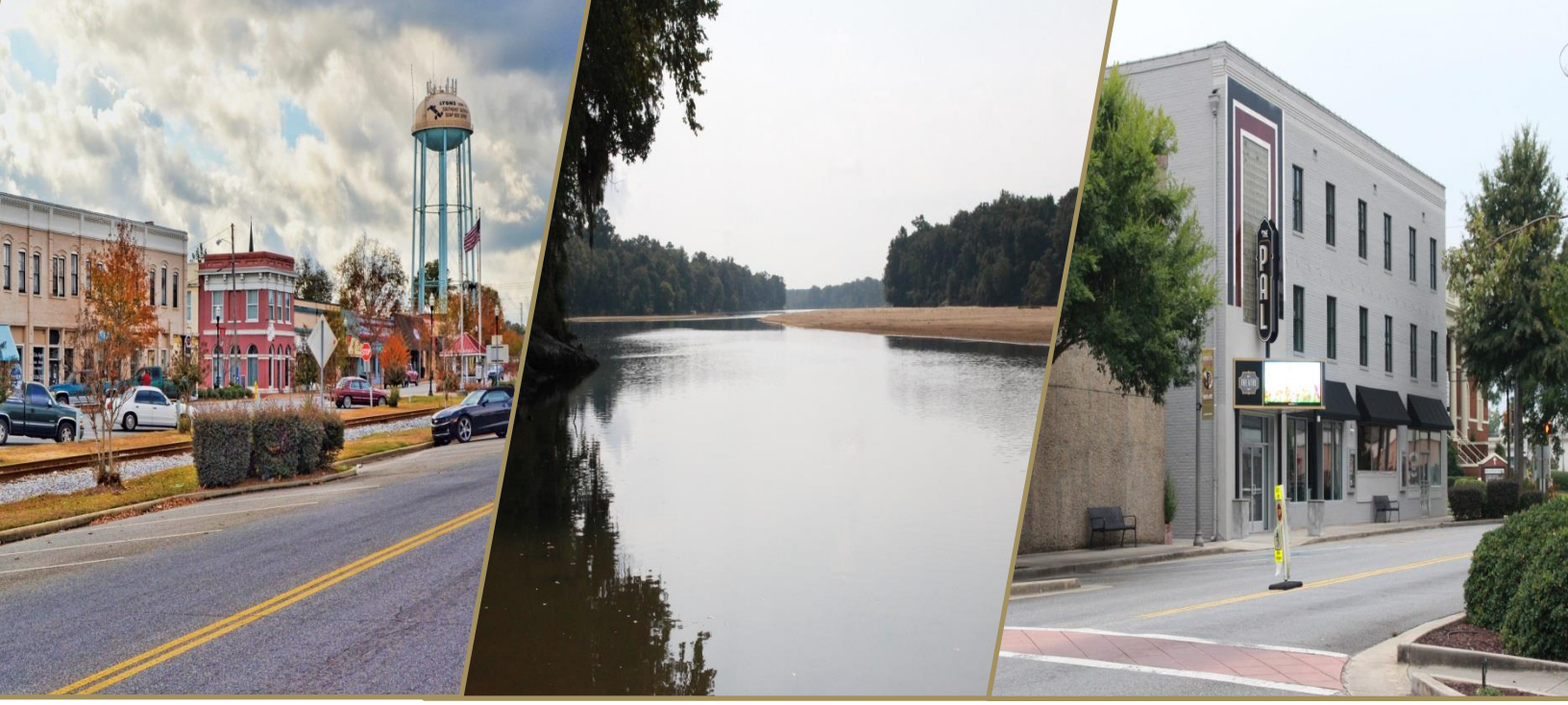

One Toombs: A Legacy of Leadership

A Joint Comprehensive Plan for Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia, Georgia

September 2019

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A Joint Comprehensive Plan for Toombs County, the City of Lyons, the City of Santa Claus, and the City of Vidalia, Georgia, in accordance with the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 and the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs with an effective date of October 1, 2018

Prepared By:

The Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan Coordination Committee
The Toombs County Local Governments

Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission

September 2019

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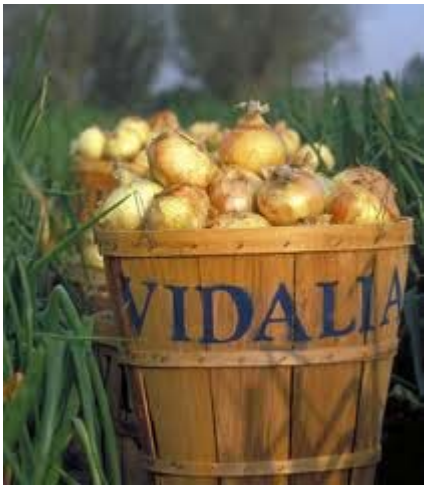
Introduction and Executive Summary

One Toombs: A Legacy of Leadership - The Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan is a comprehensive plan prepared in compliance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 adopted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The current Minimum Standards became effective on October 1, 2018. It is a joint plan for Toombs County and its municipalities – the City of Lyons, the City of Santa Claus, and the City of Vidalia.

Toombs County is a rural, progressive community in Southeast Georgia located just south of I-16 interchanges along U.S. 1 and Georgia 297. Toombs County's advantageous location is about equi-distant between the metropolitan areas of Augusta, Macon, and Savannah. The county has a population of nearly 30,000 persons (27,323 at 2010 Census). The county contains the incorporated communities of Vidalia (11,000 persons), Lyons (4,500 persons), and Santa Claus (150 persons). The community is designated by the Census Bureau as the Vidalia, Georgia Micropolitan Statistical Area. The community is a thriving regional trade, job, healthcare, and service center. Toombs County is now the third most populous county in its rural Region which lacks a metropolitan area. The county has per capita retail sales almost 20 percent above Georgia's average ($14,878 vs. $12,077), and has a labor force of 11,945 jobs, almost 10 percent of the Region total. The community's hospital, Meadows Regional, constructed a new medical center in 2011 which continues to expand offerings and services and its regional status at a time when many rural hospitals are struggling. A state of the art cancer center was completed in 2013. Meadows Regional is one of the top ten regional employers. The community also offers many other outstanding governmental facilities and services which belie the community's relatively small size and rural status. Vidalia has constructed

an expansive and impressive municipal annex in its downtown out of a vacated grocery store greyfield. Lyons has also constructed a charming new city hall downtown. Both projects have provided additional impetus to impressive, ongoing downtown revitalization in both municipalities. Santa Claus has improved facilities with a community center**,** Christmas themed museum/gift shop, and roadside park appropriately named Santa's Garden. The community has an outstanding airport with 6,000 foot runways; is home to Southeastern Technical College; two public school systems as well as two private academies; and excellent multi-venued, local recreational areas with expansive facilities and offerings. Family, culture, and arts are also celebrated as well with many offerings, including multiple museums, festivals/events, and a celebrated folk life play. Vidalia's Sweet Onion Festival is ranked as one of the five best in the U.S.; Lyons hosts an annual "Tales from the Altamaha" folk life play; and the community hosts the renowned Ladson Genealogical and Historical Library.



The community is well-served by highway and rail access with U.S. 1, U.S. 280, and Georgia highways 15/29, 56, 292, and 297. It has easy access to I-16 and both of Georgia's coastal ports. Even with all these advantages for growth and development, including location, access, facilities, and existing job diversity, the community is most well-known as home to arguably the world's sweetest onion, the Vidalia Sweet Onion. Agriculture and forestry remain integral components of the local economy, and continue to diversify as well. The community's fields and forests and other natural resources, including Georgia's Altamaha River, a world-class ecosystem with much natural and scenic beauty, are abundant and create an appealing landscape. All of this only adds further dimension to an extraordinary quality of life in the community.

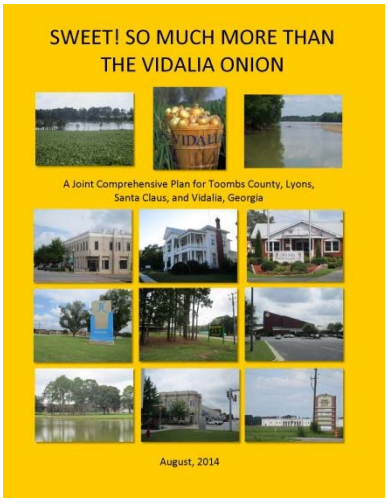
While there is much to celebrate and be optimistic about future growth and development within the community, there are issues requiring attention. Almost 15 percent of Toombs Countians are 65 or older, compared to 12 percent in Georgia. Almost a quarter (24.4 percent) of the population lives in poverty, compared to 17 percent in Georgia. The county is one of a number in Georgia with poverty levels exceeding 20 percent for decades. Incomes overall are low. Per capita money income in the county, as measured by the Census Bureau from 2013-2017, ($21,309) is about 75 percent of that of Georgia ($28,105). Even worse, the county median household income for the same period ($35,750) is

only about 67 percent that of Georgia ($52,977). Unemployment in the county has improved from double-digit level (10.0 percent) as an annual average in 2013, to a low of 4.4%. The state unemployment rate remains lower than the County rate reaching 3.7% for the same period. Such statistics have resulted in Georgia ranking Toombs County as a 2018 Job Tax Tier 1 county. While this ranking is for Georgia's bottom 40 percent or so of counties needing an economic boost, it has the advantage of offering Georgia's largest tax breaks for job creation within Toombs County.

The future Toombs County will take advantage of its assets and opportunities, and address its issues. It will be known worldwide as the home of the Vidalia Sweet Onion, but for so much more as well. It will continue to be a vibrant and thriving regional leader, economic center, and renowned model in rural Georgia. The community will be a desired address for both business and residential growth, and an exceptional place to live, work, recreate, or visit. Growth will be well managed and guided to locate near existing infrastructure and services of Vidalia/Lyons, and will be respective and protective of existing character, and the community's fields, forests, open spaces, and natural and cultural resources.

DCA planning standards, with reduced and simplified requirements, aim to engender local plans to be more attentive to individual needs and generate more local pride, ownership, and use. This Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan was developed with this as an overarching objective. It was intended to be a locally driven plan principally addressing local needs and cultivating widespread community interest, support, and buy-in, while meeting state standards. The title was developed to demonstrate the unity in vision the local governments share and the combined responsibility to manage public resources for maximum benefit. The Toombs County community wants to protect its heritage and rural character; conserve its fields and forests and natural splendor; improve its infrastructure; attract new residents and retirees; locate businesses and compatible jobs; utilize and celebrate its natural resources and heritage; and grow tourism, among its guiding aims and principles outlined herein. The community truly wants to be a thriving regional rural center, where growth and prosperity is shared by all aspects of the community.

Previous Plans



This comprehensive plan is the fourth within the County prepared under the auspices of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. The first was adopted in 1992, while the second comprehensive plan was adopted in 2009 in accordance with state requirements. Both of these plans were intensively data and state requirement driven, although local objectives are outlined and portrayed. The second plan, in particular, contains much local information which may not easily be found elsewhere and may remain of use. The third plan, "Sweet! So Much More than the Vidalia Onion," was developed in 2014 and focused on individual needs of the community. All of these plans should remain, at least in hard copy, available from the Toombs County local governments and the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission. At the time of this plan preparation, the second comprehensive plan is available in digital format on the state (www.georgiaplanning.com) and region (www.hogarc.org) websites.

Data

The emergence of the world wide web with its vast data repositories accessible through free search engines allows anyone easy access to significant amounts and a wide variety of data, and profiles of any jurisdiction, including Toombs County and its municipalities. For this reason, this comprehensive plan includes only limited data to depict or illustrate points. The new DCA planning standards actually encourage such non-inclusion of data. Almost any data depicted at a moment in time quickly becomes dated, and maybe irrelevant. The world wide web offers the opportunity of more relevant and up-to-date data at the time of access.

There are a variety of reliable public and private sources of data. Of course, the traditional source of official community data is the U.S. Census Bureau. Data on Toombs County, its municipalities, or any other jurisdiction is quickly accessed at quickfacts.census.gov which will provide a summary community profile on many popular data items, and links to even more data. Another quality source of data is the website, www.statsamerica.org, which provides a compilation of primarily government data on many items for any county in any state of the U.S. The site is maintained by Indiana University in partnership with the federal Economic Development Administration. The University of Georgia maintains a website,

www.georgiadata.org, where county level data for nearly 1,300 variables related to a wide variety of subjects on population, labor, natural resources, government, health, education, and crime can be accessed. The data can be compared to other counties and the state as well as on a historical change basis, among various user options. The data is compiled from *The Georgia County Guide and the Farmgate Value Report* prepared by UGA's Extension Service. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs has available data for cities and counties under "Community Planning Resources," and will also prepare community data reports when requested under "Other Resources." The State of Georgia has official labor and economic data in its Georgia Labor Market Explorer as organized by the Georgia Department of Labor at explorer.gdol.ga.gov. Additional state sponsored economic data is available at www.georgia.org. Excellent overall private data sources include www.city-data.com, datausa.io, and www.usa.com, while www.headwaterseconomics.org is an excellent source for socioeconomic information, including data and interpretation through its economic profile system.

Population Projections

As noted earlier, the official 2010 Census population of Toombs County was 27,223, up 4.4% from 2000's 26,067. This growth was only about one-quarter (24%) that of Georgia's 18.3% and less than half of the national U.S. rate of 9.7%. Toombs County's location inland from the Georgia coast and close to I-16 and Georgia's metro areas has helped. The U.S. Census Bureau estimate for 2018 Toombs County population is 26,887, a decrease of 336 persons from 2010. This suggests a slight retraction in population numbers and follows the Region's population trend according to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission's Regional Plan 2040. With the exception of slight dips from 1930-1940 during the Great Depression and again from 1950-1960 after WWII, the county has always exhibited slow, but steady growth. Toombs County's location, the Vidalia Sweet Onion and other agricultural crops, existing businesses, quality of life, and easy access to larger metro areas and Georgia's ports are positive factors and influences for future growth and development.

While past and present population levels are readily available on the world wide web, population projections are not so easily accessed. The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) is responsible for generating official state population projections for Georgia counties. OPB's official projections for Toombs County were developed in 2015 and showed growth to 31,175 in 2035, extrapolated to 31,673 in 2040. The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission (HOGARC) also prepares population projections which have proven to be relatively accurate in the past. HOGARC's

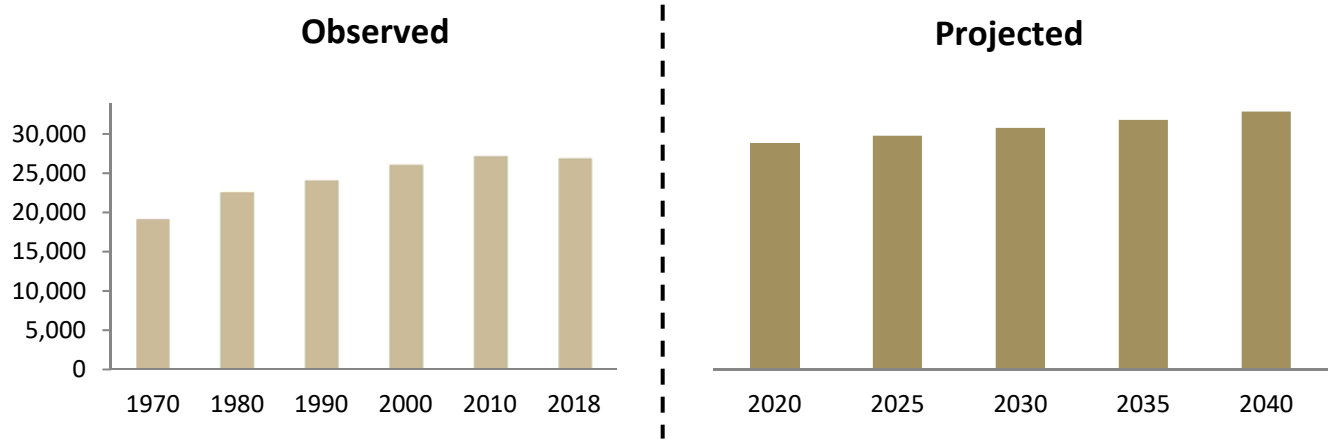
population projections for Toombs County, as noted in the 2019 Regional Plan 2040, show higher expected levels than current OPB projections. These include 31,128 in 2030 and 33,426 in 2040. In addition, the Regional Commission reexamined the population projections for this plan utilizing the 2018 estimated Census figure as another trend point. This evaluation, based on historical population trends, estimates the Toombs County population to grow, albeit at a slow pace, to 30,283 in 2035 and increase to 32,322 in 2040.

Population Projections, Toombs County

	2010	2018	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
OPB, 2015	28,858	28,399	28,802	29,757	30,555	31,175	31,673
HOGARC Regional Plan	27,223		28,988	30,039	31,128		33,426
Regional Commission	27,223	26,887	28,363	29,305	30,278	31,283	32,322

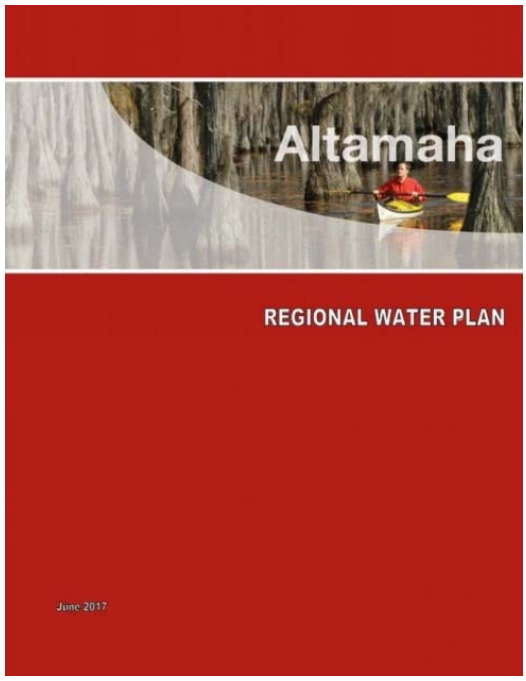
Sources: State Office of Planning and Budget, 2015, Daniel Adams, email, 2018; Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission Regional Plan, 2019; Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission staff projection using Microsoft Excel GROWTH formula, 2019.

Toombs County Population Projections



Source: U.S. Decennial Census, ACS Estimates; HOGARC Staff Projections, 2019.

Coordination with Other Plans



Toombs County has an approved and adopted hazard mitigation plan prepared for the Federal Emergency Management Agency to remain eligible for federal disaster assistance. This Hazard Mitigation Plan's preparation was coordinated with past comprehensive plan preparation. It is clear that the two most prominent hazards facing Toombs County that can be influenced by the comprehensive plan are the hazard mitigation plan goals to reduce damage from flood hazards and wildfire, and thereby protect life and health. The comprehensive plan objectives to conserve the county's river and stream corridors, to maintain healthy working forests and fields (including employing proper management techniques), to improve fire/emergency management and other public safety services, and to enhance growth management/code enforcement regulation are generally consistent with, and offer implementation to, the hazard mitigation plan.

The Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan is also consistent with the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The Strategy's goals and objectives to develop industrial parks; develop/improve local infrastructure; enhance telecommunications infrastructure; retain existing businesses/industry; attract new industry; and spur non-traditional economic development, like tourism and downtown development, are repeated as principal goals in the Toombs County Comprehensive Plan. The local plan is similarly supportive of espoused state economic goals.

Regional Water Plan & Environmental Planning Criteria Consideration

Toombs County is part of the Altamaha Regional Water Planning Council. The adopted regional water plan, *Altamaha Regional Water Plan* (2011) and revised in 2017, was considered by the Toombs County

Local Plan Coordination Committee and the local governments in preparation of this plan. This local comprehensive plan's objectives to maintain viable agriculture/forestry uses, protect/conserve natural resources, to enhance intergovernmental coordination and government/efficiencies, and upgrade local infrastructure all help implement, and maintain consistency with, the regional water plan. The vision of the regional water plan, "to wisely manage, develop and protect the region's water resources…to enhance quality of life…, protect natural systems…, and support the basin's economy," is inherent in this comprehensive plan's community vision and goals.

Similarly, the Environmental Planning Criteria were also considered in the development of this comprehensive plan. The local governments of Toombs County, including Toombs County, the City of Lyons, the City of Santa Claus, and the City of Vidalia, are now in compliance with the Environmental Planning Criteria, having adopted a consistent implementation ordinance. The local governments, with the assistance of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, adopted the Region's model "Environmental Conservation, On-Site Sewage Management, and Permit" Ordinance in 2017/2018.

Consistency with Quality Community Objectives

In 2011, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs changed its Quality Community Objectives to a more general listing and summary of the 10 objectives. These include: Economic Prosperity, Resource Management, Efficient Land Use, Local Preparedness, Sense of Place, Regional Cooperation, Housing Options, Transportation Options, Educational Opportunities, and Community Health.

The Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan directly espouses (many of) these objectives and therefore, is very consistent with, and supportive of them. This comprehensive
plan has goals to achieve a brighter future and better community for Toombs County, which is consistent with a quality community and the DCA Quality Community Objectives. The Toombs County Local Plan Coordination Committee reviewed and considered these Quality Community Objectives at one of its meetings.

Community Involvement

As noted earlier, the Toombs County local governments clearly wanted to take advantage of the DCA planning standards to develop a broad-based community plan which would involve and excite all concerned, both public and private, with the future growth and development of Toombs County and its municipalities. To accomplish this, they created a steering committee, the Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan Coordination Committee, of all local stakeholders who could be envisioned to help guide this plan's development, and make the community a better place to live, work, recreate, and learn. The committee did include elected and appointed members from the governing authorities, local economic development practitioners, and local government staff, as well as others concerned with community and economic development and other issues within the entire community. This Coordination Committee was actively involved in the development of all facets of this comprehensive plan, and had numerous opportunities to both help develop, review, and revise all components. The first orders of business at any Coordination Committee meeting were review of any revisions to previous elements based on committee input, and chances to return to and modify earlier elements, if desired. The initial meeting of the Local Plan Coordination Committee included a formal identification of strengths and weaknesses of the community, including opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis). This identification was utilized in developing all plan elements. The newly required Broadband Services element highlights the lack of broadband service in Toombs County. The general public was offered the chance to participate at the two required public hearings (and with the Coordination Committee, if desired, after the initial public hearing). These hearings were advertised through unique wording to specifically generate interest and participation. The initial public hearing was held near the beginning of the plan development process to explain the process, offer opportunity for further participation, and solicit input on an improved community vision and local issues/opportunities. The final public hearing was held after a plan draft was developed and reviewed by the Coordination Committee to allow citizen review, solicit any final input, and inform of pending submittal. Citizens were also provided the opportunity to give their opinions during a community drop-in/input session held at the City of Santa Claus Community Center in Santa Claus from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. which was both publicly posted and announced in the local newspaper. A webpage, bit.ly/ToombsComp2019, specifically devoted to this plan was promoted throughout the community which allowed for administration of a Community Vision survey. A more detailed summary of community involvement is included in Appendix A.

One Toombs: A Legacy of Leadership is truly a locally developed guide to, and framework for, future growth and development of Toombs County designed to generate local pride and enthusiasm, to accentuate assets and improve weaknesses, and ultimately bring about a desired future which makes the Toombs County community an improved place to live and work with an outstanding and enhanced quality of life. It is realized that to take advantage of opportunities and to make a difference will take time and considered effort, but it is felt this plan is pragmatic and practical in outlining a course and roadmap for steps and actions which can be achieved and which will move the community forward. The plan continues with delineation of the Community Goals element and a Community Vision which essentially and succinctly summarizes the community's aspirations and plan's objectives.

Community Goals

The Community Goals Element is described in the State Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning as the most important part of the comprehensive plan. It is a concise summary of future community desires and wishes, and is an easily referenced roadmap for community leaders and all concerned with growth and development of the community and its future. The Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan includes three of the four possible components detailed in the Minimum Standards for the required element. These include: a general Community Vision, separate municipal descriptions/visions, listing of Community Goals, and a description of Long Term Community Policies. These components seek to paint a picture of the desired future community, and answer the planning question, "Where does the community wish to go?" To some degree, the Long Term Community Policies also outline guidance strategy of, "How are we going to get where we desire to go, and also, what do we desire for other development parties to pursue?"

Community Vision

Toombs County Is:

"A regional leader of commerce and culture with a celebrated history tied to a progressive spirit of achievement. We are a community with a bold vision of growth, and desire large town amenities with continued small town charm. Our community seeks to define our future by enhancing our many strengths and investing as a regional leader."

TO FULFILL OUR VISION, WE WILL CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING GOALS WHEN PROMOTING OUR COMMUNITY:

- **Promote a healthy, transparent citizen/government relationship**
- **Capitalize on our identified opportunities to successfully market our community as a place to live, work, play and invest**
- **Seek investment to capitalize on our diverse economic base**
- **Remain vigilant of tourism trends and seek ways to innovate promotion of the community**
- **Remove blight and improve cost-burdened housing**
- **Continue enhancements of our historic city centers with sustained business recruitment**
- **Maintain the sense of place and small-town character and feel of Toombs County**
- **Ensure that future development is coordinated appropriately with infrastructure including transportation, water, sewer, and natural gas service areas**
- **Attract and promote investment in cultural amenities and economic opportunities for retention of young people after graduation**
- **Become a Broadband Ready Community to achieve broadband capabilities community wide**

Toombs County is a rural, progressive community of nearly 30,000 persons located just south of I-16 in south central Georgia about equi-distant between the metropolitan areas of Augusta, Macon, and Savannah. It is a thriving regional trade center with a diverse local economy best known for its world famous Vidalia Sweet Onion, but with many assets and attractions for business and residential growth. The county's cities include Vidalia with a population of about 10,500 persons; Lyons, the county seat, with 4,500 persons; and the small town of Santa Claus with a population of about 175 persons. All are located close together in the center of the county. The community has excellent transportation access given its location just south of Interstate 16 at the junction of two U.S. highways in process of multi-lane upgrade, the east-west U.S. Highway 280, and the north-south U.S. Highway 1. The community is served by the Georgia Central Railway, the Heart of Georgia (Georgia DOT) Railroad, and the City of Vidalia Railroad. There is also access to the Norfolk Southern and CSX Railway systems. For air travel, the community has a modern Level III airport with a 6,000 foot runway. The community has easy access to Georgia's two world class seaports, the Port of Savannah, North America's largest single terminal container facility, and the Port of Brunswick, known for both its auto/heavy machinery processing and bulk imports/exports.

Toombs County as a community is a thriving regional trade, service, employment and educational center located in a verdant and scenic landscape dominated by pastoral agricultural fields and towering southern yellow pines. There continues to be expanding growth and development because of coordinated, progressive leadership, increasing and improving community facilities and services, and continuing success in economic diversification. The community gained about 2,000 persons in the 1990s, 1,500 in the 2000's, and continues to grow despite having to overcome the loss of many apparel manufacturing jobs during the late 1990s and early 2000s. The community

has attracted new service, manufacturing, distribution, and agricultural processing businesses. The community is home to a major Trane plant, Tumi Luggage, one of DOT Foods' (the US's largest food redistributor) distribution centers, and attracted Chicken of the Sea to its US 1 Corporate Center during the post 2008 recession. In 2015, the community completed its third industrial speculative building located in the U.S. 1 Corporate Center. It has broadly expanded its Vidalia Onion agricultural base and reach, while diversifying into additional vegetable crops, timber/pine straw production, and other alternative crops, like olive trees. The community is a growing regional leader in retail trade and services, education, and health care services. Vidalia is one of the smallest communities in the United States to have a Chick-fil-A restaurant and its local WinShape day camp is one of the nation's largest. The community's hospitality sector continues to growth with two new hotels currently under construction. Both the cities of Lyons and Vidalia have state-of-the-art municipal complexes and public safety buildings.

