (CERT) program needs to be implemented.

- o **Policy 7.7.1:**   Pursue funding to implement the CERT program.

7.8   Generators. Portable and/or fixed generators are needed for all designated evacuation and emergency shelters, community water systems, as well as other critical facilities.

- o **Policy 7.8.1:**   Participate in the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency's required Hazard Mitigation planning process and pursue grant funding to acquire and install generators through the Action Step process of the plan.

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

- o **Policy 7.9.1:** Participate in the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency's Hazard Mitigation program and continue to seek grants for warning and protection equipment utilizing the Action Step process in the plan.

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

- o **Policy 7.10.1**: Participate in the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency's Hazard Mitigation program and continue to seek grants for training through the Action Step process in the plan.

7.11   **Senior Center.** Continue to maintain and upgrade the Senior Center as necessary to keep it in top condition and attractive to seniors for their use and enjoyment.

- o **Policy 7.11.1:**   Periodically inspect the Senior Center Facility for potential upgrade needs and plan for renovations as necessary to keep the facility in top condition.

7.12   **Hospital.**   The Irwin County Hospital is threatened with closure and the medical system is perceived as being weak.

- o **Policy 7.12.1:**   Explore issues contributing to the decline of the Irwin County Hospital and take measures to correct them. Communicate with the Hospital Board and Hospital Administrator on the issues and look for ways the County Government can assist to prevent decline and closure.

- o **Policy 7.12.2:**   Establish a line of communication between the Irwin County Hospital and the Emergency Medical Services Director for the County.

- o **Policy 7.12.3:**   Expand services offered through the Irwin County Hospital as possible. Explore the potential of a Rural Healthcare Clinic designation (RHC) designation by the Georgia Department of Community Health.

7.13   Event Facilities.   There is a lack of local event facilities for events and the ones that do exist are not outfitted with modern technical capacities.

- o **Policy 7.13.1:**   Inventory all county and city owned event facilities for maintenance issues and for needed upgrades for technical capacities.

- o **Policy 7.13.2:**   Plan upgrades to existing facilities as needed.

- o **Policy 7.13.3:**   Conduct a "Needs Assessment" for event facilities in the County and City.

- o **Policy 7.13.4:**   Develop additional event facilities as needed based on discoveries from the Event Center Needs Assessment. Adaptively re-use existing buildings and only construct a new building when no suitable existing building is available.

8. Intergovernmental Coordination

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

Needs and Policies:

8.1:   Collaboration. Increased collaboration with neighboring counties is needed.

- o **Policy 8.1.1:**   Pursue increased collaboration with neighboring counties and communities.

8.2:   Duplication of Services.   The City and County provide services that are duplicated and could be consolidated.

- o **Policy 8.2.1:**   Update the required Service Delivery Strategy between Irwin County and Ocilla. Irwin County and Ocilla should self-review the services they

provide and determine if costs could be saved by consolidating the services in one provider and reflect this in the Service Delivery Strategy.

8.3:   ISO: The ISO Rating is too high.

- o **Policy 8.3.1:**   The Fire Chief should be in charge of determining what needs to be done to reduce the ISO. The Fire Chief should make recommendations to the City or the County on what can be done to reduce the ISO. The local government should take steps to reduce the ISO.

8.4:   School Board/City/County.   The School Board, City, and County do not communicate enough.

- o **Policy 8.4.1:**   The County, City and School Board should plan an annual or semi-annual joint meeting to discuss the goals and objectives of each organization and plan joint strategies that would improve the economy and quality of life in Irwin County and Ocilla.

9. Broadband Services

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

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

- o **Policy 9.1.1:**   Pursue development of public/private partnerships to provide comprehensive broadband coverage that is consistent, reliable, and equitable.

- o **Policy 9.1.2:**   Include consideration of broadband infrastructure in roadway projects where such infrastructure may be included in the right-of-way.

- o **Policy 9.1.3:**   Community-wide technology infrastructure should be considered a basic community facility and as such should be adequately planned for and implemented.

- o **Policy 9.1.4:**   Enable public and private partnerships to reduce the cost of broadband services in Irwin County.

7. Community Work Program 2019-2023 Report of Accomplishments

City of Ocilla Report of Accomplishments (FY2019-2023)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	Report of Accomplishments	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
NATURAL RESOURCES								
Plant and maintain trees downtown as needed	$500/Year	City	Underway	X	X	X	X	X
CULTURAL RESOURCES								
Establish a countywide Historic Preservation Committee and develop a Historic Preservation Ordinance	Staff Time/$5,000	City/County	Completed	x	x	x		
Complete renovation of the Old Elementary School to serve as a Community Center and develop a plan to consolidate City offices in the building	$400,000	City	Postponed due to funding issues	x	x	x	x	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
Financially support the Chamber of Commerce's activities for job retention, marketing and job training/education programs	$500/Year	Chamber/City/County	Underway	x	x	x	x	x
Continue to support the Chamber's website to promote Irwin County in economic development	$1,000	Chamber/City/County	Underway	x	x	x	x	x
HOUSING								
Implement current CHIP applications and apply for new/rehab housing as needed to upgrade housing supply	$600,000	City	Underway	x	x	x	x	x
Implement current CDBG applications and apply for new/rehab housing as needed to upgrade housing supply and its infrastructure (roads, water & sewer system)	$1,250,000	City	Underway	x	x	x	x	x

City of Ocilla Report of Accomplishments (FY2019-2023)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	Report of Accomplishments	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
Apply for CDBG Program to upgrade the water system to provide city neighborhoods with sufficient fire flow	$150,000	City	Underway	x	x	x		
Neighborhood Revitalization for clean-up, green space, parks, etc.	$500,000	City	Underway	x	X	x	x	x
LAND USE								
Revise the City Zoning Ordinance	$10,000/ Staff Time	City, SGRC	Postponed due to change in administration	x				
TRANSPORTAITON								
Utilize LMIG Program to resurface City Streets	Staff Time	City	Underway	x	x	x	x	x
Implement a grading and maintenance program for alleyways within the City of Ocilla	Staff Time	City	Underway	x	x	x	x	x
Construct the TE sidewalk/ pedestrian safety lane on Highway 32	$500,000	City	Completed	x				
Continue to identify and pave all remaining dirt roads within the city	$3,000,000	City	Underway	X	X	X	X	X
COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES								
Inventory existing water, sewer and gas facilities and conditions	$20,000	City/SGRC	Underway	x	x			
Extend the Water Main on Vo-Tech Drive to include all development	$625,000	City	Postponed due to funding issues	x				
Improve and update the water main on Park Street	$100,000	City	Underway	x				
Construct Water Main Loop in South Industrial Park and remaining 27 within the city	$50,000/South Industrial Park $10,000/ each remaining	City	Underway	x	x	x	x	x
Purchase 2 Police Vehicles	$50,000	City	Underway	x	x	x	x	x

