

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Early County & the Cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin



## Introduction

### A. Purpose

**T**he Early County Consolidated Comprehensive Plan mandated by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 represents joint participation in Georgia's coordinated planning process by Early County and the cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin. The purpose of the Early County Consolidated Comprehensive Plan is to provide the elected and advisory officials of Early County communities with a guidance tool to manage and guide their community's growth and development. The comprehensive planning process provides for the development of a short term work program outlining the future provision of public services and facilities. In addition, the comprehensive plan will serve as the foundation for decision making regarding future land use patterns, economic development, housing improvements, environmental and historic resource protection and intergovernmental coordination efforts.

By meeting Georgia's Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures established as part of the Georgia Planning Act, each participating community will retain their Qualified Local Government status. This status enables Georgia communities to remain eligible for state loans and grants.

### B. Planning Process

The Early County Comprehensive Plan was prepared using the three step planning process outlined in the Revised Georgia's Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures effective January 1, 2004. This three-step process as sum-

marized below was undertaken for each of the seven required planning elements. These planning elements include: Population, Housing, Economic Development, Community Facilities, Natural and Historic Resources, Land use and Intergovernmental Coordination. The three planning steps are: 1.) Inventory of Existing Conditions, 2.) Assessment of Current and Future Needs and 3.) Articulation of Goals and An Associated Implementation Program.

## **Step 1 - Inventory of Existing Conditions**

This first step of the planning process provides local governments with facts, figures, and maps of community trends and issues to be used in subsequent decisions made in the planning process. In this step the basic information and statistics for the community are analyzed (in detail) to identify historical trends and current conditions and to uncover potential problems or opportunities. If carried out carefully, this step of the planning process can produce valuable information which will lead to better decisions for guiding the future of the community.

## **Step 2 - Assessment of Current and Future Needs**

In this second step of the planning process, the local government looks at the information generated in the inventory of existing conditions -- i.e., the opportunities, problems, issues, and trends uncovered through analysis of the basic information -- and makes decisions about the community's needs, goals and ambitions. In this step the local government decides which of the trends or issues discovered in Step 1 are important enough to warrant further attention or action from the local government - these are the community's identified needs. It is then necessary for the local government to decide what it would like to do (in general terms) to address the identified needs.

### Step 3 – Articulation of Goals and an Associated Implementation Program

This final step of the planning process involves developing a plan of action for achieving the goals decided upon in the previous step. The implementation strategy should identify specific activities, programs, or policies to be carried out by the local government in an effort to achieve the goals. The product of Step 3 is an integrated set of goals, objectives, policies and action items that implement the community’s desires or vision for the future. The Minimum Standards require each local government to include a Short Term Work Program in its implementation strategy.

The Short Term Work Program (STWP) is an implementation tool that lists specific actions to be undertaken annually by the local government and covers a five-year planning period. Each local government is required to submit to the Department of Community Affairs through their Regional Development Center an STWP every five years but can at the discretion of the local government amend their STWP as needed in order to accomplish specific goals as established in the local government’s comprehensive plan or in order to accommodate changes in the community which must be addressed. The goals in the Early County Plan are consistent with the statewide goals as defined in the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures. The statewide goals are as follows:

**Economic Development:** To achieve a growing and balanced economy, consistent with the resources of the state and its various regions, that equitably benefits all sections of the state and all segments of the population.

**Natural and Historic Resources:** To conserve and protect the environmental, natural and historic

resources of Georgia's communities, regions and the state.

**Community Facilities:** To ensure that public infrastructure facilities serving local governments, the region, and the state have the capacity and are in place when needed to support and attract the growth and development and /or maintain and enhance the quality of life of the residents of the state.

**Housing:** To ensure that all people within the state and its various regions and communities have access to adequate and affordable housing.

**Land Use:** To ensure that the land resources of the state are allocated for uses required to promote and sustain growth and economic development, to conserve and protect the natural, environmental and historic resources of the state and to protect and promote the quality of life of the people of Georgia's communities, regions and the state.

## C. Public Participation

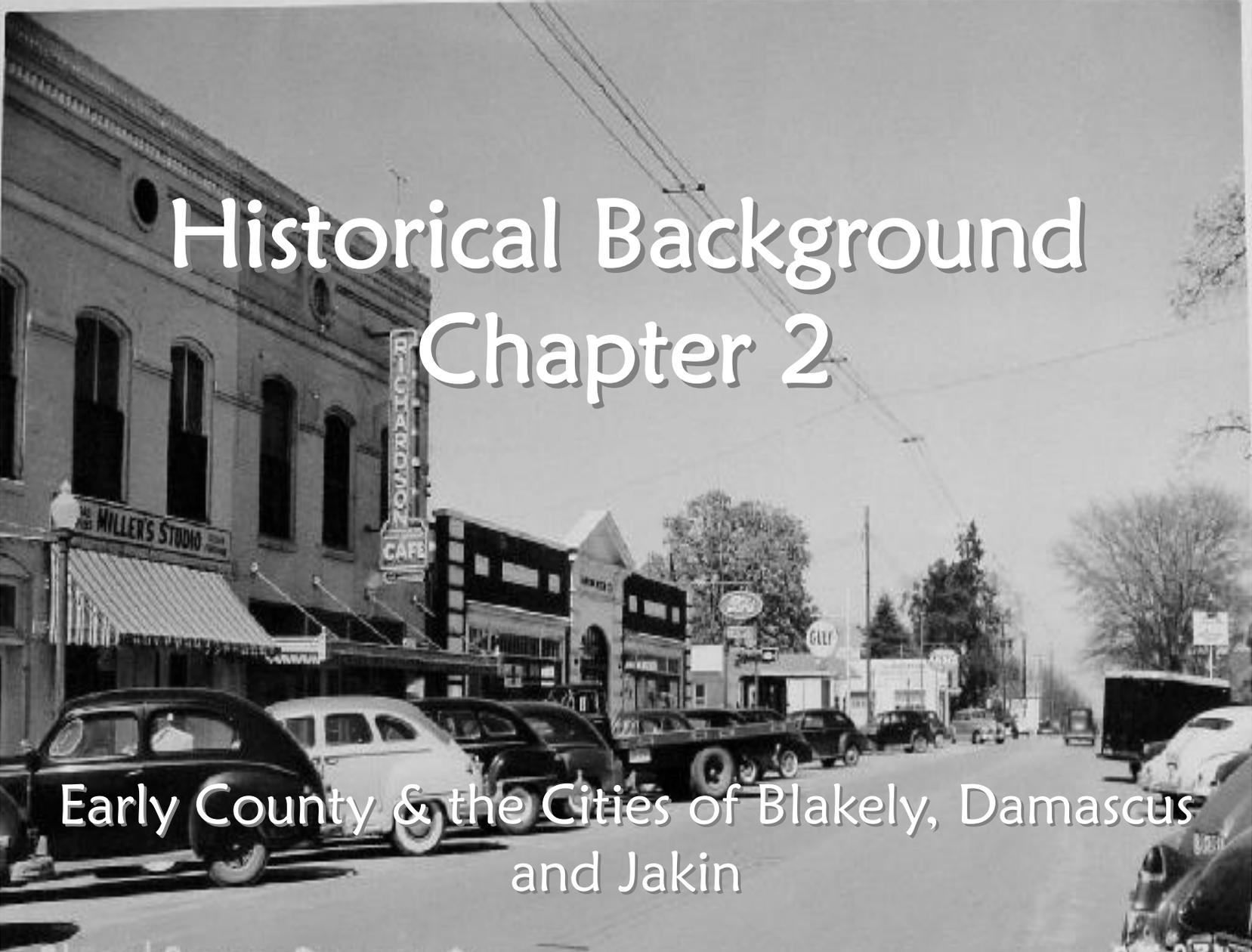
In addition to addressing the basic three planning steps, local governments are also responsible for ensuring adequate public participation in the comprehensive planning process. Therefore, in accordance with Georgia's Revised Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures, a joint public hearing was held on October 21, 2003 prior to the plan preparation by Early County and the cities of Blakely, Damascus, and Jakin. A second joint public hearing was held by these communities on February 09, 2004 to allow the public to review the plan.

To assure adequate public participation during the planning process, a committee structure was jointly organized

by the cities and the county. A main committee was also established to assist in the plan preparation. During the planning process, the committee relied on the assistance of elected officials and community leaders with expertise relating to the seven planning elements. Committee members worked with the RDC to develop the inventory and analysis portion of the plan, to assist with the development of the goals, objectives, and policies and to aid in the development of the five year work program for their communities.

Copies of the draft elements of the plan were made available during the planning process in public offices throughout the county. The county and cities also posted notices throughout the County Administration Building and the City Hall buildings to keep the public informed of the comprehensive planning process.





# Historical Background Chapter 2

Early County & the Cities of Blakely, Damascus  
and Jakin

# Historical Background

## A. History of Early County

**T**he territory of Southwest Georgia was first inhabited by the Creek and Appalachian Indians. By 1800, the Lower Creeks were the dominant tribe in this region and attacks on the early frontier settlements were frequent. In the War of 1812, Georgians found themselves fighting the natives rather than British Troops.

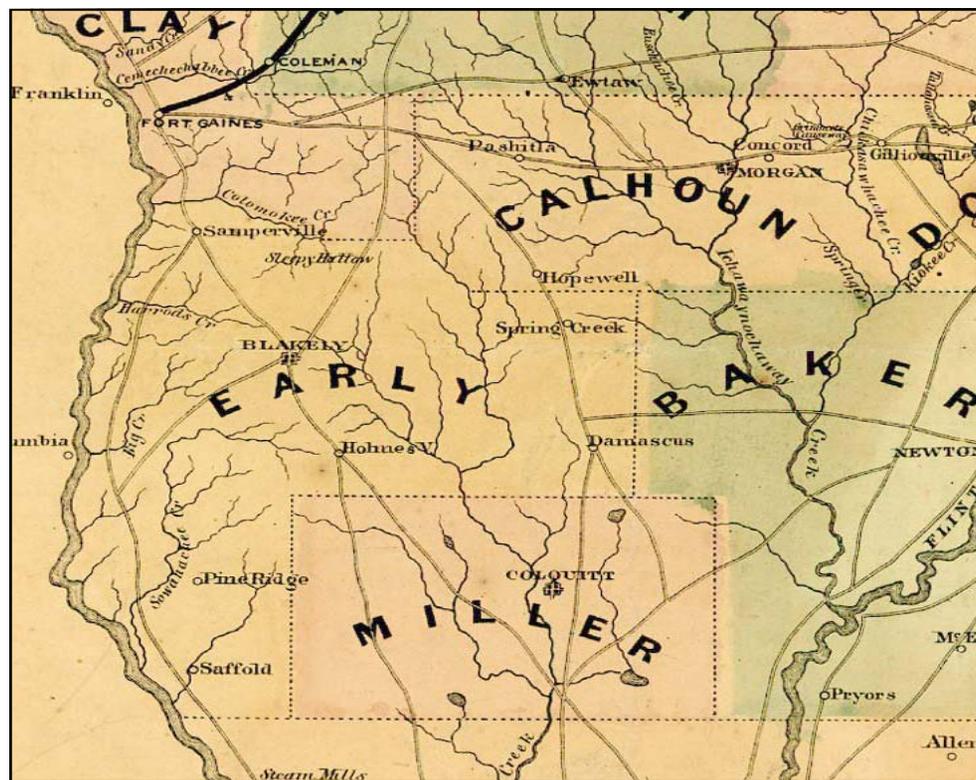
Following the massacre at Fort Mims in 1813, General Andrew Jackson decisively defeated the Indians at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend on the Tallahassee River in Alabama and in 1814, the Indians were forced to sign the Treaty of Fort Jackson ceding most of their lands to Alabama and southern Georgia. Although no official document exists to corroborate the route General Jackson followed on his way to Florida to fight the Seminoles in 1813 and 1818, it is strongly believed that he traveled the “Three Notch Trail” in Early County. This trail is believed to be matched with three notches by scouts of General Jackson’s troops on their way to Fort Scott. It was a wagon road for early settlers and one of the areas most important pioneer roads.

Gradually, the white settlers began to trickle down into the recently acquired territory. Surveyors came and laid out the county in 250-acre lots, except for partial lots along the river. Early County was distributed in the Georgia Land Lottery of 1820. A grant was presented to each fortunate drawer after he had paid a grant fee of \$18.00. If the fee was not paid by 1843, the land reverted back to the State.

When Baker County was formed out of the territory belonging to Early County in 1825, it became necessary to seek a new location for the courthouse and jail. A five-man commission board was appointed to select a new location and the present site of Blakely was chosen and named in honor of Captain Johnston Blakely of the United States Navy.