The City of Vidalia created a new downtown passive park and gathering place complete with an outdoor amphitheater stage. In 2019, the City also unveiled the refurbished Pal Theatre located in historic downtown Vidalia. Planned use of the facility includes movie showings, performing arts/live productions, and rental space for events. A new aquatics center is now available through the Vidalia Recreation Department. In 2016, Vidalia was recognized as a PlanFirst community, a designation bestowed on local governments with a proven record of project completion and a devotion to planning ahead. The City of Lyons has been very active in revitalizing its downtown facilitating private investment and small business startups. The City of Santa Claus has found great use in its newly constructed 4,500 square foot community center, and made other improvements such as a quaint roadside chapel and garden to enhance its attraction to tourists and residents alike. Southeastern Technical College has expanded facilities, campuses, programs, enrollment, and its service area. It hosts the Southeastern Early College and Career Academy, Georgia's first regional career academy and the first to be certified. The Toombs County Board of Education has also expanded facilities with construction of a new high school in Lyons. Local healthcare services have also shown tremendous growth in expansion of

specialties, practitioners, and regional reach. The community opened a new modern regional medical center hospital in 2011 at a time when many rural hospitals are closing. Meadows Regional Medical Center is a fully accredited, not-for-profit hospital which continues to expand services offerings and outreach clinics to the surrounding multi-county rural area. In 2013, the hospital opened a cutting-edge cancer center, and provides some of the most modern and advanced cardiology services available, both at exceptional levels which belie the community's size and rural status. The hospital, like the community, states it is there "to help you get more out of life."

The community and its leadership have always had a determined commitment to support a high quality of life, pay homage to heritage, and provide superlative cultural opportunities. Both Vidalia and Lyons are Main Street Program communities which use a preservation-based approach to downtown revitalization and economic development. Many stately historic residential structures on Vidalia's South Jackson Street have been adaptively recycled for office business uses. The community has developed the Stage at City Park in its downtown on the site of its former police station. Vidalia hosts a six-day festival in April to celebrate the much acclaimed and world famous Vidalia Sweet Onion. Festivalgoers are often treated to an airshow, concert, carnival and much more. There is also a Vidalia Onion Museum which showcases the history and development of Georgia's state vegetable. Vidalia is also home to the Altama Museum of Art and History housed in the historic Brazell House, as well as the headquarters of the Ohoopee Regional Library serving four surrounding counties. The Ohoopee Regional Library also operates the large, preeminent Ladson Genealogical and Historical Library in Vidalia. The City of Lyons has transformed its historic downtown theater into the "Blue Marquee," which hosts a widely acclaimed annual folklife play on colorful local characters and events centered on the natural gem, the Altamaha River, and written about in the local newspaper, along with other events. Lyons also hosts "The Real Squeal Barbeque and Music Festival" in the fall, as well as the soap box derby for all of southeast Georgia. In addition, Lyons has renovated its historic railroad depot into a community center and special

event space. The Altamaha Heritage Center Museum, also in Lyons, contains exhibits on the area's local history. Appropriate to the community's outdoor heritage, the historic Lyons Post Office has a terra cotta relief sculpture, funded by the Works Progress Administration and crafted by the well-known Italian sculptor Albino Manca, entitled "Wild Duck and Deer." The City of Santa Claus, one of two towns so-named in the U.S., has taken advantage of the Christmas theme, providing hand-cancellations for letters to Santa Claus, Santa Claus entrance signs, as well as a museum and gift shop, and having its streets appropriately theme named.

Beyond the varied abundant cultural and outdoor recreational opportunities the Toombs County community offers, it is a regional leader in organized recreation activities and facilities. The City of Vidalia has two large community and regional parks, with many fields and facilities, the Ed Smith Complex and the newer Vidalia Regional Sports Complex; several neighborhood parks; four walking tracks at different locations; and a number of passive parks, including two located downtown. The City of Lyons hosts several parks, including one of Georgia's finest, most well-rounded small town parks,

Partin Park, which opened in 1975. This park can host multiple meetings or parties, both large and small in its four rental buildings and nine outdoor pavilions, as well as provide playing fields with covered bleachers, eight playgrounds, three concession stands, picnic areas, walking and nature trails, a skate park, batting cage complex, an outdoor environmental education classroom, and other facilities. It is home to one of the South's largest youth baseball tournaments, ongoing for over 50 years. In the spring of each year, Partin Park also hosts the popular Southeast Georgia Soap Box Derby, the largest such event in the Southern U.S. In 2014, the stock division of this

annual event was the second largest in size of number of drivers in the country next to the world championship race in Akron, Ohio. Races are held a total of eight (8) weekends a year in Lyons. The annual Real Squeal BBQ and Music Festival is also held at Partin Park. The Toombs County Recreation Department recently completed major renovations of its facilities located adjacent to Toombs Central School. There are other recreational facilities in the rural, unincorporated community of Cedar Crossing, and a walking track in Santa Claus. The community offers many choices for an active and healthy lifestyle.

All of this growth, and attention to heritage and quality of life, is occurring in a relatively unspoiled environment of outstanding natural beauty and quality of life. Over 75 percent of the county's land use remains in agricultural or forest use. The county is home to two scenic blackwater rivers, the great Altamaha River and the lazy meandering Ohoopee River. There is abundant wildlife and outdoor recreational opportunities. The Altamaha River forms the southern border of the county and has been designated by The Nature Conservancy as one of 75 great natural places in the world. The climate is also outstanding with a growing season lasting about eight months and an average annual temperature of 66 degrees. There are future plans for bicycle connectivity along U.S. 1 and local roadways leading to Gray's Landing on the Altamaha River.

Toombs County was first settled by farmers and stockmen of Scotch Highland descent attracted to its fertile lands, and later by large numbers of timber and naval stores operators from the Carolinas because of its vast pine forests. The real growth period came after the establishment of the Savannah, Americus, and Montgomery Railroad and the other railroads through the county in the late 1800s. Lyons and Vidalia both originated as railroad stops, and Vidalia soon became a railroad center and junction point for several railroads. Toombs County was created in 1905 through the political outcry and advocacy for local governance by involved leadership. This local leadership has also been evidenced in

more recent years through the growth and marketing of the Vidalia Sweet Onion, and other economic and community success.

Though the modes have changed, Toombs County's current and future growth parallels that of its past. Steady growth will continue because of the strengths of location, transportation access, its abundant natural resources, its regional economic and service center status, its investment in infrastructure, and the progressive local leadership. The community's location between major metropolitan areas, near I-16, and at the crossroads of U.S. Highways 1 and 280, is key to future growth. This key location, as well as the presence of Plant Hatch Nuclear Plant just south of the Altamaha River, will provide much impetus for additional economic and residential growth and development. The fertile fields and vast pine forests will feed the continued growth of the Vidalia Sweet Onion as well as other agricultural and value added enterprises, such as vegetable production, cellulosic biofuels, and food processing and distribution. The rural and pastoral landscapes created by these functioning fields and forests and other natural beauty added by the creeks and rivers of the county, particularly that of the Altamaha River, will be integral to continued and enhanced high quality of life which attracts additional residential and other growth. The expanding regional services, retail trade, employment opportunities, especially those in education and health care, will also attract additional residential and other growth. The progressive leadership enables the community to continue to expand the facilities and services necessary to attract and support this growth; to market, shape, and facilitate the growth; and to build upon successes.

The future Toombs County community will continue to be known worldwide as the home of the Vidalia Sweet Onion, but also for much more. The community will build upon the legacy of leadership and will grow as a united, vibrant, and thriving economic center which recognizes the mutual benefits of coordinating resources. It will be a desired address for both business and residential growth and be known as an exceptional location to live, work, and play. The community will have expanded retail and service businesses, and a diverse offering of well-paying jobs, quality employers, and a well educated and motivated work force. The community will be a recognized leader in health care, education, retail trade, service, and recreational facilities and services. It will seek to attract additional post secondary or satellite campuses to offer expanded educational opportunities to local and regional residents. The accompanying intense growth and development will be well managed and guided to locate near existing infrastructure and services of Vidalia/Lyons and the U.S. 1 to I-16 corridor, and will be of quality, well-maintained appearance. The downtowns and historic areas of Vidalia and Lyons will be immaculate, well

preserved, and attractive government, social, cultural, and economic centers of the community, as well as important diverse, functioning contributors to robust local and regional economies. Santa Claus will be of unique charm to residents and visitors alike. All of this quality growth will take place in an environment offering diverse choices of exceptional housing and well-kept neighborhoods for all, while maintaining a scenic countryside and unique quality of life. The farms and forests will be working contributors to the local economy, while again adding to the preserved rural character and natural and scenic beauty. The abundant natural resources will remain relatively unspoiled backdrops to extraordinary living whose natural functioning and contributions to wildlife habitat, enhanced quality of life, and recreational outlets are retained and preserved.

Toombs County will enjoy much continued success, and be an even better place to live, work, visit, and invest. The community will be the envy of many others, and not just in rural Georgia. Toombs County's continuing successes will be enhanced through ongoing community cooperation and progressive leadership working together. This exceptional community with a widely known outstanding reputation will be accomplished through continuing local investment in quality, modern and improved public and private facilities, infrastructure, and services. Compatible growth and development which implements the community's vision will be attracted, well managed, and appropriately directed by well planned public investment, incentives, and other guidance.

City of Lyons

The City of Lyons is located in the center of Toombs County at the intersection of Georgia Highway 292 and U.S. 1. It is also served by U.S. 280 and Georgia Highways 152 and 178. The community lies adjacent and east of, and shares city limits with, Vidalia. Lyons serves as the county seat. Lyons was established as a railroad station stop on the Savannah, Americus, and Montgomery Railroad (later the Seaboard Air Line Railway) in 1891, and was formally incorporated in 1897. It became the county seat of the newly created Toombs County in 1905. The City of Lyons was named for Lyons, France at the urging of the railroad president, Sam Hawkins. Lyons has always been a social and governmental center within the county and a bastion of small town, Southern hospitality and culture. The community's downtown Elberta Hotel opened in 1905, and immediately became the county's social center. Today the community remains active in downtown revitalization of its historic district through long, active participation in the Better Hometown, now Main Street Program. The community maintains a small-town, family friendly atmosphere of Southern hospitality and culture attractive to residents and visitors alike, yet with "big city" offerings, such as the upscale Elements Restaurant, Hardware Pizza, and Scoops Ice Cream. The community's population has remained relatively constant in the low 4,000s since 1980. The 2018 Census estimate for Lyons is 4,772. Four of five county school system schools (primary, upper elementary, middle, and high schools), as well as the large, private Robert Toombs Christian Academy, are located within the city limits. A renowned historic WPA terra cotta relief sculpture, "Wild Ducks and Deer" by Italian artist Albino Mancu, is located inside the city's post office. The community's historic Pal Theater has been revitalized into the Blue Marquee, which hosts an annual

folklife play, and other events. The play, "Tales from the Altamaha," featuring changing performances about colorful events and characters from the local area, has received widespread acclaim. The community also hosts an annual, regional Soap Box Derby, and the Real Squeal BBQ and Music Festivals. These events and the focus on town history, culture, and downtown revitalization have all contributed positively to enhanced public and private investment, and improved economic and community development within the community. The City of Lyons is served by a new compatible city hall along GA. Hwy 292, and an adaptive reuse of the National Guard building as a modern police department headquarters. The community and its long time recreation director have developed the local Partin Park into a showcase of small town recreation and community gathering place for all ages. Partin Park is home to its own "Green Monster," four different venues for meetings of all sizes, nature and walking trails, an outdoor environmental classroom, a permanent track for the Southeast Georgia Soap Box Derby, and many other varied facilities which belie the community's size. It is the host site each year for one of the South's largest youth baseball tournaments, which has been held for over 50 years. The Soap Box Derby course attracts visitors from multiple states to its eight annual races/events, and in 2014 attracted the second most drivers in the country for the stock division. It has to date six (6) world champions. Lyons has prepared for its industrial economic future by jointly extending water/sewer service to the county's U.S. 1 Corporate Center north of town toward I-16. The community truly is an evolving and expanding beacon of southern culture and family fun which utilizes its heritage and hospitality to stand out and remain vital and viable. It retains unique identity and appeal for business, industry, residents, and visitors.

City of Lyons Vision

The City of Lyons wants to retain its status as a viable and vital SMALL TOWN OASIS of FAMILY ORIENTED FUN and southern hospitality and culture. The community will remain the educational and governmental center of county government. Downtown Lyons will continue to utilize and REVITALIZE ITS HISTORY and ARCHITECTURE as an economic stimulus and cultural center for the community. The U.S. 1 Corporate Center and the U.S. 1 Corridor north of town to I-16 will become the address for new business location within Toombs County, creating further economic and community development impetus and appeal for the community. The community will continue to INVEST in and PROMOTE its INFRASTRUCTURE, CULTURE, and IDENTITY.

City of Lyons Needs

Continued water/sewer/ infrastructure improvements

Continued street, drainage, and streetscape improvements

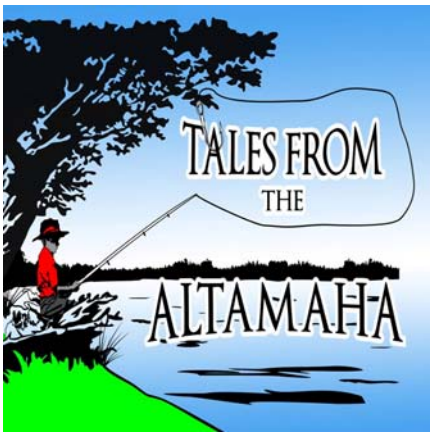
Continued downtown revitalization/utilization

Water/sewer extension to Toombs Corporate Center on U.S. 1 industrial park expansion

Public safety improvements

Continued recreation/Partin and Hallmark Park improvements

City of Lyons Opportunities



Downtown Lyons/Main Street Program

"Tales from the Altamaha" and other events

Partin Park

U.S. 1 Corporate Center

Nelle Brown Public Library

Altamaha Heritage Center Museum

Toombs County High School

Robert Toombs Christian Academy

Southeast Georgia Soap Box Derby

Commercial opportunities associated with the 4-laning of U.S. 1 South and Bypass highway frontage

City of Santa Claus

The City of Santa Claus is a quiet, friendly municipality, almost a neighborly hamlet, of about 182 persons located about one mile south of Lyons, lying adjacent and east of U.S. 1. The community wholeheartedly embraces and celebrates its namesake and the associated Christmas holidays. City hall is located at 25 December Drive; all city streets, save one, are appropriately theme named; the City's motto is "The City that Loves Children;" and six-foot, welcoming Santas are located alongside the City's entrance signs on both edges of town. The community is one of two such named incorporated municipalities in the U.S. (the other is a larger Indiana town). The City of Santa Claus was incorporated in 1941 at the behest of C. C. (Farmer Green) who operated a roadside stand there to sell his pecans and other novelties to passing tourists. The development of the physical town was principally the work of real estate broker Bill Salem and his brother. The one, non-themed street in town is named, Salem, in his honor. The city's name, Santa Claus, was chosen to generate additional traveler interest and attention. The growth of Santa Claus was thwarted by the opening of interstates, and the resulting decline of U.S. 1 as a tourist route. Today, the community merrily continues to embrace its holiday traditions and beginnings. Although without an official post office, the citizens of the community voluntarily hand-cancel many holiday letters and packages with a special stamp. The City operates a welcome center, historical museum and gift shop, and a new 4,200 square foot community center which hosts an annual community-wide, public Christmas party and other events. The community also hosts a public Christmas tree, replete with a town-wide decorating event and carol sing. An especially inspiring and beautiful celebration is the City's Christmas Eve Luminary Lighting which attracts many visitors to ride through town to see the many traditional luminaries (paper bags filled with sand and candles) lining its streets. Light from fire has been a destination beacon for weary travelers for centuries. A small chapel and peaceful garden have recently been constructed along U.S. 1 and is open to residents and visitors alike. The luminaries and chapel do succinctly capture the heritage and spirit of Santa Claus, the small, neighborly city of Toombs County, Georgia.

City of Santa Claus Vision

The City of Santa Claus wishes to be a WARM and CARING COMMUNITY with a friendly, neighborly population which embraces the Christmas spirit and holiday year-round. The magic and SELFLESS TRADITIONS of Christmas will be evident and embraced all year. The community will welcome both visitors and residents alike, and instill both JOY and TANGIBLE REMINDERS OF THE HOLIDAYS with appropriate decorations, shops, and community facilities, services, and events.

City of Santa Claus Needs

Improved water/sewer infrastructure

Street improvements

City website with online shop

Establishment of a local arts/crafts festival

Additional playground equipment

City of Santa Claus Opportunities

Municipal name and heritage

Location on U.S. 1

Proximity to Lyons/Vidalia

Community cohesiveness

City of Vidalia

The City of Vidalia is located in southeastern Georgia along U.S. 280 just south of I-16, about equidistant between the Georgia metro areas of Augusta, Macon, and Savannah. The current municipality is by far the largest in Toombs County, with a population of nearly 11,000 persons, although it is not the county seat. Vidalia's history is tied to fields and forests, and lies in the rich fertile river valleys between the famed Altamaha River on the south, the scenic Ohoopee on the north and east, and the mystic Oconee on the west. Even today, Vidalia is best known as the home of the world's sweetest onion, the Vidalia Sweet Onion. Vidalia had its municipal beginnings as Jenkins Station when the Savannah, Americus, and Montgomery (SAM) Railroad came through the county in 1890. Sam Hawkins was president and principal owner of the SAM Railroad. According to the CSX Railroad historian at a meeting in 1980, Vidalia officially got its name by combining the names of Hawkins' two daughters. Even as a station stop on the SAM, Vidalia languished until the Macon, Dublin and Southwestern Railroad was extended from Dublin to a junction with the Seaboard Air Line Railroad (formerly the SAM) in 1902. Vidalia is said to have exhibited Georgia's largest percentage growth from 1900 when its official Census population was 500 to 1910, when it was 1,800. By 1917, Vidalia's population is estimated to have doubled to 3,500. The Vidalia City Directory of 1917 noted that Vidalia had the best railroad facilities of any little city in Georgia, radiating in six directions from the city and with direct lines to "Savannah, Macon, Augusta, and Florida cities." The Directory further noted that the railroads handled "fully 500 cars of freight" daily during the busy season. It was further pointed out that the community had "splendid clayed highways (which) lead out in every direction in making it easy and pleasant for automobile travel." The local businesses were still agricultural, forest, and agribusiness related. The community was noted as manufacturing the best cotton gin on the market, having the biggest wire fence market in Georgia, and the second largest mule market. Vidalia was also a leader with its newspaper, its Leader and Rosansky Department Store, and its large number of retail dry goods and grocery stores. It was additionally a regional leader in education, including its schools for African-

Americans. Vidalia's first school for blacks was a converted Odd Fellows Hall made into a one-room school in 1904. It was established by James DeWitt Dickerson, who was instrumental in Vidalia education until his death in 1947. Professor Dickerson was instrumental in securing the local support of Vidalia's black and white citizens needed to attract the aid of the Julius Rosenwald Fund to build a two-story Rosenwald school on Third Avenue in 1918-1919, eventually known as the Vidalia High and Industrial School. Under the tutelage of Professor Dickerson, the school achieved Georgia Department of Education aid and elevated designation as the Toombs County Training School in the early 1930s. The Toombs County Training School also attracted Works Progress Administration funding in 1935 to build a new brick veneer school in 1937, appropriately named the Dickerson Training School. Dickerson Training School was said to be the most modern school building in South Georgia for African Americans at that time. Even today, Vidalia operates one of the few city school systems in the state, and has a J.D. Dickerson Elementary School, which pays homage to the Dickerson Training school.

Vidalia's elevated status today as a regional center of retail, service, economic opportunity, and health care can be traced again to location, agricultural heritage, and progressive leadership. Seeking to recover from the Great Depression, a local farmer, Moses Coleman, planted onions as an alternative crop and early spring cash source. Coleman's foresight was rewarded when he discovered the low sulfur soils of the area made the onions exceptionally sweet, therefore commanding a premium price. This price led other local farmers to follow suit and also plant onions. Vidalia was located at the juncture of some of South Georgia's most widely traveled highways. Given this and the fortuitous location of a state farmer's market in Vidalia in the 1940s, the fame of the sweet "Vidalia Onions" soon spread. The Tanner Brice Company, which was founded in Vidalia in 1919, began operating the first area Piggly Wiggly grocery stores in 1943. The community had a distribution center for Piggly Wiggly in the early 1950s, which became Piggly Wiggly Sims Stores and later Piggly Wiggly Southern. The business acumen of the local Piggly Wiggly distribution center manager, quickly led to much wider marketing of the sweet "Vidalia Onions." The state of Georgia gave the Vidalia Onion legal status in 1986, protecting it by restricting its production area to a surrounding 20 county area. Local

onion producers received further federal protection under a marketing order in 1989. The Vidalia Onion was made Georgia's official state vegetable in 1990, and its season was extended by controlled atmosphere storage adapted from apples. Today the Vidalia Onion is a cash crop worth an estimated 90 million dollars to the regional economy.

The Vidalia Onion is certainly one of Georgia's agricultural and economic success stories, and a state treasure. However, Vidalia is a success on many levels. The community has diversified itself economically by focusing on its location, maintaining the excellence of local education and other facilities, preserving and reusing tangible reminders of its heritage, and growing itself as a regional trade, service and healthcare center. The community was successful in getting the state to locate Southeastern Technical Institute (now College) in 1988 to the city. The community did not stop there. Through a local option sales tax, it expanded the state project to include the construction of a local funded 776 seat auditorium for both school and community use. Vidalia has been a Main Street Program participant since 1989, and has long been a proponent of downtown revitalization. Vidalia's City Hall is in a rehabilitated, expanded downtown WPA post office. The downtown commercial area is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The community continues to invest in its heritage, downtown, and infrastructure. In 2011, the community constructed a new, modern Meadows Regional Medical Center in Vidalia, which continues to expand its regional focus and level of services at a time when many small-town rural hospitals are severely struggling. During the same year, the City of Vidalia converted a downtown vacated grocery store into an imposing, state of the art Municipal Annex which will serve the community well into the future. In 2014, Vidalia created the Stage at City Park and passive park on the former police station site behind City Hall, vacated after the Municipal Annex construction. The Vidalia Sweet Onion Festival is now a nearly week-long celebration of the world famous onion, recognized by MSNBC as one of the five don't miss festivals in the U.S. The community operates a Convention and Visitors Bureau, despite its relatively small size. It also has excellent recreation facilities,

an airport with a 6,000-foot runway, along with many other amenities. Vidalia is home to a regional library, the Ohoopee Regional Library, and to a renowned, pre-eminent genealogical library, the Ladson Genealogical and Historical Library. Many of the city's historic homes have been converted to professional, office, and community use, including the Altama Museum of Art and History, located in the National Register-listed Brazell House. This museum is home to 24 original Audubons. The historic Pal Theatre was purchased by the City and subsequently modernized in recent years as a multi-use theater/event space. As of 2018, Vidalia has a new Aquatic Center. This project features a lap pool for general and competition swimming, and a popular splash pool. The Vidalia Convention and Visitors Bureau notes, "the Vidalia area is full of local flavor, and we don't just mean on your dinner plate!" Vidalia truly is a modern urban area with small-town atmosphere, progressive leadership, outstanding facilities, expanding economic status, and with much attention and celebration to its heritage. The U.S. Census Bureau recognizes Vidalia's growing economic status, as the City of Vidalia is the central component of the Vidalia, Georgia Micropolitan Statistical Area, which includes all of Toombs County. The community is most definitely much more than the Vidalia Onion.

City of Vidalia Vision

The City of Vidalia will continue its status as a REGIONAL CENTER OF RETAIL TRADE, SERVICES, JOB OPPORTUNITIES, and HEALTH CARE. The VIDALIA SWEET ONION and other local heritage will continue to be celebrated and utilized as a platform for economic diversification and community improvement. Vidalia's downtown and historic fabric will be lovingly preserved and incorporated into ONGOING IMPROVEMENTS, even as facilities and services are modernized and expanded. EDUCATION, CULTURE, THE ARTS, and TOURISM will continue to be major focal points of attention. The City and surrounding community will be a model of rural development respective of, and complementary to, existing heritage and culture.