City of Ocilla Report of Accomplishments (FY2019-2023)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	Report of Accomplishments	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
Purchase 2 Utility Trucks	$25,000	City	Underway	x	x	x	x	x
Construct a new City Well	$1.0 Million	City	Underway	x				
Improve the two City Parks as needed, including siding for the Community Center (Change name to Neighborhood Center), and new roof for the Community House (Roof for the Community House has been completed)	$15,000	City	Underway & Partially Completed Community House has been re-roofed	X				
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION								
Construct local Firing Range for Public Safety force	$100,000	City	Not Accomplished/Cancelled – the firing range needs to be located in the County	x	x	x		

Irwin County Report of Accomplishments (FY2019-2023)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
NATURAL RESOURCES								
Develop and maintain an inventory of Environmentally Sensitive areas in the county	$4,500	County	Underway	X				
Seek funding to develop and implement a countywide Master Drainage Plan to address issues identified in the Pre- Disaster (PDM) Plan	$1,000/Staff	City/County	Underway	X	X	X		
CULTURAL RESOURCES								
Establish a countywide Historic Preservation Ordinance	$5,500	City/County	Underway	x	x			
Conduct a county-wide inventory of historic resources	$7,500	City/County	Underway			x	x	
Develop a Historic Tourism/cultural Website as part of the Chamber Website	$1,000	Chamber	Underway	x	x			
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
Design a marketing program and a brochure to market Greater Irwin County's economic advantages and historic tourism opportunities **(Change to read: Develop tools to market Irwin County's economic advantages, Agri-tourism, and historic tourism opportunities)**	$1,000	Chamber	Underway	x	x			
Develop inventories of available lands for industry, residential development, and commercial development	Staff	Chamber	Underway	x	x			
Design a marketing program to promote agricultural products from local Farms **(Add: and increase value-added farming ventures)**	Staff	Chamber	Underway	x	x			

Irwin County Report of Accomplishments (FY2019-2023)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
Design an Agri-tourism program to support local agricultural businesses	Staff	City/County/Chamber	Underway	x	x	x		
Purchase and develop no more than 150 acres of land for new Industrial Park **(Change to read: Purchase and develop land for a new Industrial Development)**	$5,000 per acre, not to include development **(Increase per-acre cost to $7,500)**	City/County/Chamber/ Industrial Development Authority **Change to read: (County/Industrial Development Authority)**	Underway	x	x	x	x	x
HOUSING								
Implement a survey of housing conditions	$4,500 **(Increase cost to $6,500)**	County	Underway	x	x			
Implement current CHIP applications and apply for new/rehab housing as needed to upgrade housing supply	$500,000 **(Change to current rate $600,000)**	CHIP/County	Underway	x	x	x	x	x
LAND USE								
Develop a county-wide Green Space Program	$3,000/ Staff	City/County/ SGRC	Not Accomplished/Cancelled due to change in plans	x				
TRANSPORTATION								
Continue to identify and pave all remaining dirt roads within the County	$10,000,000	County	Underway	x	x	x	x	x
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES								
Purchase 8 AEDs for County facilities	$300/AED	County	Underway	x	x			

Irwin County Report of Accomplishments (FY2019-2023)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
Upgrade Public Safety Vehicles & Equipment	$25,000/ Annually **(Change cost to $75,000 annually)**	County	Underway	x	x	x	x	x
Seek funding for a countywide Early Warning Communication/ Notification System	Staff Time	City/County	Completed	x	x			
Install auxiliary portable and/or fixed generators (including transfer switches) for all designated evacuation and emergency shelters, community water systems, and other critical facilities	$100,000 per generator	City/County	Underway	x	x			
Install lightning warning and protection equipment at outdoor recreational facilities countywide	$50,000	City/County	Underway	x	x			
Fund and implement the "Community Emergency Response Team" (CERT)	$75,000	City/County	Underway	x	x			
Become a designated "Storm Ready Community"	$5,000/ Staff	City/County	Underway	x	x			
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION								
NONE								

Irwin County 5-Year Community Work Program (FY2025-2029)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29
NATURAL RESOURCES								
Develop and maintain an inventory for Environmentally Sensitive areas in the county	$4,500	County	General Funds	X				
Seek funding to develop and implement a countywide master drainage plan to address issues identified in the pre-disaster (PDM) plan	$1,000 (Staff Time)	City/County	General Funds	X				
CULTURAL RESOURCES								
Establish a countywide Historic Preservation Ordinance	$5,500	City/County	General Fund, City	X	X			
Conduct a county-wide inventory of historic resources	$25,000	County	General Fund/HPD Planning and Survey Grant	X	X			
Develop a Historic Tourism/Cultural website as part of the Chamber Website	$2,500	County/Chamber	Chamber Funds/Grants		X			

Irwin County 5-Year Community Work Program (FY2025-2029)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
Develop tools to market Irwin County's economic advantages, Agri-tourism, and historic tourism opportunities	$1,000	County/Chamber/Industrial Development Authority	Chamber/Industrial Development Authority	X	X			
Develop inventories of available lands for industry, residential development, and commercial development	$2,000 (Staff Time)	County/Chamber/Industrial Development Authority	Chamber/Industrial Development Authority	X	X	X	X	X
Design a marketing program to promote agricultural products from local farms and increase value-added farming ventures	$2,500 (Staff Time)	County/Chamber/Industrial Devel0pment Authority	Chamber/Industrial Development Authority	X	X			
Design an Agri-tourism program to support local agricultural businesses	$5,000 (Staff Time)	County/Chamber/Industrial Development Authority	Chamber/Industrial Development Authority	X	X	X		
Purchase and develop land for new Industrial Development	$7,500 per acre	County/Industrial Development Authority	Industrial Development Authority	X	X			
Restore and re-purpose the Old Elementary School	$3,000,000	County/Industrial Development Authority/Private	Industrial Development Authority/Private	X	X			

Irwin County 5-Year Community Work Program (FY2025-2029)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29
HOUSING								
Conduct a survey of housing conditions	$6,500	County	General Funds	X	X			
Conduct a survey of housing needs	$6,500	County	General Funds	X	X			
Implement current CHIP applications and apply for new/rehab. housing as needed to upgrade housing supply.	$600,000	County	General Funds/CHIP Grant	X	X	X	X	X
Explore Public/Private partnerships for workforce housing development	$1,500,000	County/RWHI	General Funds/Rural Workforce Housing Initiative (RWHI)	X	X	X	X	X
LAND USE								
None								
TRANSPORTATION								
Continue to identify and pave all remaining dirt roads within the county	$10,000,000	County	General Funds/LMIG/Grants	X	X	X	X	X
Continue to identify and resurface aging paved roads in the county	$10,000,000	County	General Funds/LMIG/Grants	X	X	X	X	X