By 1844, cotton was at its lowest price, so planters, in desperation, began to experiment with new crops and agricultural societies were formed. The lack of adequate transportation facilities for other crops helped make cotton “king”. Cotton was easy to transport and would not spoil as corn and wheat were likely to do. Corn was the second major crop followed by rye, oats, sugar cane, wheat, rice, potatoes and a variety of vegetables and fruits.

As the period of the Civil War began, Early County, along with Baker County, was among the first to organize its companies and volunteer its services in behalf of the Confederacy. Food and other essential items became scarce and everyone had to be extremely conservative.



Early County, 1864

In 1818 the State Legislature divided the Creek session into three counties: Early, Irwin and Appling. By an Act in 1818 the Legislature created Early County, the fourteenth county in the State of Georgia. The county received its name from Peter Early, a native of Virginia, who served as Governor of Georgia from 1813 to 1815.

The territory originally included in Early County now embraces the counties of Decatur, Dougherty, Baker, Calhoun, Miller, Grady and Seminole and portions of Thomas, Clay, Mitchell and Colquitt Counties. In 1818, Early County contained 3,750 square miles, while the present Early County has 524.32 square miles.

County officers were elected following the 1819 session of the Legislature. The first Road Commissioners were appointed in 1820 to lay out a road from the Indian Boundary Line near Fort Gaines, to the Florida line.

Blakely remained primarily a market for farmers in the county and its economy was largely dependent upon the prices of farm products. The price of cotton, however, continued to remain very low and very little progress was evident in the agricultural arena. After 1894 diversification and improved farming techniques brought a gradual increase in the prosperity of the county.

Blakely was incorporated as the Town of Blakely in 1871. In 1890, an amendment to the Charter created and incorporated the City of Blakely. Through the years, the municipal authority has consisted of a mayor and four councilmen who formed the city council. In 1849, Blakely was described as having “twenty-five to thirty families, a courthouse, jail, two stores, two hotels and one church”. By 1889, however, there were one thousand people living in the city and a railroad was being extended to this area. Boats traveled the Chattahoochee River the year round from Columbus to Apalachicola. The downtown area of Blakely was greatly improved. As a result, the streets around the

courthouse square and the two main thoroughfares running north and south were paved. The first newspaper in Blakely was started in 1859 and although other papers began publication throughout this period, only the Early County News has survived.

In 1826, the Commissioners were appointed to “select a route for a road from the Early County Courthouse in Blakely to Porter’s Ferry on the Chattahoochee River”. From this, it is believed that the January 1827 term of court was held in Blakely, (apparently a public building had been established by that time). Records account for four courthouses located in Blakely since 1826. The first, a log building, was later sold for \$13.00. A frame building built in 1836 and 1837 at a cost of \$1,995, served as the second courthouse. The third, a colonial type building erected in 1857 and 1858, stood just on the east of the present courthouse. The present courthouse was built in 1901 at a cost of \$50,000 on land deeded to the county and is the public square on which the courthouse stands today.

Free schools were started in the county in 1873 and only operated three months out of the year. Prior to the opening of these schools, only private academies in Blakely, Damascus and Cedar Springs were available.

The lumber business and its related industries did much to improve the economic growth of the county. Sawmills, the planting of lumber, and naval stores brought many new people into this area and progress continued in Early County until 1929 when the stock market collapsed. The depression years created a shortage of money and times became difficult. Programs designed to aid people into recovery were initiated and along with other federally sponsored projects, the economy in Early County gradually improved.

In 1861, Saffold was only a country post office at a cross road less than a mile from the Chattahoochee River. It

was named for Adam G. Saffold of Morgan County, Georgia who, between 1826 and 1840, had brought much of the land in this area. In 1861, the Confederate States officially put the name of Saffold on the map by establishing a Navy Yard at or near Saffold to construct a gunboat for the protection of the Chattahoochee River against attacks by the Union Navy stationed at Pensacola, Florida. According to the contract, David S. Johnston was commissioned to construct the gunboat to be built upon the Chattahoochee River near Saffold.

Early in 1862, Johnston contracted with the Confederate States to build the gunboat “Chattahoochee” which was not completed and delivered to the Confederate Navy until December of that year. In 1863, it was almost destroyed when a boiler exploded, killing and injuring many crewmen on board. Johnston rebuilt the gunboat and it was put back into active duty in 1864. She was later sunk by her own crew to prevent capture by Union forces. A historical marker was placed at Saffold in 1961 to honor this event during the Civil War.

The Kolomoki State Park was established in Early County in 1938. During the 13th Century, Kolomoki, with its villages, burial grounds, temple mound and ceremonial plaza, was the largest ceremonial center in southern Georgia. Approximately two thousand Natives resided in the main village at that time. The seven mounds preserved within the park were built by the Kolomoki people who occupied the site until about the 13th century. The large sacrificial mound is 75 feet high and seven hundred feet around the bottom and is one of the largest in the United States. The other six mounds were used for ceremonies and as watchtowers. Later, during the 16th century, Indians of another culture who were descendants of historic tribes of this area, occupied part of the mound site.

Jakin is a small community located in the southern most part of the 26th land district of Early County and was incorporated in 1895. The Chattahoochee River lies west of the community with Seminole County bordering on the

south, Miller County on the east and Cedar Springs to the North. A former Major in the Confederate Army, J. Morris Bivings, gave the name of Jakin to the town. Although it was spelled differently, the name was derived from the biblical word “Jachin”.

White settlers began to move to the area of Jakin around 1817 and many of the river plantation families became large landowners. Slave labor and the level lowland with fertile sandy loam soil, produced hundreds of bales of cotton which were shipped to market on river barges or boats. In 1828, the first cotton gin was built in Early County at the landing which has been known as the Saffold Navy Yard since the Civil War.

The River Road was routed through Jakin as early as 1820 and became a post road by the mid 1820’s. In 1828, a road from Blakely to Bainbridge was constructed, passing just east of the site of Jakin. U.S. Highway 84 now extends across the lower southeast corner of Early County from the Chattahoochee River to Jakin.

One of the first churches established in Jakin was a Free Will Baptist Church which was also used as a free school until a schoolhouse was built a few years later. The land in Jakin belonged to the children of Alzono Minter who was said to be the first white child born in Early County.

The Duke and Bivings Lumber Company, the primary industry in Jakin, was purchased by the Flowers family and became the Flowers Lumber Company. Members of the Flowers family moved to Jakin, built nice homes and greatly aided in the growth and economy of the community. Their company supplied water service to all of Jakin in addition to building and maintaining a Methodist Church and schoolhouse. U.S. Highway 84 was built parallel to the railroad and Jakin became a thriving community. The lumber company closed its operations in 1918, a move which had a dis-

astrous effect on the economy of the area.

In the mid-1880s, the Pineland Railroad Company began construction crossing from Alabama at Saffold and running through the area to the Decatur County line. It later became the Alabama-Midland Railroad and still later was purchased by the Atlantic Coast line. Between 1945 and 1950, steam locomotives were replaced by diesel engines and much of the labor force in Jakin soon began to move away to seek employment in other cities. Row crops decreased, cattle raising increased and hundreds of poorly drained acres of land were planted in permanent pasture. Jakin has become a haven for retired persons and industrial workers who commute daily to Bainbridge, Blakely, Donalsonville or Cedar Springs.

Cedar Springs, named for a group of springs located east of the village, is one of the oldest communities in Early County. The first settlement in the community located at Green Old Mill Creek now known as Sheffield Mill Creek. This settlement later moved to Chambers Beach. The United Church was also established near Green Old Mill Creek and was moved to Chambers Beach as the people relocated. This church, now recognized as the Cedar Springs Free Will Baptist Church was built in 1878; the Methodist Church in 1885.

The Old Cedar Springs Academy, established in the 1880's or 1890's, was so popular and well known that two boarding houses were needed to accommodate out of town students. The Cedar Springs school was the first to transport children to and from school and a plaque was given to them from the State Board of Education in recognition of this achievement. The school burned in the 1930's, however, a consolidated school was built about this time and used until 1950 when all students were brought into the schools in Blakely. This unused consolidated school burned in

1968. Sheffield's Mill to the north and Howard's Mill on the south side of the community were favorite gathering places for swimming, fishing and buying meal.

Because of the size of the Cedar Springs area, it is surprising to find several large industries located here which greatly enhance the community's economy. The Georgia Pacific Company, which manufactures kraft liner board and semi-chemical corrugated board, employs over one thousand persons from within and around Cedar Springs and the tri-state area. The Georgia Tubing Company also with an impressive work force makes electrical metallic (conduit) tubing. Aluminum is also manufactured in Cedar Springs.

Damascus, earlier known as Kestler, was a prosperous settlement in Early County which was founded, prior to the Civil War. In 1880, the town included several large fashionable stores, a millinery shop, a two story school building, a Methodist Church, one hotel and two doctors. A railroad was completed through town in 1897 and about this time, a large sawmill operation moved into the settlement which spurred an increase in the town's size and population. A Baptist Church was established in 1901 and a Free Will Baptist Church was built. All three church buildings burned in 1828 but by the early 1930's, each had been rebuilt.

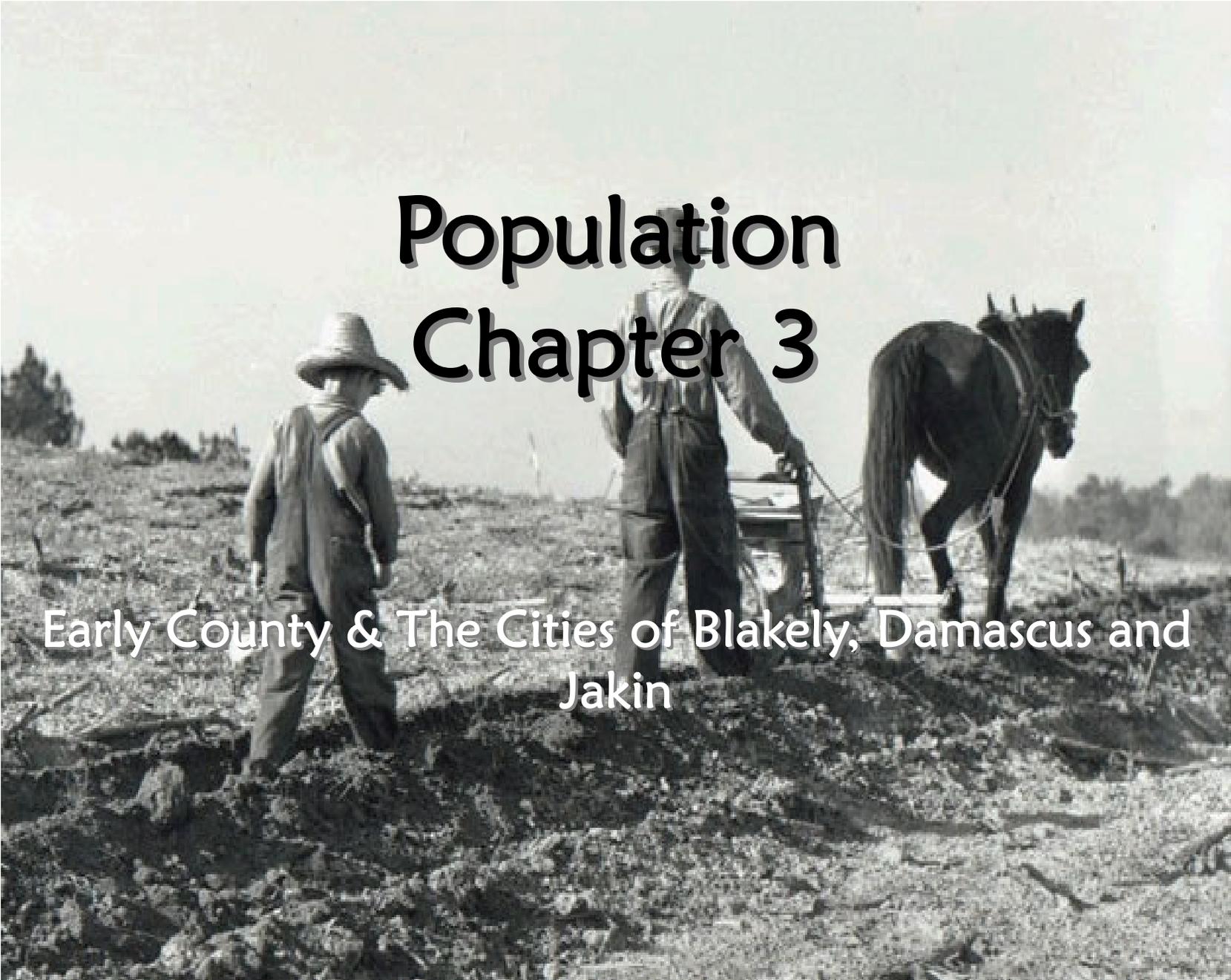
Damascus continued to grow during the 1900's. Cotton gins were built and sawmills continued to be a big operation; when the railroad was completed through the settlement in 1897, the name Damascus was placed on the sign at the depot. This created friction between the earlier settlers who preferred the name "Kestler" and the newer townspeople who liked "Damascus". Although the town's name was officially changed to Damascus in 1914, the older residents continued to call the town Kestler until 1920 when as a result of many fires and the following depression years,

the bank and other businesses closed and the town began to decline.