City of Vidalia Needs

Continued water/sewer/ infrastructure improvements

Continuing downtown revitalization

Drainage improvements

Information technology and broadband/Wi-Fi improvements

Continuing public safety improvements

Continuing transportation system improvements

Downtown wayfinding signage

Continuing landmark/historic fabric preservation

Housing stock improvements

Continuing culture/arts/tourism support/development

Recreational facilities/parks improvements

City of Vidalia Opportunities

National Register of Historic Places

TIA

PlanFirst Community
A Program of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs

- Vidalia Sweet Onion, Museum, and Festival
- National Register-listed downtown commercial area
- Vidalia City School System
- Vidalia Municipal Annex
- 2020 TIA T-SPLOST
- Vidalia Main Street Program
- Vidalia Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Intergovernment cooperation
- Meadows Regional Medical Center
- Southeastern Technical College
- Vidalia Regional Airport
- Vidalia Regional Sports Complex
- Vidalia Community Center
- Leadership
- Aquatic Center
- Pal Theatre
- 2020 PlanFirst Designee

42nd Annual Vidalia Onion 2019 Festival

Community Goals

Economic Development

- Address continuing education/job skills improvements
- Continue to improve education levels
- Support Southeastern Technical College
- Retain local graduates
- Attract new businesses/industry/jobs
- Support small business/entrepreneurial development
- Continue development of industrial parks/sites
- Maintain/upgrade water/sewer infrastructure
- Improve transportation access/quality
- Seek broadband/fiber availability upgrades
- Attract green businesses
- Enhance intergovernmental cooperation
- Maintain viability/support/enhance agricultural/forestry uses
- Promote/enhance tourism
- Organize local cultural arts umbrella group
- Regional center promotion/enhancement
- Maintain/increase local retail trade/service sectors
- Continue downtown revitalization of Lyons and Vidalia
- Continue support for active Toombs-Montgomery Chamber of Commerce and Toombs County Development Authority
- Continue promotion of Vidalia Onion
- Develop new/involved local leadership

- Protect significant natural resources of Toombs County
- Seek compatible development/utilization
- Utilize/preserve/adaptively use historic resources/heritage of Toombs County
- Continue downtown revitalization of Lyons and Vidalia
- Conserve/protect Altamaha and Ohoopee rivers in Toombs County
- Maintain open spaces/agricultural/forestry uses
- Promote nature-based, recreation, and agri-tourism opportunities
- Address growth management/natural and cultural resources protection

Natural & Cultural Resources

Housing

- Encourage diverse housing mix
- Utilize state/federal programs
- Improve quality/appearance of housing
- Support Lyons and Vidalia housing authorities
- Implement/enforce need for land use planning/subdivision/manufactured housing/code enforcement
- Collaborate on housing rehabilitation measures/programs

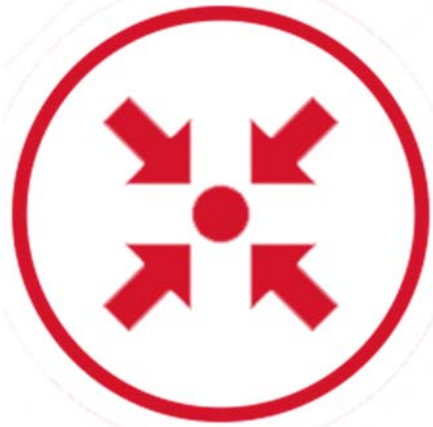
- Implement/enforce need for land use planning/subdivision/manufactured housing/code enforcement
- Improve community appearance/aesthetics
- Maintain open spaces/agricultural/forestry uses
- Improve/promote transportation access/quality
- Continue to maintain local Subtitle D landfill
- Rural character/quality of life protection
- Promote compatible development/utilization

Land Use

Community Facilities & Services

- Maintain/upgrade/expand infrastructure/services, as needed
- Maintain/upgrade water/sewer facilities and service, as needed
- Upgrade quality/availability of broadband/fiber technology
- Improve/promote transportation access/quality
- Maintain Toombs Subtitle D landfill
- Continue to upgrade public safety/emergency medical facilities/services
- Maintain/upgrade local healthcare facilities/services within the community and regional healthcare provider status
- Develop/improve/maintain recreation facilities and programs countywide
- Provide/maintain appropriate governmental facilities/services
- Maintain quality educational facilities/services
- Support Southeastern Technical College
- Encourage utilization/enhancement/promotion of cultural facilities/activities
- Maintain/enhance Ohoopee Regional Library and local libraries
- Support/enhance local museums

- Maintain/enhance local, regional, state cooperation
- Seek sharing/cooperation/consolidation in service delivery
- Coordinated land use planning/code enforcement



Intergovernmental Coordination

Long Term Policies

Economic Development

The community will work together to improve educational and skills levels to ensure a better qualified workforce for existing and future employers

The community will collaboratively support the local school systems and otherwise develop cooperative efforts to improve the graduation rate, and to engage students to remain in school

The community will continue to support Southeastern Technical College and its continued enhancement of educational and technological opportunities

The community will work together to develop, support, and promote programs which will enhance opportunities for local graduates to both live and work in the community upon graduation

The community will seek to maintain and enhance its diversified industrial base

The community will actively recruit new industry and commercial/retail development, utilizing the Industrial Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce, and other means, which is compatible with, and supportive of, the resources, infrastructure, existing economy, and the natural environments of the county

The community will continue to work regionally to support existing and new small businesses to maintain its Georgia Department of Economic Development's Regional Entrepreneur Friendly Community designation

The community will continue to maintain GRAD certified industrial parks and other industrial sites through technological improvements, infrastructure maintenance/improvements, and/or additional enhancements as needed

The community will work to maintain and upgrade, as necessary, its excellent water and sewer infrastructure (with excess capacity) and extend service to growth areas

The community will continue to seek transportation improvements (highway, airport, rail, bicycle, and pedestrian) to enhance and support economic development efforts

The community will continue to support and maintain the Vidalia Regional Airport, through necessary infrastructure/equipment upgrades and maintenance, service expansions and other means

The community will pursue obtaining broadband/fiber availability upgrades, including Wi-Fi accessibility in public parks and spaces

The community will seek to attract green businesses that improve the quality of life for the community and environment

The community will cooperate and coordinate with existing local, regional, and state agencies to improve all of Toombs County

The community will maintain agriculture/forestry as viable economic uses through traditional and alternative enterprises, such as value-added agribusiness and exporting, agritourism, and nature-based tourism

The community will continue to cooperatively develop and promote itself as a regional tourist attraction through festivals, the local folk play (Tales from the Altamaha), recreation and leisure facilities/activities, museums, cultural events, heritage tourism, agri-tourism, and nature-based tourism

The community will seek to organize an umbrella group to improve cultural arts facilities/programs coordination throughout Toombs County

The community will continue to maintain and enhance its position as a regional center for surrounding counties in terms of shopping, job opportunities, healthcare, education, recreation, and cultural opportunities

The community will continue to support the Toombs-Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce and the Toombs County Development Authority's active efforts to attract economic development, including maintaining and increasing the local retail trade and service sectors and their market share

Toombs County
development authority

The community will continue the revitalization of Downtown Lyons and Vidalia as vibrant, functioning commercial, governmental, and social centers through the Main Street Program and other means

The community will investigate usage of Tax Allocation Districts (TADs), Business Improvement Districts, Enterprise Zones, Rural Zones, and other economic improvement zone designations as tools for redevelopment/revitalization

The community will continue to promote the Vidalia Onion in terms of community identity and marketing, while at the same time broadening marketing efforts to promote the community's diverse opportunities

The community will seek to improve its social and economic fabric and overall quality of life by developing new and involved leadership, by inviting greater community involvement, and by marshalling broad-based efforts and initiatives to address pressing issues and concerns

Natural & Cultural Resources

The community will seek to conserve and protect the Altamaha and Ohoopee rivers, the county's significant groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, other important natural resources, and the open spaces and landscapes of the county while promoting compatible utilization and recreational development

The community will maintain, utilize, promote, and preserve its heritage, and will seek to encourage public and private adaptive use/reuse of its historic buildings, historic districts, and landmark structures and pursue listing in the National Register of Historic Places, as appropriate

The community will continue the revitalization of historic downtown Lyons and Vidalia through the Lyons and Vidalia Main Street programs, Downtown Vidalia Association, and other means, including improved coordination and use of available state and federal preservation tax incentives

The community will capitalize on its agricultural lands/forestry economic opportunities, and will seek to promote, develop, and cultivate additional compatible uses of these resources, including agri-tourism and nature-based tourism initiatives

The community will proactively manage and guide its growth and development, and protect and conserve its important natural and cultural resources

Housing

The community will seek to encourage a diverse mix of safe, quality housing, including affordable, rental, elderly, assisted living, starter homes, and compatible workforce housing

The community will encourage the use of state and federal programs to improve availability of quality housing, and to encourage homeownership

The community will continue to support the Lyons and Vidalia housing authorities in their efforts to provide affordable subsidized housing

The community will cooperate to implement and enforce the need for land use planning, subdivision/manufactured housing ordinances, and code enforcement

The community will continue to work collaboratively on housing rehabilitation measures and programs, where appropriate
Land Use

Land Use

The community will cooperate to implement and enforce the need for land use planning,

subdivision/manufactured housing regulations, growth management and code enforcement

The community will work to improve its appearance and aesthetics, including enhancing gateways/entranceways though landscaping/beautification and other means

The community will encourage growth that preserves and maintains forestry and agriculture as viable, functioning land uses

The community will pursue, develop, and promote transportation improvements of all types (highway, airport, rail, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian) that are compatible with, and supportive of, the community's desired economic development, future growth, and quality of life

The community will continue to maintain its Subtitle D landfill through technological and/or other improvements, as needed, and otherwise develop and expand its solid waste management services and facilities

The community will work to protect/conserve its existing rural character/landscape and quality of life, and will promote appropriately compatible development

Community Facilities & Services

The community will maintain, upgrade, and expand its existing infrastructure and services to enhance the quality of life; to attract desired, compatible growth and development; and to support its status as a regional trade/growth center

The community will seek to maintain and upgrade existing water and sewer facilities, as needed, and to extend service to areas of growth

The community will pursue obtaining upgraded broadband/fiber availability upgrades, including Wi-Fi accessibility in public parks and spaces

The community will pursue, develop, and promote transportation improvements of all types (highway, airport, rail, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian) that are compatible with, and supportive of, the community's desired economic development, future growth, and quality of life

The community will continue to maintain its state-of-the art Subtitle D landfill through technological and/or other improvements, as needed

The community will continue to improve public safety services, facilities, and personnel training to support an expanding population, improve quality of service, and better coordinate in times of emergency and disasters

The community will work together to maintain and upgrade healthcare facilities and services, as needed, and seek to continue its status as a regional healthcare provider

The community will maintain and improve existing parks/recreational facilities as needed and establish new parks/recreational facilities and activities to serve existing and future populations

The community will continue to provide and maintain adequate government facilities, including city and county administrative facilities

The community will seek to continue to enhance educational and technological opportunities by continuing to maintain and upgrade its educational facilities and programs

The community will continue to support Southeastern Technical College and its continued enhancement of educational and technological opportunities

The community will continue to support its cultural facilities, programs, and events and provide enhanced service and programs, as feasible, in conjunction with organization of an umbrella group to coordinate efforts throughout Toombs County

The community will maintain and work to enhance its status as headquarters of the Ohoopee Regional Library and continue to upgrade its local libraries and the Ladson Genealogical Library

The community will support and enhance its museums and their offerings both to preserve local heritage and encourage tourism

Intergovernmental Coordination

The community will continue to cooperate locally, regionally and on the state level to improve, develop, and plan for the desired future of Toombs County

The community will continue to seek ways to cooperate and coordinate efforts in the delivery of services, and will investigate the possibility of shared and consolidated services where appropriate and feasible

The community will cooperate in coordinated land use planning and code enforcement to manage and guide its future growth and development

Needs and Opportunities

The Needs and Opportunities Element is required of all local governments by the Minimum Standards and Procedures. The community needs are those weaknesses or liabilities which have to be addressed, changed, or mitigated to help achieve the desired community future. The community opportunities are strengths and assets which can be utilized as starting points and foundations to accentuate or capitalize on to move the community forward on its desired future path. The Needs and Opportunities Element generally answers the planning question, "Where are we currently?" The answers can provide the compass point guidance necessary to begin and advance along the improvement journey. The Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan identifies each community goal as an issue for improvement, and further identifies local needs and opportunities, as appropriate, for each issue.

Needs & Opportunities

Needs

- Continuing education/job skills improvements (Economic Development (ED), Community Facilities and Services (CFS), and Intergovernmental Coordination (IC))
- Continuing collaborative support/cooperative efforts for the local school systems to improve high school student retention/graduation rate (ED, CFS, IC)
- Support for enhanced post-secondary education and technology resources/programs at Southeastern Technical College (ED, CFS, IC)
- Retention of local graduates (ED, Housing (HO), CFS)
- Maintain/enhance diversified industrial base (ED, Land Use (LU), CFS, IC)
- Compatible new business/industry/jobs attraction/creation (ED, Natural and Cultural Resources (NCR), LU, CFS, IC)
- Work to attract green businesses (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Continue to work regionally to support small businesses and maintain Regional Entrepreneur Friendly Community designation (ED, CFS, IC)
- Continued maintenance of GRAD certified industrial parks/other industrial sites with technology, infrastructure, and other needed improvements (ED, CFS, IC)
- Water and sewer infrastructure extension to Toombs Corporate Center at U.S. 1 industrial park expansion (ED, CFS, IC)
- Purchase additional property for expansion of Toombs Corporate Center at Vidalia Regional Airport industrial park with gas, water, sewer, and high speed broadband connectivity (ED, LU, CFS, IC)
- Maintenance/extension/development of infrastructure necessary for desired growth/quality of life and support of regional trade/growth center status, including transportation, water/sewer, natural gas, broadband high speed connectivity, and industrial park improvements (ED, LU, CFS, IC)
- Continued improvements/promotion of all kinds of transportation access/quality, including highway, roads/streets, airport, rail, transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and multi-modal/Complete Streets supportive of desired economic development/future growth/quality of life (ED, CFS, IC)
- “Complete Streets” policy to develop safe infrastructure for bicycle and pedestrian users (ED, CFS, IC)
- Increased development of local bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure, such as more signage to promote increased bicycle use (ED, CFS, IC)

- Continuing street and road improvements, including paving and resurfacing projects utilizing TIA and other funding (ED, CFS, IC)
- Completion of TIA Band 2 and 3 projects, including Ezra Taylor and New Normantowns roads (County); West Oglethorpe Avenue, North Lanier and North Lexington streets, SR 292, and Oxley Drive (Lyons); and Pete Phillips, Brinson, Rudell, and Semco roads; Lowery Place; Curry and Truman streets; and Railroad crossings (Vidalia) (ED, CFS, IC)
- Passage of second T-SPLOST in Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region (ED, LU, CFS, IC)
- Continue to maintain modern Vidalia Regional Airport, including regular infrastructure/equipment upgrades and service expansion (ED, CFS, IC)
- Rehab/expand Vidalia Regional Airport terminal apron pavement (ED, CFS, IC)
- Construct new hangar at Vidalia Regional Airport (ED, CFS, IC)
- Improvements to Internet/broadband access/service/facilities supportive of state-of-the art technology, including Wi-Fi access in public parks/spaces and improved residential access countywide (ED, CFS, IC)
- Adoption of DCA's model Broadband Services ordinance and certification as Broadband Ready Community countywide (ED, CFS, IC)
- Broadband education for local leadership (ED, CFS, IC)
- Continuing local, regional, and state agency cooperation/coordination (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Maintenance of agriculture/forestry as viable economic land uses through traditional and alternative means, such as agri- and nature-based tourism (ED, NCR, LU, IC)
- Regional tourism development/promotion through events, such as Lyons' Real Squeal Barbeque and Music and Vidalia Onion festivals; Tales from the Altamaha folk play; recreation/leisure activities; heritage tourism; agri-tourism; nature based tourism; and other means (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Establish arts and crafts festival in Santa Claus (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Expand Sweet Onion RV Park in Vidalia (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Organize umbrella group to improve cultural arts facilities/programs coordination countywide (ED, NCR, IC)
- Maintain/enhance community's position as regional center for commerce, jobs, healthcare, education, recreation, and cultural opportunities (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Continued support for Chamber and Development Authority's efforts to attract economic development (ED, LU, CFS, IC)

- Continue to maintain/increase local retail trade and service sectors through Chamber and Development Authority efforts (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Continued downtown revitalization/investment in Lyons and Vidalia (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Investigate use of/establish Tax Allocation Districts, Business Improvement Districts, Enterprise Zones, Rural Zones, and other economic improvement designations for redevelopment/revitalization (ED, LU, CFS, IC)
- Continued promotion of Vidalia Onion for community identity/marketing, while broadening marketing of community's diverse opportunities (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Implement new city-wide branding for Vidalia (ED, CFS, IC)
- Develop new, involved community leadership and involvement (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Conservation/protection of Altamaha and Ohoopee rivers, significant natural resources, and open spaces/landscapes of Toombs County, while promoting compatible use/recreational development (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Develop/implement water quality protection ordinance consistent with Vidalia's watershed assessment (NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Historic resources preservation/reuse/promotion, including Pal Theatre (Vidalia) and Lyons Depot, as well as continued rehabilitation of downtown Lyons and Vidalia commercial structures (ED, NCR, HO, CFS, IC)
- Renovate the Lyons Depot (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Develop downtown passive park beside Lyons Fire Station (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Purchase/install onion statues throughout downtown Vidalia (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Paint murals throughout downtown Vidalia depicting locally recognized points of importance (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Purchase/install rooftop lights around businesses in downtown Vidalia (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Purchase/install Edison lights in downtown Vidalia alleys and in Meadows Street Park area (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Add decorative lighting from downtown Vidalia to 3rd/4th streets (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Outdoor sound system for downtown Vidalia (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Install pedestrian wayfinding signage in downtown Vidalia historic district (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Seasonal decorations for downtown Vidalia (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)

- Pal Theatre improvements, including new roof, new exterior doors, ice machine for catering kitchen, and structural beams for rigging and lighting (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Improvements to the Stage at City Park in downtown Vidalia, including rigging, permanent lighting, pigtails, and permanent fencing (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Pursue National Register listing for historic structures and districts, as appropriate (ED, NCR, IC)
- Continued revitalization of historic downtowns in Lyons and Vidalia through Main Street program participation, Lyons Downtown Development Authority, Downtown Vidalia Association, and other means (ED, HO, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Increased utilization of state and federal historic preservation rehabilitation tax incentives (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Proactive growth management of future compatible development, and protection/conservation of significant natural and cultural resources, through community investment/appropriate regulation (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Diverse mix of quality housing (safe, affordable, rental, elderly, assisted living, starter, compatible workforce) (ED, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- State/federal housing programs utilization to improve availability of affordable/quality housing and home ownership (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Continued pursuit of CDBG/CHIP grants and others to rehabilitate substandard housing, as appropriate (ED, NCR, HO, CFS, IC)
- Establish program(s) to remove dilapidated manufactured homes/housing units countywide (HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Adopt Georgia Uniform Building Codes and establish permit system (Toombs County) (HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Continued support for Lyons and Vidalia housing authorities' provision of affordable subsidized housing (ED, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Cooperative implementation and enforcement of updated/coordinated land use planning, manufactured housing/subdivision regulations, growth management, and construction code enforcement (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Continued collaborative housing rehabilitation measures/programs (ED, HO, CFS, IC)
- Appearance/aesthetics improvements, including enhancing gateways/entranceways through landscaping, beautification, and other means (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Replace Vidalia's entrance signs (ED, CFS, IC)

- Seasonal decorations for City of Santa Claus and along Hwy. 292 from Vidalia High School to Semco Drive (CFS, IC)
- Encourage growth supportive of preserving/maintaining viability of forestry and agriculture land uses (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Continue to maintain Toombs County's Subtitle D landfill through technological or other needed improvements/expand solid waste management services/facilities as necessary (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Complete removal of all green boxes throughout Toombs County (NCR, LU, CFS)
- Establish new convenience center south of Vidalia (NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Compatible development supportive of community's unique landscapes; natural and cultural resources; open spaces; and rural character/quality of life (ED, NCR, LU, CFS)
- Maintain/upgrade existing water and sewer facilities, as needed, including extending service to growth areas (ED, LU, CFS, IC)
- Sewer system improvements in the Roosevelt Street area of Lyons (CFS, IC)
- Expand capacity of Lyons' east and north sewer plants to accommodate downtown and other areas of the city (ED, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Connect Lyons' north and east wastewater treatment plants (ED, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Improve Santa Claus water system citywide, including fire hydrants (ED, CFS, IC)
- Install new water and sewer lines between U.S. 280 and Highway 292 and along GA 130 in Vidalia to accommodate residential and commercial growth (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Replace old water and sewer lines along portions of MLK, Jr. Avenue and Grand, Epstein, Church, Jackson, Durden, Mosley, and Smith streets in Vidalia (ED, NCR, HO, CFS, IC)
- Improve water, sewer, and drainage along Bay, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th streets in Vidalia (ED, NCR, HO, CFS, IC)
- Upgrade lift stations (pump replacement) throughout Vidalia (ED, NCR, HO, CFS, IC)
- Upgrade effluent sand filters and clarifiers at Swift Creek WWTP in Vidalia (CFS, IC)
- Automatic screening system and septic waste dumping station at LAS WWTP in Vidalia (CFS, IC)
- Replace lift station to include new wet well and increase pump capacity at Barksdale Drive and Pleasure Court in Vidalia (CFS, IC)
- Purchase new water meters/system in Vidalia (CFS, IC)
- Upgrade water withdrawal depths (pump lowering) at all four (4) wells in Vidalia (CFS, IC)
- Purchase portable generator (Vidalia) (CFS, IC)

- Storm drainage and street improvements in the Roosevelt Street and Pecan Place areas of Lyons (CFS, IC)
- Drainage ditch improvements/maintenance in Santa Claus (CFS, IC)
- Concrete ditches along sections of West Jenkins and Ward streets in Vidalia (CFS, IC)
- Improve street surface and drainage along 4th Avenue, Poe Street, and Dickerson Drive in Vidalia (CFS, IC)
- Purchase maintenance equipment for County roads department (CFS, IC)
- Develop bicycle trail/route designation along Cedar Crossing-Vidalia Road from Vidalia to Gray's Landing on the Altamaha River (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Construct non-motorized trail to connect to planned bicycle trail (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Pave Emanuel and Victoria circles and Lake Drive in County (HO, CFS, IC)
- Repair bridge aprons countywide (CFS, IC)
- Re-stripe approximately 115 miles of County-maintained roads (CFS, IC)
- Complete GDOT countywide transportation study (ED, CFS, IC)
- Continue sidewalk maintenance in Vidalia (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Extend sidewalks along sections of Highway 297 and Aimwell and Adams streets in Vidalia (CFS, IC)
- Install way-finding signage on arterial routes throughout Vidalia (ED, CFS, IC)
- Continued improvements to local public safety/fire/emergency medical services, equipment, training, facilities, and emergency/disaster coordination, as needed (CFS, IC)
- Construct new County EMS building (LU, CFS, IC)
- Renovate and/or expand Toombs County Jail (CFS, IC)
- Renovate Lyons Fire Department building (CFS, IC)
- Purchase three (3) 2-door top mount rescue pumper fire trucks for City of Vidalia (CFS, IC)
- Construct training burn center/search/rescue building for Vidalia Fire Department (CFS, IC)
- Construct new fire station with training room in Vidalia (CFS, IC)
- Replace 12 MSA SCBA (air packs) and 27 Veridian PPE (bunker) gear for Vidalia Fire Department (CFS, IC)
- Purchase rescue equipment/accessories (Jaws of Life) for Vidalia (CFS, IC)
- Purchase maintenance truck for Vidalia Fire Department (CFS, IC)
- Purchase vehicles for investigators, administration, and police patrols in Vidalia (CFS, IC)

- Purchase body camera equipment, portable radios, and patrol car laptops for Vidalia Police Department (CFS, IC)
- Install rubberized material in lanes at Vidalia Police Department shooting range (CFS, IC)
- Continued maintenance/upgrades, as needed, of Meadows Regional Medical Center and healthcare facilities/services/equipment (ED, CFS, IC)
- Maintain/improve existing parks/recreational facilities/activities and establish new ones, as needed (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Construct new soccer complex and replace all field lighting at Partin Park in Lyons (ED, CFS, IC)
- Renovate Hallmark Park in Lyons (ED, CFS, IC)
- Renovate Lyons City Gym (ED, CFS, IC)
- Repair/replace/add new playground equipment to park in Santa Claus (CFS, IC)
- Construct birthday/party house in Santa Claus (ED, CFS, IC)
- Replace benches at Meadows Street Park in Vidalia (CFS, IC)
- Upgrades at Vidalia's Ed Smith Complex baseball fields, including new fencing, bleachers, dugouts, lighting, and back stops (ED, CFS, IC)
- Install new playing surface on tennis courts at Ed Smith Complex in Vidalia (CFS, IC)
- Construct sheltered batting cage facility at Ed Smith Complex in Vidalia (CFS, IC)
- Expand maintenance building at Ed Smith Complex in Vidalia (CFS, IC)
- Upgrade neighborhood parks (5 total) throughout Vidalia with playground equipment, basketball court, other active recreation amenities (CFS, IC)
- Construct three (3) new soccer fields and two (2) new football fields at Vidalia Regional Sports Complex (ED, CFS, IC)
- Expand Vidalia Aquatics Facility to include slides and concession stands (ED, CFS, IC)
- Continued maintenance and provision of adequate local government facilities/services, including City and County administrative facilities (ED, CFS, IC)
- Renovate existing Toombs County Courthouse or construct new one (LU, CFS, IC)
- Renovate interior of Toombs County Human Resource building (CFS, IC)
- Create new website for Santa Claus with an online store (ED, CFS, IC)
- Pave entrance to Vidalia Animal Control Center (CFS, IC)
- Construct new Vidalia Public Works facility (CFS, IC)

- Purchase equipment and vehicles for Vidalia Public Works, including vac truck, limb truck, portable jetter, backhoe, work trucks, and others (CFS, IC)
- Purchase shop equipment, such as vehicle lift and tire equipment (Vidalia) (CFS, IC)
- Purchase yard waste mulching equipment (Vidalia) (CFS, IC)
- Purchase vehicles for Vidalia Code Enforcement and Administration (CFS, IC)
- Employ maintenance person for all Vidalia city departments (CFS)
- Replace all City of Vidalia desktop computers (CFS)
- Continued stewardship and local government use of National Register-listed historic Vidalia City Hall, including completion of remodeling (ED, NCR, CFS)
- Continued maintenance/enhancement to retain excellent quality local educational facilities/services/technology (ED, CFS, IC)
- Continued support/promotion/maintenance/enhancement of existing cultural facilities/programs/events and development of additional ones (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Continue to upgrade local libraries and Ladson Genealogical Library and retain/enhance status as Ohoopee Regional Library headquarters (ED, CFS, IC)
- Purchase new microfilm machine and digital converter for document digitization for Ohoopee Regional Library (CFS, IC)
- Support/enhance local museums and their offerings (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Expand Vidalia Onion Museum and create new exhibits (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Continue stewardship of National Register-listed Brazell House (Altama Museum of Art and History) and support for its programs (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Continued efforts to seek sharing/cooperation/consolidation in delivery of services (ED, CFS, IC)
- Enforcement of model ordinance based on Georgia DNR's Part V Environmental Planning Criteria for significant wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and protected river corridors (NCR, LU, CFS, IC)

Opportunities

- Continuing existing local, regional, and state agency cooperation/coordination (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Heart of Georgia Altamaha Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program (ED, IC)

- Post-secondary education access at Southeastern Technical College, Brewton-Parker College, Georgia Southern University, and other nearby institutions (ED, IC)
- Southeastern Early College and Career Academy (ED, CFS, IC)
- Regional Entrepreneur Friendly Community designation (ED, CFS, IC)
- Bronze Cornerstone Community recognition by Great Promise Partnership for Toombs County governments (ED, CFS, IC)
- Excellent local schools, including facilities, technology, and dual enrollment opportunities (ED, CFS, IC)
- Increasing local high school graduation rate (ED, CFS)
- GRAD certified industrial parks (Toombs Corporate Center at U.S. Highway 1 and Toombs Corporate Center at Vidalia Regional Airport) (ED, CFS, IC)
- Existing businesses/industries, such as Tumi Luggage, Trane, DOT Foods, Chicken of the Sea, and others (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Active Toombs-Montgomery Chamber of Commerce and Toombs County Development Authority (ED, CFS, IC)
- Low unemployment (ED, IC)
- Existing agricultural/forestry uses (ED, NCR, LU, IC)
- Available industrial space (ED, CFS, IC)
- Transportation improvements, including TIA funded resurfacing and paving projects and planned new southbound U.S. 1 bridge over Altamaha River (ED, CFS, IC)
- Proximity to Savannah and Brunswick ports, Interstates 16 and 95, and larger cities (ED, CFS, IC)
- Greater Savannah Regional Alliance participation (ED, IC)
- Vidalia Onion's national and international recognition (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Regional center for commerce, jobs, healthcare, education, recreation, and cultural opportunities (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Vidalia Regional Airport improvements (ED, CFS, IC)
- New Dollar General store in Santa Claus (ED, LU, CFS, IC)
- Historic downtown Lyons and Vidalia with further rehabilitation opportunities and Main Street Program participation (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Pal Theatre renovation (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Stage at City Park in downtown Vidalia (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)

- Active Vidalia Convention and Visitor's Bureau (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Local/regional tourism events/venues, such as Lyons' Real Squeal Barbeque and Music Festival, Vidalia Onion Festival, Tales from the Altamaha folk play, and Southeast Georgia Soap Box Derby (Lyons) (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Nature-based, agri-tourism, recreation, heritage, and other tourism venues, including the Altamaha and Ohoopee rivers (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Gray's, McNatt Falls, U.S. 1 Bridge, and Cobb's Creek landings on Altamaha River in Toombs County (ED, NCR, LU, CFS, IC)
- Santa's Garden Park in Santa Claus (ED, CFS, IC)
- Local cultural/historic resources, such as Altama Museum of Art and History and Pal Theatre (Vidalia), Lyons Depot and Altamaha Heritage Center, historic downtown Lyons and Vidalia, and others, and opportunities for increased heritage and cultural tourism (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Community's rural character/small town quality of life (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Lower property values/lower property taxes (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Significant natural resources, including Altamaha and Ohoopee rivers and their corridors, and others (ED, NCR, LU, IC)
- Environmental Conservation ordinance adopted countywide (NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Partin and Hallmark parks (Lyons) and Ed Smith Complex (Vidalia) and Vidalia Regional Sports Complex, Vidalia Aquatics Faculty, and other recreation opportunities (ED, LU, CFS, IC)
- Ample undeveloped land (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Lower cost of living and housing costs (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Existing zoning in Lyons and Vidalia (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Part-time clerk employed by City of Santa Claus (CFS, IC)
- City of Vidalia's recognition as a PlanFirst community for its successful comprehensive plan implementation (ED, CFS, IC)
- Land available for sale (ED, NCR, HO, LU, CFS, IC)
- Availability of CDBG/other public/private programs to rehabilitate low and moderate income housing (ED, NCR, HO, CFS, IC)
- Meadows Regional Medical Center, cancer treatment center, and other available healthcare services (ED, CFS, IC)
- Georgia HEART Hospital Program participation (ED, CFS, IC)

- SPLOST funding (ED, LU, CFS, IC)
- Toombs County Senior Center (ED, LU, CFS, IC)
- Playground upgrades in Santa Claus (CFS, IC)
- Strong local public safety/enforcement and low crime rate (CFS, IC)
- Excellent local public and private schools (ED, CFS, IC)
- Active local civic organizations, churches, and social services resources (ED, CFS, IC)
- Active Leadership Toombs-Montgomery Programs (ED, CFS, IC)
- Ohoopee Regional Library (ED, CFS, IC)
- Ladson Genealogical and Historical Library (NCR, CFS)
- Altamaha Heritage Center (Lyons) (NCR, CFS, IC)
- Vidalia Onion Museum (Vidalia) (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)
- Existing local, regional, and state partnerships, including public safety/fire service cooperation, Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, and others (ED, NCR, CFS, IC)

Economic Development

Economic prosperity is a key to community improvement. A community's comprehensive plan seeks at its core to make the community a better place to live, work, and recreate. To improve quality of life, there is a need for income and an increased tax base to help enhance the ability to afford needed and desired improvements, and afford better housing and a higher standard of living. Commerce and economic development have a major influence on overall population growth and development. The relationship is quite evident in Toombs County. Much of Toombs County's early growth resulted first from Altamaha River commerce and its farms and forests, and then, more importantly, from railroad establishment in the late 1800s. The Vidalia Sweet Onion, the location of I-16 along with other improving highways, the county's convenient location near the Georgia ports and between Georgia's metro areas, the location of the nearby Plant Hatch Nuclear Plant and continuing success in diversifying and transforming local industry, have stabilized and stimulated growth in the county. Establishing itself as a regional leader in retail service, health care, and jobs and the worldwide marketing of the Vidalia Sweet Onion, have distinguished Vidalia/Toombs County. The opening of I-16, continuing improvement to local infrastructure and facilities, improvements to rail and airport service, attention and celebration to local heritage and culture have further opened doors of growth, opportunity, and exposure for the Toombs County community.