Irwin County 5-Year Community Work Program (FY2025-2029)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES								
Purchase and install six AED devices for county facilities	$300 per device	County	General Funds	X				
Upgrade public safety vehicles and equipment	$70,000 annually	County	General Funds/USDA Grants/Loans/Grants	X	X	X	X	X
Install auxiliary portable and/or fixed generators for all designated evacuation and emergency shelters, community water systems, and other critical facilities	$100,000 per generator	County/City	General Funds/City/Grants	X	X	X	X	X
Install lightning warning and protection equipment at outdoor recreational facilities countywide	$50,000	County	General Fund/Pre-disaster Management Grant (PDM)	X				
Fund and implement the Community Emergency Response Team	$75,000	County/City	General Fund/City/Pre-disaster Management Grant (PDM)	X	X			
Become a designated "Storm Ready Community"	$5,0000 (Staff Time)	County/City	General Fund/City/Pre-disaster Management Grant (PDM)	X				

Irwin County 5-Year Community Work Program (FY2025-2029)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29
Upgrade all fire services equipment in the community	$40,000 Annually	County	General Funds/USDA Grant/Loans	X	X	X	X	X
Upgrade Road Department Equipment	$150,000 annually	County	General Funds/USDA Grants/Loans/Grants	X	X	X	X	X
Upgrade water system in Mystic by installing new water meters	$358,400	County	General Funds/ARPA Grant/SLFRF	X				
Upgrade water system in Mystic by construction of a new well and well house	$700,000	County	General Fund/GEFA loan/grant/ARPA/SLFRF		X	X	X	X
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION								
NONE								

City of Ocilla 5-Year Community Work Program (2024-2028)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29
NATURAL RESOURCES								
Plant and maintain trees downtown as needed	$500/Year	City	General Fund	x	x	x	x	x
CULTURAL RESOURCES								
Complete renovation of the Old Elementary School to serve as a Community Center and develop a plan to consolidate City offices in the building	$400,000	City	General Fund/SPLOST/CLG Grants	x	x	x	x	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
Financially support the Chamber of Commerce's activities for job retention, marketing and job training/education programs	$500/Year	Chamber/City/ County	General Fund/Industrial Development Authority/County	x	x	x	x	x
Continue to support the Chamber's website to promote Irwin County in economic development	$1,000	Chamber/City/ County	General Fund/Industrial Development Authority/County	x	x	x	x	x
HOUSING								
Implement current CHIP applications and apply for new/rehab housing as needed to upgrade housing supply	$600,000	City	General Fund/CHIP Grant	x	x	x	x	x
Implement current CDBG applications and apply for new/rehab housing as needed to upgrade housing supply and its infrastructure (roads, water & sewer system)	$1,250,000	City	General Fund/CDBG Grant	x	x	x	x	x

City of Ocilla 5-Year Community Work Program (2024-2028)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29
Apply for CDBG Program to upgrade the water system to provide city neighborhoods with sufficient fire flow	$150,000	City	General Fund/CDBG/GEFA	x	x	x		
Neighborhood Revitalization for clean-up, green space, parks, etc.	$500,000	City	General Fund/CHIP/CDBG	x	X	x	x	x
LAND USE								
Revise the City Zoning Ordinance	$10,000/ Staff Time	City, SGRC	General Fund	x	x			
TRANSPORTAITON								
Utilize LMIG Program to resurface City Streets	Staff Time	City	General Fund	x	x	x	x	x
Implement a grading and maintenance program for alleyways within the City of Ocilla	Staff Time	City	General Fund	x	x	x	x	x
Continue to identify and pave all remaining dirt roads within the city	$3,000,000	City	General Fund/CDBG/TSPLOST	x	x	x	x	x
COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES								
Inventory existing water, sewer and gas facilities and conditions	$20,000	City/SGRC	General Fund	x	x			
Extend the Water Main on Vo-Tech Drive to include all development	$625,000	City	General Fund/CDBG/GEFA	x				
Improve and update the water main on Park Street	$100,000	City	General Fund/CDBG	x				

City of Ocilla 5-Year Community Work Program (2024-2028)

PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	FUNDING SOURCE	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29
Construct Water Main Loop in South Industrial Park and remaining 27 within the city	$50,000/South Industrial Park $10,000/ each remaining	City	General Fund/CDBG	x	x	x	x	x
Purchase 2 Police Vehicles	$50,000	City	General Fund/USDA/GOHS Grants	x	x	x	x	x
Purchase 2 Utility Trucks	$25,000	City	General Fund/SPLOST/USDA	x	x	x	x	x
Construct a new City Well	$1.0 Million	City	General Fund/GEFA/USDA	x	x	x	x	
Develop a multi-use community facility to serve as a hub of activities including sports, entertainment, and cultural events for young children through high school years.	$2,000,000	City	General Fund/USDA, CDBG, Neighborhood Outcome Funding, Private Funds, and any other applicable grants/funding sources	x	x	x	x	x
Improve the two City Parks as needed, including siding for the Neighborhood Center	$15,000	City	General Fund/County/SPLOST	x				
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION								
NONE								

8. Economic Development Element

The 2022-2026 Southern Georgia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), as developed by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission under a grant from the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, is hereby incorporated by reference into this Comprehensive Plan to serve as the Economic Development Element for Irwin County and the

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

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

The Southern Georgia CEDS gives an overview of the region, briefly describing geography, population, economy, labor and workforce development and use, education, transportation access, environment, and regional resources. It reviews the state of the regional economy and provides a list of achievable Goals and Objectives for the region, a Plan of Action to ensure success, and Performance Measures used to evaluate the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's successful development and implementation of the 2022-2026 CEDS. Implementation of the goals identified in this plan is significant to the economic future of the SGRC District.

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

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

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

Objectives:

o   Implement programs to foster entrepreneurship growth
o   Recruit/encourage value-added food processing (Agri-business)
o   Leadership development designed to incite new leadership
o   Downtown revitalization

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

Objectives:

o   Provide broadband to all unserved and underserved people throughout the region
o   Develop more family event venues
o   Industrial Park infrastructure upgrades

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

Objectives:

o   Improve educational attainment by reducing high school dropout rates
o   Market workforce development programs that enable youth and adults to pursue higher education opportunities.
o   Support educational institutions to provide learning/skill development opportunities.
o   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:

o   Rehabilitation of dilapidated housing
o   Expand code enforcement, especially in downtown areas
o   Mixed use downtown
o   Encourage local governments to participate in CHIP, CDBG, and USDA housing programs.

9. Land Use Element

Character Areas

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

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

Agricultural/Forestry Character Area

DESCRIPTION*:*

The purpose of this district is to permit agricultural and their accompanying residential uses in unincorporated Irwin County, and low intensity agricultural uses in those areas of the City of Ocilla that are undeveloped.