Agriculture in Early County has expanded through the years, moving from row crops to grasses to livestock. A good soil and water conservation program has aided in rebuilding the land and improved use of the water supply. The planting of pine trees has been a great stimulus to the economy, while the peanut has made such an impact on the county that a monument stands on the courthouse square in honor of the product. Some 3s4,000 acres are devoted to peanut crops.







# Population Chapter 3

Early County & The Cities of Blakely, Damascus and  
Jakin

# Population

## A. Introduction

**T**he basis for conducting a comprehensive land use planning effort is to gain an understanding of a community's past, present and projected population. Trends in population growth and the composition of the population affect the demand for public facilities and services, (including schools, police and fire protection, water and sanitary sewer treatment and recreation and cultural facilities). In addition, an analysis of local population trends assists the community in determining the adequacy of existing and future housing needs, and in identifying the type of employment opportunities and economic development programs needed to improve the quality of life.

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan examines population trends and the forces that influence population change. Most of the data utilized in this section was obtained from the U.S. Census and Woods & Poole Economics. Where applicable, historical data is analyzed for a twenty-year period at five-year intervals and projections are provided through the year 2025. Annual projections are included for the five years following plan development. These projections are utilized during the development of the work items outlined in the five-year work programs.

Since the demographic composition of a community affects its needs, population characteristics such as race, gender, age groupings, household size, incomes and educational levels are also examined. Regional, state and national

comparisons are made throughout this chapter (as required by the Minimum Planning Standards) to provide benchmarks for determining community needs. This in-depth analysis of Early County's population trends and characteristics is the basis for the development of community growth goals and management strategies. The tables for this element of the plan are located at the end of the chapter.

## B. National, State & Regional Growth Trends

Tables 3.0 and 3.1 display total population trends for the United States and the State of Georgia. Between 1990 and 2000, Georgia's population grew 26.3 percent. Over the last two censuses, a growth rate of 44.9 percent was reported in the state. According to the 2000 Census, Georgia was ranked the fourth fastest growing state in the United States. The majority of Georgia's population and economic growth occurred in the Atlanta metropolitan area, one of the country's largest and fastest growing metropolitan areas. Although this rapid growth has been very beneficial to the state, it has not been evenly dispersed. In contrast, many rural areas in Georgia have experienced contrary growth patterns and economic stagnation or decline.

TABLE 3.0: GEORGIA: TOTAL POPULATION TRENDS	
Category	Total
1980	5,484,440
1985	5,962,720
1990	6,506,530
1995	7,323,980
2000	8,229,820
2001	8,338,460
2002	8,449,130
2003	8,560,620
2004	8,670,510
2005	8,784,650
2006	8,895,580
2007	9,008,670
2008	9,122,070
2009	9,235,630
2010	9,349,660
2015	9,940,380
2020	10,550,700
2025	11,185,100

Source: Woods & Poole Economics.

Early County is located in the southwest Georgia region, an area situated in the extreme southwestern tip of

Georgia bordering northwest Florida and southeast Alabama. The area is comprised of fourteen counties including: 1) Baker, 2)Calhoun, 3)Colquitt, 4)Decatur, 5)Dougherty, 6)Early, 7)Grady, 8)Lee, 9)Miller, 10)Mitchell, 11)Seminole, 12) Terrell, 13)Thomas and 14)Worth County. Together, these very rural and agriculturally oriented counties encompass 5,942 square miles having 46 incorporated cities.

In 2000, Southwest Georgia region's population was 356,030. As such, it comprised 4.3 percent of Georgia's total population. Over the past twenty years, the region's population increased 12.3 percent. During the recent census an increase of 10 percent was recorded. Although there have been population increases throughout the region, it is still evident that since 1980, many of the region's counties have experienced long-term out migration attributed to the search for employment opportunities (Georgia County Guide).

Located within the region is the Albany/Dougherty MSA, the major growth and trade center of the region. Dougherty County's population ranks sixteenth in the state and has been the region's most urban and populous county since the 1960s. As the region's farm and rural population experienced decline in recent decades, Dougherty County absorbed many of the displaced and younger workers seeking employment opportunities. Industrial and economic development activities were strong between 1960 and 1975. Since that time, however, manufacturing growth in the in the area declined and is being replaced by growth in the commercial and service industries. Chronically high unemployment has burdened Dougherty County in recent years and presently the county is having difficulty providing sufficient job opportunities. As a result of these factors, the Dougherty County population declined 0.5 percent in the past decade to total 95,924 persons in 2000 (Georgia County Guide).

Also included in the Albany MSA is Lee County, the fastest growing county in the region, which recorded a population increase of 53.5 percent between 1990 and 2000. During this period, Lee County attracted many residents from the Albany-Dougherty County area. Worth County, the second fastest growing county in the region grew 13.0 percent during the same period (Woods & Poole Economics). Much of the growth in these counties is attributed to their proximity to Dougherty County economic opportunities, lower taxes, and lower land development costs (relative to Dougherty County) and the associated positive net migration figures. Within the region, Colquitt, Thomas and Grady Counties also experienced substantial increases in population between 1990 and 2000.

Excluding Dougherty County, the four most populous counties and important trade centers in the region include: Thomas County (42,737), Colquitt County (42,053), Decatur County (28,240), Lee County

<b>TABLE 3.1: UNITED STATES: TOTAL POPULATION TRENDS</b>	
<b>Category</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1980</b>	227,226,000
<b>1985</b>	237,925,000
<b>1990</b>	249,464,000
<b>1995</b>	266,086,000
<b>2000</b>	282,125,000
<b>2001</b>	284,844,000
<b>2002</b>	287,635,000
<b>2003</b>	290,459,000
<b>2004</b>	293,229,000
<b>2005</b>	296,135,000
<b>2006</b>	298,933,000
<b>2007</b>	301,819,000
<b>2008</b>	304,712,000
<b>2009</b>	307,603,000
<b>2010</b>	310,519,000
<b>2015</b>	325,767,000
<b>2020</b>	341,658,000
<b>2025</b>	358,301,000

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

(24,757) and Grady County (23,659). All of the remaining counties in the region have populations under 20,000, with the exception of Mitchell County, population 20,275 and Worth County, population 21,967. Of all the counties in the region, Calhoun, Colquitt, and Dougherty have experienced the largest population losses over the past 15 years.

TABLE 3.2: REGIONAL POPULATION TRENDS							
Place	1970	1990	2000	%Change 1970-80	%Change 1980-90	%Change 1970-90	%Change 1990-00
<b>SWGARegion</b>	286,490	321,102	352,930	12.3	0.2	12.1	10.0
<b>Baker</b>	3,815	3,643	4074	(3.7)	(5.1)	(4.5)	(3.2)
<b>Calhoun</b>	6502	5009	6320	(13.5)	(12.3)	(22.9)	(26.2)
<b>Colquitt</b>	32383	36670	42053	(9.9)	3.6	13.2	14.7
<b>Decatur</b>	22371	25574	28240	(14.3)	0.1	14.3	10.4
<b>Dougherty</b>	90348	96505	96065	12.4	(4.4)	6.8	(0.5)
<b>Early</b>	12700	11885	12354	3.8	(9.9)	(6.4)	3.9
<b>Grady</b>	17789	20314	23659	13.3	2.2	14.2	16.5
<b>Lee</b>	7102	16346	24757	65.9	39.1	133.5	53.5
<b>Miller</b>	6389	6292	6383	10.0	(10.8)	(3.5)	3.4
<b>Mitchell</b>	18948	20309	23982	13.4	(0.4)	7.2	15.3
<b>Seminole</b>	7135	9028	9369	28.3	(0.5)	26.6	3.8
<b>Terrell</b>	11368	10655	10970	5.3	(13.4)	(6.5)	3.0
<b>Thomas</b>	34733	39065	42737	10.4	2.3	12.5	9.4
<b>Worth</b>	14907	19807	21967	23.6	9.3	32.9	13.0

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Table 3.2 displays regional growth trends since 1970. The table indicates that the majority of the counties within the region have experienced population increases. Net migration is the increase in the total population minus the natural increase. The natural increase is the total births minus deaths. Net migration reveals the absolute number of residents entering or exiting the county, which allows one to see the true rate of population growth in a county. Net migration for the region and Early County was low in the 1970-1980s but the region increased significantly between 1980 and 2000.

Between 1980 and 2000 the region achieved an overall positive growth rate of 12.3 percent. At the state level, growth has been strong. During the past two decades, the state has recorded a 44.9 percent growth rate. By comparison, Early County experienced a decline of 6.5 percent during the same period. **Table 3.3** compares Early County population trends to adjoining counties, the state and nation.

### C. Early County Total Population Growth Trends

Early County is located in a very rural and agriculturally oriented area of the Southwest Georgia region. It is concealed from the influences of major growth areas in the region including the suburban development radiating out from the Albany trade center and the Tallahassee, Leon County, Florida area. Early County is without access to major interstate highways, as is the remainder of the region. Early County ranked as the state's 112th most populous county and the southwest region's 9th most populous county in 2000.

<b>TABLE 3.3: POPULATION TREND COMPARISON</b>						
<b>Place</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>% Change 1980-90</b>	<b>% Change 1990-00</b>	<b>% Change 1980-00</b>
<b>United States</b>	224,810,192	248,032,624	281,421,920	10.3	13.5	25.2
<b>Georgia</b>	5,457,566	6,478,216	8,186,453	18.7	26.4	50.0
<b>SWGA Region</b>	321,799	321,102	352,930	(0.2)	9.9	9.7
<b>Early</b>	13,158	11,884	12,354	(9.7)	4.0	(6.1)
<b>Blakely</b>	5,880	5,595	5,696	(4.8)	1.8	(3.1)
<b>Damascus</b>	403	297	277	(26.3)	(6.7)	(31.3)
<b>Jakin</b>	194	122	157	(37.1)	28.7	(19.1)

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

TABLE 3.4: EARLY COUNTY: TOTAL POPULATION TRENDS	
Category	Total
1980	13,144
1985	12,740
1990	11,854
1995	12,291
2000	12,362
2001	12,363
2002	12,363
2003	12,382
2004	12,382
2005	12,405
2006	12,426
2007	12,448
2008	12,473
2009	12,497
2010	12,511
2015	12,554
2020	12,635
2025	12,778

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

As indicated in **Table 3.4**, Early County population trends are generally similar to the regional trends and seem to reflect common economic influences including the reduced farm labor needs and consequent migration to urban areas in search of employment opportunities, the high unemployment of the 1980's indicated a decline in the base employment opportunities which influence total population. The area also has had a depressed economy since the mid-80s because of bad agricultural years due to drought and low market prices. The population trends reflected in **Tables 3.4 a-c** also reflect this trend.

Early County's population grew steadily through the early 1900s, peaking in 1940 at 18,273 and then declined each census period until 1980. The 1980 population increase was followed by another decline in the 1990 census. Throughout the two most recent decades, the southwest Georgia region, Early County and its cities experienced similar population growth patterns with increases in the 1980s followed by declines in the 1990s. A 3.8 percent increase in the population of the county occurred between 1970 and 1980, which was followed by a decline of 9.9

percent in the subsequent census period (Southwest Georgia Regional Plan). Consequently, between 1970 and 1990, the rate of population change was a negative 6.5 percent. Early County's total population in 1990 was 11,854 of which 46.5 percent was attributed to the unincorporated areas. The unincorporated county has steadily lost population since 1930. In more recent years, however, Early County has experienced small increases in population. The

3.4a Blakely city: Total Population							
Category	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2020	2025
<b>TOTAL Population</b>	5880	5595	5696	5716	5765	6004	6021
Source: US Census Bureau							

2000 Census indicated there was a positive population increase of 4.4 percent for Early County between 1990-2000.

## D. Population Characteristics

An inventory and analysis of Early County population characteristics (including age, gender, race, educational

3.4b Damascus town: Total Population							
Category	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2020	2025
<b>TOTAL Population</b>	403	297	277	278	280	283	285
Source: US Census Bureau							

levels, households, and income) is composed to determine the affect on local demand for public facilities, services, employment opportunities, economic development needs and housing.