The Toombs County area was an early frontier area of Georgia, originally primarily part of Montgomery/Tattnall counties, settled because of its natural beauty, fertile soils, and abundant pine forests, and access to the Altamaha River. Its growth and formal establishment in 1905 followed economic growth and the further opening of outside markets with the arrival of the Savannah, Americus, and Montgomery and other railroads in the 1880s/1890s. The abundant natural resources provided for important economic opportunities, and a profitable farming, and then lumber and naval stores industry resulted. Local leadership and improvement of infrastructure have always been important to Toombs County, beginning with its establishment and later with the Vidalia Sweet Onion and other improvements/diversification. The county's architecture, character, and many natural and cultural resources have always attracted attention and investment. The local economy received further boosts from transportation with the coming of major highways, most

notably U.S. 1, U.S. 280 and I-16. The Altamaha and Ohoopee rivers, the county's pastoral settings, Vidalia's Sweet Onion Festival, and now Lyons' "Tales from the Altamaha" folk life play have been calling cards of the community's outside natural resources, beauty, and heritage. Quality of life, family orientation, devotion to culture and heritages, small-town charm, outdoor scenic beauty, and celebration of local heritage are local economic strengths and opportunities available today for supporting and developing additional economic development opportunities. These efforts are already paying dividends through the attraction of visitors, the location of retirees, new residents, and the location of businesses.

There are continuing needs for Toombs County's economic development. Incomes in Toombs County remain relatively low, ranking about two-thirds to three-fourths that of the state. The per capita money income in Toombs County as reported by the Census Bureau for 2013-2017 is $21,309, compared to $28,015 in Georgia as a whole. Median household income is $335,750 only about 64% that of Georgia. About one-fourth (24.4%) of Toombs County citizens are in poverty, compared to only 17% in Georgia as a whole. This high poverty has persisted for a number of decades. Despite job recruitments, there have also been setbacks, and there are needs for more jobs. Unemployment in the county was 4.8% the first quarter of 2019, slightly higher than Georgia's 3.7% and the U.S.'s 3.6%. About 75 percent of county workers do work inside Toombs County with a mean travel time to work of 19 minutes. Job skills of local residents continue to be somewhat of a concern; about 20% of local residents lack a high school diploma compared to 16% statewide.

There are opportunities and cause for optimism for economic development in Toombs County as well. Employment within the county remains concentrated within manufacturing (13%), government (13%), retail trade (14%), and healthcare (17%) sectors. This reflects the stability and importance of the local retail sector, Meadows Regional Medical Center and other healthcare facilities, as well as local schools and technical college, and continuing manufacturer attraction. Toombs County does remain a regional leader in many categories providing nearly 12,000 jobs, and more than one in nine of jobs regionwide. According to the University of Georgia's 2017 Farmgate Community Value Report, Toombs ranked as the sixth highest vegetable producing county with a value of $68,139,698. Additionally, the county ranked fifth in the state for agriculture tourism with a value of $7,500,000. In total, the value of agri-related goods and services produced in Toombs County was $125,990,135 ranking 33rd of 159 counties. There are additional opportunities related to the Vidalia Sweet Onion

and other crops, the abundant fields and forests and outstanding natural and cultural resources of the county, tourism, and the county's location and transportation access. The cost of living in Toombs County is relatively very low, and the crime rate is low making it even more attractive as a place to live for families and new residents and retirees, especially in the context of overall high quality of life, attractive open spaces, and a verdant landscape punctuated by outstanding natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities. The same can be said for location of business and entrepreneurial opportunities, particularly given county history and recent successes in having companies locate within the community. The community's overall high quality of life in a rural area with excellent access beyond will continue to pay dividends.

The Toombs County community has chosen a multi-faceted approach and strategy to improve its economic status and further economic development in the county. The following goals and objectives were chosen to address identified economic development issues in Toombs County.

- **Improve Educational Levels/Improve Jobs Skills**

Toombs County will continue to support its local school systems, Southeastern Technical College and regional Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs. It will develop public/private partnerships through its Chamber of Commerce, civic groups, and continuing intergovernmental cooperation particularly on the regional levels. Participation in the Great Promise Partnership will be continued, and other local programs will be supported. Toombs County and the cities of Lyons and Vidalia were recognized in 2018 as a Bronze Cornerstone Community for its Great Promise Partnership participation in employing at risk youth. More apprenticeship programs are needed to train future employees. The Southeastern Early College and Career Academy will continue to be an important resource. The retention of local graduates

through enhanced opportunities will be pursued. Certified Literate Community participation will continue.

- **Support/Enhance/Maintain Viability of Agriculture/Forestry Uses**

The community will support efforts to continue to expand the reach and depth of the Vidalia Sweet Onion, create additional markets, explore alternative crops, and seek value-added businesses which keep such uses viable and profitable. The marketing and development of agri-tourism and nature-based tourism are other means. Support of existing forest industries and uses will be maintained. Olive tree cultivation and other vegetable production/processing are already showing promise. Legal hemp production may be another commodity to explore.

- **Develop/Maintain Necessary Infrastructure**

The Toombs County community will jointly work to solve any infrastructure deficiencies, including highway needs, drainage issues, and otherwise individually address water/sewer and other needs. The lack of appropriate broadband telecommunications access, particularly outside of the city centers, will also be addressed. The local governments plan to adopt the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' model Broadband Services ordinance and seek Broadband Ready designation to enhance the community's opportunities for more widespread access and improved service.

- **Nurture Existing Businesses/Entrepreneurs**

The Toombs County community will work through its Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce, and in cooperation with Southeastern Technical College and state agencies, to meet local industry and business needs and encourage expansions and new local business development. The community will utilize the Chamber's Existing Industry Program, the Southeastern Early College and

Career Academy, state Entrepreneur Friendly Community designation, and other avenues to accomplish this.

- **Attract New Businesses**

  The Toombs County community, through its Development Authority, the Toombs-Montgomery Chamber of Commerce, and intergovernmental cooperation, will seek compatible business and industrial development. The community will participate in state designation programs, and will work diligently to effect economic development through a multi-faceted approach. Downtown revitalization, tourism enhancement, and expansion of the GRAD certified Toombs Corporate Center at the Vidalia Regional Airport industrial park and other infrastructure improvements will all be emphasized. Support of the U.S. 1 Corporate Center (also GRAD certified) and the U.S. 1 to I-16 corridor will also be employed. Continuing local leadership development is key to all economic development strategies.

- **Promote/Enhance Tourism**

  Toombs County's Altamaha and Ohoopee rivers and outdoor amenities; the Vidalia Sweet Onion Festival; the "Tales from the Altamaha" folk play; the Ladson Genealogical and Historical Library; the Southeast Georgia Soap Box Derby in Lyons and year round rally races; Santa Claus' Christmas themes; other festivals, museums, and community centers; bicycle facilities and events; many historic structures; its location near I-16, and along U.S. 1, and U.S. 280; its farms and scenic countryside; its existing downtown revitalization; its culture/arts; Partin Park and other recreational facilities; bicycling events/routes; two new hotels currently under construction; and more offer much more potential to increase visitors. An umbrella organization for local cultural arts would be beneficial. The community already has much momentum.

- **Improve Transportation Access/Quality**

  The regional T-SPLOST has resulted in many needed local resurfacing and other road improvements which will enhance the community as a place to live and work. The new bridge across the Altamaha River and the complementary U.S. 1 multi-laning and realignment west toward Vidalia, will open up other opportunities for job creation, as well. A new south bound Altamaha River bridge is also slated for construction in the near future. The completion of widening of U.S. 1 and U.S. 280 under Georgia's GRIP program would bring more usage and travelers to the county. These and other improvements could enhance local travel and make business markets more accessible. It would also make it easier to live or retire in Toombs, but work or travel elsewhere. Promotion of trails and bicycling and other tourism would also help quality of life and economic development. The Vidalia Regional Airport and its continued improvement are also important, as are connecting bicycle facilities and trails.

- **Revitalize Downtowns**

  The historic fabric and available buildings in downtown Lyons and Vidalia allow for additional opportunity, even as much already is being realized. Their historic nature and participation in the Georgia Main Street Program allows for development incentives, preservation of unique character, and enhanced quality of life. Community projects in historic structures create civic pride, community cooperation and further avenues for community use and celebration. They also can stimulate private investment. The further implementation of preserving and improving surrounding historic neighborhoods and connecting them to the downtowns, other commercial areas and other traffic destinations and landmarks will also help.

- **Support/Continue Development of Local Industrial Parks/Sites**

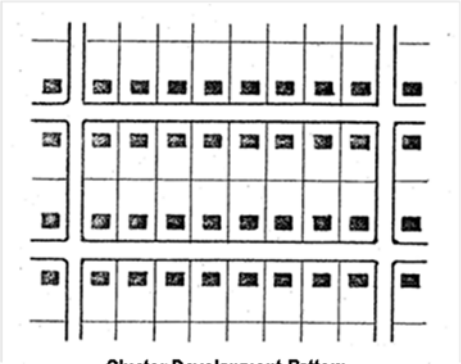
  The community has a number of available sites and buildings to market, and continues to have success with speculative building construction. The U.S. 1 Corporate Center and the Toombs County Corporate Center at the Vidalia Regional Airport are both GRAD certified industrial parks. There are plans to expand the existing industrial park at the airport. Additional infrastructure and amenities will need to be provided. Services and marketing have to stay ahead of opportunities, especially given recent local successes in industrial recruitment.

- **Enhance Intergovernmental Cooperation**

  Community efforts working together both within the county, and through neighbors, the region, and state agencies can only facilitate success and scope of effort. An active chamber of commerce, development authority, and many civic groups can only make public/private partnerships easier to achieve and more successful. Active participation in regional economic, tourism, and natural resource partnerships, offer much potential and benefit.

- **Address Growth Management/Rural Character Preservation**

  A well planned community and one which appears neat, orderly, and attractive supports and encourages additional investment. The community overall has developed individual land use regulations to address specific issues and nuisances, but coordinated efforts and joint code enforcement are needed. The community can also utilize infrastructure location and civic organizations and programs to assist. There is already built in local support given the community's success in preserving the natural and built environment, and utilizing the culture, arts, and history of the community.



Cluster Development Pattern

- **Retiree/Resident Attraction**

  Toombs County's location and high quality of life are already paying economic dividends. These advantages can be attractive to retirees, families, and other residents as well, especially given the outstanding health care, recreational, and other facilities available locally.

- **Support Meadows Regional Medical Center/Southeastern Technical College**

  As noted earlier, the Meadows Regional Medical Center has been a very important continuing contributor to a growing local economic base. It is already one of the top ten Region employers. Educational facilities like Southeastern Technical College are also crucial to a diversified and stable economy, and educational levels/job skills improvement so critical to today's economy. The community needs to be vigilant to support and ensure these pillars and foundations for other growth remain strong and vibrant.

- **Utilize/Promote/Conserve Outdoor Amenities/Natural Resources**

  The fields, forests, and rich natural resources of Toombs County have always been important to community and economic development within the county, as is evidenced by the fame and success of the Vidalia Sweet Onion, and the growing promise of other vegetable production/processing and olive tree cultivation. Much of the community's high quality of life rests with the Altamaha and Ohoopee rivers, fields, forests, and pastoral countryside; and local heritage preservation and celebration efforts. These amenities are treasured both for their contribution to quality of life and economic development.

- **Regional Center Development**

  Vidalia and Toombs County and its other municipalities have become recognized leaders in retail, job creation, infrastructure/services, health care, attention to historic preservation, culture, patronage of the arts. It is a model for rural development across Georgia and beyond. Continued cultivation and support of this status is necessary and will continue to pay dividends in community and economic development. It is important to continue to cultivate/promote this status.

- **Vidalia Sweet Onion Protection/Promotion**

  The Vidalia Onion is now synonymous with community fame/association. Not only should this state vegetable production continue to be protected/expanded, it can also be the stimulus and door opening for broader community marketing.

Broadband Services

The Broadband Services Element is a descriptive snapshot of the areas of the community served by broadband technology. The deployment of broadband technologies has become a major selling point for those communities which offer high speed connectivity, and conversely, a detriment to economic development for those areas lacking the infrastructure. The Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan includes this element to outline a strategy for attracting an increased level of broadband deployment by the private sector and to preemptively meet anticipated changes to the State Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning.

Broadband Services

Since the discovery of electricity, people all over the world have dreamed about the exciting possibilities of technology sure to be right around the corner. Each new invention or innovation brought increased excitement. What made electricity service vital to people and industry of the United States in the 20th century will make broadband service a necessity in the 21st century. We recognize high speed technology has developed in disparity across the nation and the state of Georgia largely due to population densities and cost- return on infrastructure investments. It is Toombs County's goal to determine the broadband infrastructure shortfall within the county and seek ways to improve its current position.

Broadband is defined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as a minimum of 25 megabits per second (Mbps) download speed and 3 Mbps upload speed. It should be noted the broadband definition has changed twice since its inception in 1996 due to technology advancements. Broadband delivery methods include, but are not limited to, digital subscriber lines, cable modems, fiber, wireless, broadband over power lines, and satellites. The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, within which Toombs County is located, was determined in a 2015 Digital Economy Plan to rank 12 out of 12 areas of Georgia for technological capability. It is significant to note the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region is the only region of Georgia without a metropolitan area included. Nationally, 98.1 percent of the population have access to either fixed terrestrial service at 25 Mbps/3 Mbps or mobile LTE at 10

Mbps/3 Mbps. This percentage drops to 89.7% in rural areas. In the FCC's 2018 Broadband Deployment Report, it was found that 43.7 percent of the population in Toombs County have access to fixed broadband technology served by DSL, Cable, and Fiber networks.

DSL service is available with a speed up to 25 Mbps in an area in and around the cities of Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia. Various blocks in the unincorporated county have access to DSL technology with download speeds up to 10 Mbps. Cable line access is available in Lyons and Vidalia and blocks near the city limits in each direction. The areas served by cable service have download speeds meeting 25 Mbps. Recent marketing by one local cable provider boasts of speeds greater than 100 Mbps. As of the 2018 FCC Broadband Deployment Report, 10 Census blocks are served by a fiber optic network in Toombs County. The blocks are located in the northern section of Toombs County adjacent to Emanuel County and in close proximity to U.S. Highway 1.

Other avenues of broadband service technologies available in the community are through either satellite or wireless 4G LTE service. Satellite service speeds are generally slower download speeds compared to wired infrastructure and are prone to weather related outages. Wireless 4G LTE technology is widely available throughout the State of Georgia and is used by smartphones and tablets to download content reliably, although speed is determined by proximity to a communications tower and the speed at which the tower is capable. Toombs County has a reported 4G LTE coverage area over the entire county. This avenue of service is generally sufficient for a homeowner or cell service subscriber; however, according to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission's Digital Economy Plan in 2015, service reliability can be an issue with this technology.

An industry desiring an improved communications network will likely seek a fixed connection service provider and will need at minimum 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload speeds. According to data provided by the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA), National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), and the FCC, the infrastructure for broadband services is located in portions of Toombs County; however, the fixed broadband technology fails to reach 4 out of 10 homes in the county. Increased competition among providers may also decrease the cost charged to the consumer. Wireless 4G LTE in the county meets minimum speeds of wireless broadband, but it is inadequate for industry seeking to locate in the county. The need for broadband service in Toombs County is critical as it is determined to be underserved by both fixed broadband technology and wireless broadband

technology. Toombs County and the cities of Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia desire to be fully served by broadband capability through broadband deployment with service areas reaching the minimum speeds to be considered "Broadband Service."

The Toombs County community has chosen a multi-faceted approach and strategy to improve the availability of broadband and broadband deployment. The following items are actions steps the community will take to increase economic, educational, and social opportunities for citizens and businesses through the deployment of universal broadband and other communications technologies.

- Develop and maintain an inventory of Community Anchor Institutions (schools, library, medical and healthcare providers, public safety entities, and higher education facilities) within the community to determine areas of greatest broadband need.

- Develop or otherwise enact a model ordinance which determines a contact person for any broadband projects within the community, outlines a streamlined permit process for broadband projects, keeps broadband project permit fees reasonable, and ensures equal treatment for applicants applying for use of jurisdictional rights-of-way.

- Apply to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for certification as a "Broadband Ready Community" or similar certification by the State of Georgia.

- Partner with state agencies (Georgia Technology Authority, Department of Community Affairs, and Department of Economic Development) and area local governments to promote broadband deployment in the community, region, and state.

- Identify broadband deployment projects eligible for OneGeorgia Authority funding and/or other state and federal grant or loan opportunities.

Toombs County
Digital Economy
Fixed Network

City Limits

County Boundary

Availability

- Fiber
- Cable DOCSIS 3.0
- Cable Other
- DSL

0 12,000 24,000 48,000 Feet

0 2.25 4.5 9 Miles

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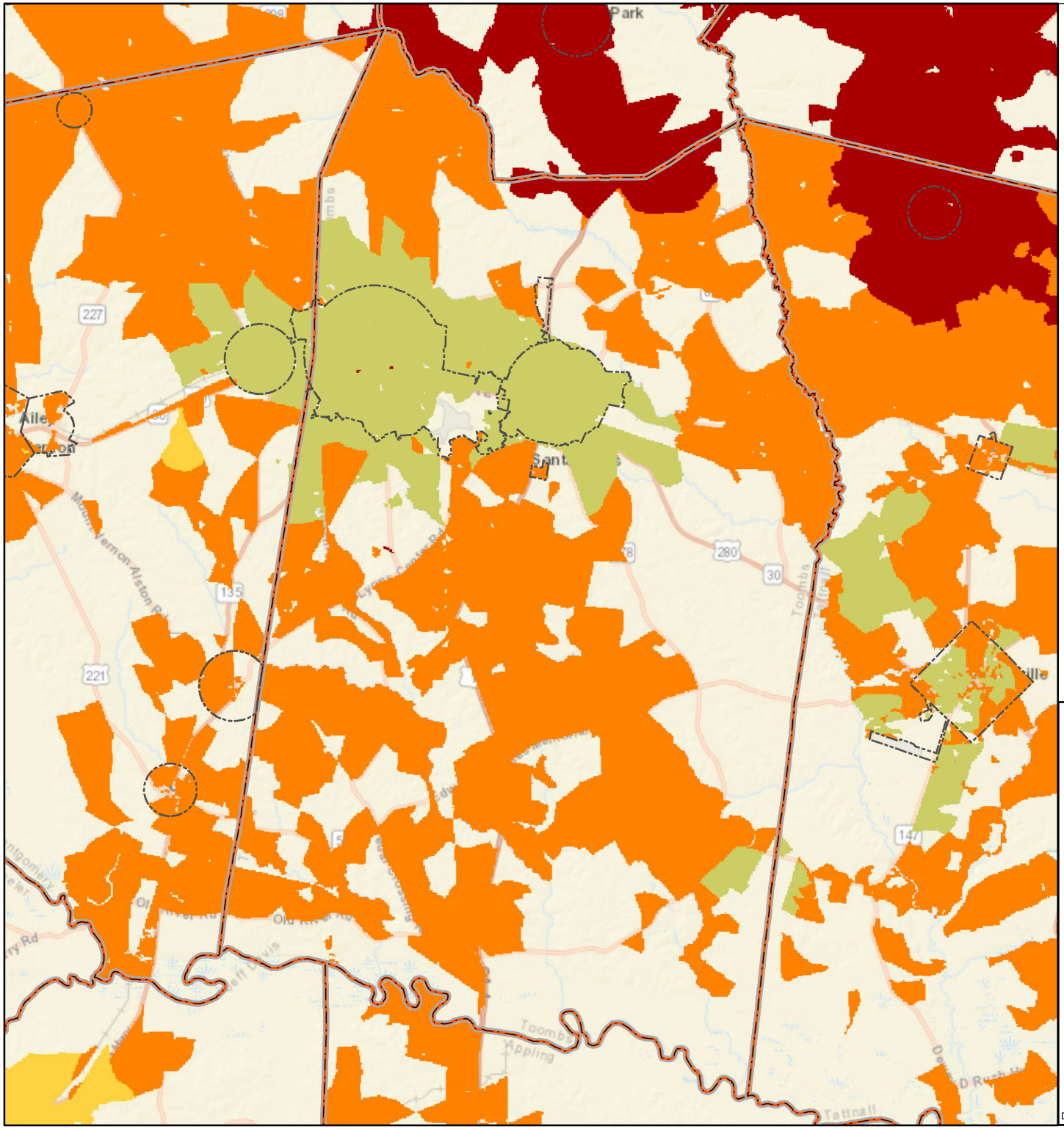

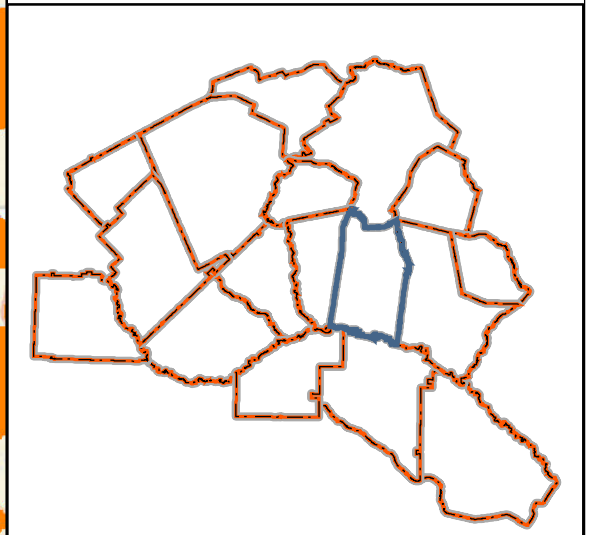

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Toombs County
Digital Economy
Fixed Network
DSL

City Limits

County Boundary

Speed Availability

- 3 mbps or less
- 3 mbps - 6 mbps
- 6 mbps - 10 mbps
- 10 mbps - 25 mbps
- Water
- Unserved Areas Less than 768 kbps Down
- 25 mbps - 50 mbps
- 50 mbps - 100 mbps
- 100 mbps - 1 gbps
- Greater than 1 gpps
- Unpopulated Lands

0 14,500 29,000 58,000 Feet

0 2.75 5.5 11 Miles

HOGARC Geospatial Information Systems

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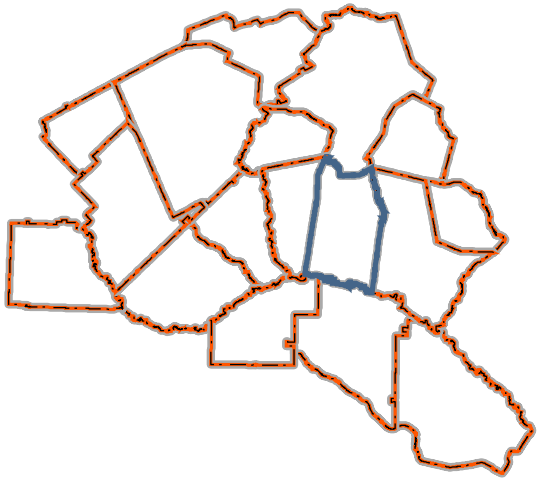

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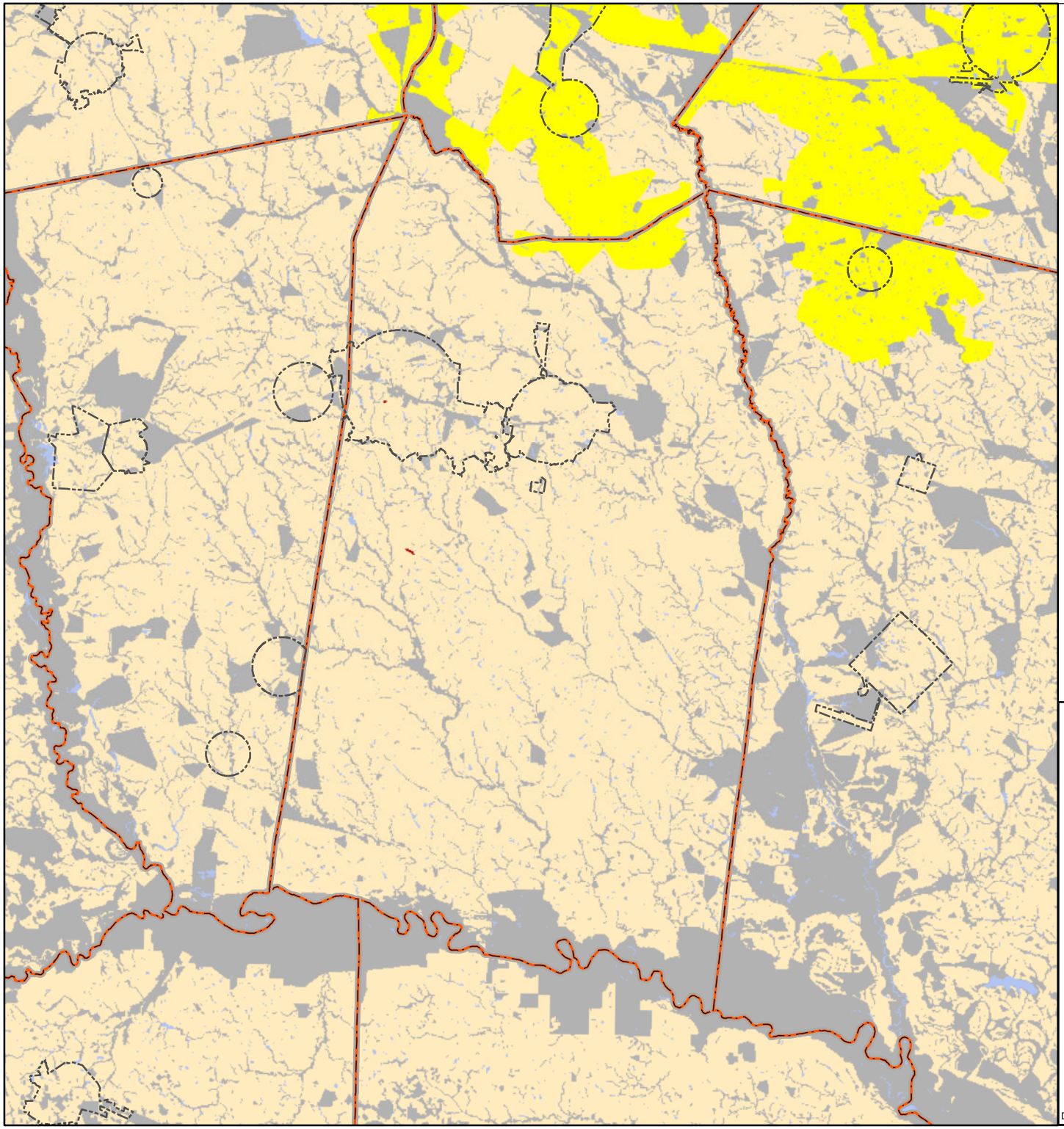