The Agricultural Character Area in unincorporated Irwin County is intended to encourage maintenance of the rural countryside, to preserve forests and other undeveloped lands away from areas of population growth, and to allow residents to retain their traditional ways of life. The preferred land use in this district is agricultural, either active in the form of crops, or

in the form of forest management or pasture lands. The A-U district should be utilized as a land-use designation where a more intensive use of the land is unlikely to occur in the near future. The requirements of the district are designed to encourage the maintenance of a rural character until more intensive development is feasible.

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

Agricultural areas in the City of Ocilla should be low intensity agricultural uses in areas of the city where the city has yet to extend urban services. The preferred uses in this area are agricultural, in the form of crops, or passive in the form of forest management or pasture lands. The S-A district should be utilized as a land use designation where a more intensive urban use of the land is unlikely to occur in the near future. The requirements of the district are designed to encourage the continuing low intensity agricultural use of the property and protect active urban uses found in adjacent districts of the city.

APPROPRIATE LAND USE:

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

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

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

PERMITTED ZONING DISTRICTS:

- AU – Agricultural Use **(Irwin County only)**
- S-A – Suburban Agriculture **(Ocilla only)**

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

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

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

Conservation Easements

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

Sidewalk/Trail Network

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

Preserve Agriculture Land Use

Help contain sprawl development by preserving agricultural lands. This may be accomplished through any combination of the following: 1) Establish an agriculture zoning district with very large minimum lot size requirements (at least 20 acres). 2) Require an agricultural buffer for all new non-agricultural development adjacent to designated agricultural land. This will minimize future potential conflicts between ag and non-ag land uses. 3) Require a waiver when land use, building, or occupancy permits are applied for on non-agricultural land abutting or within 1,000 feet of agricultural land. This waiver would specify that the applicant understands agricultural land exists near the subject property and agricultural operations are ongoing adjacent to the existing or proposed use. 4) Develop a program to assist local farmers in selling their products or otherwise profiting from their farms. These programs include agri-tourism, farmers' markets, farm festivals, and related activities. (5) Develop a Solar Ordinance that contains provides protections to valuable farmland and prime farmlands in Irwin County.

Commercial Character Area
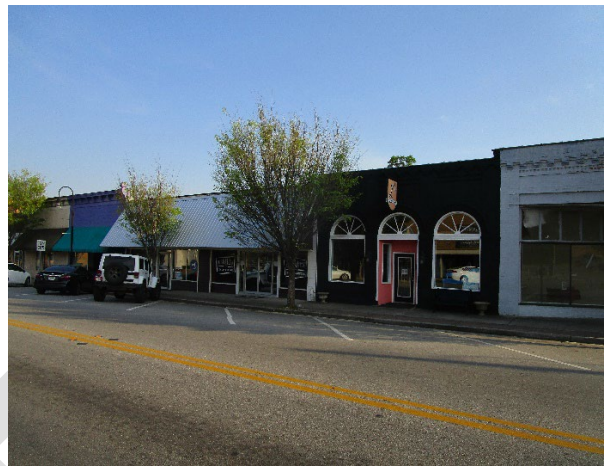
DESCRIPTION:

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

APPROPRIATE LAND USE:

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

PERMITTED ZONING DISTRICTS:

Irwin County

- G-B - General Business District
- R-C - Rural Commercial

City of Ocilla

- N-C - Neighborhood Commercial District
- GB - General Business District
- C-B-D - Central Business District

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

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

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

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

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

Owners of buildings included within the Ocilla Historic District should apply to the Historic Preservation Commission for a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to the purchase of a building permit for exterior rehabilitations or new construction. Rehabilitations to these structures and new construction in the district should follow the Ocilla Historic Preservation Commission's Design Guidelines.

Industrial Character Area

DESCRIPTION:

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

APPROPRIATE LAND USE:

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

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

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

PERMITTED ZONING DISTRICTS:

Irwin County and the City of Ocilla

- WLI - Wholesale-Light Industrial District
- H-I - Heavy Industrial District

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

1) Economic Prosperity

2) Efficient Land Use

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

Targeted Industry Analysis

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

Stormwater Management

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

Mixed Use Character Area

DESCRIPTION:

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

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

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

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

PERMITTED ZONING:

Irwin County only
- A-U Agricultural Use
- R-R – Rural Residential
- R-1 - Single Family Residential
- R-1A - Single Family Residential
- R-20 - Single Family Residential
- R-C – Rural Commercial
- WLI - Wholesale-Light Industrial District
- H-I - Heavy Industrial District
- G-B - General Business District

City of Ocilla only
- S-A - Suburban Agriculture
- R-14 - Single Family Residential
- R-8 – Residential
- M-R - Multiple Residential
- R-8-M – Residential

- R-P - Residential Professional
- N-C - Neighborhood Commercial District
- G-B - General Business District
- C-B-D - Central Business District

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

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

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

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

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

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

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

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

Parks/Recreation/Conservation Character Area

DESCRIPTION:

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

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

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

PERMITTED ZONING:

- A-U - Agriculture Use
- S-A – Suburban Agriculture

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

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

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

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

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

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

Public/Institutional Character Area

DESCRIPTION:

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

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

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

PREDOMINANT LAND USE:

- Public/Institutional

Permitted Zoning:
- There is no official zoning category for P-I – Public Institutional

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

1. Local Preparedness
2. Educational Opportunities

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- Implement a balance of transportation options and design.
- Encourage development of essential facilities in locations where they can be conveniently accessed.
- Encourage development of new public/institutional uses at a scale that is compatible with surrounding uses.
- Encourage development to occur in areas where it will no adversely impact adjacent residential areas.

Residential Character Area

DESCRIPTION:

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

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

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

PREDOMINANT LAND USE:

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

PERMITTED ZONING DISTRICTS:

Irwin County Only

- R-R – Rural Residential
- R-1 – Single Family Residential
- R1-A – Single Family Residential
- R-20 – Single Family Residential

City of Ocilla Only

- R-14 – Single Family Residential
- R-8 – Residential
- M-R – Multiple Residential
- R-8-M – Residential
- R-P – Residential Professional

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

1) Sense of Place

2) Housing Options

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

Rehabilitate Codes

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

Owners of buildings included within the Ocilla Historic District should apply to the Historic Preservation Commission for a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to the purchase of a building permit for exterior rehabilitations or new construction. Rehabilitations to these structures and new construction in the district should follow the Ocilla Historic Preservation Commission's Design Guidelines.