## 1. Racial Composition

3.4c Jakin town: Total Population							
Category	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2020	2025
<b>TOTAL Population</b>	194	122	157	158	159	159	162
Source: US Census Bureau							

An examination of a community's racial distribution provides a glimpse of the ethnic and cultural diversity of its population. According

to the 2000 census, African Americans accounted for 12.9 percent of the nation's total population and comprised 29.2 percent of Georgia's population (Census 2000). With this relatively high percentage, Georgia ranked fourth in the nation with regard to the highest percentage of African Americans. The legacy of slavery in the southern states and the plantation agriculture system left large concentrations of Black or African-Americans in the state and particularly in the Southwest Georgia region.

In 2000, Colquitt and Lee Counties were the only counties in the region to record rates of African Americans below the state average. In Early County, each community with the exception of Jakin had larger percentage of Black or African-Americans than the state average. According to the 2000 census, the southwest Georgia region's racial split was 55 percent White, 42 percent African-American and 3 percent other (e.g., Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American) (Region 10 Housing Profile). An examination of regional census period trends indicates that the proportion of White residents has increased slightly over the past twenty years. However, in 2000, Early County and each of its

communities show an average percentage of African-Americans in comparison to the surrounding region. However, a higher percentage of Black or Afri-

TABLE 3.5: EARLY COUNTY RACIAL COMPOSITION										
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
White Population	NA	NA	6,566	6,496	6,234	6,068	5,908	5,691	5,514	5,385
Black Population	NA	NA	5,196	5,583	5,923	6,094	6,313	6,514	6,741	6,964
Native American	NA	NA	31	52	23	24	25	31	20	20
Asian & Pacific Islander	NA	NA	16	44	30	32	38	40	43	47
Hispanic, any Race	130	151	45	116	152	187	227	278	317	362

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

<b>3.5a Blakely city: Racial Composition</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>TOTAL Population</b>	5880	5595	5696
<b>White</b>	3392	2821	2184
<b>Black</b>	2480	2758	3416
<b>American Indian Eskimo or Aleut</b>	0	16	11
<b>Asian or Pacific Islander</b>	7	0	25
<b>Other</b>	1	0	23
<b>Persons of Hispanic Origin</b>	100	87	88
Source: US Census Bureau			

can-Americans are located in Early County in comparison to the State of Georgia.

In 2000, Colquitt and Lee Counties were the only counties in the region to record rates of African Americans below the state average. In Early County, each community with the exception of Jakin had larger percentage of Black or African-Americans than the state average. According to the 2000 census, the southwest Georgia region's racial split was 55 percent White, 42 percent African-American and 3 percent other (e.g., Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American) (Region 10 Housing Profile). An examination of regional census period trends indicates that the proportion of White residents has increased slightly over the past twenty years. However, in 2000, Early County and each of its communities show an average percentage of African-Americans in comparison to the surrounding region. However, a higher percentage of Black or African-Americans are located in Early County in comparison to the State of Georgia.

**Table 3.5** depicts Early County's population by racial composition from 1980 to 2025 based on current trends. Over the past twenty years, Early County's racial characteristics have changed very little. The only changes have included slight increases in the percentage of the White popu-

<b>3.5b Damascus town: Racial Composition</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>TOTAL Population</b>	403	297	277
<b>White</b>	164	113	100
<b>Black</b>	239	182	176
<b>American Indian Eskimo or Aleut</b>	0	2	0
<b>Asian or Pacific Islander</b>	0	0	0
<b>Other</b>	0	0	0
<b>Persons of Hispanic Origin</b>	8	0	0
Source: US Census Bureau			

3.5c Jakin town: Racial Composition			
Category	1980	1990	2000
TOTAL Population	194	122	157
White	181	117	111
Black	13	5	44
American Indian Eskimo or Aleut	0	0	0
Asian or Pacific Islander	0	0	0
Other	0	0	2
Hispanic	0	0	2

Source: US Census Bureau

lation and slight increases in the percentage of the "other" racial categories. According to the latest census, Early County's population was 50.43 percent White, 47.91 percent African-American, 3.23 percent Hispanic and 0.24 percent Asian & Pacific Islander.

Persons of Hispanic origin may belong to any race. Early County has traditionally recorded

a very small Hispanic population and has shown no significant growth in this area. Many of the other agricultural communities in the region have experienced growth in this population through the development of a greater Hispanic farm laborer population. In fact, over the past 10 years, the Hispanic population in region 10 grew by about 127 percent, while it grew by about 300 percent statewide.

As shown in **Table 3.5**, Early County will be moving toward a greater racial parity by the year 2025 with the increase in the percentage of African-Americans to 49.5 percent. While the percentage of "other" is forecast to remain fairly stable, the number of Hispanics is expected to more than triple. Nonetheless, Hispanics will remain a very small sector of the population. **Tables 3.5 a through c** show the racial demographics of the cities.

### Age Distribution

**Table 3.6** depicts the historical and projected population by age classifications for Early County (this same in-

formation is shown in percent-age format in Table 3.7). Tables 3.6 a through c show this data for the municipalities. The projections were developed by Woods & Poole Economics. There are two significant trends that include a decline in the youngest age groupings and an increase in the aging population.

Generally, the 0 to 19 cohorts have declined in Early County. However both the 20-29 and the 50+ age groups have increased and show that there will be a significant increase in the years within the planning horizon. The combined percentages between 2000 and 2010 indicate a 6.8 percent increase in the 50- plus population in Early County.

3.6 Early County: Age Distribution										
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>Total</b>	13,144	12,740	11,854	12,291	12,362	12,405	12,511	12,554	12,635	12,778
<b>Age 0 to 4</b>	1,127	1,049	935	928	877	759	797	829	817	811
<b>Age 5 to 9</b>	1,219	1,084	974	980	969	900	788	821	844	845
<b>Age 10 to 14</b>	1,344	1,189	1,051	1,073	1,071	937	885	770	793	829
<b>Age 15 to 19</b>	1,292	1,100	924	918	952	1,034	912	854	739	769
<b>Age 20 to 24</b>	974	925	734	751	643	898	959	824	786	688
<b>Age 25 to 29</b>	883	879	747	664	698	655	884	934	820	795
<b>Age 30 to 34</b>	807	837	812	795	738	719	676	901	964	850
<b>Age 35 to 39</b>	693	814	853	972	845	744	724	671	908	966
<b>Age 40 to 44</b>	631	662	731	823	922	828	726	698	652	892
<b>Age 45 to 49</b>	620	586	592	680	799	928	831	718	698	652
<b>Age 50 to 54</b>	589	547	554	639	703	809	931	826	720	703
<b>Age 55 to 59</b>	608	598	540	571	618	671	768	881	787	685
<b>Age 60 to 64</b>	611	610	529	552	580	589	639	722	840	754
<b>Age 65 to 69</b>	610	563	509	496	510	535	550	591	676	791
<b>Age 70 to 74</b>	500	500	469	458	449	437	457	478	514	589
<b>Age 75 to 79</b>	324	390	425	427	392	362	356	379	397	432
<b>Age 80 to 84</b>	191	237	267	311	309	277	264	273	288	314
<b>Age 85 &amp; Over</b>	121	170	208	253	287	323	364	384	392	413

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

This aging trend is reflected in the growing median age of the county, region and state. The median age in

Early County increased from 33.5 in 1990 to 36.34 in 2000. Between 1980 and 2000, the statewide population median age increased from 28.7 in 1980 to 33.38 in 2000. Such trends are expected to continue as medical technology continues to reduce infant mortality, prolong life expectancy, and the "Baby Boomers" continue to age.

Most significantly, the population in Early County is becoming older and older. By the year 2020, 15.92 percent of Early County's population is projected to be in the elderly category. Based on the 2000 Census, within the City of Blakely, the City of Damascus and the City of Jakin, this percentage is projected to be 16.4, 13.9 and 17.9 percent of the total population. These projections have many implications for the future of Early County. Primarily, these include the need for health and social services responsive to an elderly population. In addition, the special transportation and housing needs of this population will be raised. Throughout the planning horizon, the county must contend with the out migration of talented younger generations who are in search of employment opportunities. The result will be a potential loss of interest in employment in the traditional agricultural sector.

Similar aging trends are observed in the region, state and nation. Every county in southwest Georgia, with the exception of Lee County (which is experiencing a large influx of younger families with school age children), has a higher percentage of elderly residents than the state average of 9.8 percent. Early, Miller and Seminole counties have percentages of elderly over 15 percent. And similarly, the persistent out-migration of younger generations has been occurring in the region since 1940. Estimates indicate that about 12 percent of Southwest Georgia's (Region 10) population is 65 or older (Region 10 Housing Profile). The implications of such trends have far reaching social and eco-

<b>TABLE 3.8: EARLY COUNTY NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS</b>										
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Total</b>	4,337	4,273	4,289	4,506	4,705	4,785	4,849	4,897	4,912	4,902
Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.										

conomic effects.  
This growing  
elderly popula-  
tion will de-

TABLE 3.9: GEORGIA NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS										
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>Total</b>	1,886,550	2,124,630	2,380,830	2,684,490	3,022,410	3,265,030	3,501,380	3,727,580	3,929,140	4,108,410
Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.										

velop specialized needs in the areas of health care, housing, financial assistance, estate planning and recreation facilities.

TABLE 3.10: EARLY COUNTY AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE										
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>Persons per Household</b>	3.010	2.950	2.720	2.680	2.570	2.530	2.520	2.500	2.500	2.520
Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.										

### 3. Households

The primary source of demand for many public services

and facilities including fire protection, garbage collection, and water and sewer systems is the household. Accordingly, an analysis of local household growth trends is necessary in the comprehensive planning process. The examination of these trends can also help determine the amount and kind of housing likely to be needed in the community's future. **Tables 3.8** and **3.9** contain past and projected trends in household numbers for the State of Georgia and Early County.

Accompanying  
the high rates of  
population growth  
across the State of

TABLE 3.11: GEORGIA AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE										
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>Persons per Household</b>	2.830	2.730	2.660	2.650	2.650	2.610	2.590	2.590	2.600	2.630
Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.										

Georgia, the number of households increased in Georgia by 23.2 percent between 1990 and 2000. According to Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., there were 4,705 households in Early County in 2000. Between 1980 and 2000 the county experienced a significant increase of 368 households (a 7.8 percent change). The number of households in the City of Blakely increased by 3.0 percent from 1980 to total 2083 households in 2000. Blakely households represent 44.2 percent of all households in the county. In contrast, the number of households in the smaller City of Damascus decreased from 102 in 1990 to 82 in 2000. Jakin increased only slightly between 1980 and 2000. Combined the two smaller cities of Early County represented a 3.1 percent share of the county's total households. Households in the Unincorporated areas comprised the remaining 52.5 percent of the county's total households.

Household growth in Georgia is projected to continue to increase, at a rate similar to the previous two decades of growth. In the following decades, Georgia households are projected to increase by 60.2 percent. Household growth is expected in the following two decades for Early County and the City of Blakely. By the year 2025, the number of households in the county is projected to increase by 4.0 percent to a total of 4,902 households. Within the City of Blakely, a projected increase of 37.2 percent is projected to bring the total number of households to 2,674. The number of households in the City of Damascus is projected to total 139 in the Year 2013, representing an increase of 29.9 percent. In contrast, the number of households in the City of Jakin is projected to decline to a low total of 42 in the twenty-year period. This represents a loss of 20 households or 32.3 percent.

National trends indicate that average household size has been on the decline for many years. **Table 3.10** indicates that Early County's average household size in 2000 was 2.57, slightly lower than the state average household size of 2.65, but was declining at a slightly faster rate. Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. projections as shown in **Tables 3.10** and **3.11** indicate that the average household size in Early County and the state are projected to continue to de-

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cline through the year 2020.

Today, a very important consideration is the composition of the households in a community. Of the 3,294 total households in Early County in 2000, 3246 or 98.5 percent were considered family households. Approximately 64.2 percent of the total households were married couples or two parent households, 29.7 percent were single parent (female, no husband) householder families and 6.1 percent were single non-family households (Georgia County Guide).

Single parent households are more likely to require financial assistance than two parent households (as discussed in the income portion of this chapter). This is particularly true in the case of single female-headed households, since females generally have lower average incomes.

#### 4. Income

TABLE 3.12: EARLY COUNTY PER CAPITA INCOME										
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Income per Capita (1996 \$)	\$10,228	\$13,078	\$15,607	\$17,411	\$18,187	\$19,003	\$19,838	\$20,907	\$22,057	\$23,253
Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.										