Toombs County
Digital Economy
Fixed Network
Fiber

City Limits

County Boundary

Speed Availability

- 3 mbps or less
- 3 mbps - 6 mbps
- 6 mbps - 10 mbps
- 10 mbps - 25 mbps
- Water
- Unserved Areas Less than 768 kbps Down
- 25 mbps - 50 mbps
- 50 mbps - 100 mbps
- 100 mbps - 1 gbps
- Greater than 1 gpps
- Unpopulated Lands

0 14,500 29,000 58,000 Feet

0 2.75 5.5 11 Miles

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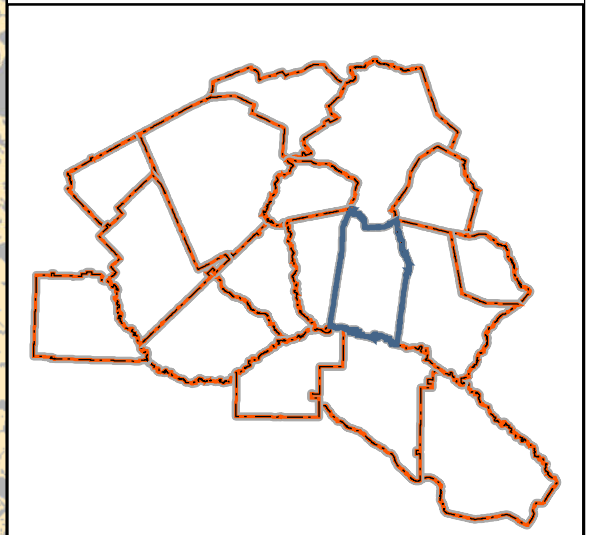

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Toombs County
Digital Economy
Fixed Network
Cable

City Limits

County Boundary

Speed Availability

- 3 mbps or less
- 3 mbps - 6 mbps
- 6 mbps - 10 mbps
- 10 mbps - 25 mbps
- Water
- Unserved Areas Less than 768 kbps Down
- 25 mbps - 50 mbps
- 50 mbps - 100 mbps
- 100 mbps - 1 gbps
- Greater than 1 gpps
- Unpopulated Lands

0 14,500 29,000 58,000 Feet

0 2.75 5.5 11 Miles

HOGARC Geospatial Information Systems

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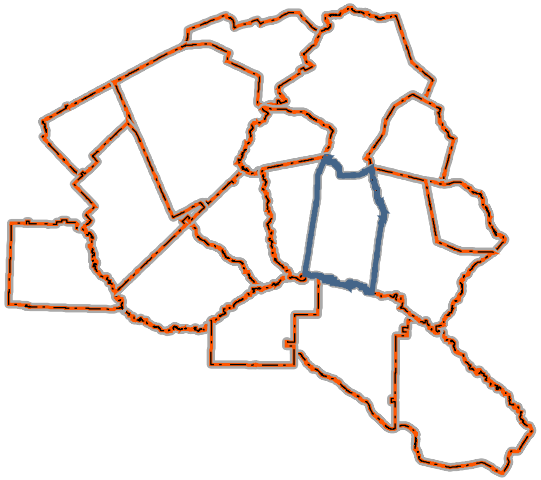

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Toombs County
Digital Economy
Wireless 4g LTE

City Limits

County Boundary

Availability

Wireless 4G LTE

0 14,500 29,000 58,000 Feet

0 2.75 5.5 11 Miles

HOGARC
Geospatial Information Systems

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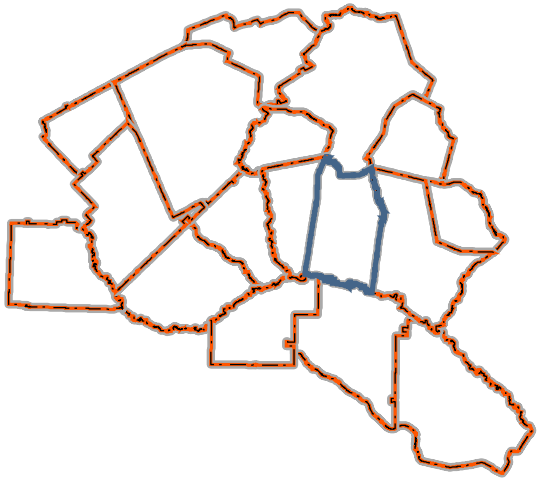

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Toombs County
Digital Economy
Wireless 4g LTE

City Limits

County Boundary

Speed Availability

- 3 mbps or less
- 3 mbps - 6 mbps
- 6 mbps - 10 mbps
- 10 mbps - 25 mbps
- Water
- Unserved Areas Less than 768 kbps Down
- 25 mbps - 50 mbps
- 50 mbps - 100 mbps
- 100 mbps - 1 gbps
- Greater than 1 gpps
- Unpopulated Lands

0 14,500 29,000 58,000 Feet

0 2.75 5.5 11 Miles

HOGARC Geospatial Information Systems

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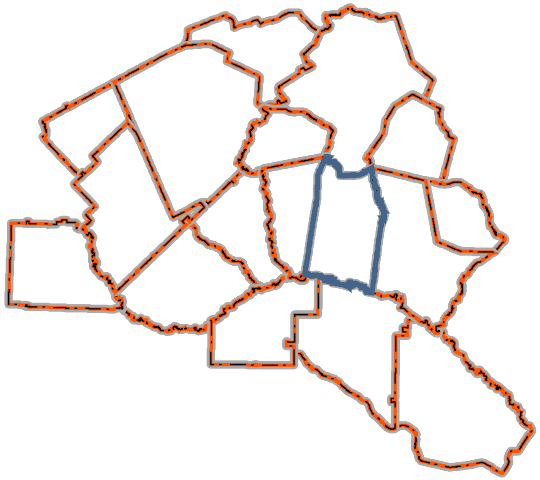

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Land Use

The landscape and the way land is used is often visible and tangible evidence of planning or the lack thereof. It reveals the pattern of growth and development, and how we relate to the natural environment. It often defines what we view as the character of our community, and is a major component in our determination of quality of life. As science evolves, we realize with greater certainty that the way our land is used and managed has definite implications for air and water quality, and the diversity and health of our ecosystems.

The awareness of the impacts and consequences of the way land is used illustrate the need for wise use of our finite supply of land, and the necessity of sound decisions in its development or protection. The need for sustainable growth and development, which accommodates our development needs while maintaining balance and control, and limiting impacts on the natural and built environment, is recognized in the state quality community objectives.

Sound, quality growth and development results from effective and balanced land use planning that anticipates, prepares, and exercises control over development decisions. It guides and directs growth and development into a desirable and efficient pattern of land use to achieve compatibilities in use, proper return and effective use of public investments in infrastructure and services, and minimal impacts to environmentally or aesthetically important natural and cultural resources.

The lack of planning, on the other hand, can result in uncontrolled and unmanaged growth which can wreak havoc on community desires and plans, negatively impact property values, degrade the environment and landscape, and foster other detrimental effects or burdens in a short period of time. It can destroy important natural functions and treasured views or other parts of the landscape. It can cause new public tax or service burdens while lowering return or lessening use of public infrastructure already paid for or invested in. Public desires or future plans or options can be precluded or prevented by such uncontrolled growth, while other ill-advised consequences or burdens upon the general public can result.

A community's land use planning efforts are an attempt to provide a policy guide and framework or blueprint for desired growth and development. Sound planning provides for managed growth and development, allowing for necessary land use and development, but guiding it in such a manner that balances and protects resources, systems, and other aspects of the landscape important to the community. Such planning tries to lessen, mitigate, or avoid inconsistencies, inefficiencies, or conflicting land use efforts. Existing patterns and trends of land uses, community investment in and location of facilities and services, important natural and cultural constraints, and overriding community desires are considered and accommodated in developing and delineating the desired pattern of growth and development.

Toombs County and its municipalities are united in their vision and desires for growth. Despite being a regional growth and economic center and a Census designated micropolitan statistical area, it remains a rural county with abundant natural and cultural resources, great natural beauty, fortuitous location, continuing success diversifying economically, excellent infrastructure, progressive local leadership, and many other assets for growth. It is home to the world famous Vidalia Sweet Onion, but also to so much more. The community's vision for its growth and development is one that protects and utilizes its natural and cultural resources and landscape to continue growth and development conducive to maintaining its regional leadership, and compatible with such natural beauty and important agricultural and forest resources. Land uses would continue to look similar to those existing, and the rural character would be maintained. Infrastructure and amenities would be expanded and developed to support and attract both population and business growth, primarily in or adjacent to the existing municipalities, developed areas and along U.S. 1 to I-16. Agriculture and forestry use would be kept viable and remain the principal land use of the county, and diversification beyond the Vidalia Sweet Onion would continue. It would be an integral component of the economy of the county, and the preservation of rural character supportive of open space and natural resource protection. The natural beauty, landscape, and preserved historic landmarks would be utilized for tourism development and treasured for their quality of life contributions. Downtown revitalization and attention to developing cultural and arts programs and facilities would be integral components to the extraordinary high quality of life. Commercial and industrial growth would be compatible and supportive of continued agricultural/forestry/conservation uses, and would maintain the high quality of life and rural character while providing additional jobs and economic opportunity.

While technically only Lyons and Vidalia, because of their zoning ordinances, are technically required to have a Land Use element in its comprehensive plan under the DCA planning standards, all local governments in the county have chosen to participate and include the element in this joint comprehensive plan. Existing land use maps visually convey to all concerned the current landscape and correlation of extant development. Future land use maps illustrate to all concerned the community's vision and desires for additional growth and development. Such depictions also lend credence and supporting background information important to understanding and illustrating official local government policy in designating lands unsuitable for solid waste handling facilities in local solid waste management plans. Land use maps do provide official display of community desires and goals for compatible future growth and development.

The community's land use maps are, however, a general policy guide and framework, not necessarily a rigid or unchangeable picture of future growth and development. Not all growth or developments can be foreseen, and other events could necessitate a change in community vision or desires. The depicted pattern of desired future growth and development displayed on future land use maps is a current statement and reflection of community expectations and desires. It provides a context, framework and background for the public and private sector to utilize to plan, evaluate, shape, guide, and evaluate proposed developments and other decisions affecting the use of the land and community growth and development. The plan provides a context for forethought, examination of impacts and consequences, and mitigation of land use decisions on the community's growth and development and desired future patterns and community vision.

Existing Land Uses

Existing land use patterns for Toombs County and the cities of Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia are depicted on the following maps. A table depicting the existing distribution of land use acreages is shown below.

Land use categories utilized in the development of this plan and in the land use maps are the standard categories established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and defined in the planning standards as below.

RESIDENTIAL The predominant use of land within the residential category is for single-family and multi-family dwelling units.

COMMERCIAL This category is for land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities, located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building.

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

PUBLIC/INSTITUTIONAL This category includes certain state, federal or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc. Examples of institutional land uses include colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals, etc.

TRANSPORTATION/COMMUNICATIONS/UTILITIES This category includes such uses as major transportation routes, public transit stations, power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, telephone switching stations, airports, port facilities or other similar uses.

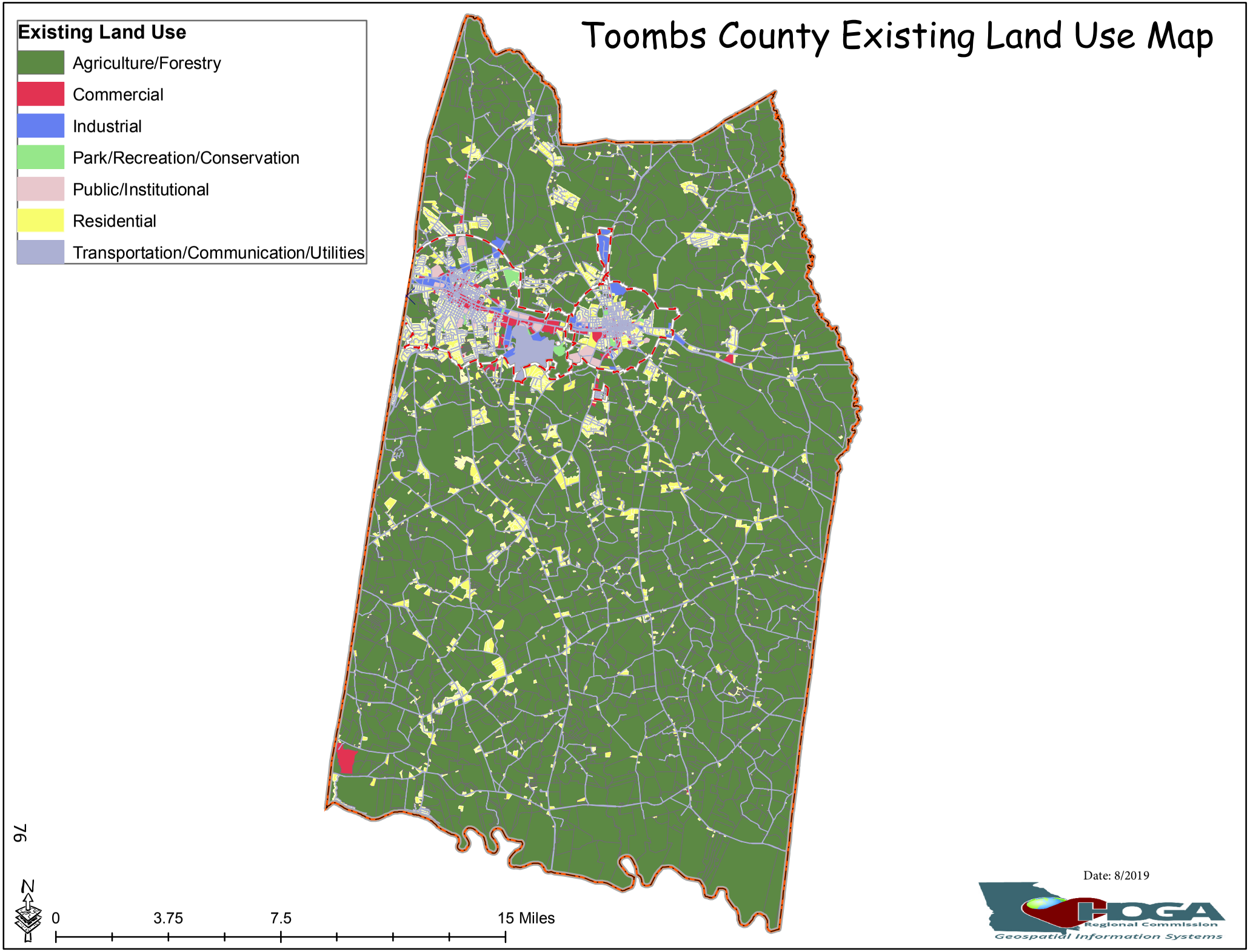
PARK/RECREATION/CONSERVATION This category is for land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers or similar uses.

AGRICULTURE/FORESTRY This category is for land dedicated to farming (fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock production, etc.), agriculture, commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting, or similar rural uses.

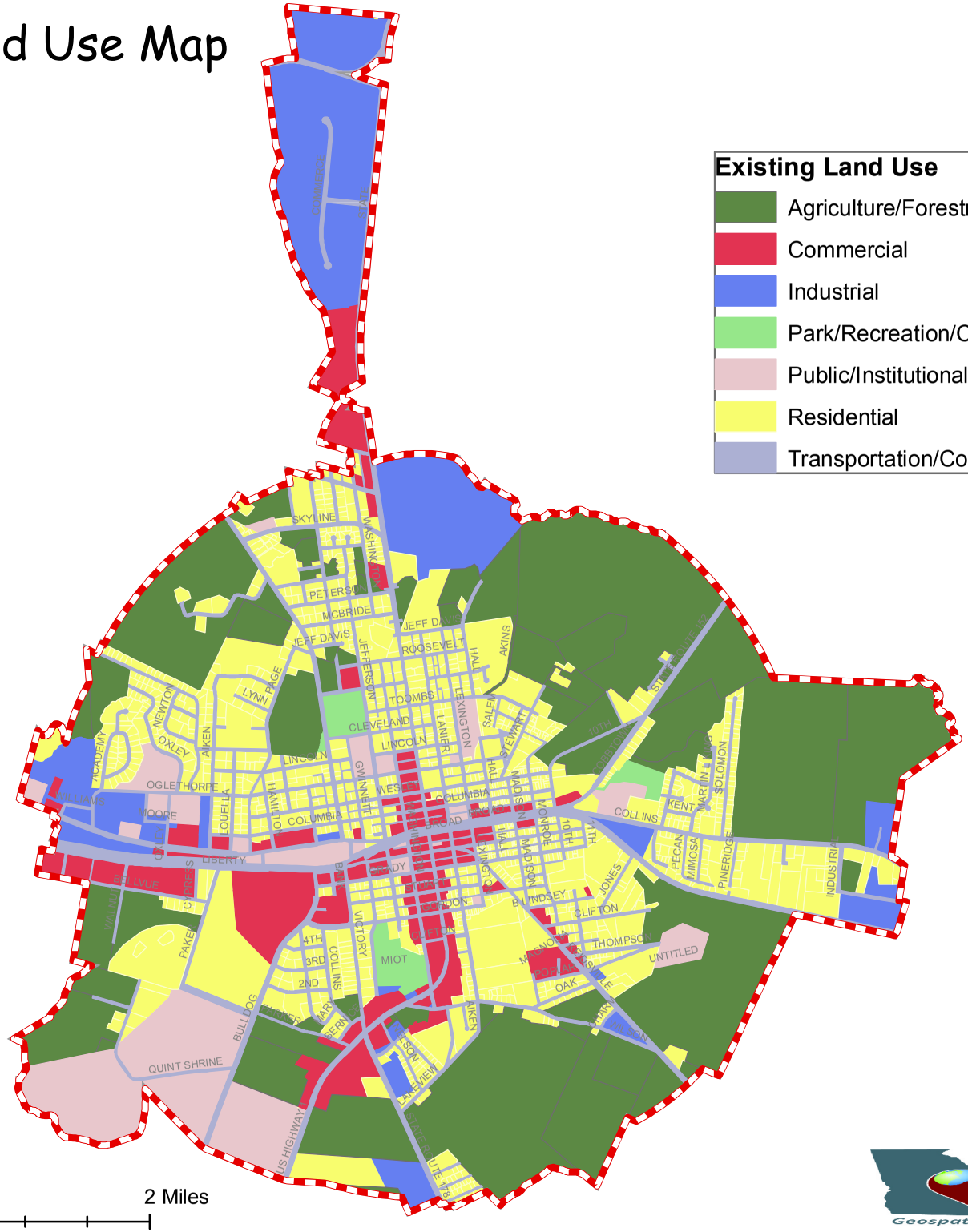
Existing Land Use Distribution, 2019 (Acres) Toombs County		
Land Use Category	**Acreage**	**Percent of Total**
Agriculture/Forestry	204,611	86.77
Commercial	1,716	0.73
Industrial	1,247	0.53
Park/Recreation/Conservation	328	0.14
Public/Institutional	847	0.36
Residential	19,158	8.12
Transportation/Communications/Utilities	7,892	3.35
Total	235,799	100.00

Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission Geographic Information System, 2019.

Toombs County Existing Land Use Map



Lyons Existing Land Use Map



Existing Land Use

- Agriculture/Forestry
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Park/Recreation/Conservation
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities

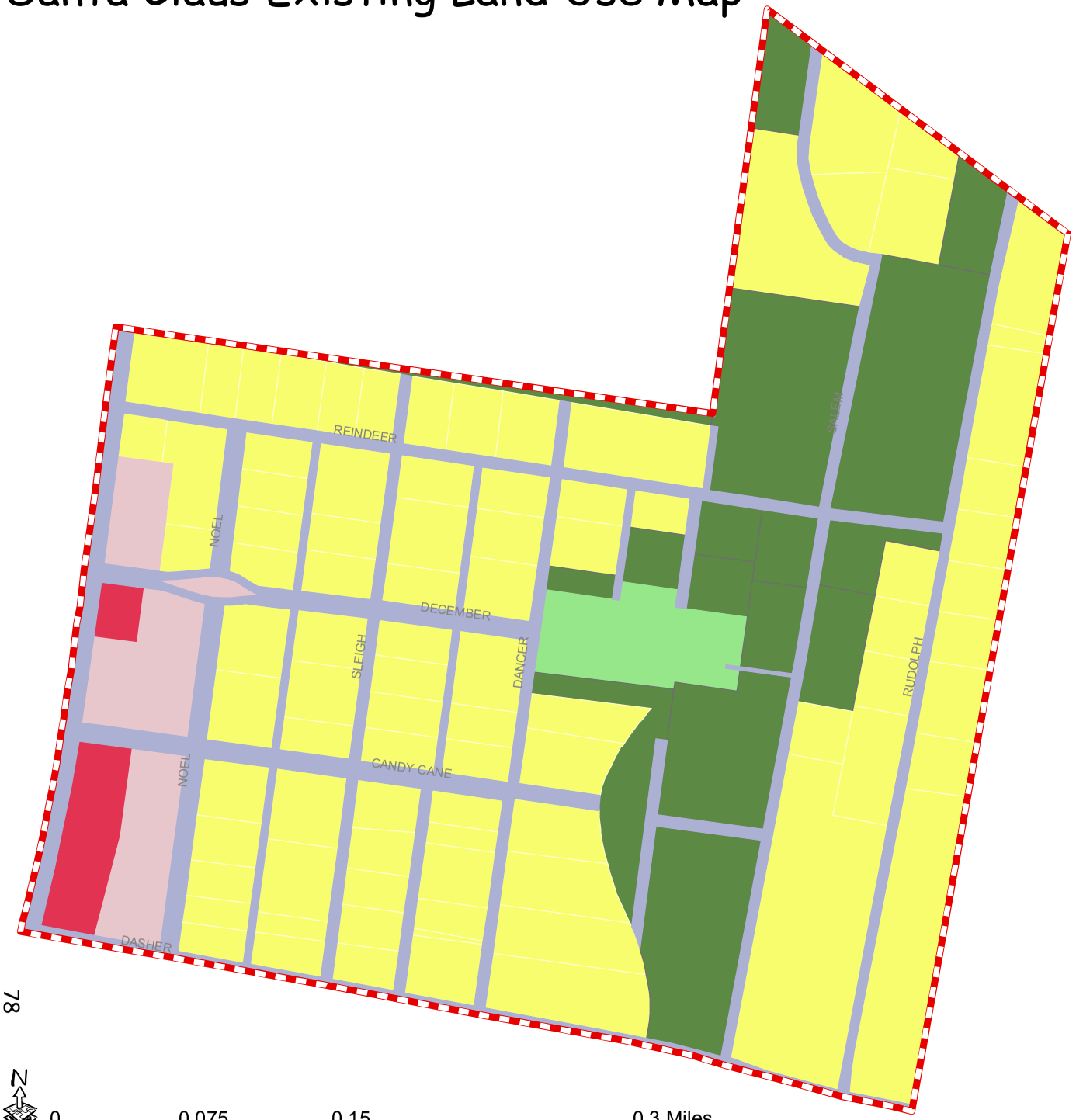
N

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Date: 8/2019

HOGA Regional Commission
Geospatial Information Systems

Santa Claus Existing Land Use Map



Existing Land Use

- Agriculture/Forestry
- Commercial
- Park/Recreation/Conservation
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities

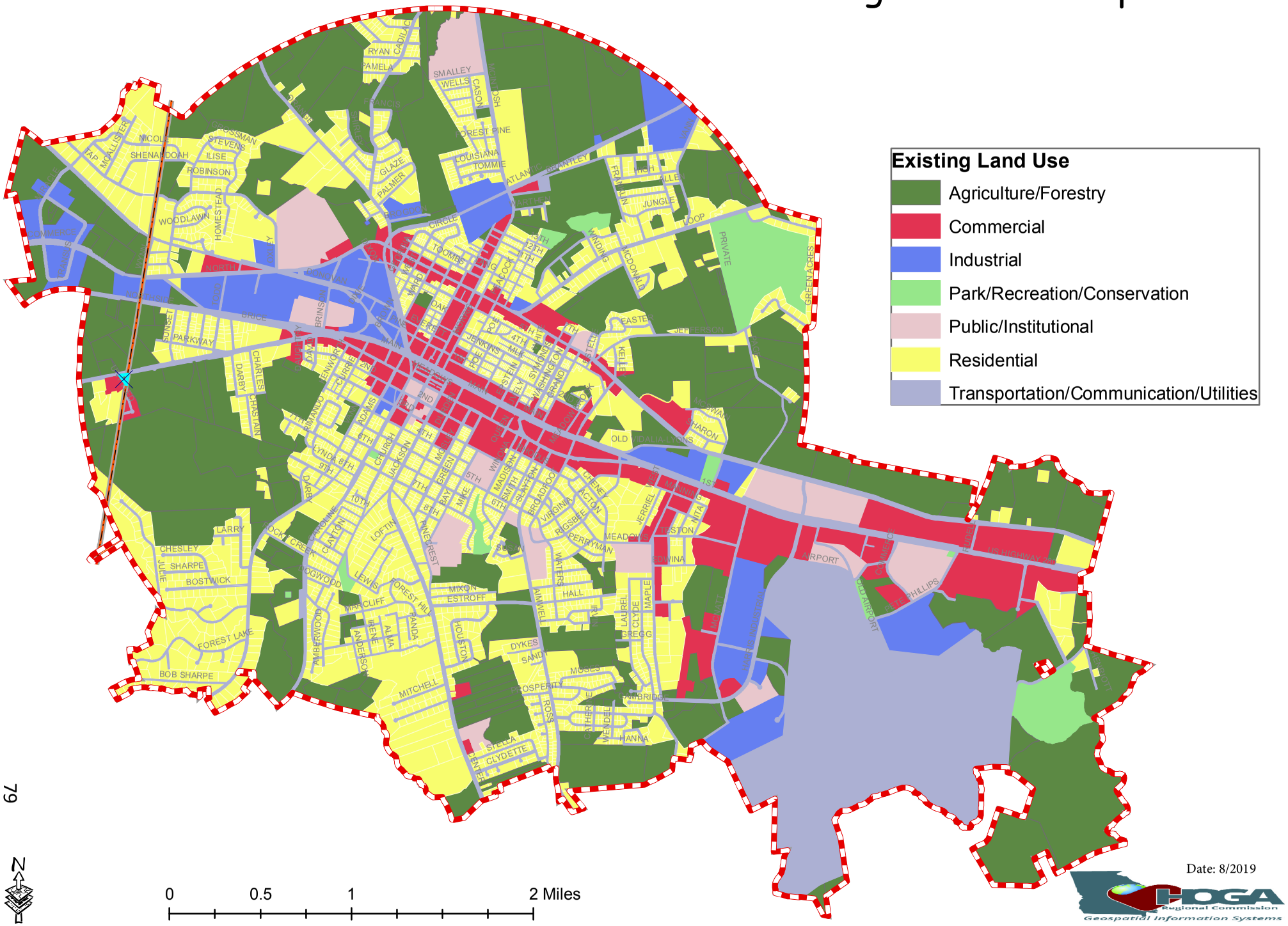
N

0 0.075 0.15 0.3 Miles

Date: 8/2019

HOGA Regional Commission
Geospatial Information Systems

Vidalia Existing Land Use Map



Future Land Uses

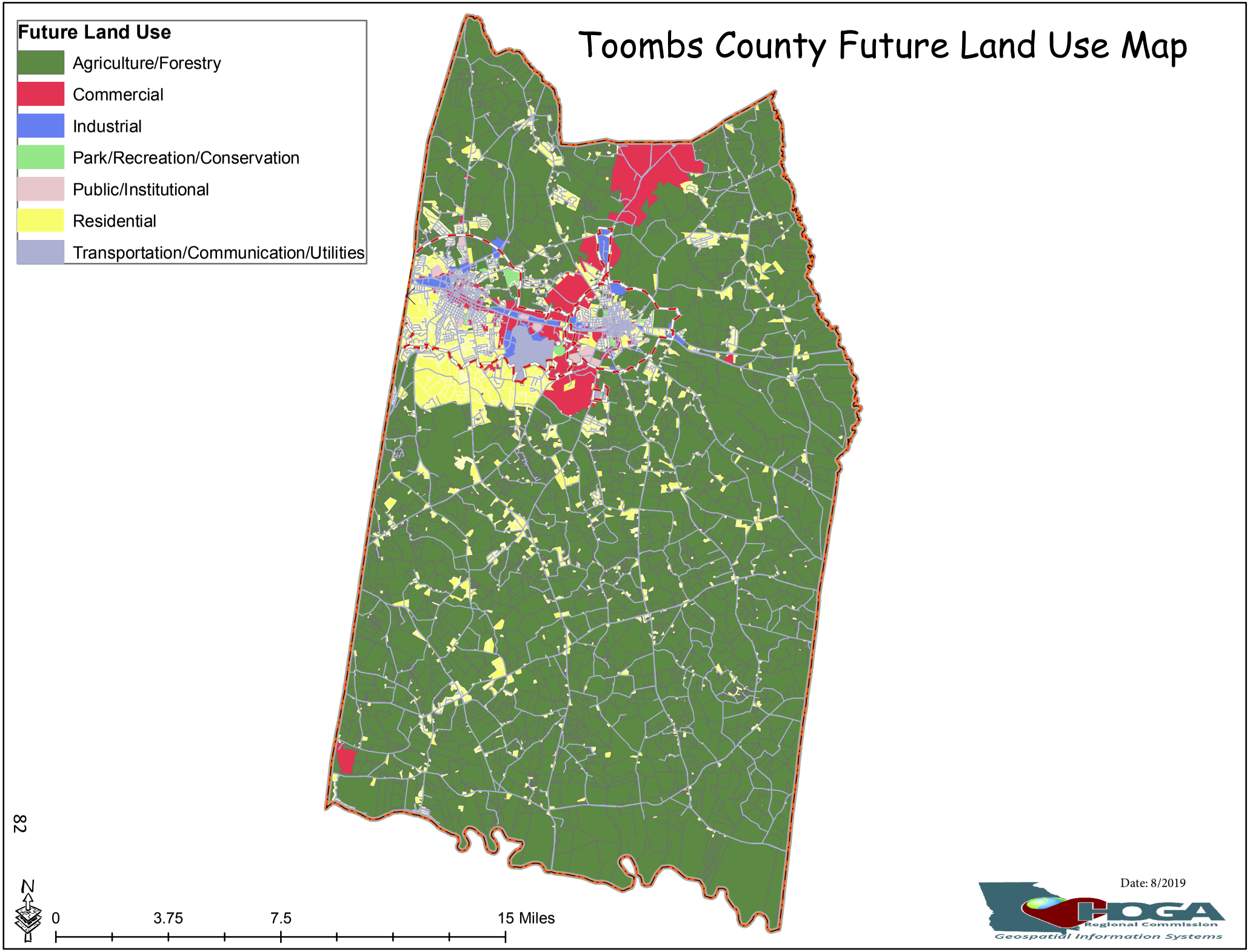
Toombs County is one of Georgia's newer counties (144th in creation), created in 1905 from Emanuel, Montgomery, and Tattnall counties. Initially settled because of the Altamaha River, its pine forests and fertile soils, the county was dominated by small farms and sparse population until the arrival of railroads in the 1880s. This attracted settlers from nearby counties and particularly, North Carolinians. Both Lyons and Vidalia originated as stops on the Savannah, Americus, and Montgomery Railroad in the 1890s. The growth fueled by railroad development led local leadership to create the county. Later growth can be traced to the opening of U.S. highways 1 and U.S. 280 through the county and the establishment of Toombs County as a regional trade center. The population of the county quickly grew form 11,206 in 1910 to 17,165 in 1930. The Great Depression, then World War II, and a general decline in agriculture took a toll on the county, and its population remained stagnant until the 1960s. In the 1960s, the emergence of the Vidalia Sweet Onion, followed by the location of the Plant Hatch Nuclear Plant just across the Altamaha River in neighboring Appling County, the development of I-16 just north of the county, and local success in economic diversification once again fueled slow, but steady population and economic growth since 1970. Toombs County's location, transportation access, local progressive leadership, and economic diversification continue to be key stimulators and facilitators of this growth. The growth of the Vidalia Sweet Onion marketing; the diversification of local agriculture into additional crops; the access provided by I-16, U.S. 1, U.S. 280 and local rail and airport facilities; the proximity to Georgia's ports and larger metro areas; and the overall quality of life because of the rural environment, extraordinary natural resources, and the community's preservation of, and attention to, local heritage and culture remain positive growth and development influences. The community leadership continues to progressively invest in its infrastructure, including not only water/sewer, but broadband, downtown revitalization, administrative modernization, and recreation, among others. The community continues its growth as a regional center in many areas. Meadows Regional Medical Center was opened in 2011 at a time when many rural hospitals were struggling, and continues to expand coverage and services. The community's population was 27,223 in 2010, and is estimated at 26,887 in 2018 by the Census Bureau indicating a slight decrease . The county is the Region's third largest county by population but Vidalia is the Region's second largest city, and the county is the second largest employment center.

Most current growth is concentrated in the Greater Vidalia/Lyons Area in and mostly south and west of Vidalia, and between Vidalia and Lyons. There is some growth east and south of Lyons in rural Toombs County. Commercial growth is concentrated in Vidalia along U.S. 280 East, and between U.S. 280 and Georgia 292 between Vidalia and Lyons. Industrial growth is concentrated in/near Vidalia near the Airport, and north of Lyons in the U.S. 1 corridor north to I-16. Residential growth has been scattered across the county, but has been particularly concentrated south and west of Vidalia/Lyons between Center Road and Georgia 130. There has also been some growth north of Vidalia near the Vidalia Country Club and east to Lyons.

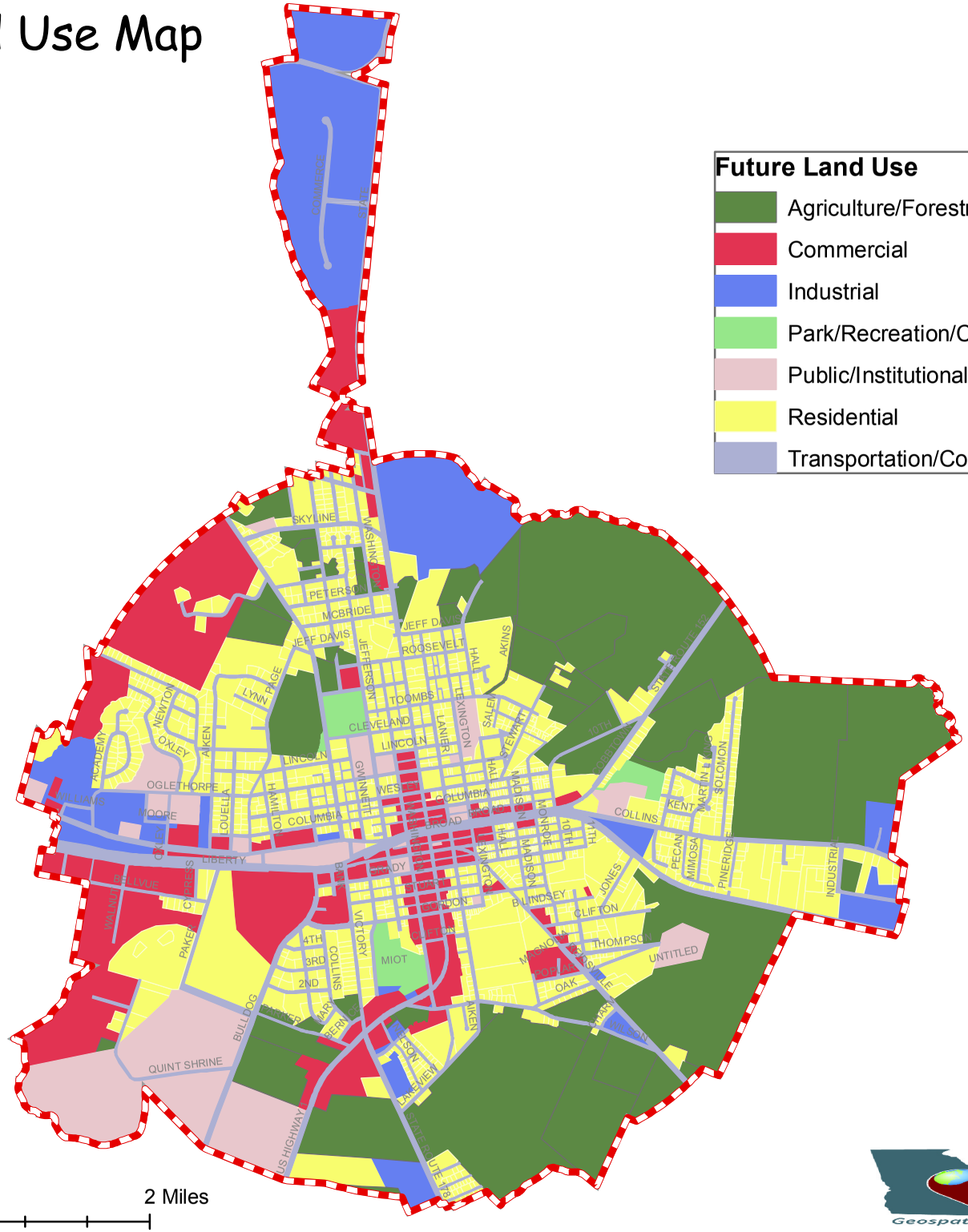
Growth momentum in Toombs County can trace its life to its location along U.S. 280 and U.S. 1; its proximity to I-16; ongoing economic and job growth; the availability of services and infrastructure; its current position as a rural retail trade/service center; its existing population and size; quality of life; and ample land availability for all uses. These same factors will continue to spur future growth particularly because of I-16; the existing economic opportunities, services, and diversity; the availability of infrastructure; the Vidalia Regional Airport; Meadows Regional Medical Center and other quality medical services; Southeastern Technical College; the abundant natural resources and the Altamaha River; the community's vibrant downtowns and available cultural resources; and the overall excellent quality of life. Future growth will likely continue to concentrate in the Greater Vidalia/Lyons Area, and along the U.S. 1 North corridor, as it has recently. The county's future land uses will closely resemble existing land uses. Agricultural, forestry, and conservation use will continue to predominate the landscape, and maintain the existing rural character.

Future land use maps for Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia are included following this description.

Toombs County Future Land Use Map



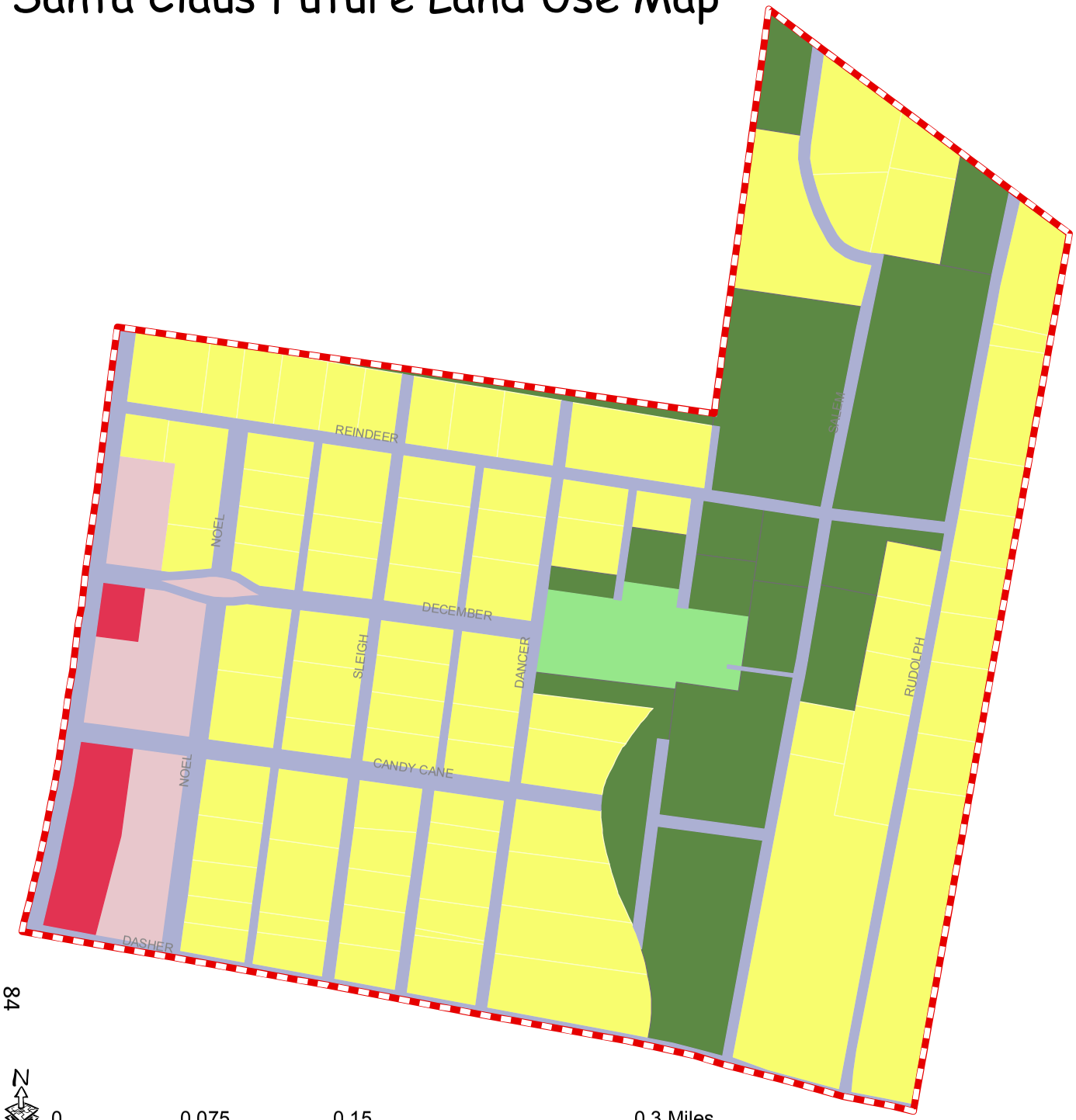
Lyons Future Land Use Map



Date: 8/2019

HOGA Regional Commission
Geospatial Information Systems

Santa Claus Future Land Use Map



Future Land Use

- Agriculture/Forestry
- Commercial
- Park/Recreation/Conservation
- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities

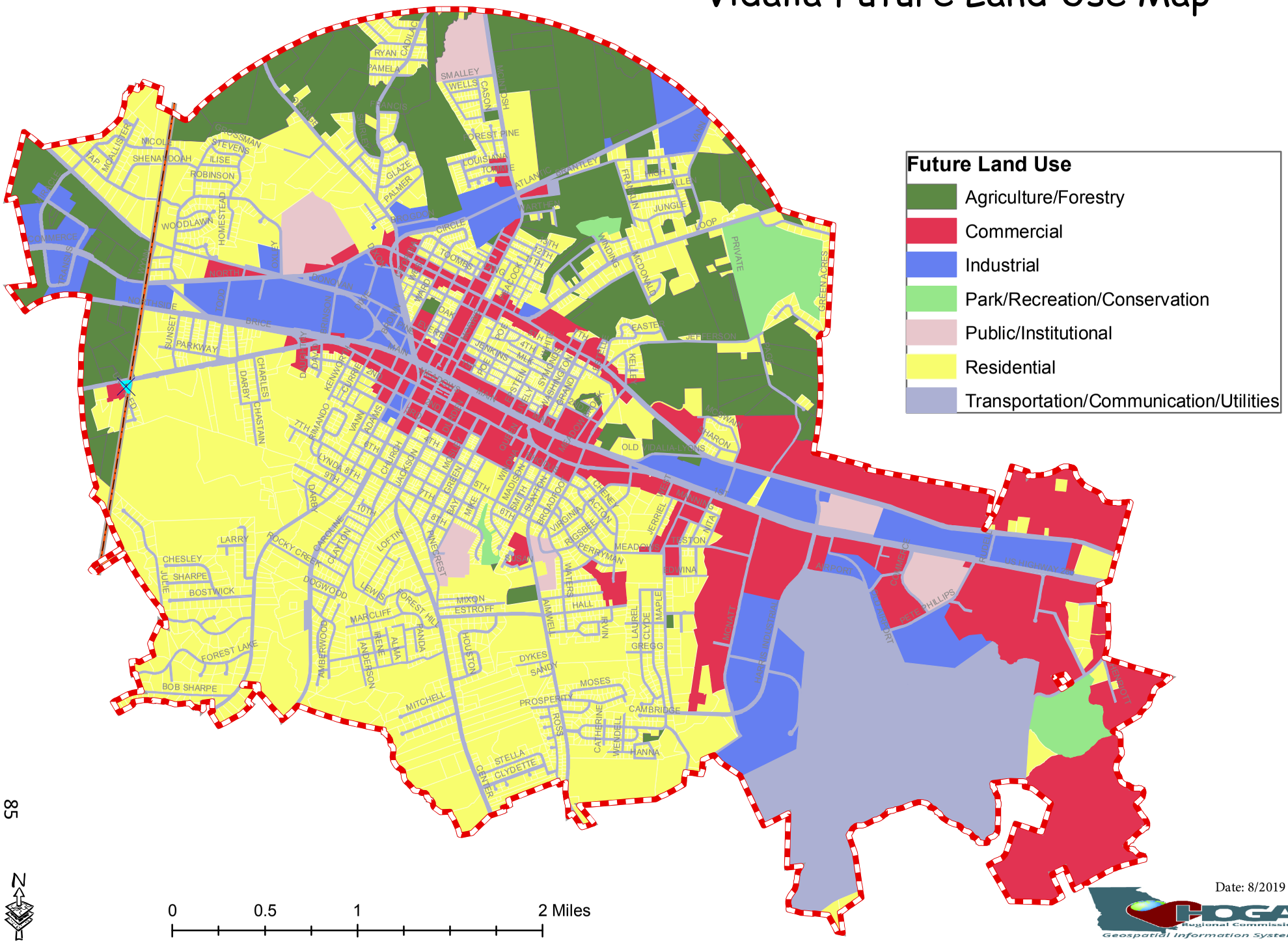
N

0 0.075 0.15 0.3 Miles

Date: 8/2019

HOGA Regional Commission
Geospatial Information Systems

Vidalia Future Land Use Map



Land Use Goals

Toombs County and its municipalities seek future growth and development respective of its rural character, scenic natural and cultural resources and agriculture/forestry use, and the existing quality of life. It desires growth patterns which maintain and keep viable existing agricultural and forestry use, which sustain its heritage, abundant natural and cultural resources, and which are otherwise compatible and complementary of existing uses and scale of development. The community has chosen the following land use goals to help bring about its desired future and delineated community vision.

- **Address Growth Management/Compatible Development**

  A well planned community and one which appears neat, orderly, and attractive supports and encourages additional investment. The community, outside of Lyons and Vidalia, has developed only limited individual land use regulations to address specific issues and nuisances, but more general and coordinated efforts and joint code enforcement are needed. The community can also utilize infrastructure location; improvement of facilities and services; support of agricultural, forestry, and conservation uses; downtown revitalization; and involvement of its citizenry to assist.

- **Implement/Enforce Subdivision/Manufactured Housing/Land Use Regulation/Code Enforcement**

  As noted above, Toombs County has only narrow, specific land use regulations, road acceptance/subdivision ordinances, a manufactured home ordinance, and others to address specific issues or nuisances. Only Lyons and Vidalia have a zoning ordinance and building code enforcement. The County should continue to enforce current regulations and consider expansion as necessary to address issues of major public concern.

- **Maintain Open Spaces/Agricultural/Forestry Use/Rural Character/Quality of Life**

  Development of new markets, continuing support and expansion of the Vidalia Sweet Onion supporting creation of alternative crops and uses, ongoing celebration of the Vidalia Sweet Onion and local heritage, providing professional support, and attracting compatible agribusiness or other supportive economic development ventures all can help achieve this. The celebration of the

community's heritage and resources in festivals provides outside exposure and recruitment of residents and businesses. The Sweet Onion Festival has national clout, and "Tales From the Altamaha" continues to garner increasing notoriety. Protection of the Altamaha and Ohoopee rivers; continued downtown revitalization; and development and support of history, culture, and the arts; and the existing high quality of life will also help. Regulation should also be utilized.

- **Encourage/Protect Utilization/Access/Tourism for Natural/Cultural Resources**

  The Altamaha River, U.S. 1, the Sweet Onion Festival; Partin Park and "Tales From the Altamaha" all have much history for recreation, tourism, and motoring within the county. Santa Claus' recent development of Santa's Garden Park complete with a picturesque chapel, the ongoing downtown revitalization and enhancements, historic preservation efforts, attention to trail development, and Altamaha River access will also enhance both protection and utilization. Increased recreational and outdoor usage through continued park development, promotion, and growth of tourism of many kinds offers much unrealized potential to both enhanced economic utilization and conservation of the County's significant natural and cultural resources. Vidalia's historic districts and ongoing efforts in downtown revitalization in Lyons and Vidalia are already garnering increased attention. This can also attract more visitors, and more residents, and build a larger audience of citizen support for protection and enhancement of these resources. Improvement and promotion of U.S. 1 also hold promise. Continued improvement of Altamaha River access, bicycle venues, and local recreational facilities; museums; enhancement of events or festivals; and continued preservation of community landmarks and heritage will also reap benefits.

- **Encourage Infill Development**

  It only makes sense to utilize lands and buildings where taxpayers and private interests have invested in providing costly infrastructure and construction in the past before extending additional infrastructure or incurring completely new construction costs. Both Lyons and Vidalia are already reaping benefit from both public and private investment in its historic, downtown structures. There are an abundance of available vacant commercial, industrial and residential structures within the community, as well as areas with readily available infrastructure. Available historic buildings countywide are avenues for preservation of character and heritage and opportunities for economic and community development utilizing existing served areas. Public preservation of

landmarks and important structures and public investment downtown, as has already happened in all three municipalities, can further stimulate nearby private investment.

- **Improve Community Appearance/Aesthetics**

  Toombs County and its municipalities have much intrinsic natural and cultural beauty and Southern charm attractive to residential location and tourism. Landscaping/beautification efforts, general clean-up, and rehabilitation/upgrade of existing structures/areas will serve to accent and highlight this. Continuing gateway improvements, particularly along U.S. 1, U.S. 280, and Georgia 292, can enhance community image and attractiveness. Upgrade of the housing stock quality and resurfacing of local streets under T-SPLOST will also help.

- **Seek Compatible Development/Utilization**

  Growth supportive, not disruptive through use, scale, or intensity, of the community's existing rural character, small-town atmosphere, extant heritage, abundant natural and cultural resources, and current agriculture/forestry use is desired.

Community Work Programs

The Community Work Program Element is the chosen implementation strategy which the community has identified to begin its path toward improvement and its desired future growth and development. These are the immediate steps the community has chosen to address identified community issues, needs, and opportunities, and begin the journey to achieve the desired community vision. This plan element answers the questions, "How are we, as a community, going to get where we desire, given where we are?" The Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan includes a separate community work program for each local government involved, as well as a report of accomplishments on their previous work program. The Long Term Policies identified under the Community Goals element identifies implementation activities and ideals which may take longer than five years, or because of circumstances involved, including finances, are not envisioned to begin in the near future.

Toombs County

Report of Accomplishments and Community Work Program

TOOMBS COUNTY
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Report of Accomplishments

		Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	
Initiation Year	**Description**	**Y/N**	**Year**	**Y/N**	**Est. Comp. Date**	**Y/N**	**Est. Int. Date**	**Y/N**	**Status/Comments**
2015	Complete the removal of all green boxes throughout the County			Y	2023				The County now has 7 convenience centers and has plans to add one (1) additional center.
2015	Establish a new convenience center south of Vidalia			Y	2023				A new convenience center location is planned to be located south of Vidalia by 2023.
2015	Construct a new maintenance barn	Y	2018						A new maintenance building was constructed in 2018.
2016	Replace half of the police fleet with new vehicles	Y	2019						The County has replaced one-third of the sheriff department's pursuit vehicles each year since 2015.
2016	Establish a 5 year program to replace equipment of the Solid Waste and Roads departments	Y	2016						A replacement program was developed in 2016.
2017	Begin renovation of the existing courthouse or begin construction of a new courthouse			Y	2022				Plans for a new courthouse are underway. Site plans and surveys have been completed. Architectural renderings have been released to the public with anticipation of a SPLOST ballot for funding in 2020.
2015	Develop a program to rank road improvement projects based on need and grade	Y	2016						A program was developed in 2016.
2015	Decrease the mileage of dirt roads within the County each year	Y	2019						The County has accomplished task through a combination of road closures and five (5) miles of new road paving since 2015.

TOOMBS COUNTY
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Report of Accomplishments

		Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	
Initiation Year	**Description**	**Y/N**	**Year**	**Y/N**	**Est. Comp. Date**	**Y/N**	**Initiation Year**	**Description**	**Y/N**
2017	Purchase 2 new ambulances every 2 years	Y	2017						The County purchased new ambulances in 2017.
2015	Upgrade/repair County buildings, utilizing a building crew from the Department of Corrections, each year	Y	2018						Beginning in 2016 and being complete in 2018, the County was able to make repairs and upgrades to the following buildings: the courthouse, human resources, recreation department, Cedar Crossing Fire Department, and the Cedar Crossing Community Center.
2015	Pursue the establishment of programs to remove dilapidated manufactured homes/housing units countywide					Y	2023		The project was postponed due to lack of resources and funding.
2015	Adopt Georgia Uniform Building Codes and establish a permit system					Y	2023		The project was postponed until a greater demand warrants the establishment of the program.
2015	Complete projects listed in TIA Band 1 (Lyons Center Road; County-wide Striping; 130 Accel-decel Lane)	Y	2015						The TIA Band 1 projects were completed on schedule by 2015.
2016	Complete projects listed in TIA Band 2 (Providence Church Road; Donald Anderson Road; Five Point Resurfacing; Mt. Moriah Church Road; Marvin Church Road)	Y	2019						The TIA Band 2 projects were completed on schedule by early 2019.
2017	Adopt and enforce a model ordinance based on DNR's Part V Environmental Planning Criteria to conserve and protect wetlands	Y	2018						The County adopted a model ordinance to conserve and protect wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and protected river corridors in 2018.