Transportation/Communication/Utilities Character Area
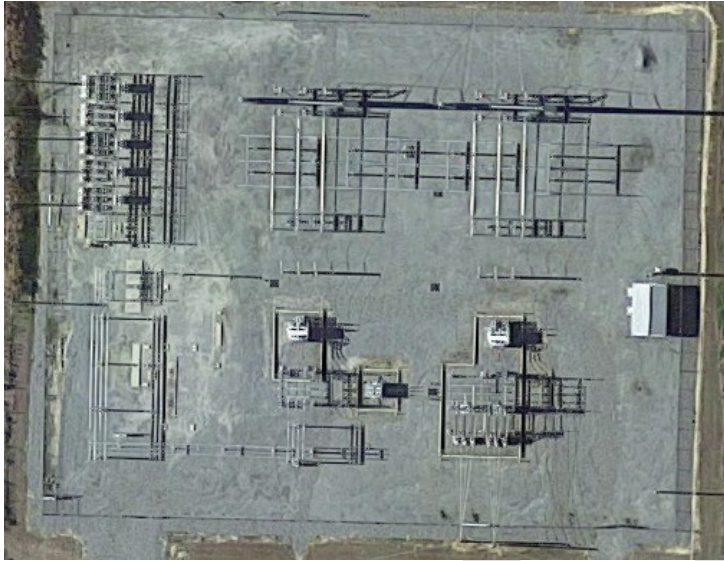
DESCRIPTION:

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

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

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

PREDOMINANT LAND USE:

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

PERMITTED ZONING DISTRICTS:

Any zoning district is permitted within this area.

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

- **Economic Prosperity**
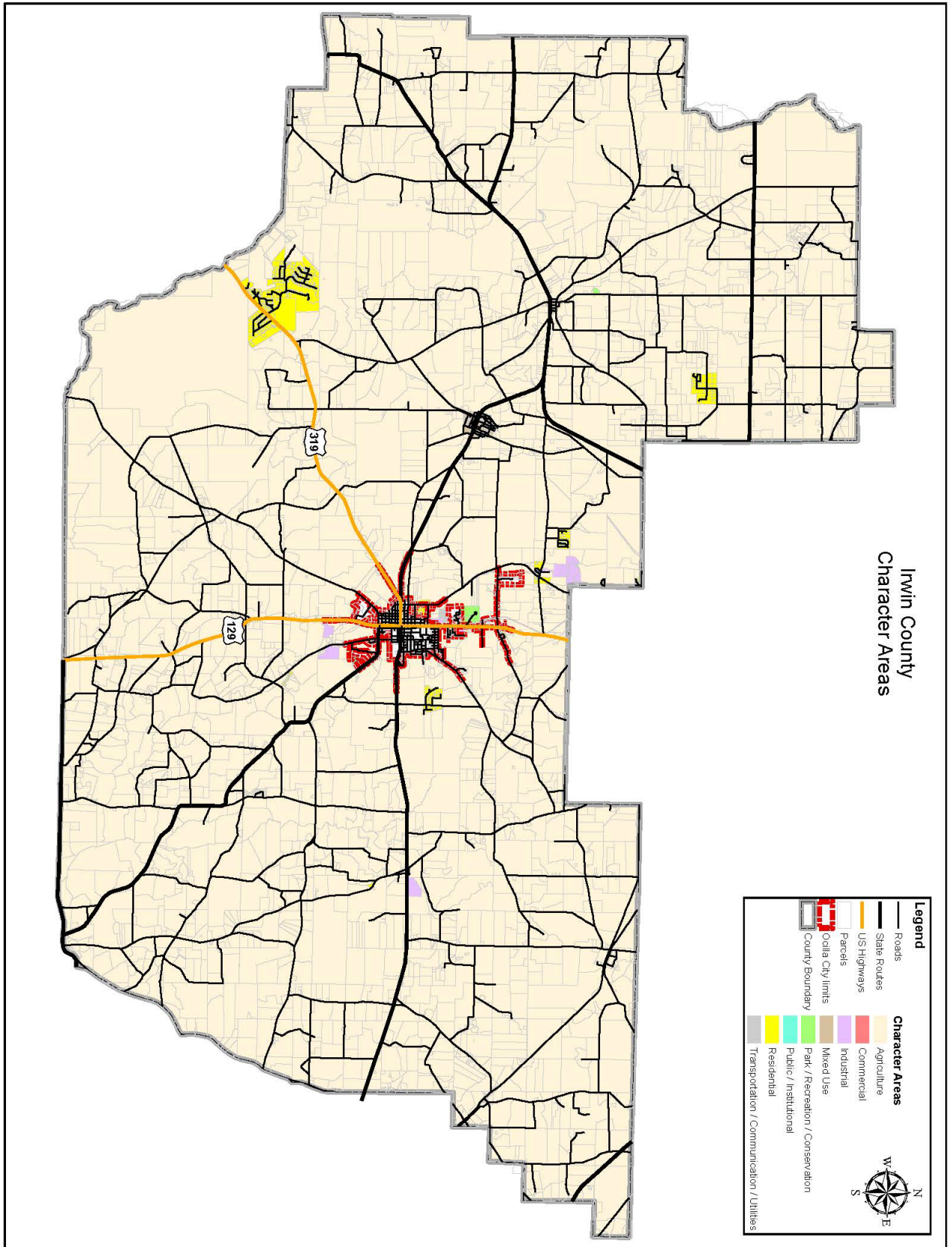
- **Local Preparedness**
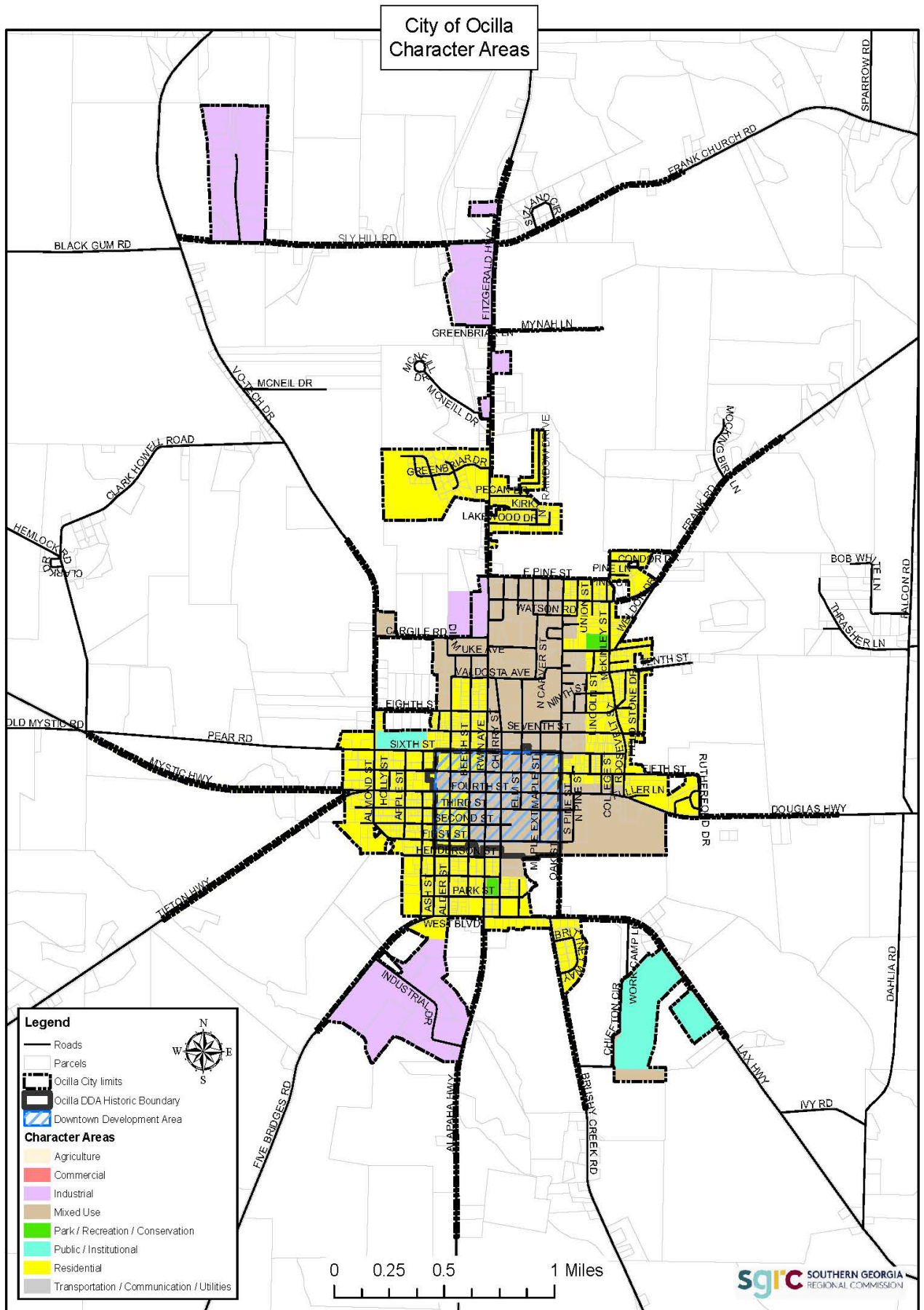