Historic and projected income trends for Early County and the state of Georgia are contained in **Tables 3.15** and **3.16**. This data was obtained from the U.S. Census reports for the corresponding decades. All projections were made by Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. The provided income projections should be used with caution, as there are

TABLE 3.13: GEORGIA PER CAPITA INCOME										
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Income per Capita (1996 \$)	\$15,353	\$18,512	\$20,715	\$22,287	\$25,433	\$26,975	\$28,549	\$30,141	\$31,767	\$33,413

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

so many dynamic variables affecting the pro-

jections which can be altered daily including unemployment rates, inflation, major business closings or openings and population migration.

### A. Per Capita Income

Per capita income is the total personal income of an area divided by the resident population. It is an indicator of the quality of consumer markets and an area's economic well-being. Two factors that may significantly affect the measure are the presence of a large elderly population on a fixed income and a large number of persons under the age 16. Due to the county's large elderly population, the measure should be utilized with caution in Early County.

Per capita incomes for Early County, Region 10 and the State of Georgia are depicted in **Tables 3.12, 3.13, 3.14** based on Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. These tables indicate that the wages and incomes in the county and region are far lower than those across the state and nation.

The national per capita income has historically outpaced the per capita income in the State of Georgia. In recent years, no county in the southwest Georgia region has recorded a per capita income greater than the state average. Undoubtedly, the region's per capita income is influenced by the large elderly composition of the population, the

dominance of low wage and low skill enterprises and the low level of educational attainment in the area.

According to the 2000 census, Early County's 2000 per capita income based on 1987 constant dollars was \$12,843 (73.6 percent of the state average). By comparison, the region's average per capita income based on 1987 constant dollars was \$12,649. Georgia's per capita income was \$16,550 and the nation's per capita income was \$17,999. Between 1980 and 2000, the per capita income in Early County grew approximately 44 percent compared to a 60.2 percent growth rate of the state per capita average.

TABLE 3.14 PER CAPITA INCOME 1970-2010 in 1987 CONSTANT DOLLARS						
	1970	1980	1990	1995	2000	2010
<b>Nation</b>	11,359	13,925	16,223	17,011	17,799	21,090
<b>State</b>	9,476	11,730	14,850	15,052	16,550	19,809
<b>Region</b>	7,503	9,240	11,798	12,223	12,649	14,956
Baker	6,051	6,953	11,699	12,413	13,128	15,543
Calhoun	5,757	6,949	11,092	11,425	11,758	14,185
Colquitt	7,857	9,420	12,145	12,511	12,877	15,319
Decatur	6,493	8,599	11,712	11,996	12,281	14,638
Dougherty	8,105	10,638	12,755	13,131	13,507	16,027
Early	6,540	7,858	11,208	12,025	12,843	15,611
Grady	6,828	7,803	10,916	11,523	12,148	14,388
Lee	7,058	9,827	11,637	11,836	12,036	13,698
Miller	6,796	6,829	10,327	10,846	11,366	13,313
Mitchell	7,307	8,133	10,054	10,476	10,899	12,989
Seminole	7,458	7,932	10,374	10,980	11,586	13,599
Terrell	6,456	6,637	9,420	10,091	10,762	13,018
Thomas	8,350	10,168	12,979	13,673	14,368	17,073
Worth	6,968	8,049	10,054	10,065	10,076	11,368
Source: CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy-Region 10)						

## B. Household Incomes

Tables 3.15 and 3.16 provide information on average household income for Early County and the State of Georgia in

TABLE 3.15: EARLY COUNTY AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME										
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>Mean Household Income (Current \$)</b>	NA	NA	\$18,760	\$21,090	\$23,957	\$26,902	\$29,822	\$32,748	\$35,687	\$38,588
Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.										

current dol-  
lars. As was

Category	1980	1990	2000
<b>TOTAL Households</b>	4303	4301	4703
<b>Income less than \$5000</b>	1114	711	NA
<b>Income \$5000 - \$9999</b>	1032	736	943
<b>Income \$10000 - \$14999</b>	579	562	552
<b>Income \$15000 - \$19999</b>	547	487	526
<b>Income \$20000 - \$29999</b>	357	615	596
<b>Income \$30000 - \$34999</b>	230	228	325
<b>Income \$35000 - \$39999</b>	140	211	291
<b>Income \$40000 - \$49999</b>	116	288	321
<b>Income \$50000 - \$59999</b>	43	248	306
<b>Income \$60000 - \$74999</b>	37	126	291
<b>Income \$75000 - \$99999</b>	77	43	275
<b>Income \$100000 or more</b>	35	46	277

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

County is expected to increase by 62.1 percent to total \$38,588. This increase is projected to close in proportion to the gap between the county and state income figures. The state average household income is projected to increase to \$59,049, which is a rate of 28.6 percent. By the year 2025, the county's average household income is projected to be 65.4 percent of the state average.

expected, the average household income in Early County was smaller than the state and national figures. The Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. figures indicate that Early County's average household income was \$23,957 significantly lower when compared to the average of \$42,158 across the State of Georgia. The Early County income represents 57 percent of the state average.

By the year 2025, the average household income in Early

Category	1980	1990	2000
<b>TOTAL Households</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>Income less than \$5000</b>	25.89%	16.53%	NA
<b>Income \$5000 - \$9999</b>	23.98%	17.11%	20.05%
<b>Income \$10000 - \$14999</b>	13.46%	13.07%	13.74%
<b>Income \$15000 - \$19999</b>	12.71%	13.32%	13.18%
<b>Income \$20000 - \$29999</b>	8.30%	14.30%	12.67%
<b>Income \$30000 - \$34999</b>	5.35%	5.30%	6.91%
<b>Income \$35000 - \$39999</b>	3.25%	4.91%	6.19%
<b>Income \$40000 - \$49999</b>	2.70%	6.70%	6.83%
<b>Income \$50000 - \$59999</b>	3.00%	5.77%	6.51%
<b>Income \$60000 - \$74999</b>	0.86%	2.93%	6.19%
<b>Income \$75000 - \$99999</b>	3.79%	3.00%	5.85%
<b>Income \$100000 or more</b>	0.81%	3.07%	5.89%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

<b>TABLE 3.19: GEORGIA HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>TOTAL Households</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>Income less than \$5000</b>	16.20%	7.90%	NA
<b>Income \$5000 - \$9999</b>	17.10%	8.87%	10.13%
<b>Income \$10000 - \$14999</b>	16.28%	8.62%	5.85%
<b>Income \$15000 - \$19999</b>	14.19%	8.87%	5.91%
<b>Income \$20000 - \$29999</b>	13.53%	17.13%	12.74%
<b>Income \$30000 - \$34999</b>	8.23%	7.90%	6.22%
<b>Income \$35000 - \$39999</b>	5.53%	6.77%	5.87%
<b>Income \$40000 - \$49999</b>	3.36%	13.03%	10.85%
<b>Income \$50000 - \$59999</b>	2.04%	7.61%	9.24%
<b>Income \$60000 - \$74999</b>	3.47%	6.85%	10.48%
<b>Income \$75000 - \$99999</b>	2.57%	4.63%	10.36%
<b>Income \$100000 or more</b>	3.52%	3.81%	12.34%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Early County, and the cities of Blakely and Damascus have incomes below \$10,000. Overall, in Early County, 34 percent of households have incomes of less than \$15,000 and 24.5 percent of the households make incomes greater than \$50,000. Consequently, the effective buying income of Early County residents will not lend itself to high retail sales revenues. The low incomes in the county and its cities may also represent a signifi-

### C. Household Dollar Income Categories

Tables 3.17 and 3.19 provide information on household income distribution for the state of Georgia and Early County. Tables 3.20 through 3.21 reflect this information for the cities. Approximately 8 percent of the households in

<b>3.20 Blakely City: Household Income Distribution</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>TOTAL Households</b>	1950	1957	2083
<b>Income less than \$5000</b>	537	372	NA
<b>Income \$5000 - \$9999</b>	497	357	524
<b>Income \$10000 - \$14999</b>	273	264	283
<b>Income \$15000 - \$19999</b>	271	197	227
<b>Income \$20000 - \$29999</b>	144	220	314
<b>Income \$30000 - \$34999</b>	103	112	147
<b>Income \$35000 - \$39999</b>	61	88	70
<b>Income \$40000 - \$49999</b>	49	149	114
<b>Income \$50000 - \$59999</b>	17	101	146
<b>Income \$60000 - \$74999</b>	17	59	86
<b>Income \$75000 - \$99999</b>	37	12	100
<b>Income \$100000 or more</b>	16	26	72

<b>3.21 Damascus town: Household Income Distribution</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>TOTAL Households</b>	132	102	82
<b>Income less than \$5000</b>	23	22	NA
<b>Income \$5000 - \$9999</b>	21	15	21
<b>Income \$10000 - \$14999</b>	13	12	0
<b>Income \$15000 - \$19999</b>	10	13	15
<b>Income \$20000 - \$29999</b>	8	10	11
<b>Income \$30000 - \$34999</b>	4	6	6
<b>Income \$35000 - \$39999</b>	3	8	5
<b>Income \$40000 - \$49999</b>	2	7	9
<b>Income \$50000 - \$59999</b>	1	4	5
<b>Income \$60000 - \$74999</b>	1	0	0
<b>Income \$75000 - \$99999</b>	1	2	6
<b>Income \$100000 or more</b>	1	3	4
Source: US Census Bureau			

effectiveness of the public education system. In addition, educational attainment is closely linked with income potential and the need for special supportive services. Generally, communities with low educational attainment have lower income rates and higher levels of mortality and illness.

Historically, the southwest Georgia region has had lower educational levels than the State of Georgia as a whole. Only two counties in the region,

cant obstacle in the community's ability to raise the tax revenues necessary for capital improvements and the provision of services. The same information is provided for Early County in percentage format on **Table 3.18**.

## 5. Educational Attainment Levels

The educational level in a community plays a major role in its social and economic development. An examination of education levels is important when assessing the adequacy of the labor force and its ability to meet existing and future employment needs. Education levels can also be used as a basic measure of the

<b>3.22 Jakin town: Household Income Distribution</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>TOTAL Households</b>	75	56	66
<b>Income less than \$5000</b>	12	10	NA
<b>Income \$5000 - \$9999</b>	11	7	26
<b>Income \$10000 - \$14999</b>	6	7	5
<b>Income \$15000 - \$19999</b>	6	8	4
<b>Income \$20000 - \$29999</b>	6	6	3
<b>Income \$30000 - \$34999</b>	3	4	1
<b>Income \$35000 - \$39999</b>	2	2	2
<b>Income \$40000 - \$49999</b>	2	0	8
<b>Income \$50000 - \$59999</b>	1	2	9
<b>Income \$60000 - \$74999</b>	0	5	3
<b>Income \$75000 - \$99999</b>	1	3	3
<b>Income \$100000 or more</b>	0	2	2
Source: US Census Bureau			

<b>Table 3.23: Early County Education Statistics</b>							
<b>Category</b>	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
<b>H.S. Graduation Test Scores (All Components)</b>	74%	77%	63%	54%	50%	60%	65%
<b>H.S. Dropout Rate</b>	13.4%	7%	4.8%	2.5%	3.6%	3.2%	2.7%
<b>Grads Attending Georgia Public Colleges</b>	20.3%	33.9%	30.8%	30.1%	28.5%	NA	NA
<b>Grads Attending Georgia Public Technical Schools</b>	NA	7.2%	9.8%	9%	14.5%	14.2%	NA
Source: Georgia Department of Education							

Dougherty and Lee, had less than 50 percent of their population without a high school education in 1990. The major contributing factors to the low educational levels in the agricultural region include high concentrations of elderly persons (who may not have found it as necessary

to complete higher levels of education), large out-migrations of younger better-educated workers in search of employment, and the status of poverty within the area.

Tables 3.23 and 3.24 depict education statistics for Early County and the state of Georgia. Of particular interest is the state drop out rate, which decreased from 9.76% in 1995 to 6.5 percent in 2000. In Early County, the dropout

<b>TABLE 3.24: GEORGIA EDUCATION STATISTICS</b>							
<b>Category</b>	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
<b>H.S. Graduation Test Scores (All Components)</b>	82%	76%	67%	68%	66%	68%	65%
<b>H.S. Dropout Rate</b>	9.26%	8.60%	7.30%	6.50%	6.50%	6.50%	6.40%
<b>Grads Attending Georgia Public Colleges</b>	35.0%	30.0%	30.2%	38.8%	37.5%	37.3%	36.1%
<b>Grads Attending Georgia Public Technical Schools</b>	5.4%	6.2%	7.1%	6.5%	6.4%	7.4%	8.8%
Source: Georgia Department of Education							

rate has decreased from 13.4 percent in 1995 to 3.2 percent in 2000. This decline of more than 10% is three times that made on the state level. This significant change is a result of many factors and further study is necessary to determine specific causes and strategies to pursue.