TOOMBS COUNTY
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program

2020 – 2024

	Years							Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
Activity	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Each Year	Beyond 2024	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Complete the removal of all green boxes throughout the County				X				X			$1,000	X			
Establish a new convenience center south of Vidalia				X				X			$10,000	X			
Begin renovation of the existing courthouse or begin construction of a new courthouse			X					X		SPLOST	$40 Million	X			
Pursue the establishment of programs to remove dilapidated manufactured homes/housing units countywide				X				X			N/A	X			
Adopt Georgia Uniform Building Codes and establish a permit system				X				X			N/A	X			
Adopt the DCA model ordinance for broadband deployment and permitting	X							X			N/A	X			
Seek Broadband Ready Community designation	X							X		HOGARC	$2,000 (Staff Time)	X			
Construct a new EMS building	X							X			$450,000	X			
Renovate the interior of the Human Resource Building	X							X			$100,000	X			
Renovate and/or expand the County Jail				X				X			$1 Million	X			

TOOMBS COUNTY
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
2020 – 2024

	Years							Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
Activity	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Each Year	Beyond 2024	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Purchase maintenance equipment for the roads department		X						X			$400,000	X			
Complete countywide GDOT transportation study	X							X	Lyons, Santa Claus, Vidalia		$10,000	X	X		
Develop a bicycle trail/route designation along Cedar Crossing Vidalia Road from Vidalia to Grays Landing (Altamaha River)					X		X	X		GDOT, GDNR	$500,000	X	X		X
Utilize Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to pave Emanuel Circle, Victoria Circle, and Lake Drive	X							X		GDCA, HUD	$750,000	X	X	X	
Repair bridge aprons across the county	X							X		GDOT	$100,000	X	X		
Re-stripe approximately 115 miles of county maintained roads		X						X		GDOT	$250,000	X	X		
Complete TIA Band 3 Projects (Ezra Taylor Road, New Normantown Road)	X	X	X					X		TIA (TSPLOST)	$1,771,929	X	X		

City of Lyons

Report of Accomplishments and Community Work Program

CITY OF LYONS
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Report of Accomplishments

		Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	
Initiation Year	**Description**	**Y/N**	**Year**	**Y/N**	**Est. Comp. Date**	**Y/N**	**Initiation Year**	**Y/N**	**Status/Comments**
2016	Finalize, maintain and promote Certified Work Ready Community designation							Y	The City does not anticipate completing this action due to attention required for other projects and workforce development efforts currently ongoing.
2017	Construct a new recycling facility	Y	2017						A recycling bin is now provided at the public works department.
2015	Purchase one new public safety vehicle each year	Y	2019						The City has purchased six (6) police cars since 2015.
2015	Purchase one new vehicle for the Utilities Department each year	Y	2019						The City has purchased 10 vehicles since 2015.
2017	Renovate existing Police Department or construct a new one	Y	2016						The police department was relocated to the newly renovated national guard armory building. The City has sold the old police station and has no further plans of renovation at this location.
2016	Renovate the Lyons Fire Department building					Y	2024		This project has been postponed due to lack of funds.
2016	Develop the Bob Moore property to construct a new soccer complex at Partin Park					Y	2024		This project has been postponed due to lack of funds. The action item language has been amended in the new community work program.
2017	Renovate Hallmark Park			Y	2021				The City received a USDA grant to complete upgrades including paving, basketball court, playground equipment, pavilion, and walking track.
2015	Replace 2 lift stations each year, until all are upgraded							Y	The City evaluates the life expectancy for each lift station annually. Further actions/needs for lift stations will be addressed as an ongoing maintenance issues and therefor a separate long-term policy will be entered in the respective section of this Comprehensive plan.

CITY OF LYONS
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Report of Accomplishments

		Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	
Initiation Year	**Description**	**Y/N**	**Year**	**Y/N**	**Est. Comp. Date**	**Y/N**	**Initiation Year**	**Y/N**	**Status/Comments**
2015	Purchase a mini-excavator for the Roads Department	Y	2017						A mini-excavator was purchased in 2017.
2016	Purchase a new pumper truck for the Fire Department	Y	2018						A new pumper truck was purchased with a USDA grant/loan contract.
2017	Renovation the recreation office at Partin Park	Y	2017						Renovations were completed in 2017 using SPLOST monies.
2018	Purchase a new ladder truck for the Fire Department, shared with the City of Vidalia							Y	This action is no longer a warranted. The City of Vidalia purchased a ladder truck and has completed a mutual aid agreement with the City of Lyons. This agreement provides fire coverage for the City of Lyons if a ladder truck is needed.
2019	Replace all lighting on the fields at Partin Park					Y	2020		This project has been postponed until 2020.
2015	Purchase new equipment for the Police Department, to keep up with technology	Y	2019						This City has purchased various equipment items to ensure a modern police force. General actions for upgrading the public safety departments are exhibited in the long-term policy section of this comprehensive plan.
2015	Purchase new equipment for the Fire Department, to maintain ISO rating standards	Y	2019						This City has purchased various equipment items including breathing apparatuses and fire suits. General actions for upgrading the public safety departments are exhibited in the long-term policy section of this comprehensive plan.
2015	Replace outdated equipment of the Roads Department, each year as feasible	Y	2019						The City maintains/replaces equipment used by the public works department annually. General actions for equipment upgrades are exhibited in the long-term policy section of this comprehensive plan.
2018	Develop the National Guard Armory building for business or public use	Y	2016						The City successfully renovated the Armory building for reuse as the police department.

CITY OF LYONS
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Report of Accomplishments

		Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	
Initiation Year	**Description**	**Y/N**	**Year**	**Y/N**	**Est. Comp. Date**	**Y/N**	**Initiation Year**	**Y/N**	**Status/Comments**
2017	Expand the capacity of the east sewer plant to accommodate downtown services and applicable areas of the City			Y	2021				The City has funding allocated to expand/increase capacity of both wastewater treatment plants and will complete the project in 2021. The action item entry will be modified in the new CWP to reflect project changes.
2015	Complete the Trails to Rail project in the downtown area	Y	2017						The City completed the construction of a 1-mile multi-use trail along Victory Drive in 2017.
2015	Pursue the establishment of programs to remove dilapidated manufactured homes/housing units countywide	Y	2015						The City has developed a plan for blight removal within the incorporated boundaries. Approximately 10 structures have been removed since 2015. The plan aims to remove two (2) structures per year or $40,000 as the budget allows.
2015	Complete projects listed on TIA Band 1 (South Victory Drive)	Y	2015						TIA Band 1 projects were completed in 2015 as scheduled.
2016	Complete projects listed on TIA Band 2 (West Oglethorpe Avenue; North Lanier Street; North Lexington Street)					Y	2020		TIA Band 2 projects have been postponed until 2020 when the Band 3 schedule of projects can begin.
2017	Adopt and enforce a model ordinance based on DNR's Part V Environmental Planning Criteria to conserve and protect wetlands	Y	2018						The City adopted a model ordinance to conserve and protect wetlands in 2018.

CITY OF LYONS
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
2020 – 2024

	Years							Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
Activity	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Each Year	Beyond 2024	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Renovate the Lyons Fire Department building					X				X	SPLOST	$300,000	X			
Construct a new soccer complex at Partin Park					X				X	SPLOST	$350,000	X	X		
Renovate Hallmark Park	X	X							X	SPLOST, Garden Clubs	$150,000	X	X		
Replace all lighting on the fields at Partin Park	X								X	SPLOST, Rec. Authority	$540,000	X	X		
Expand the capacity of the east and north sewer plants to accommodate downtown services and applicable areas of the City	X	X							X	GEFA	$6,000,000	X	X		
Connect the north and east wastewater treatment plants		X							X	GEFA	$1,500,000				
Complete projects listed on TIA Band 2 and Band 3 (West Oglethorpe Avenue; North Lanier Street; North Lexington Street, SR 292 & Oxley Dr.)	X	X	X						X	TIA (TSPLOST)	$1,460,316	X	X		
Renovate the Lyons Railroad Depot	X								X		$100,000	X			
Develop a downtown passive park beside the Lyons fire station		X							X		$200,000	X			
Renovate the Lyons City Gym			X						X		$300,000	X			

CITY OF LYONS
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
2020 – 2024

	Years							Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
Activity	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Each Year	Beyond 2024	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Adopt the DCA model ordinance for broadband deployment and permitting	X								X		N/A	X			
Seek Broadband Ready Community Designation	X								X	HOGARC	$2,000 (Staff Time)	X			
Complete countywide GDOT transportation study	X							X	Lyons, Santa Claus, Vidalia		$10,000	X	X		
Conduct streets and drainage improvements in the Roosevelt Street target area	X								X	GDCA CDBG	$700,000	X	X	X	
Conduct streets and drainage improvements in the Pecan Place target area					X				X	GDCA CDBG	$700,000	X	X	X	
Conduct sanitary sewer improvements in the Roosevelt Street target area	X								X	GDCA CDBG, GEFA	$500,000	X	X	X	
Extend water and sewer service to the Toombs Corporate Center Expansion	X								X	GDCA EIP	$250,000	X	X	X	

City of Santa Claus

Report of Accomplishments and Community Work Program

CITY OF SANTA CLAUS
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Report of Accomplishments

		Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	
Initiation Year	**Description**	**Y/N**	**Year**	**Y/N**	**Est. Comp. Date**	**Y/N**	**Initiation Year**	**Y/N**	**Status/Comments**
2016	Establish a permit system for new buildings							Y	The City is no longer going to pursue establishing a permit system until growth increases.
2015	Obtain additional law enforcement services from the City of Lyons							Y	The City has determined the additional cost and insurance is prohibitive to providing this service.
2016	Establish a memorial garden at the north entrance along US 1	Y	2016						A roadside memorial garden was established in 2016.
2016	Replace any old playground equipment with new equipment and/or add more new equipment	Y	2019						New playground equipment was installed in 2019.
2017	Re-establish Prancer Street							Y	The City is no longer pursuing this project due to the cost and minimal benefits to citizens.
2017	Establish an arts & crafts festival					Y	2022		Action has been postponed until a committee and volunteers can be organized.
2016	Establish and hire a formal City Clerk	Y	2016						A City Clerk became employed with the City in 2016.
2015	Create a new City website with an online store			Y	2020				The City anticipates having a new City website completed in 2020.
2018	Attract entrepreneurship for the establishment of a candy store and restaurant	Y	2018						The City now has a Dollar General store which opened in 2018.

CITY OF SANTA CLAUS
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Report of Accomplishments

		Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	
Initiation Year	**Description**	**Y/N**	**Year**	**Y/N**	**Est. Comp. Date**	**Y/N**	**Initiation Year**	**Y/N**	**Status/Comments**
2015	Pursue the establishment of programs to remove dilapidated manufactured homes/housing units countywide							Y	The City generally approves of the current state of housing units and no longer view this as a necessary project.
2018	Finalize, maintain, and promote Certified Work Ready Community designation							Y	The City does not anticipate completing this action due to attention required for other projects and workforce development efforts currently ongoing.
2017	Adopt and enforce a model ordinance based on DNR's Part V Environmental Planning Criteria to conserve and protect wetlands	Y	2017						The City adopted a model ordinance to conserve and protect wetlands in 2017.

CITY OF SANTA CLAUS
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
2020 – 2024

	Years							Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
Activity	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Each Year	Beyond 2024	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Establish an arts & crafts festival			X						X		$3,000	X			X
Create a new City website with an online store	X								X		$5,000	X			
Install additional playground equipment		X		X					X		$10,000	X	X		
Resurface approximately one-half mile of City streets				X	X		X		X	GDOT TIA	$55,000	X	X		
Purchase and replace seasonal decorations for the City						X			X		$15,000 (Total)	X			X
Reclaim/clean drainage ditches along City rights-of-way			X						X	GDOT TIA	$7,000	X	X		
Construct a birthday/party house				X					X		$50,000	X			
Improve the water system infrastructure to include fire hydrants				X	X				X	GDCA CDBG, GEFA	$400,000	X	X	X	
Adopt the DCA model ordinance for broadband deployment and permitting	X								X		N/A	X			
Seek Broadband Ready Community Designation	X								X	HOGARC	$2,000 (Staff Time)	X			
Complete countywide GDOT transportation study	X							X	Lyons, Santa Claus, Vidalia		$10,000	X	X		

City of Vidalia

Report of Accomplishments and Community Work Program

CITY OF VIDALIA
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Report of Accomplishments

		Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	
Initiation Year	**Description**	**Y/N**	**Year**	**Y/N**	**Est. Comp. Date**	**Y/N**	**Initiation Year**	**Y/N**	**Status/Comments**
2015	Construct a new industrial spec building at the industrial park	Y	2015						Project was completed in 2015.
2015	Complete remodeling of City Hall					Y	2020		This project was postponed while other large capital projects were completed. The City anticipates project initiation in late 2020.
2015	Upgrade the software system to integrate all departments for better networking and connectivity	Y	2018						The City now uses customer service driven software systems such as CivicRec and Tyler Technologies to integrate workflows for each department.
2015	Promote quarterly events to be held at the amphitheater	Y	2019						The City utilizes the amphitheater for seasonal events and community engagement. The ongoing use of this event space is also included as a long term policy for the City.
2015	Complete installation of new tennis courts and soccer fields at the Recreation Department					Y	2020		This project was postponed while other large capital projects were completed. The City anticipates project initiation in late 2020.
2015	Replace entrance signs					Y	2022		The City has identified multiple new gateway sign locations and will work to develop these locations.
2015	Replace all signage within the City							Y	This action was deemed to be too broad to significantly accomplish. Further action for sign replacement when necessary will be included in the Long Term Policy section.
2015	Improve water, sewer, and drainage systems along Bay, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th streets			Y	2020				The City received a Community Development Block Grant to complete this action. Completion of the project is expected in early 2020.
2018	Expand the Sweet Onion RV Park					Y	2021		Expansion plans of the RV park have been postponed until other projects are significantly completed.

CITY OF VIDALIA
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Report of Accomplishments

		Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	
Initiation Year	**Description**	**Y/N**	**Year**	**Y/N**	**Est. Comp. Date**	**Y/N**	**Initiation Year**	**Y/N**	**Status/Comments**
2015	Complete the upgrading of infrastructure along Adams Street (GA 130)	Y	2015						The Adams Street infrastructure project was completed in 2015.
2015	Pave Ezra Taylor Road	Y	2015						Ezra Taylor Road was paved in 2015.
2015	Purchase a new fire truck					Y	2021		The purchase of a new pumper fire truck was postponed until 2021. The new work program modifies this action to include greater details.
2015	Purchase 3 new police cars each year	Y	2017						The City replaced multiple cars in 2015-2017. The purchasing policy has changed with the City to replace patrol cars as needed.
2015	Replace water meters until all are upgraded and for maintenance	Y	2016						The City has upgraded meters throughout the City. Approximately 10 percent of the meters are replaced annually for maintenance.
2015	Purchase equipment for the removal of yard debris	Y	2015						The City purchased a boom truck in 2015 for yard debris removal.
2015	Establish a yard debris removal program	Y	2015						A program was created in 2015.
2018	Install new banners throughout the City	Y	2017						The City successfully worked with downtown business owners to install new banners.
2019	Establish free public Wi-Fi in various locations throughout the City	Y	2019						The City offers free public Wi-Fi at the Pal Theatre and Aquatics Center.

CITY OF VIDALIA
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
Report of Accomplishments

		Accomplished		Underway		Postponed		Dropped	
Initiation Year	**Description**	**Y/N**	**Year**	**Y/N**	**Est. Comp. Date**	**Y/N**	**Initiation Year**	**Y/N**	**Status/Comments**
2015	Complete historic renovations to Pal Theater and operate for community use	Y	2019						Renovations to the Pal Theatre were completed in 2019.
2017	Save and rehabilitate at least 1 historic building for business or public use each year, if feasible							Y	This action is not financially feasible at present. The City may, on occasion, revisit the issue however, further action will derive from the long-term policy section of the comprehensive plan.
2018	Purchase a new ladder truck for the Fire Department, shared with the City of Lyons	Y	2015						The City of Vidalia purchased a new ladder truck in 2015. Fire protection for the City of Lyons is in place through a mutual aid agreement.
2015	Pursue the establishment of programs to remove dilapidated manufactured homes/housing units countywide	Y	2019						Since 2015, 77 dilapidated houses have been demolished and 33 residential structures rehabilitated in the City due to the City's efforts.
2015	Complete projects listed on TIA Band 1 (Mose Coleman Road; Michael Collins Drive)	Y	2015						Projects were completed in 2015.
2016	Complete projects listed on TIA Band 2 (Airport Road; Adams Street)	Y	2016						Projects were completed in 2016.
2017	Adopt and enforce Environmental Conservation Ordinance to conserve and protect significant wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and Altamaha and Ohoopee rivers protected corridors	Y	2018						The County adopted a model ordinance to conserve and protect wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and protected river corridors in 2018.
2015	Develop and implement ordinance protecting water quality consistent with watershed assessment in Vidalia					Y	2022		Action was postponed until the watershed assessment can be completed.

CITY OF VIDALIA
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
2020 – 2024

	Years							Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
Activity	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Each Year	Beyond 2024	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Complete remodeling of City Hall	X								X	SPLOST	$500,000	X			
Complete installation of new tennis courts and soccer fields at the Recreation Department	X								X	SPLOST	$1,500,00	X			
Replace entrance signs			X						X	Chamber of Commerce	$50,000	X			
Improve water, sewer, and drainage systems along Bay, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th streets	X								X	SPLOST CDBG	$2,000,000	X			
Expand the Sweet Onion RV Park		X							X		$125,000	X			
Develop and implement ordinance protecting water quality consistent with watershed assessment in Vidalia			X						X		$2,000	X			
Purchase (3) 2 Door Top Mount Rescue Pumper Fire Trucks		X		X	X				X		$900,000	X	X	X	
Construct a Training Burn Center, Search, and Rescue Building		X							X		$35,000	X	X	X	
Replace 12 MSA SCBA (Air Packs)	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		$85,000	X	X	X	X

CITY OF VIDALIA
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
2020 – 2024

	Years							Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
Activity	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Each Year	Beyond 2024	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Replace 27 Veridian PPE Gear (Bunker Gear)	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		$65,000	X			
Purchase Fire Department Maintenance Truck	X								X		$30,000	X			
Purchase Rescue Equipment and Accessories (Jaws of Life)	X								X		$50,000	X			X
Construct a new fire station with Training Room					X				X		$300,000	X	X	X	
Purchase Body Camera Equipment		X							X		$35,000	X	X	X	
Purchase vehicles for the PD Investigators	X	X	X						X		$110,000	X			
Pave the entrance to the Vidalia Animal Control Center		X							X		$25,000	X			
Purchase administrative and patrol vehicles	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		$550,000	X			
Purchase rubberized material to install in the shooting range lanes	X								X		$5,000	X			
Purchase portable radios for officers	X	X	X						X		$20,000	X			

CITY OF VIDALIA
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
2020 – 2024

	Years							Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
Activity	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Each Year	Beyond 2024	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Purchase patrol car laptops		X	X	X					X		$13,000	X	X	X	
Construct a new Public Works Facility				X					X		$1,500,000	X			
Purchase public works equipment and vehicles including a vac truck, limb truck, portable jetter, backhoe, work trucks, etc.	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		$750,000	X			
Upgrade lift stations (pump replacement) throughout the city	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	USDA, GEFA	$2,000,000	X	X	X	
Upgrade the effluent sand filters and clarifiers at the Swift Creek WWTP			X						X	USDA, GEFA	$275,000	X	X	X	
Purchase an automatic screening system and septic waste dumping station at the LAS WWTP				X					X	USDA, GEFA	$250,000	X	X	X	
Replace lift station to include a new wet well and pump capacity increase (Barksdale Drive and Pleasure Court)		X	X						X	USDA, GEFA	$650,000	X	X	X	
Purchase a portable generator		X							X	FEMA, GEMA	$250,000	X	X	X	
Upgrade water withdrawal depths (pump lowering) at all four wells			X						X		$65,000	X			

CITY OF VIDALIA
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
2020 – 2024

	Years							Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
Activity	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Each Year	Beyond 2024	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Purchase new water meters and system				X					X		$1,750,000	X	X	X	
Conduct sidewalk maintenance for broken/unsafe segments						X			X		$150,000	X	X	X	
Purchase shop equipment including a vehicle lift, tire equipment, etc.	X	X	X						X		$50,000	X			
Purchase yard waste mulching equipment		X	X	X	X				X		$250,000	X			
Install new water and sewer lines in between Highways 280 & 292 and along GA 130 for residential and commercial growth		X							X		$500,000	X	X	X	
Purchase and install onion statues throughout downtown		X	X						X	DVA	$50,000	X			X
Paint murals throughout downtown representing locally recognized points of importance						X			X		$25,000	X			X
Purchase and install rooftop lights around businesses downtown				X	X				X		$85,000	X			X
Purchase and install edison lights in downtown alleys and in the Meadows Street Park area		X	X						X		$10,000	X			
Purchase an outdoor sound system for downtown		X	X	X					X		$50,000	X			

CITY OF VIDALIA
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
2020-2024

	Years							Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
Activity	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Each Year	Beyond 2024	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Purchase Pedestrian wayfinding signage for historic district		X	X						X		$40,000	X	X		X
Replace benches at Meadows Street Park		X	X								$20,000	X	X	X	X
Purchase seasonal decorations for downtown	X	X	X						X		$20,000	X			
Install new fencing, bleachers, dugouts, lighting, and back stops for the baseball fields at the Ed Smith Complex				X					X		$550,000	X	X	X	
Install hard surface tennis courts	X	X							X		$350,000	X	X	X	
Construct a sheltered batting cage facility at the Ed Smith Complex		X	X						X		$60,000	X			
Expand maintenance building at the Ed Smith Complex		X							X		$40,000	X			
Upgrade neighborhood parks (5 total) throughout the city with playground equipment, basketball court and other active recreation amenities	X	X	X	X					X	Land and Water Conservation Fund	$250,000	X	X	X	
Construct (3) new soccer fields at the Vidalia Regional Sports Complex		X							X		$500,000	X	X	X	

CITY OF VIDALIA
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
2020 – 2024

	Years							Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
Activity	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Each Year	Beyond 2024	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Expand the Aquatics Facility to include slides and concession stands				X	X				X		$400,000	X			
Construct (2) new football fields at the Vidalia Regional Sports Complex		X							X		$250,000	X			
Implement a new City-wide branding	X	X							X		$35,000	X			
Create new exhibits in the Vidalia Onion Museum		X							X		$25,000	X	X		
Expand the Vidalia Onion Museum			X						X		$100,000	X	X		X
Install a new roof on the Pal Theatre		X							X		$200,000	X	X	X	
Install new exterior doors at the Pal Theatre		X							X		$15,000	X	X	X	
Install structural beams for rigging and lighting in the Pal		X							X		$30,000	X	X	X	
Install way-finding signage throughout the city on arterial routes			X						X		$50,000	X	X	X	

CITY OF VIDALIA
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
2020 – 2024

	Years							Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
Activity	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Each Year	Beyond 2024	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Purchase ice machine for the catering kitchen at the Pal		X							X		$7,500	X			
Install rigging, permanent lighting, and pigtails at the Stage at City Park	X								X		$25,000	X			
Purchase property for the development of a new industrial park with Gas, water, sewer, and internet		X	X	X					X		$1,000,000	X	X	X	
Adopt the DCA model ordinance for broadband deployment and permitting	X								X		N/A	X			
Seek Broadband Ready Community Designation	X								X	HOGARC	$2,000 (Staff Time)	X			
Purchase vehicles for Code Enforcement and Administration	X	X	X		X				X		$120,000	X			
Hire a maintenance person for all city departments		X	X	X	X				X		$200,000	X			
Replace all desktop computers throughout the city	X								X		$65,000	X			
Establish Enterprise Zones and TADS		X	X	X	X				X		$100,000	X	X	X	

CITY OF VIDALIA
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
2020 – 2024

	Years							Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
Activity	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Each Year	Beyond 2024	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Complete a county-wide GDOT transportation study	X							X	X	Lyons, Santa Claus	$10,000	X	X		
Rehab and expand the terminal apron pavement	X	X							X		$2,000,000	X	X	X	
Construct a new hangar			X	X					X		$450,000	X	X	X	
Construct a non-motorized trail to planned bicycle trail/route in Toombs County		X	X						X		$250,000	X	X	X	
Improve drainage to include concrete ditching (West Jenkins Street to Peacock Street) (Ward Street to McIntosh Street)				X	X				X		$3,500,000	X	X	X	
Replace cast iron/PVC/transite water and PVC/concrete/ terracotta sewer pipes (MLK, Jr. Ave. to Grand Street/Grand Street from NE Main Street to MLK Jr. Ave./ Epstein from NE Main Street to Fifth Avenue)	X	X	X	X	X				X	GEFA	$3,500,000	X	X	X	

CITY OF VIDALIA
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
2020 – 2024

	Years							**Responsibility**			**Estimated Cost**	**Funding Source**			
Activity	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Each Year	Beyond 2024	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Replace cast iron/PVC/transite water and PVC/concrete/ terracotta sewer pipes (Church Street from E. First Street to Pinecrest Dr./ Jackson Street from E. First Street to Pinecrest Dr./ Durden Street from E. First Street to Pinecrest Dr./ Mosley Street from E. First Street to Pinecrest Dr./Smith Street from E. First Street to Fifth Street)	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	GEFA	$5,000,000	X	X	X	
Expand free public wi-fi in various locations throughout the city	X	X									$25,000	X			
Pursue the removal of dilapidated manufactured homes/housing units countywide	X	X	X						X		$75,000	X			
Complete projects listed on TIA Band 3 (Pete Phillips Rd., Brinson Rd., Lowery Place, Curry St., Truman St., Rudell Rd., Semco Rd., Railroad crossings Upgrades)	X	X	X						X	GDOT TIA	$1,003,366	X	X	X	

CITY OF VIDALIA
Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program
2020 – 2024

	Years							Responsibility			Estimated Cost	Funding Source			
Activity	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Each Year	Beyond 2024	County	City	Other		Local	State	Federal	Private
Install permanent fencing around the Stage at City Park		X							X		$100,000	X	X	X	
Purchase seasonal decorations for Hwy. 292 from Vidalia High School to Semco Drive			X	X					X		$5,000	X			
Add decorative lighting from Jackson at 280 to Durden/280 and from that intersection down to 3rd or 4th street; from Jackson and 280 down to 3rd or 4th street; from Church & 280 to 3rd or 4th, etc.			X	X	X				X		$1,000,000	X	X	X	
Extend sidewalks along Highway 297 to J. R. Trippe from intersection of Highway 292 & McIntosh St.; Aimwell from Rhodus to Hall Way; Adams from 9th Street to Bob Sharpe.									X	GDOT	$580,000	X	X		
Improve street surface and drainage in the 4th Avenue, Poe Street and Dickerson Drive		X							X	CDBG	$750,000	X	X	X	
Purchase a new microfilm machine for use in the library		X							X		$8,000	X			
Purchase a digital converter for document digitization by the library			X						X		$2,000	X			

Appendix

Community Involvement
Public Hearing Notice 1
News Release & Public Outreach
Comprehensive Plan Website
Community Vision Survey
Public Hearing Notice 2
Meeting Agendas
Stakeholders Invited to Participate
Active Participants

Community Involvement

The Local Planning Requirements established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) encourage and require that each element of the comprehensive plan "be prepared with considerable opportunity for involvement and input from stakeholders, local leadership, and the general public." The Toombs County local governments took this requirement to heart and placed increased emphasis on getting community leaders, stakeholders, and the general public involved. The need for strong community involvement from a broad spectrum of stakeholders was emphasized by the Regional Commission in communications with the local governments. As a result, the local governments put forth considerable effort for broad community involvement and participation in this comprehensive plan's development.

The local governments coordinated establishment of a steering committee which they called the "Local Plan Coordination Committee" approximately one to two months ahead of the scheduled first committee meeting, and invited through formal email and direct contact as many stakeholders and community leaders as they could envision. Regional Commission planning staff had previously counseled the local governments to make such efforts a priority a number of times, including in a plan implementation assessment meeting held in December, 2018, in the letter offering Regional Commission plan preparation assistance, and in direct communication and follow-up for plan development organization. DCA's Suggested Community Plan Stakeholder List, some specific known local candidates, and a model invitation for stakeholder participation were provided for local government use. In addition to local government direct contact, the local governments used their public meetings to notify the general public and any other interested parties to participate. The official public advertising of the required public hearing further invited all those interested to participate. Similar efforts occurred prior to the final committee meeting and public hearing to review the draft plan prior to its formal submittal.

In another attempt to reach out to the general public and to provide further opportunity for community involvement and input outside of the formal public hearing setting, an open community-wide drop-in session was held from 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. at the Santa Claus Community Center in Santa Claus where people could attend at their convenience, receive a one-on-one explanation and introduction to the planning process, and offer their input. In addition, a webpage for this plan was developed which

provided basic information, the meeting schedule, copies of the documents being developed at each meeting, and an online Community Vision survey. Notice of both of these extra efforts to invite community stakeholder involvement and participation were officially posted.

These considerable efforts for achieving meaningful community involvement were considered a success by the local governments. The committee meetings participation did include numerous appointed and elected local officials, local economic development practitioners, other local agencies and organizations, and many others. The first committee meeting, as well as the first public hearing, included a strengths/weakness (SWOT analysis) exercise. The results of these strengths/weaknesses exercises were also reviewed at the second committee meeting. In standard practice, the first order of business at each committee meeting was to review all prior committee inputs and their summary by staff for committee amendment before moving to the next input topic. Much community involvement and input was provided in all facets and elements of the comprehensive plan's development. The local governments were very pleased both with the community involvement/input and the results.