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- Analyze impact of additional traffic flow.

- Identify and plan for improvement needs along key transportation corridors

Character Area Maps

Irwin County
Character Areas

Legend

— Roads
—— State Routes
—— US Highways
Parcels
Ocilla City limits
County Boundary

Character Areas

Agriculture
Commercial
Industrial
Mixed Use
Park / Recreation / Conservation
Public / Institutional
Residential
Transportation / Communication / Utilities

City of Ocilla
Character Areas

Legend

— Roads

☐ Parcels

⬛ Ocilla City limits

⬛ Ocilla DDA Historic Boundary

▨ Downtown Development Area

Character Areas

☐ Agriculture

☐ Commercial

☐ Industrial

☐ Mixed Use

☐ Park / Recreation / Conservation

☐ Public / Institutional

☐ Residential

☐ Transportation / Communication / Utilities

0   0.25   0.5   1 Miles

sgrc SOUTHERN GEORGIA
REGIONAL COMMISSION

Appendix

Sign-In Sheets

Public Hearing Notices

Transmittal Letters

Adoption Resolutions

Kick-off Tear Sheet – Kick-off held March 26, 2023

Page 6 - THE OCILLA STAR – February 15, 2023

Deaths & Funerals

Eleanor Newell Allen

Eleanor Newell Allen, 91, of Fitzgerald, Georgia, died Thursday, February 9, 2023, at Shady Pines Estate in Abbeville, Georgia.

Funeral services were held Sunday, February 12, 2023, at The Paulk Funeral Home Chapel in Fitzgerald with her nephew Dr. Jeff Myers officiating. Interment followed in the Siloam Cemetery in Wilcox County, Georgia, with Dr. Eugene Jackson offering a prayer and a song. The family received friends prior to the services at the funeral home.

Mrs. Allen was born January 28, 1932, in Abbeville, Georgia, to the late L. F. & Rebecca Statham Newell. She graduated from Rochelle High School in 1950. She was a homemaker and worked as a sales clerk for Belk-Hudson and Friedlanders Department Stores. Mrs. Allen was a correspondent for the Wilcox Chronicle and the Herald Leader newspapers. She was a former member of Fitzgerald Lioness, Optimist Club, UDC and was a Young Farmers Wife. She loved flowers and working in her flower beds. She will be remembered for her cooking, especially her cakes and her famous dressing. She enjoyed family gatherings and was known to share her cooking with neighbors and friends. Many of her nieces and nephews fondly recall the fish frys she and Mr. Allen would host. Talking on the phone and attending gospel sings were favorite past times of hers. Mrs. Allen loved the Lord and was a member of Arbor Baptist Church.

She is survived by her daughters: Martena Cauthen & Tommy of Abbeville, Debra Davis & Kenny, and Janie Pickard & Sam Garland, all of Fitzgerald; grandchildren: Kendra & Kevin Day, Brant & Heather Pickard, Dr. T.W. Cauthen, III, Kenny Ray & Crystal Davis, Lindsey & Joshua Brown, Allen Davis, Brittney & Jesse Laudino, and Martin & Kayla Cauthen; great grandchildren: Kenlea Davis Day, Jillian Davis, Brady Davis, Maddie Grace Pickard, Jab Brown, Chayse Allen Brown, Blake Davis, Andey Mae Brown, Parker Cauthen, Suthern Jaxx Wise Davis, Pierce Cauthen, and one on the way, Arabella Laudino; a brother, Marion Newell of Abbeville, and six sisters, Lorell Wheeler of Abbeville, Vivian Yawn of Tifton, Gloria Spires of Albany, Patricia Berry of New Orleans, Louisiana, Alicia Everett of Vienna, and Mary Ruth Davis of Americus. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Martin W. Allen; two brothers: Lewis Newell and Turner Newell; and a sister, Nettie Sharkshnas.

The family wishes to gratefully acknowledge the staff of Shady Pines Estate of Abbeville as well as the nurses and staff of PruittHealth Hospice in Cordele for their kind and compassionate care of Mrs. Allen.

The family suggests those desiring to send memorials may send them to Shady Pines Estate, Activities Fund, 124 Airport Road, Abbeville, GA 31001 or to Bibles4all at bibles4all.com.

Go to www.paulkfuneralhome.com to sign the online registry. Paulk Funeral Home had charge of all arrangements.

Pastor's Viewpoint

By Charles 'Buddy' Whatley

Years ago, Ed Sullivan asked Jimmy Durante to help entertain some veterans, but Jimmy said "No," he had a radio show to do at the same time. Ed kept asking and Jimmy agreed to do a short bit so that he could still make his radio show.

Jimmy went back on stage three times and Ed asked him about his radio show. Jimmy took Ed by the arm and led him to the curtain and pointed at the front row, there were two soldiers sitting there and each had lost an arm in the war. But working together, they were clapping with the two hands they had left.

"Forget the radio show!"