Tables 3.25 and 3.26 provide information on educational attainment levels of adults (ages 25 years and older) for Early County and the State of

Georgia between the years 1980 and 2000. Analysis of this table indicates that significant efforts have been made in educational attainment during the 20-year period. Between 1970 and 1980, the percentage of Early County adults,

age 25 and older, without high school diplomas declined from 63.2 to 31 percent. In this period, the state percentage declined from 56.4 to 23.4 percent. Tables 3.30 through 3.32 show this information for the cities.

The counties adjacent to Early County include Baker, Calhoun, Clay, Miller and Seminole Counties. Many of these counties have the similar problems with low educational at-

TABLE 3.25: EARLY COUNTY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT			
Category	1980	1990	2000
<b>TOTAL Adult Population 25 &amp; Over</b>	7183	7202	7872
<b>Less than 9th Grade</b>	2675	1627	1081
<b>9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)</b>	1718	1677	1404
<b>High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)</b>	1652	2105	2635
<b>Some College (No Degree)</b>	517	851	1388
<b>Associate Degree</b>	NA	268	375
<b>Bachelor's Degree</b>	614	447	591
<b>Graduate or Professional Degree</b>	NA	227	398

Source: US Census Bureau

TABLE 3.26: GEORGIA EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT			
Category	1980	1990	2000
<b>TOTAL Adult Population 25 &amp; Over</b>	3081513	4012329	5185965
<b>Less than 9th Grade</b>	730846	481679	393197
<b>9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)</b>	613975	683833	718152
<b>High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)</b>	878923	1189740	1486006
<b>Some College (No Degree)</b>	NA	682350	1058692
<b>Associate Degree</b>	NA	198951	269740
<b>Bachelor's Degree</b>	NA	518433	829873
<b>Graduate or Professional Degree</b>	NA	257201	430305

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

TABLE 3.27 REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT COMPARISON 1980 TO 2000									
	1980			1990			2000		
County	Total Adult Population 25 and over	% High School Graduate or Higher	% Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Total Adult Population 25 and over	% High School Graduate or Higher	% Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Total Adult Population 25 and over	% High School Graduate or Higher	% Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Early	7183	23.0	8.55	7202	29.23	6.21	7872	33.47	7.51
Baker	2068	18.76	4.88	2166	32.73	6.09	2543	40.39	7.47
Calhoun	3154	18.58	7.17	3137	30.12	6.38	4277	33.76	5.0
Clay	2072	19.79	9.75	2079	23.67	6.69	2215	35.53	4.51
Dougherty	52,128	29.94	14.22	55,627	28.85	10.9	58,024	28.26	11.41
Miller	4,000	23.8	7.1	3989	35.5	4.54	4281	35.88	7.43
Seminole	5,153	26.35	7.26	5,637	29.59	5.16	6,114	36.8	5.9

Source: US Census from PlanBuilder

tainment that are prevalent in the region. Only Baker and Miller Counties have lower percentages of residents with no high school diploma than the state average of 22 percent. Early County follows Calhoun County (25.3 percent) with the second highest percentage of residents without high school diplomas. Amongst these counties, Miller and Baker have higher than state average percentages of residents with high school degrees at 35.5 and 32.7 percent respectively. Of these counties, Early County recorded the lowest percentage of residents having high school diplomas. All of the counties mentioned have smaller percentages of residents with college degrees than the state average of 12.0 percent. Early County falls into the middle of this group with 9.4 percent of the population being a college graduate. Tables 3.27 through 3.29 compare Early with the region, surrounding counties, state and nation.

## 6. Policy Implications

The analysis of twenty year trends in this element indicates that Early County is experiencing slight increases in population overall. Such trends are expected to continue in the foreseeable future.

Some of the demographic characteristics (with significant potential for creating problems in the county) are the continued out-migration of a younger, talented population segment, a large and growing elderly population (with many on limited incomes), the prevalence of low incomes, high levels of poverty and of single parent (mainly female headed) families. This is also the case in most of the agriculturally oriented southwest Georgia region. Economic development opportunities and investment in human capital and public facilities are needed to increase the quality of life in the community.

In order to realize a more prosperous future, Early County and the Cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin must adopt a vision and pursue policies to overcome its problems. Listed below are several policies that will assist the county in creating a greater future.

**1.** Early County and the Cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin will promote population growth through the improvement of public services, community facilities, greater housing opportunities, and increased economic development opportunities.

**2.** The cities and county will prepare to accommodate a growing senior population by supporting policies and

TABLE 3.29 REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT COMPARISON 1980 TO 2000									
	1980			1990			2000		
County	Total Adult Population 25 and over	% High School Graduate or Higher	% Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Total Adult Population 25 and over	% High School Graduate or Higher	% Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Total Adult Population 25 and over	% High School Graduate or Higher	% Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Early	7183	23.0	8.55	7202	29.23	6.21	7872	33.47	7.51
Baker	2068	18.76	4.88	2166	32.73	6.09	2543	40.39	7.47
Calhoun	3154	18.58	7.17	3137	30.12	6.38	4277	33.76	5.0
Clay	2072	19.79	9.75	2079	23.67	6.69	2215	35.53	4.51
Dougherty	52,128	29.94	14.22	55,627	28.85	10.9	58,024	28.26	11.41
Miller	4,000	23.8	7.1	3989	35.5	4.54	4281	35.88	7.43
Seminole	5,153	26.35	7.26	5,637	29.59	5.16	6,114	36.8	5.9

Source: US Census from PlanBuilder

3.30 Blakely city: Educational Attainment			
Category	1980	1990	2000
TOTAL Adult Population 25 & Over	3337	2533	3442
Less than 9th Grade	NA	703	504
9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)	NA	717	738
High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	NA	991	979
Some College (No Degree)	NA	392	666
Associate Degree	NA	95	121
Bachelor's Degree	NA	244	243
Graduate or Professional Degree	NA	137	191

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

3.31 Damascus town: Educational Attainment			
Category	1980	1990	2000
TOTAL Adult Population 25 & Over	150	134	142
Less than 9th Grade	NA	34	18
9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)	NA	57	25
High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	NA	55	63
Some College (No Degree)	NA	12	20
Associate Degree	NA	7	5
Bachelor's Degree	NA	7	9
Graduate or Professional Degree	NA	1	2

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

<b>3.32 Jakin town: Educational Attainment</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>TOTAL Adult Population 25 &amp; Over</b>	86	70	102
<b>Less than 9th Grade</b>	NA	25	13
<b>9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)</b>	NA	24	16
<b>High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)</b>	NA	29	43
<b>Some College (No Degree)</b>	NA	5	15
<b>Associate Degree</b>	NA	3	11
<b>Bachelor's Degree</b>	NA	1	2
<b>Graduate or Professional Degree</b>	NA	0	2

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

programs in the areas of transportation, health care services, housing and recreation which complement the needs of the elderly population. This shall include promotion of nursing homes, personal care homes and home care possibilities.

3. Each community will support programs and policies targeting services which better enable families to function more effectively such as health care, day care, etc.

4. Early County and its communities will continue to work to support community improvements which will increase economic development opportunities, economic diversity and the potential for higher wage employment opportunities.

5. A focus on increasing educational levels and vocational training will be needed in the county throughout the planning period. Investments in literacy programs, GED participation, outreach educational programs, incentive programs, and improved transportation to post-secondary educational facilities or progressive links to educational programs through high tech communications networks are needed. Public policies will be sought to solicit such improvements

# Population Tables

3.6a Blakely city: Population by Age								
Category	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>TOTAL Population</b>	5880	5595	5696	5716	5765	5784	6004	6021
<b>0 – 4 Years Old</b>	511	471	422	425	440	481	407	469
<b>5 – 13 Years Old</b>	1074	922	873	845	883	894	879	817
<b>14 – 17 Years Old</b>	502	399	379	388	380	447	402	423
<b>18 – 20 Years Old</b>	296	242	186	179	165	191	211	216
<b>21 – 24 Years Old</b>	323	282	236	222	217	209	184	189
<b>25 – 34 Years Old</b>	775	689	617	609	602	594	588	575
<b>35 – 44 Years Old</b>	552	746	799	808	851	801	790	816
<b>45 – 54 Years Old</b>	539	431	525	601	626	698	747	721
<b>55 – 64 Years Old</b>	506	482	423	489	504	544	762	791
<b>65 Years and Over</b>	802	931	1078	1150	1097	925	1034	1004
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census								

3.6b Damascus city: Population by Age								
Category	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>TOTAL Population</b>	403	297	277	278	280	281	283	285
<b>0 – 4 Years Old</b>	28	22	11	12	15	14	10	18
<b>5 – 13 Years Old</b>	85	25	50	51	43	41	28	20
<b>14 – 17 Years Old</b>	36	33	20	22	28	32	33	25
<b>18 – 20 Years Old</b>	21	31	24	25	26	24	27	21
<b>21 – 24 Years Old</b>	23	13	2	2	3	5	8	9
<b>25 – 34 Years Old</b>	53	32	39	34	31	15	12	17
<b>35 – 44 Years Old</b>	35	39	32	30	33	37	31	28
<b>45 – 54 Years Old</b>	33	28	17	15	24	28	35	31
<b>55 – 64 Years Old</b>	42	28	33	35	29	34	39	38
<b>65 Years and Over</b>	47	46	21	52	48	51	60	78
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census								

3.6c Jakin city: Population by Age								
Category	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>TOTAL Population</b>	194	122	157	158	159	159	159	162
<b>0 – 4 Years Old</b>	13	2	10	13	12	13	10	15
<b>5 – 13 Years Old</b>	21	11	16	18	19	16	17	16
<b>14 – 17 Years Old</b>	15	8	6	9	11	10	13	8
<b>18 – 20 Years Old</b>	11	3	4	2	3	6	10	13
<b>21 – 24 Years Old</b>	10	11	10	10	9	11	8	11
<b>25 – 34 Years Old</b>	27	15	18	19	21	18	19	16
<b>35 – 44 Years Old</b>	27	17	13	14	16	21	24	20
<b>45 – 54 Years Old</b>	14	19	31	25	21	17	19	15
<b>55 – 64 Years Old</b>	21	9	20	26	20	22	18	20
<b>65 Years and Over</b>	35	27	20	22	27	25	21	28
Source: US Census Bureau								

<b>TABLE 3.7: EARLY COUNTY AGE DISTRIBUTION</b>							
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Total</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>Age 0 to 4</b>	8.57%	7.89%	7.09%	6.37%	6.60%	6.47%	6.35%
<b>Age 5 to 9</b>	9.27%	8.22%	7.84%	6.30%	6.54%	6.68%	6.61%
<b>Age 10 to 14</b>	10.23%	8.87%	8.66%	7.07%	6.13%	6.28%	6.49%
<b>Age 15 to 19</b>	9.83%	7.79%	7.70%	7.29%	6.80%	5.85%	6.02%
<b>Age 20 to 24</b>	7.41%	6.19%	5.20%	7.67%	6.56%	6.22%	5.38%
<b>Age 25 to 29</b>	6.72%	6.30%	5.65%	7.07%	7.44%	6.49%	6.22%
<b>Age 30 to 34</b>	6.14%	6.85%	5.97%	5.40%	7.18%	7.63%	6.65%
<b>Age 35 to 39</b>	5.27%	7.20%	6.84%	5.79%	5.34%	7.19%	7.56%
<b>Age 40 to 44</b>	4.80%	6.17%	7.46%	5.80%	5.56%	5.16%	6.98%
<b>Age 45 to 49</b>	4.72%	4.99%	6.46%	6.64%	5.72%	5.52%	5.10%
<b>Age 50 to 54</b>	4.48%	4.67%	5.69%	7.44%	6.58%	5.70%	5.50%
<b>Age 55 to 59</b>	4.63%	4.56%	5.00%	6.14%	7.02%	6.23%	5.36%
<b>Age 60 to 64</b>	4.65%	4.46%	4.69%	5.11%	5.75%	6.65%	5.90%
<b>Age 65 to 69</b>	4.64%	4.29%	4.13%	4.40%	4.71%	5.35%	6.19%
<b>Age 70 to 74</b>	3.80%	3.96%	3.63%	3.65%	3.81%	4.07%	4.61%
<b>Age 75 to 79</b>	2.47%	3.59%	3.17%	2.85%	3.02%	3.14%	3.38%
<b>Age 80 to 84</b>	3.45%	2.25%	2.50%	2.11%	2.17%	2.28%	2.46%
<b>Age 85 &amp; Over</b>	0.92%	3.75%	2.32%	2.91%	3.06%	3.10%	3.23%
Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.							