The actual documents utilized or published during the community involvement and comprehensive plan preparation process are provided in this appendix. These include the local government stakeholder invitation, the local government official public hearing advertisements, the community drop-in session notice, screen captures of the Toombs Plan website (http://bit.ly/ToombsComp2019) , and the Local Plan Coordination Committee meeting agendas. A list of stakeholders invited to participate in the comprehensive plan preparation process and a list of active participants on the Local Plan Coordination Committee and involved in plan preparation are also included.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan
"The Future of All of Toombs County"

The local governments of Toombs County and the municipalities of Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia are in the initial stages of a process to develop a new joint comprehensive plan in accordance with state law. It is desired that this plan not only meet state requirements, but also truly express the Community's wishes for the future growth and development of the Community.

Please come to this meeting and express your desires about the Community's future vision, the issues and opportunities facing the Community, and what should be done to make Toombs County and its municipalities better places to live and work. What should be the Community's guiding principles, and what can be done to generate local pride and enthusiasm about the future of all of Toombs County?

PUBLIC HEARING DATE AND TIME: **Thursday, March 7, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.**

LOCATION OF PUBLIC HEARING: **Toombs County Courthouse, Courtroom B, Lyons, Georgia**

Please attend, voice your opinions, and be involved. Help your community be proud about its future. All persons with a disability or otherwise needing assistance should contact Toombs County Board of Commissioners, 100 Courthouse Square, Lyons, Georgia, or call (912) 526-3311.

NEWS RELEASE

PUBLIC INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN DROP-IN SESSION ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS' COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

DATE: **Thursday, March 14, 2019 4:00 – 6:00 PM**

LOCATION: **City of Santa Claus Community Center**

Are you concerned about the future of Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia? Do you have thoughtful ideas on what needs to be done to make the community a better place? What do you consider to be pressing needs and issues in the community?

The local governments of Toombs County, the Toombs County Board of Commissioners, and the cities of Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia, are in the process of updating their comprehensive plan required by state law. The current joint comprehensive plan dates from 2014, and is the principal guide to the long-term growth and development of Toombs County and its municipalities. The new update will focus on achieving a vision set by the community on what it wants to be, and addressing identified needs and opportunities.

You are cordially invited to get involved and to participate in this plan update process. You may do so by attending a public drop-in session concerning the comprehensive plan update to be held at the City of Santa Claus Community Center at 200 North Holiday Boulevard in Santa Claus from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 14, 2019. The session is designed to be informal, to answer any questions you may have, and to allow for one-on-one input at your convenience. Planning staff from the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission will be on hand to discuss the plan and its process, and to receive your input and ideas. There will be no formal presentation. The event is designed as a drop-in at whatever time is convenient for those wishing to participate or learn more.

Please attend and voice your ideas. We want to hear them. Let us know what you think. Do your part in making Toombs County an even better place to live, work, and play.

HEART OF GEORGIA ALTAMAHA

Regional Commission

331 West Parker Street
Baxley, GA 31513
Phone: 912-367-3648
Fax: 912-367-3640

5405 Oak Street
Eastman, GA 31023
Phone: 478-374-4771
Fax: 478-374-0703

NEWS RELEASE

PUBLIC INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN DROP-IN SESSION ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS' COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

DATE: **Thursday, March 14, 2019 4:00 – 6:00 PM**

LOCATION: **City of Santa Claus Community Center**

Are you concerned about the future of Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia? Do you have thoughtful ideas on what needs to be done to make the community a better place? What do you consider to be pressing needs and issues in the community?

The local governments of Toombs County, the Toombs County Board of Commissioners, and the cities of Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia, are in the process of updating their comprehensive plan required by state law. The current joint comprehensive plan dates from 2014, and is the principal guide to the long-term growth and development of Toombs County and its municipalities. The new update will focus on achieving a vision set by the community on what it wants to be, and addressing identified needs and opportunities.

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Please attend and voice your ideas. We want to hear them. Let us know what you think. Do your part in making Toombs County an even better place to live, work, and play.

The City Of Lyons Georgia ···
· March 5 ·

PUBLIC INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN DROP-IN SESSION
ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS' COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Are you concerned about the future of Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia? Do you have thoughtful ideas on what needs to be done to make the community a better place? What do you consider to be pressing needs and issues in the community?
... See More

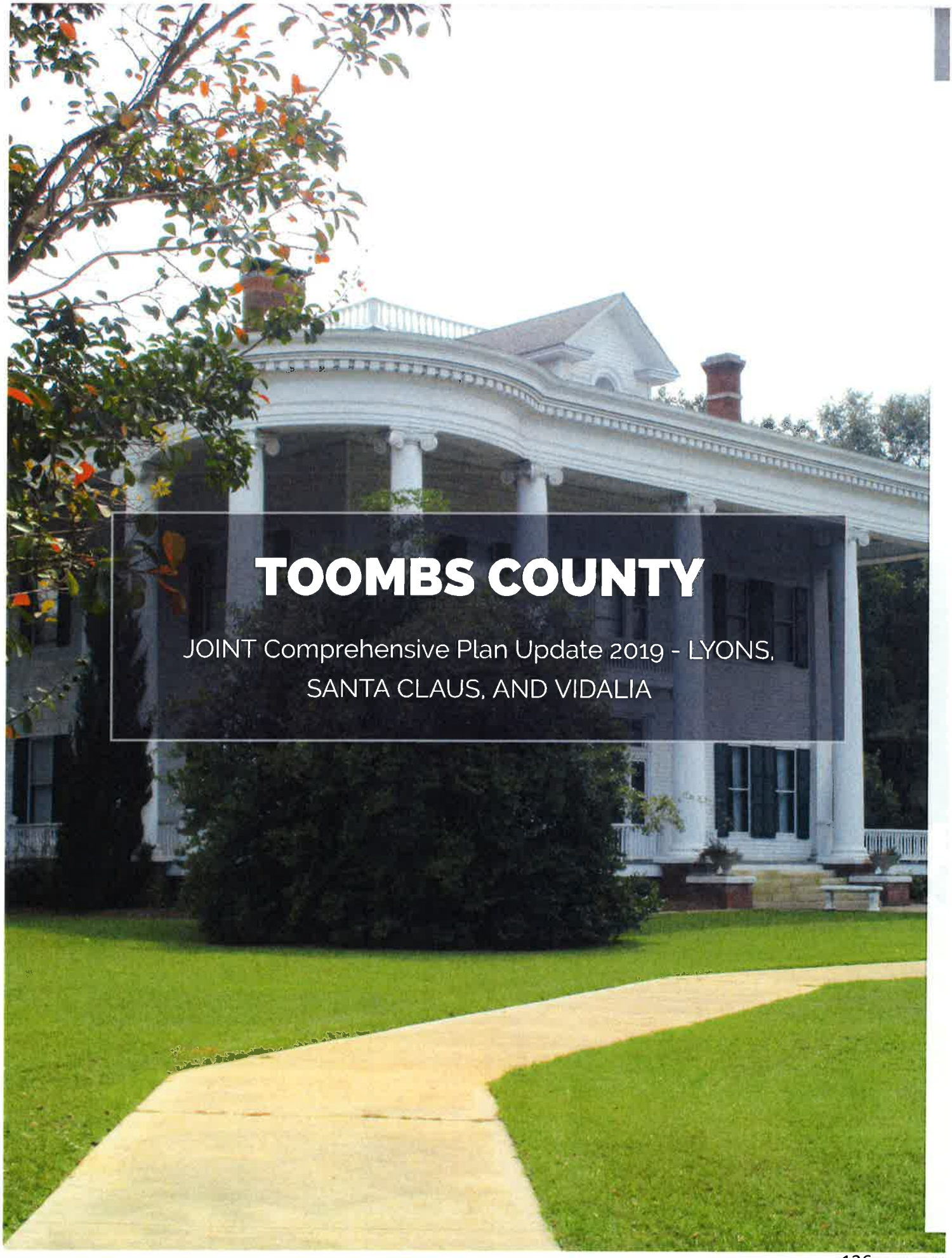
City of Vidalia, Georgia Authorized Page

February 13

A big Thank You to all the business, civic, and community leaders who came out today and participated in the Heart of Georgia Regional Commission Stakeholders Meeting. Your participation and input in making our community a better place today and tomorrow's to come.

Below is a link for members of our community to provide input also.

http://bit.ly/ToombsComp2019

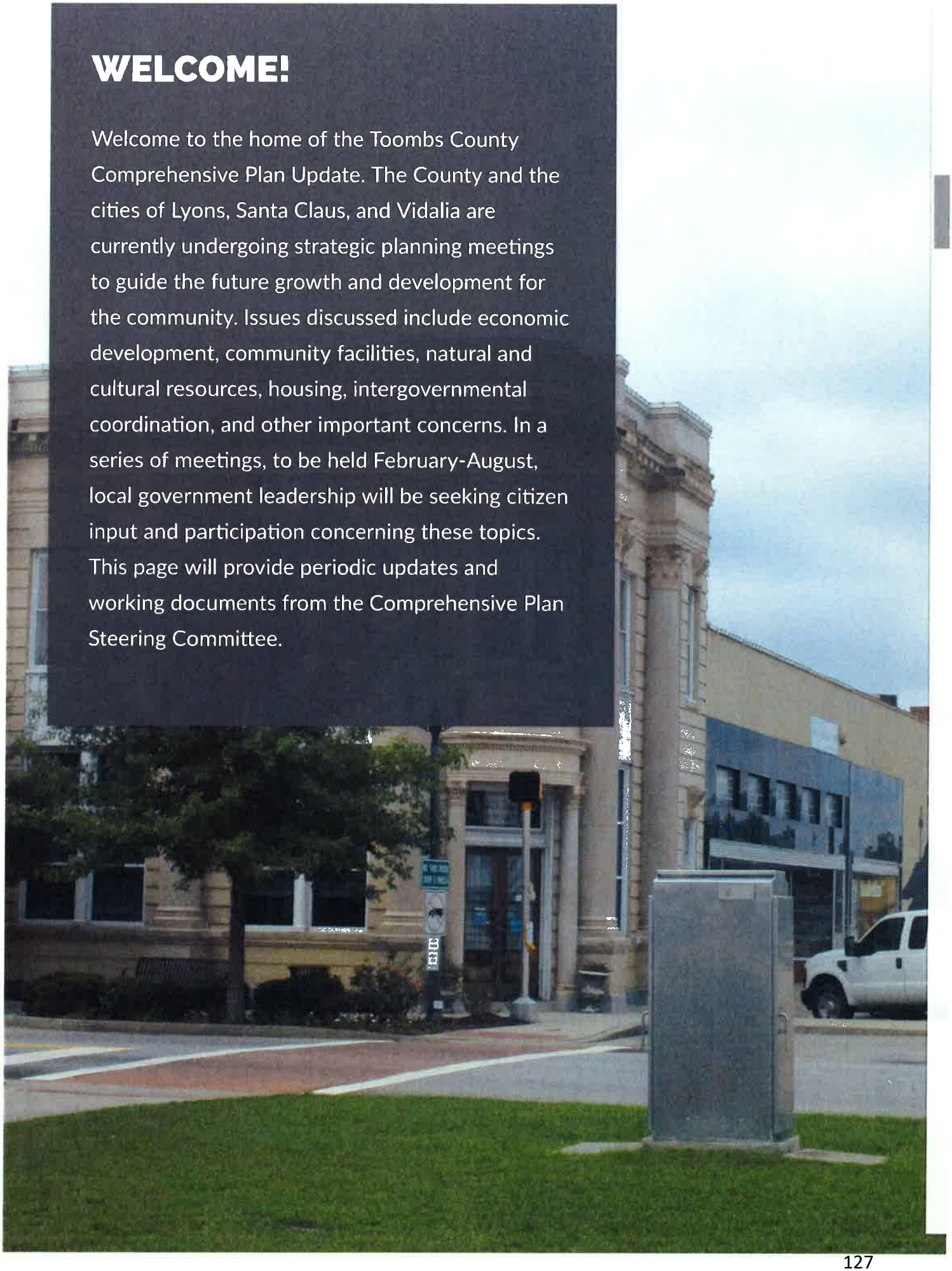


TOOMBS COUNTY

JOINT Comprehensive Plan Update 2019 - LYONS, SANTA CLAUS, AND VIDALIA

WELCOME!

Welcome to the home of the Toombs County Comprehensive Plan Update. The County and the cities of Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia are currently undergoing strategic planning meetings to guide the future growth and development for the community. Issues discussed include economic development, community facilities, natural and cultural resources, housing, intergovernmental coordination, and other important concerns. In a series of meetings, to be held February-August, local government leadership will be seeking citizen input and participation concerning these topics. This page will provide periodic updates and working documents from the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.



SWEET! SO MUCH MORE THAN THE VIDALIA ONION

A Joint Comprehensive Plan for Toombs County, Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia, Georgia

August, 2014

Download a Copy of the 2014 Plan Here!

WHY IS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPORTANT?

Effective planning ensures that future development will occur where, when, and how the community and local government wants. There are several important benefits to the entire community that result from the planning process:

- Quality of life is maintained and improved.
- There is a vision, clearly stated and shared by all, that describes the future of the community.
- Private property rights are protected.
- Economic development is encouraged and supported.
- There is more certainty about where development will occur, what it will be like, when it will happen, and how the costs of development will be met.

To encourage local governments' engagement in comprehensive planning, Georgia incentivizes it by allowing cities and counties with DCA-approved comprehensive plans access to a special package of financial resources to aid in implementing their plans. This includes Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), water and sewer loans from the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA), economic development funding from the OneGeorgia Authority, and a variety of other programs from DCA and partner agencies (a detailed list is available in the "Fact Sheets" section, below). Eligibility for this package of incentives is called Qualified Local Government (QLG) status.

https://dca.ga.gov/local-government-assistance/planning/local-planning/local-comprehensive-planning

TOOMBS COUNTY 2019 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TIMETABLE

- Wednesday, 2.13.2019, 10:30 AM - Initial Meeting/Strengths/Weaknesses (SWOT)
- Thursday, 3.7.2019, 5:30 PM - Initial Public Hearing
- Wednesday, 3.13.2019, 10:30 AM - Community Vision/Issues and Opportunities
- Thursday, 3.14.2019, 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM - Community Input Drop-In
- Wednesday, 4.10.2019, 10:30 AM - Issues and Opportunities/Goals/Policies
- Wednesday, 5.15.2019, 10:30 AM - Goals/Policies/ Economic Development/Broadband/Land Use
- August, TBD - Draft Plan
- August, TBD - Final Public Hearing
- September, 2019 - Local Government Submittal

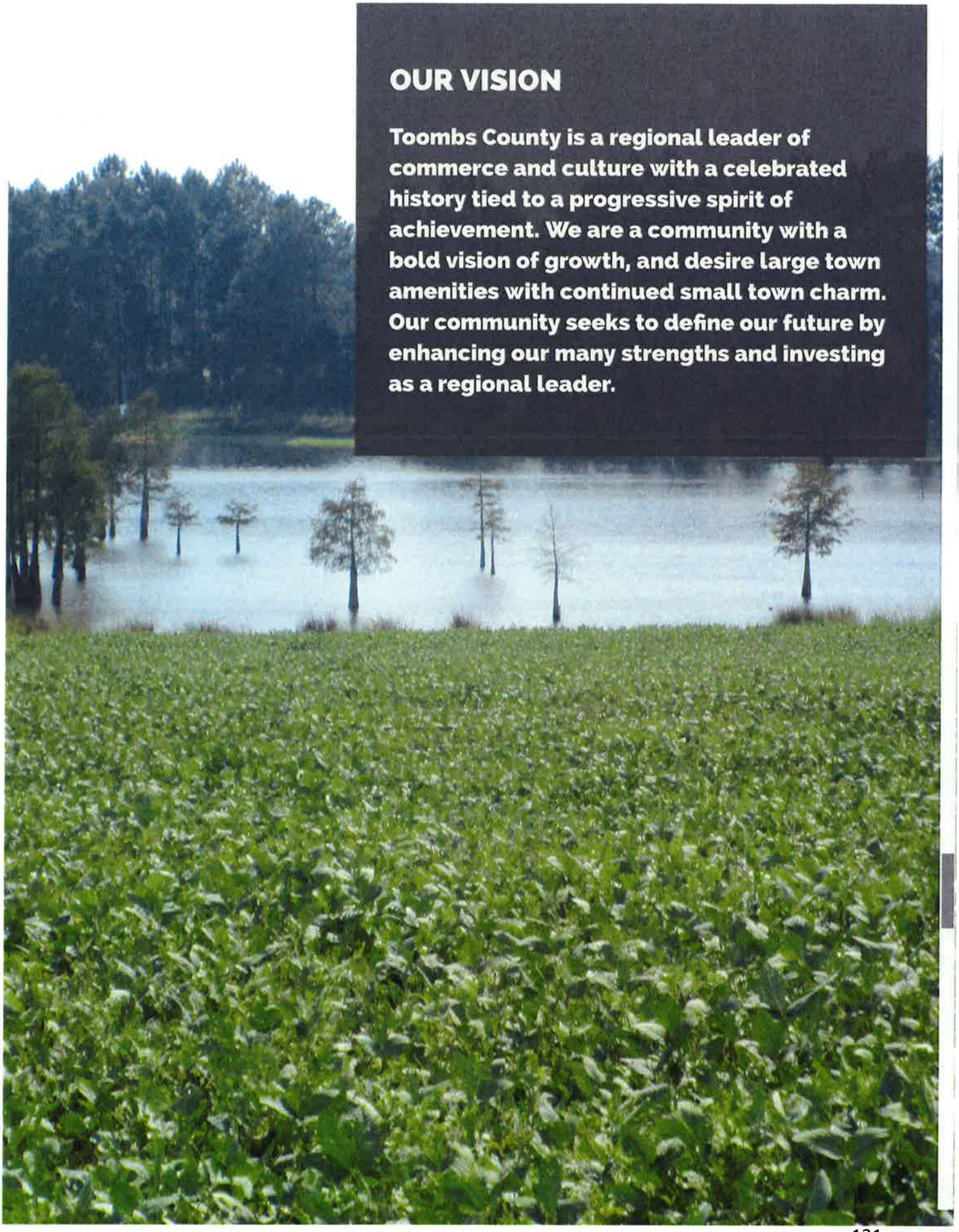
Click to View Files From First Planning Meeting 2.13.19 ▸

Click to View Files From Second Planning Meeting 3.13.19 ▸

Click To View Files From Third Planning Meeting 4.10.19 ▸

Click To View Files From Fourth Planning Meeting 5.15.19 ▸

Click To View Files From Fifth Planning Meeting 8.19.19 ▸



OUR VISION

Toombs County is a regional leader of commerce and culture with a celebrated history tied to a progressive spirit of achievement. We are a community with a bold vision of growth, and desire large town amenities with continued small town charm. Our community seeks to define our future by enhancing our many strengths and investing as a regional leader.

What is your vision for Toombs County? Help define it by taking the survey below!

Toombs County Community Vision Survey ▸

HOGA
Heart of Georgia Altamaha
Regional Commission

FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING THE 2019 TOOMBS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS, CONTACT US:

331 West Parker Street - Baxley, GA 31513

912. 367. 3648

pope@hogarc.org

Appreciate

Toombs County Community Vision Survey

1. How would you describe your community, particularly to someone who knows nothing about it?

2. What makes your community unique and special as a place to live?

3. What improvement(s) to your community would you most like to see happen?

4. What are the greatest strengths or assets of your community?

5. What are your community's greatest needs, especially long-term?

6. What specific projects/improvements are critically needed in the short term?

7. What opportunities for positive change/improvement/growth are there in your community?

8. How do you think your community will change/grow in the next five to ten years?

9. What would you like your community to be like in 20 years?

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan

The Toombs County Board of Commissioners and municipalities of Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia are in the process of finalizing a new joint comprehensive plan in accordance with state law.

The comprehensive plan outlines a community vision, identifies needs and opportunities, and delineates long term policies and a community work program to provide a guide and blueprint for future growth and development within the community jurisdictions. The plan is in draft finalization before submittal to the state for review.

The purpose of the hearing is to brief the community on the content and strategies outlined in the draft comprehensive plan, to address the issues and opportunities facing Toombs County and the municipalities of Lyons, Santa Claus, and Vidalia, obtain any final citizen input, and notify the community of the pending submittal of the comprehensive plan for state and regional review.

PUBLIC HEARING DATE AND TIME: Monday, August 26, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.

LOCATION OF PUBLIC HEARING: Toombs County Courthouse, Courtroom A, Lyons

Please attend and voice your opinions. Help your community achieve a better future. All persons with a disability or otherwise needing assistance should contact Toombs County Board of Commissioners, 100 Courthouse Square, Lyons, Georgia 30436, or call (912) 526-3311.

TOOMBS COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
LOCAL PLAN COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING
Vidalia Municipal Annex, Vidalia, GA

February 13, 2019

AGENDA

Introductions

Background/Committee's Purpose

Proposed Timetable for Plan Development

Community Strengths/Weaknesses Identification (SWOT)

Community Vision Input

Next Meeting
- **Draft Community Vision Review**
- **Issues and Opportunities Input**

TOOMBS COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
LOCAL PLAN COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING
Vidalia Municipal Annex, Vidalia, GA

March 13, 2019

AGENDA

Introduction

Draft Community Vision Review

Plan Title

Draft Issues and Opportunities

Next Meeting – Wednesday, April 10, 2019, 10:30 a.m.
- **Revised Draft Community Vision Review**
- **Revised Draft Issues and Opportunities Review**
- **Goals/Policies Input**

***Community Input Drop-In Session on Thursday, March 14, 2019, 4-6 p.m., Santa Claus Community Center**

TOOMBS COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
LOCAL PLAN COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING
Vidalia Municipal Annex, Vidalia, GA

April 10, 2019

AGENDA

Introduction

Plan Title

Revised Draft Community Vision Review

Revised Draft Issues and Opportunities Review

Goals Input

Long Term Policies Input

Next Meeting – Wednesday, May 15, 2019, 10:30 a.m.
- **Revised Community Vision Review**
- **Revised Issues and Opportunities Review**
- **Revised Goals Review**
- **Revised Long Term Policies Review**
- **Economic Development/Land Use/Plan Coordination**

TOOMBS COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
LOCAL PLAN COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING
Vidalia Municipal Annex, Vidalia, GA
May 15, 2019
AGENDA

Introduction

Plan Title

Revised Draft Community Vision Review

Revised Draft Issues and Opportunities Review

Revised Draft Goals Review

Revised Draft Long Term Policies Review

Economic Development

Draft Broadband Element

Land Use

Plan Coordination

Next Meeting – Date to be determined to review draft plan.

TOOMBS COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
LOCAL PLAN COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING
VIDALIA MUNICIPAL ANNEX, VIDALIA, GA
August 19, 2019
AGENDA

Draft Plan Review

Submittal Discussion

Public Hearing – Monday, August 26, 2019, Toombs County Courthouse, Courtroom A, 5:30 p.m.

Stakeholders Invited to Participate in Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan Preparation Process

Toombs County Board of Commissioners
City of Lyons
City of Santa Claus
City of Vidalia
Southeastern Technical College
Toombs County Board of Education
Vidalia City Schools
Robert Toombs Christian Academy
Vidalia Heritage Academy
Toombs County Development Authority
Toombs-Montgomery Chamber of Commerce
Lyons Main Street
Vidalia Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
Downtown Vidalia Association/Main Street
Toombs County Cooperative Extension
Meadows Memorial Medical Center
Lyons Recreation Department
City of Vidalia Fire Department
City of Vidalia Police Department
ESG Operations (Vidalia Public Works)
The Advance
Local Banks
Local Businesses
Altama Museum of Art and History
Ohoopee Regional Library
Local Churches
Local Community Activists
Community Men in Action
Local Civic Clubs

Active Participants in Toombs County Local Plan Coordination Committee Meetings and Plan Preparation

Toombs County Board of Commissioners
- David Sikes, Chairman
- Tommy Rollins, Commissioner
- John Jones, County Manager
- Helen Harris, County Clerk

City of Lyons
- Willis D. NeSmith, Jr., Mayor
- Jason Hall, City Manager
- James McGowan, Recreation Director
- Darel Corley, Public Works Director and Fire Chief

City of Santa Claus
- Vince Meadows, Mayor
- Amy Lawler, Council Member
- Sue Grisham, City Clerk

City of Vidalia
- Ronnie Dixon, Mayor
- Kailey Dees, Council Member
- Lisa Chesser, Council Member
- Greg Johnson, Council Member
- Raymond Turner, Council Member
- Nick Overstreet, City Manager
- Kellie Murray, Assistant to Manager
- Bill Bedingfield, City Clerk/Finance Director
- Brian Sikes, Fire Chief
- Frank Waits, Chief of Police (former)
- ESG Operations/Vidalia Public Works
  - Robbie Akins, Project Manager

Toombs-Montgomery Chamber of Commerce
- Tres Herin, Director and Chair-Elect

Toombs County Development Authority
- Trent Williams, Chairman

Downtown Vidalia Authority/Main Street
- Tonya Parker, Executive Director

Vidalia Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Alexa Britton, Executive Director

Lyons Main Street
- Daphne Walker, Manager
- Darrien Ramsey, Vice Chairman, Board of Directors

State Senator Blake Tillery

Southeastern Technical College
- Larry Calhoun, President
- Dr. Barry Dotson, Vice President for Student Affairs
- David Yarbrough, Vice President for Economic Development

Toombs County Board of Education
- Barry Waller, Superintendent

Vidalia City Schools
- Dr. Garrett Wilcox, Superintendent
- Ginger B. Morris, Assistant Superintendent
- John E. Sharpe, Jr., Vidalia High School

Robert Toombs Christian Academy
- Travis Absher, Head of School
- Hayne Brant, Director of Athletics and Operations

Altama Museum of Art and History
- Jennifer Martinez, Executive Director
- Dan Brown, Board of Trustees President

Ohoopee Regional Library System
- Cameron Asbell, Director

Altamaha Bank and Trust
- Jake Cleghorn, Chief Lending Officer

Million Pines Community Bank
- Michael Thigpen, Chief Lending Officer

Mount Vernon Bank
- Alan Thigpen, President
- Dwight Stout, Executive Vice President

Active Participants in Toombs County Local Plan Coordination Committee Meetings and Plan Preparation (continued)

Meadows Regional Medical Center
- **Alan Kent, President and CEO**
- **Rachel Crumpler**

The Oaks-Bethany (Skilled Nursing)
- **Mark Findley**

Affinis Hospice
- **Alysa Marsicano**

The Temples Company (Commercial Real Estate)
- **Dent Temples, Broker**

Georgia Pinestraw
- **Jacob Woodfin**

The Onion Inn, Vidalia
- **Ricky Mitchell**

Vidalia Valley (produce processor)
- **Andy Woodruff**

Ashford Advisors
- **Frank Champion**

Chick-fil-A
- **Britt McDade, Operator**

G. Marie's Formals
- **Ginger Russell, Owner**

Chapman's Pharmacy
- **Wes Chapman**

Goin Postal
- **Frank Champion**

Tommy Smith, Attorney

Bishop-Durden Insurance Group
- **Brian Bishop, President**

Lovins Realty
- **Ross Kelly, Broker**

The Mercy Ministries
- **Clint Hutcheson**

First Baptist Church Lyons
- **Dannie Williams, Lead Pastor**

First Baptist Church Vidalia
- **Dr. Ricky Cummings, Senior Pastor**

TLC CASA
- **Lainie Jenkins, Program Coordinator**
- **Sandra Dowd**

Lyons Lions Club
- **Jason Hall, President**
- **Mark Findley**
- **Alysa Marsicano**

Boys and Girls Club of Toombs County
- **Wes Chapman, Board Chair**

Our Land Our Choice

Note: Both elected and appointed local government and local economic development officials participated.