And so Micah writes in chapter 6, verse 8, "He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you except to be just, and to love [and to diligently practice] kindness (compassion), And to walk humbly with your God [setting aside any overblown sense of importance or self righteousness]?"

All this begins way back in Genesis when God created man in his own image; we were created to be like God in the first chapter and we lost it in the third chapter. And we've spent thousands of years since the garden of Eden trying to reclaim the image of God.

Now Micah literally means, "Who is like God?" It's the question we've been trying to answer since 6.8... pelled from the garden. Remember the "What would Jesus do?" campaign... posters, t-shirts, caps, banners, and everything else you can imagine. "What would Jesus the Son of God do?" is our version of "Who is like God?" And the answer is right there in Micah 6.8...

Pastor's viewpoint is written by Charles 'Buddy' Whatley, a retired Methodist pastor serving Dawson Street Methodist Church and, with Mary Ella, a missionary to the Navajo Reservation in Arizona.

ICHS Fall 2022 Honor Roll

9th Grade
N2 Honor Roll
Bell, Davion
Bell, Keshon
Brock, Kierston
Cordero, Jessie
Crofutt, Ethan
Edwards, Ethan
Goff, Ryleigh
Holcombe, Hunter
Hood, Chloe
Howell, Carter
Johnson, Harlan
Jones, Travion
Lee, Griffin
McMahan, Howard
Phillips, Natalee
Raffield, Emma
Reeves, Gene
Royal, Thaddeus
Sanford, Garin
Smith, Ralph

Vickers, Doriyanna
Washington, Ariyah
White, Lainey
Wilcox, Anterrio
9th grade
Semester 1 Honor roll
Belk, Hannah
Benson, Riley
Blankenship, Justin
Brock, Kierston
Cordero, Jessie
Crofutt, Ethan
Edwards, Ethan
Goff, Ryleigh
Holcombe, Hunter
Howell, Carter
Johnson, Harlan
Jones, Travion
McMahan, Howard
Mobley, Jonathan
Patel, Pari
Phillips, Natalee

Raffield, Emma
Rich, Savannah
Slacks, Keon
Smith, Ralph
Thomas, Jeana
Vickers, Doriyanna
Washington, Ariyah
White, Lainey
Wilcox, Anterrio
9th Grade
N2 Highest Honors
Anderson, Julia
Belk, Hannah
Cook, Gage
Davis, Jackson
Eason, Jada
Edwards, Sarabeth
Gaskins, Cemorra
Giddeas, Gracie
Hodge, Jaidan
Hodnett, Caroline
Mixon, Sailor
Paulk, Sarah
Peake, Dustin
Reeves, Peyton
Rich, Savannah
Ross, Dylan
Royal, Emerson

Simmons, Nevaeh
Smith, Camasia
Stripling, Cade
Thomas, Jenna
Walker, Kyndal
Willingham, Ellie
9th Grade
Semester 1 Highest Honors
Anderson, Julia
Cook, Gage
Davis, Jackson
Eason, Jada
Edwards, Sarabeth
Gaskins, Cemorra
Giddeas, Gracie
Hodge, Jaidan
Hodnett, Caroline
Hood, Chloe
Mixon, Sailor
Paulk, Sarah
Peake, Dustin
Reeves, Peyton
Ross, Dylan
Royal, Emerson
Simmons, Nevaeh
Smith, Camasia
Stripling, Cade
Walker, Kyndal

10th Grade
N2 Honor Roll
Allen, Renika
Arnold, Gabriel
Brown, Cheyanne
Brown, Jakob
Cravey, Tommie
Culbertson, Hannah
Felker, Cali
Graham, Najiyah
Guerrero, Alejandro (Alex)
Lately, Kaelyn
Merrifield, Brylan
Norris, October
Nyberg, Kyee
Paulk, Caleb
Payne, Zayvian
Poole, Tripp
Powell, Sydney
Royal, Harlee
Stiggs, Brodie
Tucker, Addison
Watkins, Daija
Wynn, Jeremiah
Youmans, Larkin
Young, Zachary
10th Grade
Semester 1 Honor Roll
Arnold, Gabriel
Brown, Cheyanne
Brown, Jakob
Cravey, Tommie
Davis, Christopher
Dixon, Zackary
Graham, Najiyah

Guerrero, Alejandro (Alex)
Johnson Jordan, Haven
Martinez, Amy
Merrifield, Brylan
Norris, October
Nyberg, Kyee
Payne, Zayvian
Poole, Tripp
Powell, Sydney
Richardson, Precious
Royal, Harlee
Suggs, Brodie
Tucker, Addison
Warren, Avery
Wright, Matilyn
Wynn, Jeremiah
Youmans, Larkin
Young, Zachary
Younghblood, David
10th Grade
N2 Highest Honors
Barrios, Hannah
Charrez, Victoria
Conner, Addison
Gill, Robbi
Guy, Sammy
Hall, E.J.
Howell, Nash
Johnson Jordan, Haven
Lake, Hannah
Laster, D'Asia
Martinez, Amy
Merritt, Nicholas
Mobley, Jaiden

See ICHS, Page 7

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

A public hearing will be held at 5:45 PM on Monday, March 6, 2023 in the Irwin County Commissioners Meeting Room, located at 207 S. Irwin Avenue, Ocilla GA to announce the beginning of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update for Irwin County and the City of Ocilla. 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 County Clerk at the Irwin County Commission Office at (229) 468-9441. Persons with hearing disabilities may consider using the Georgia Relay Service at 1-800-255-0135. All persons are invited to attend the public hearing. If you would like more information, please contact the Irwin County Board of Commissioners at (229) 468-9441 or James Horton at the Southern Georgia Regional Commission at (229) 333-5277.

ATTENTION!!! Until Further Notice City Hall Office Hours

Mondays - 8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Tuesdays - 8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Wednesdays - 1:30 p.m.   4:30 p.m.
Thursdays - 8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Fridays - 8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

You may also pay by phone during office hours.
Call 468-5141 with your credit or debit card.
AFTER OFFICE HOURS,
Please put check or money order in the drop box.
Do not put cash in the drop box.