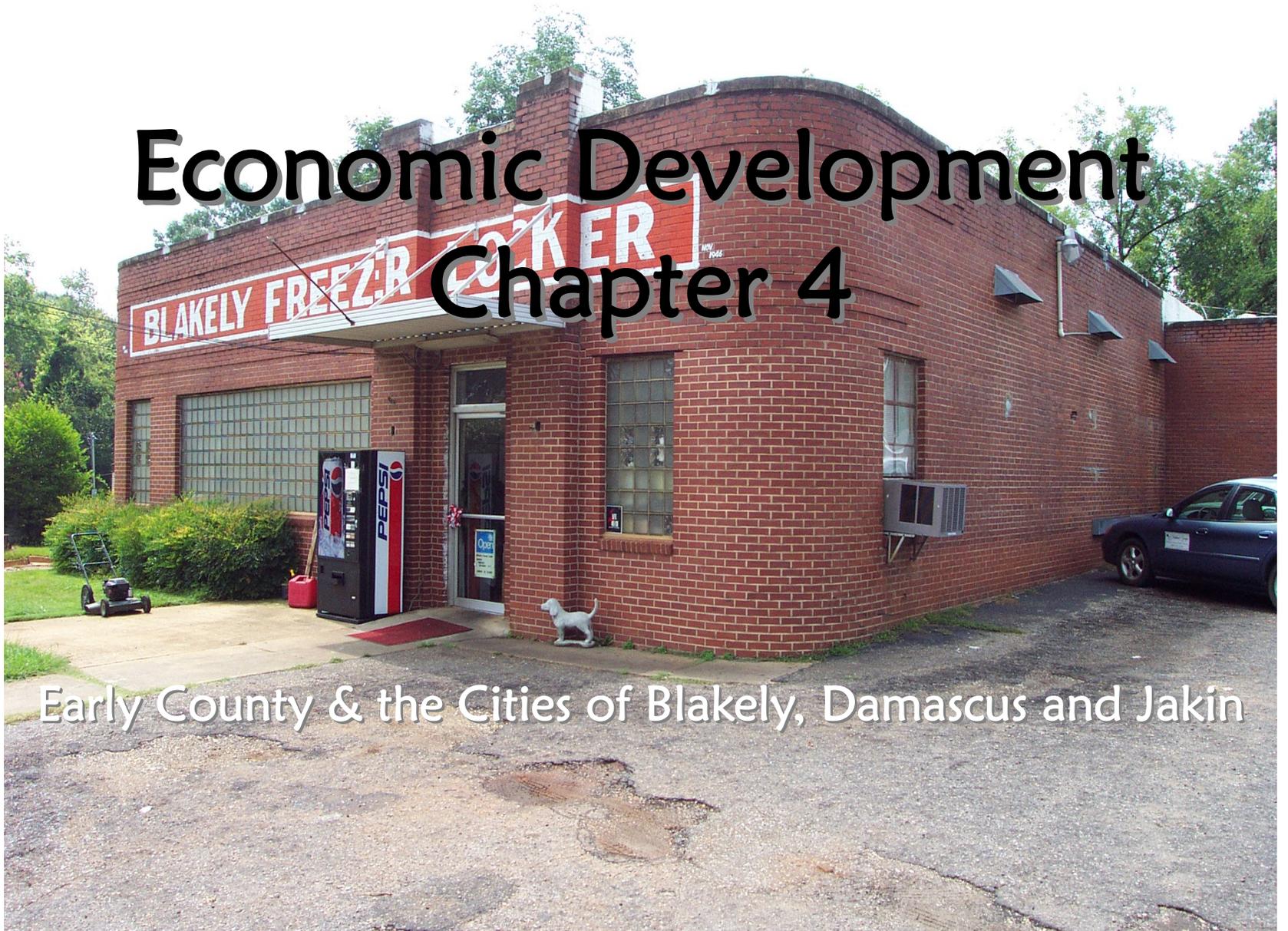
**TABLE 3.28 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT 1970 and 1990**

		1970			1990	
County	Total	% High School Graduate or Higher	% Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Total	% High School Graduate or Higher	% Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Baker	1,891	18.0	2.8	2,166	53.6	9.4
Calhoun	3,238	16.2	5.4	3,137	52.2	10.1
Colquitt	16,892	27.8	4.2	22,546	57.0	10.0
Decatur	11,655	22.6	4.0	15,358	59.8	13.7
Dougherty	41,141	38.8	9.5	55,627	67.5	17.0
<b>Early</b>	<b>6,480</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>7,202</b>	<b>54.1</b>	<b>9.4</b>
Grady	9,504	23.4	5.6	12,691	54.9	7.7
Lee	3,188	23.7	5.7	9,485	69.8	13.7
Miller	3,495	18.5	5.3	3,989	57.4	8.2
Mitchell	9,468	20	4.6	11,942	54.9	7.8
Seminole	3,735	25.3	5.2	5,637	52.7	7.8
Terrell	5,737	24.6	4.7	6,538	52.4	9.2
Thomas	18,247	25.5	6.7	24,219	63.3	13.4
Worth	7,436	23.6	3.4	11,837	58.1	6.3
<b>Region</b>	<b>142,107</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>192,374</b>	<b>63.0</b>	<b>12.1</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>2,355,810</b>	<b>33.4</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>4,023,420</b>	<b>70.9</b>	<b>19.3</b>
Nation	109,899,359	43.7	10.7	158,868,436	75.2	20.3

Source: U.S. Census of Population 1970 & 1990



# Economic Development Chapter 4



Early County & the Cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin

## A. Introduction

**E**conomic development characteristics like economic bases, labor force characteristics, income distributions, and commuting patterns are important in analyzing a community potential to attract new industries and to maintain existing industries and to develop a set of goals and policies to maintain the economic vitality of a community.

## INVENTORY

### B. Economic Base

#### MANUFACTURING

Manufacturing is one of the key elements in Early County's economy. Occupations such as Machine Operators Assembler and Inspector comprised a significant portion of the jobs in Early County. Georgia Pacific (Wood product manufacturer) is now and will continue to be the largest and most influential employer in Early County. In fact, the manufacturing sector employed approximately 21 percent of the entire labor force in Early County. Any industry of any size in today's current market will generally employ persons from the surrounding area and in the case of Early County, from the neighboring state of Alabama. The following table illustrates several other employers of more than 50 who contribute substantially to the economy of the County.

The apparel industries in Early County have been devastated by trade agreements like NAFTA. Due to cheap labor in other countries, "cut and sew" companies have had to close and lay-off workers. Since these industries require very little training, many of the displaced workers lack the skills to retain a job with similar wages. The options avail-

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able to these workers consist of going to back to school for re-training or getting jobs where the pay is less than their previous job. In addition, many people in Early County work in the surrounding region, which includes the metropolitan areas of both Albany, Georgia: and Dothan, Alabama.

## AGRICULTURE

Cotton and Peanuts are the major agricultural commodities in the County. According to the 2003 Georgia County Guide, cotton was valued at more than \$14 million dollars and Peanuts were valued at over \$12 million dollars. These two commodities stimulate the need for associated agri-businesses like cotton gins and peanut processing facilities. For example, Birdsong Peanuts in Blakely, Damascus Peanut in Damascus and other peanut processing businesses employ over 375 people. Cotton processing businesses employ fewer people, yet are still a prominent part of the county's economic picture. In 2003, Early County ranked 29th in the state for overall farm gate value at a value of nearly 90 million dollars.

However, farming is a declining occupation in the county. The number of farms in the county has decreased from 673 in 1969 to 279 in 1997 according to the 2003 Georgia County Guide. Between 1992 and 1997, there was an 11 percent drop in the number of farms. Individual farmers are selling their lands to larger operations or even leaving the business because of its often-small profit margin. In addition, younger generations are choosing to pursue

<b>Company</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Employees</b>
Georgia Pacific	Cedar Springs	776
Early County Public Schools	Blakely	375
Early County Memorial Hospital	Blakely	185
Birdsong Peanut	Blakely	125
Dana Undies	Blakely	94
Damascus Peanut	Damascus	75
Universal Blanchers	Blakely	74
Golden Peanut	Blakely	50
Peanut Corporation of America	Blakely	50
Early County Gin	Blakely	55
Maverick C & P	Blakely	100
Source: Blakely-Early County Chamber of Commerce, 2004		

<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Total</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>Farm</b>	16.89%	13.87%	11.17%	9.21%	9.35%	8.56%	7.86%	7.30%	6.84%	6.47%
<b>Agricultural Services, Other</b>	1.31%	2.09%	3.40%	7.27%	5.23%	5.37%	5.50%	5.63%	5.80%	5.97%
<b>Mining</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.06%	0.09%	0.08%	0.08%	0.08%	0.08%	0.10%	0.10%
<b>Construction</b>	1.92%	2.01%	2.76%	2.73%	3.52%	3.54%	3.52%	3.50%	3.46%	3.42%
<b>Manufacturing</b>	31.13%	30.47%	32.12%	30.28%	23.61%	22.50%	21.72%	21.07%	20.61%	20.28%
<b>Trans, Comm, &amp; Public Utilities</b>	1.86%	2.33%	2.07%	2.08%	1.90%	1.84%	1.81%	1.80%	1.80%	1.81%
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	7.55%	7.30%	5.11%	4.14%	8.04%	8.37%	8.59%	8.84%	9.13%	9.47%
<b>Retail Trade</b>	10.44%	11.19%	10.86%	12.18%	12.03%	12.23%	12.38%	12.47%	12.48%	12.41%
<b>Finance, Insurance, &amp; Real Estate</b>	1.92%	2.36%	2.23%	3.68%	4.60%	4.82%	5.04%	5.27%	5.49%	5.73%
<b>Services</b>	12.36%	12.96%	13.10%	12.47%	17.40%	18.28%	18.96%	19.47%	19.81%	19.99%
<b>Federal Civilian Government</b>	0.82%	0.78%	0.84%	0.93%	0.83%	0.80%	0.78%	0.76%	0.73%	0.72%
<b>Federal Military Government</b>	0.84%	0.96%	0.81%	0.76%	0.76%	0.78%	0.78%	0.79%	0.78%	0.77%
<b>State &amp; Local Government</b>	12.99%	13.66%	15.47%	14.16%	12.66%	12.84%	12.96%	13.01%	12.97%	12.86%

Source: Woods & Poole Economics

more lucrative careers, instead of continuing the family farm business. To supplement their incomes, some of the remaining farmers are using their lands as hunting preserves in the off-seasons.

## RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL

Many of the county's residents purchase a significant amount of goods and services in nearby Dothan Alabama and Albany. This practice is the result of the lack of quantity and diversity of local businesses within the county. Both larger cities provide a variety of retail and commercial establishments. The cities in Early County must develop ways

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>Total</b>	6,467	6,258	6,419	6,545	6,045	6,019	6,017	6,055	6,123	6,229
<b>Farm</b>	1,092	868	717	603	565	515	473	442	419	403
<b>Agricultural Services, Other</b>	85	131	218	476	316	323	331	341	355	372
<b>Mining</b>	0	0	4	6	5	5	5	5	6	6
<b>Construction</b>	124	126	177	179	213	213	212	212	212	213
<b>Manufacturing</b>	2,013	1,907	2,062	1,982	1,427	1,354	1,307	1,276	1,262	1,263
<b>Trans, Comm, &amp; Public Utilities</b>	120	146	133	136	115	111	109	109	110	113
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	488	457	328	271	486	504	517	535	559	590
<b>Retail Trade</b>	675	700	697	797	727	736	745	755	764	773
<b>Finance, Insurance, &amp; Real Estate</b>	124	148	143	241	278	290	303	319	336	357
<b>Services</b>	799	811	841	816	1,052	1,100	1,141	1,179	1,213	1,245
<b>Federal Civilian Government</b>	53	49	54	61	50	48	47	46	45	45
<b>Federal Military Government</b>	54	60	52	50	46	47	47	48	48	48
<b>State &amp; Local Government</b>	840	855	993	927	765	773	780	788	794	801

Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

to keep sales tax dollars in the county instead of losing them to neighboring cities (and states, in the case of Dothan). The City of Blakely is actively involved in supporting local and new businesses through a variety of programs, including the Blakely-Early County Chamber of Commerce and the Better Home Town Program.

The cities of Arlington, Damascus and Jakin should consider the creation of downtown development authorities to renovate dilapidated buildings and provide attractive streetscapes as a way of attracting small retail businesses and keeping sales tax dollars within the community. These cities could apply for the Better Hometown Program with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The Better Hometown Program

focuses on cities with a population less than 5,000. The Program develops local vision and leadership while ac-

tively facilitating the economic development of downtown using a four point approach borrowed from the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Program. This approach concentrates on the areas of Organization, Design, Economic Restructuring and Promotion. Each designated city receives technical assistance, manager/board training, regional networking sessions and resources to assist the community in revitalizing its downtown area.