Kick-off Sign-in Sheet

Southern Georgia Regional Commission
Kick-off Public Hearing for Irwin County and Ocilla for the
2024-2028 Irwin County and City of Ocilla Comprehensive Plan
Date: March 6, 2023

NAME	ORGANIZATION	PHONE	E-MAIL
Patricia Betts	Irwin Co. Bd. Comm.		
L. Corr	"		
Dennah Barnette	"		
Jimmy Malloy	Irwin Co. Comm	229 424-5434	jimmy malloy 500@gmail
James Horton	SGRC	229-333-5277	jhorton@sgrc.us
Brandon Fletcher	Irwin County	229-385-7368	brandon.fletcher@irwincounty-ga.gov
Chris Paulk	Irwin Emrly Boe	229-425-0447	chrispaulk@gmail.com
	" " "	229-425-3912	davisfenere1home@windstream.net
	Awinda FFPA	229-465-5727	M (Kevlow @ windstream.net
Wes Seay	Irwin Co City of Ocio	229-343-3492	dowketley 001@gmail.com
Donna Perrin	Citizen Ocilla C	392-3481	porrin483@live.com
Lyla Clustel	Ocilla Star	406 5437	oclloster@windstream.net
Phillip Edwards	IC Extension	229 242863	pedwards@uga.edu

Workshop I – Sign-in Sheet – April 18, 2023

Southern Georgia Regional Commission
Irwin County/City of Ocilla Comprehensive Plan Update 2023
Workshop I
Date: April 18, 2023

NAME	ORGANIZATION	PHONE	E-MAIL
Lucile Middlebrooks	City of Ocilla	229 468 9835	lmiddlebrooks@cityofocillaga.net
Randy Crenshaw	Irwin EMC	229 424-2303	rcrenshaw@irwinEMC.com
DW Harper		229-457-1527	dw@threepinesllc.com
Brenda Crain	Historic Preservation	229 424 2602	brenda.crain360@gmail.com
Kelly Lane	GADCA	404273616	kelly.lane@dca.ga.gov
Shirley Mathis	Twin Cir Parks	229-468-9799	smathis@twin.k12.ga.us
Charlene Hutch	Ocilla Housing	229 468 5400	chutchison1@windstream.net
Kendall Edwards	lasseter Tractor Company	229-425-3541	kedwards@lassetertractor.com
Patricia Battle	Commissioners	229-468-9441	
Jean Blevins	Irwin Co. Hospital	229-468-3954	jblevins@irwincityhospital.com
Linda Murrell	Ocilla Civic Club	912-501-43, 229-468-3	lindamurrell@windstream.net
Sylvia Lockett		229-468-0592	sylvialockett3@mchsi.com
Hazel McCranie	Ocilla Chamber	229-425-3566	hayes0331@gmail.com
Walter Hudson	Picker upper	229-424-9178	walters@socilla.com
Joe Saxon	City of Ocilla	229-468-5141	standardcompliance@cityofocillaga.net
James Horton	Southern GA. Regional Commission	229-333-5277	jhorton@sgrc.us

Workshop II Sign-in Sheet – May 9, 2023

Southern Georgia Regional Commission
2023 JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR
IRWIN COUNTY AND THE CITY OF OCILLA
Workshop 2
Date: May 9, 2023

NAME	ORGANIZATION	PHONE	E-MAIL
Bill Driscoll	Mewhorter Driscoll	704 421 7442	billCM'Whorter.driscoll.com
Sharon Johnson	IRWIN BOE	225-424-2632	sjohnson@irwin.k12.ga.us
Patricia Buttle	Irwin Co Bldg Comm.	229-Nov-944	—
Susan Driscoll	Mewhort Driscoll	404 432 1955	susan@mewhorterdrscoll.com
Jessica Sirmans	Irwin BOE	229-468-7485	jsirmans@irwin.k12.ga.us
Kevin Billingsley	Irwin BoE	229-424-4526	kbillingsley@irwin.k12.ga.us
Brenda Crain	Historic Preservation	229 424 2602	brendacraine@gmail.com
Shirley Mullis	Irwin Coun.	229-468-9719	sediwicelsatIrwin.k12.ga.us
Jeanne Blevins	ICH	229-425-1275	jblevias@irwincounty.hospital.on
Scott Carver	ICBOE	229-457-5554	irwinchairman@gmail.com
Charlene Hutchinson	Ocilla Housing Auth	229 468 5400	oha5@ocillapha.com
Lucille Middlebrooks	City of Ocilla	229 768 9835	cityclerk@cityofocilla.net
Horace L. Hudgins	City of Ocilla	229 468 5141	oh4@cityofocilla.net
Joe Sox	City of Ocilla	229 468 5141	standardcompliance@cityofocilla.net
Hazel McCtanie	chamber	224-425-3566	hmks1331@gmail.com
James Horton	SouthonGA Reg Comm.	229-333-5277	jhorton@sgrc.us

Workshop III Sign-in Sheet – July 11, 2023

Southern Georgia Regional Commission
Workshop III
2023 Irwin County and City of Ocilla Comprehensive Plan
Date: July 11, 2023

NAME	ORGANIZATION	PHONE	E-MAIL
Jeanne Blevins	ICH	229-425-1275	jblevins@irwincntyhospital.com
Deanne Moses	Councilwoman	229-315-8628	lemonadMoses66@Gmail.com
Joe Saxon	City Of Ocilla	229-468-5141	standardscompliance@cityofocillaga.net
Steven Hudson	City of Ocilla	229-435-3647	District4@cityofga.net
Kerry Billingsley	ICSS	229-424-4528	KBillingsley@irwin.k12.ga.us
Susan Driscoll	Ocilla Irwin Ind. Dvlp. Auth	404-432-1955	Susan@mcwhorterdriscoll.com
Dill Driscoll	Ocilla Irwin Ind. DA.	404.421.2447	dillC.mcwhorterdriscoll.com
Randy Reeves	Ocilla Historic Preservation	(229)520-1755	backtothefarm63@gmail.com
Scott Carver	Board of Commission	229-457-5554	irwinchairman@gmail.com
Charlene Hutchinson	Ocilla Housing Auth	(229)325-4188	oha5@ocillapha.com
Shirley Matthew	ICFC	229468-4719	Sediworls@irwin.k12.ga.us
James Horton	SGRC	229-333-5377	jhorton@sgrc.us

Transmittal Public Hearing Advertisement – January 29, 2024

The Ocilla Star
THE OCILLA STAR
Devoted to the Agricultural and Industrial Development of Ocilla and Irwin County

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Wednesday, January 10, 2024

Notice Content

Joint Public Hearing For Irwin County and Ocilla Comprehensive Plan Update A public hearing will be held at 5:00 pm on Monday January 29, 2024, at the Ocilla Community House located at 711 South Irwin Avenue, Ocilla, Georgia 31774. The purpose of the meeting is to review and transmit the FY 2024-2029 Comprehensive Plan for Irwin County and the City of Ocilla to the Southern Georgia Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for review. Residents are invited to attend and participate in this planning effort. Copies of the plan are available for public review at the Irwin County Commission office and at the City of Ocilla on their respective websites. Copies are also available for download at the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) website at www.sgrc.us. Persons with special needs relating to disability access or foreign language should contact the County Clerk at Irwin County Commission Office at (229) 468-5435. Persons with hearing disabilities may consider using the Georgia Relay Service at 1-800-255-0135. Everyone is invited to attend the public hearing. If you would like more information, please contact the Irwin County Board of Commissioners office at (229) 468-5435 or James Horton at SGRC at (229) 333-5277. OS# 1431, 1/10

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Transmittal Public Hearing Sign-in Sheet

Transmittal Public Hearing Sign-in Sheet