The labor force in Early County is shifting from farming and manufacturing to services and retail trade. According to **Table 4.2**, the Services sector accounted for 17.4 percent of the jobs in 2000 a figure that increased from 12.36 percent in 1980 and 13.10 percent in 1990. By 2025, the Services sector is predicted to be one of the largest employment sectors in Early County employing 19.99% of the labor force. This is second only to Manufacturing, which at that time should employ 20.28 percent of the local labor force.

The Retail sector comprised 12.03 percent of the jobs in 2000, up from 10.44 percent in 1980 and 10.86 percent in 1990. This sector is currently the fourth largest in the County behind Manufacturing, Services and Government. These four sectors are likely to continue in the same order of prominence until at least 2025.

Manufacturing has decreased from 31.13 percent in 1980 to 23.61 percent in 2000. By 2025, the Manufacturing sector will comprise 20.28 percent of the jobs in the county. Although this sector has steadily declined in prominence, it is projected to continue to be the leading employer in the future. The Farm sector employed 9.35 percent of the jobs in 2000 down from 16.89 percent in 1980 and 11.17 percent in 1990. The decrease in manufacturing and farming jobs can largely be attributed to advances in technology and foreign competition.

The statistics provided by Woods and Poole provide a review not only of the current situation, but also future

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Table 4.4 United States: Employment by Sector (%)										
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>Total</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>Farm</b>	3.32%	2.78%	2.26%	2.08%	1.91%	1.78%	1.65%	1.52%	1.40%	1.29%
<b>Agricultural Services, Other</b>	0.80%	0.93%	1.04%	1.20%	1.26%	1.26%	1.26%	1.25%	1.25%	1.24%
<b>Mining</b>	1.12%	1.11%	0.75%	0.59%	0.48%	0.47%	0.46%	0.46%	0.45%	0.44%
<b>Construction</b>	4.95%	5.19%	5.21%	5.18%	5.68%	5.67%	5.62%	5.55%	5.48%	5.40%
<b>Manufacturing</b>	18.19%	15.88%	14.13%	12.85%	11.61%	11.02%	10.49%	9.99%	9.51%	9.05%
<b>Trans, Comm, &amp; Public Utilities</b>	4.97%	4.73%	4.71%	4.74%	4.88%	4.84%	4.78%	4.72%	4.65%	4.58%
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	5.03%	4.93%	4.81%	4.64%	4.58%	4.61%	4.60%	4.58%	4.56%	4.52%
<b>Retail Trade</b>	15.66%	16.27%	16.44%	16.87%	16.37%	16.21%	16.08%	15.95%	15.80%	15.65%
<b>Finance, Insurance, &amp; Real Estate</b>	7.67%	7.62%	7.68%	7.39%	7.94%	7.89%	7.83%	7.77%	7.70%	7.62%
<b>Services</b>	21.89%	25.09%	27.76%	29.97%	31.75%	32.77%	33.85%	34.95%	36.07%	37.21%
<b>Federal Civilian Government</b>	2.62%	2.42%	2.32%	1.97%	1.68%	1.60%	1.52%	1.45%	1.38%	1.31%
<b>Federal Military Government</b>	2.19%	2.21%	1.95%	1.54%	1.25%	1.19%	1.14%	1.08%	1.02%	0.97%
<b>State &amp; Local Government</b>	11.61%	10.83%	10.93%	10.98%	10.62%	10.70%	10.72%	10.73%	10.73%	10.71%

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

forecasts. There is an interesting discrepancy in Labor Force numbers in Early County between Woods and Poole and the Georgia Department of Labor. According to Woods and Poole, in 2000 there were 6,045 people employed in all sectors in the County. However, the Department of Labor puts the total employed Labor Force at 4,406. To cloud this issue further, the U.S. Bureau of the Census puts the number of employed people in the Labor Force in 2000 at 4,845. Part of this discrepancy could be due to the fact that approximately 24 percent of the County's workers are employed outside of the county (see Table 3.27). This may generally indicate that the lower numbers of the Georgia DoL are the most accurate.

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>Total</b>	114,231	124,512	139,427	149,359	166,168	176,602	187,343	198,813	211,062	224,148
<b>Farm</b>	3,798	3,466	3,153	3,106	3,175.21	3,140.23	3,082.7	3,022.62	2,960.18	2,895.58
<b>Agricultural Services, Other</b>	908.981	1,152.32	1,452.95	1,789.1	2,091.2	2,226.86	2,357.99	2,493.92	2,634.56	2,779.88
<b>Mining</b>	1,277.6	1,385	1,044.09	883.86	789.502	827.217	865.976	905.691	946.461	988.196
<b>Construction</b>	5,654.2	6,465.52	7,260.79	7,731.5	9,435.37	10,017.5	10,522.8	11,039.3	11,566.	12,102.3
<b>Manufacturing</b>	20,781	19,778.6	19,697.2	19,186.3	19,293.3	19,454.2	19,650.9	19,854.9	20,066.6	20,286.1
<b>Trans, Comm, &amp; Public Utilities</b>	5,672.11	5,894.89	6,568.62	7,076.2	8,103.4	8,540.08	8,952.03	9,376.14	9,812.21	10,260.1
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	5,741.68	6,136.1	6,711.51	6,930.52	7,607.26	8,140.74	8,618.44	9,111.38	9,618.92	10,140.3
<b>Retail Trade</b>	17,883.9	20,261.8	22,920.5	25,204.2	27,206.6	28,629.5	30,131.6	31,706.5	33,357.4	35,087.7
<b>Finance, Insurance, &amp; Real Estate</b>	8,756.01	9,491.99	10,712.6	11,037.8	13,194.1	13,937.2	14,673	15,442.2	16,245.9	17,085.5
<b>Services</b>	24,999.6	31,241.5	38,709.6	44,768.3	52,754	57,868.5	63,417.2	69,489.8	76,134.9	83,405.8
<b>Federal Civilian Government</b>	2,993.99	3,008	3,233	2,946	2,790.27	2,821.89	2,851.96	2,882.07	2,912.16	2,942.24
<b>Federal Military Government</b>	2,501.01	2,746	2,718	2,293	2,074.01	2,106.07	2,131.77	2,150.02	2,160.68	2,163.54
<b>State &amp; Local Government</b>	13,263	13,484	15,245	16,406	17,654.1	18,891.6	20,087.1	21,338.1	22,645.8	24,011

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

At the state and national levels, a similar shift from the agricultural and manufacturing sectors to services and retail trade is apparent. This can be seen in **Tables 4.4 through 4.7**. In the United States, services account for 31.75 percent of the jobs in 2000 from 21.89 percent in 1980 and 27.76 percent in 1990. The Retail sector accounted for 16.37 percent of the jobs in 2000, up from 15.66 percent in 1980 and 16.44 percent in 1990. Manufacturing decreased from 18.9 percent in 1980 and 14.13 percent in 1990 to 11.61 percent in 2000. The farming sector held 1.91 percent of the

<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Total</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>Farm</b>	3.51%	2.55%	2.01%	1.63%	1.39%	1.24%	1.11%	1.00%	0.90%	0.82%
<b>Agricultural Services, Other</b>	0.60%	0.76%	0.85%	1.06%	1.13%	1.15%	1.16%	1.17%	1.17%	1.16%
<b>Mining</b>	0.32%	0.32%	0.29%	0.22%	0.20%	0.18%	0.17%	0.17%	0.16%	0.15%
<b>Construction</b>	5.07%	6.11%	5.75%	5.58%	6.10%	6.05%	5.94%	5.80%	5.66%	5.52%
<b>Manufacturing</b>	19.25%	17.53%	15.51%	14.27%	12.63%	12.07%	11.56%	11.03%	10.50%	9.97%
<b>Trans, Comm, &amp; Public Utilities</b>	5.55%	5.51%	5.86%	5.72%	6.10%	6.17%	6.19%	6.16%	6.09%	5.97%
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	6.34%	6.65%	6.18%	5.73%	5.69%	5.74%	5.73%	5.71%	5.69%	5.66%
<b>Retail Trade</b>	14.84%	16.13%	16.44%	17.14%	16.80%	17.08%	17.32%	17.51%	17.65%	17.76%
<b>Finance, Insurance, &amp; Real Estate</b>	7.28%	6.98%	6.64%	6.36%	7.12%	7.05%	6.98%	6.91%	6.83%	6.76%
<b>Services</b>	18.30%	20.61%	23.75%	26.61%	28.63%	29.27%	30.10%	31.07%	32.16%	33.35%
<b>Federal Civilian Government</b>	3.08%	2.87%	2.79%	2.33%	1.90%	1.76%	1.63%	1.53%	1.43%	1.35%
<b>Federal Military Government</b>	3.36%	3.05%	2.46%	2.24%	1.93%	1.82%	1.71%	1.61%	1.51%	1.42%
<b>State &amp; Local Government</b>	12.51%	10.92%	11.46%	11.11%	10.39%	10.44%	10.40%	10.33%	10.22%	10.10%

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

jobs in 2000, falling from 3.32 percent in 1980 and 2.26 percent in 1990.

For the State of Georgia, service sector occupations were 28.63 percent of total employment in 2000 compared to 18.30 percent in 1980 and 23.75 percent in 1990. Retail accounted for 16.80percent of the jobs in 2000, up from 14.84percent in 1980 and 16.44percent in 1990. Manufacturing accounted for 12.63 percent of the jobs in 2000,

**Table 4.7  
Georgia: Employment by Sector**

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>Total</b>	2,747,310	3,224,300	3,690,610	4,229,290	4,859,970	5,235,630	5,623,650	6,029,160	6,451,320	6,890,350
<b>Farm</b>	96,559	82,370	74,286	68,780	67,356	64,877	62,438	60,240	58,297	56,584
<b>Agricultural Services, Other</b>	16,432	24,574	31,487	44,659	54,829	60,079	65,359	70,538	75,465	80,033
<b>Mining</b>	8,808	10,241	10,590	9,408	9,522	9,645	9,813	10,047	10,324	10,653
<b>Construction</b>	139,233	196,913	212,342	236,159	296,572	316,876	333,895	349,870	365,279	380,526
<b>Manufacturing</b>	528,812	565,278	572,477	603,394	613,992	632,106	649,864	665,184	677,683	687,263
<b>Trans, Comm, &amp; Public Utilities</b>	152,583	177,746	216,343	241,886	296,267	322,804	347,846	371,521	392,902	411,295
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	174,084	214,310	228,213	242,508	276,326	300,312	322,310	344,504	367,022	389,992
<b>Retail Trade</b>	407,627	520,232	606,608	724,946	816,701	893,996	973,979	1,055,500	1,138,660	1,223,640
<b>Finance, Insurance, &amp; Real Estate</b>	199,887	225,090	244,947	269,183	345,923	369,137	392,407	416,440	440,943	465,714
<b>Services</b>	502,841	664,476	876,597	1,125,360	1,391,460	1,532,290	1,692,630	1,873,380	2,074,950	2,298,230
<b>Federal Civilian Government</b>	84,599	92,561	102,981	98,336	92,262	91,889	91,883	92,089	92,439	92,936
<b>Federal Military Government</b>	92,295	98,319	90,745	94,733	93,789	95,235	96,403	97,224	97,709	97,839
<b>State &amp; Local Government</b>	343,553	352,189	422,991	469,941	504,969	546,388	584,820	622,628	659,644	695,636

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

down from 19.25 percent in 1980 and 15.51 percent in 1990. The Farming sector comprised 1.39 percent of the jobs in 2000, falling from 3.51 percent in 1980 and 2.01 percent in 1990.

Although Early County is sparsely populated in a rural location, it is fortunate to be served by a variety of transportation options. The Early County Airport has a 5,000 foot runway, and is currently in the process of expanding. The Chattahoochee River provides the availability of barge access to transport goods nationally or internationally. Early County is also served by two rail lines: Mainline of Norfolk Southern and the Shortline connector of the Chatta-

hoochee Industrial Railroad. In addition, State Highway 27 runs north-south through the county and is in the process of being four-laned. This should be complete in the next few years, and will enhance the business opportunities in the county.

## WAGES AND EARNINGS INVENTORY

Wage levels are another indicator of economic strength. While job growth is a leading indicator, wage levels quantify the significance of economic growth. Despite the County's decline in population over the last 20 years (although the population increased between 1990 and 2000, it remains below 1980 levels), there has been substantial growth in weekly wages for Early County. **Table 4.8** shows a nearly 37% increase in overall wages between 1989 and 1999. The largest increase was in the manufacturing sector rising by almost 41% from \$589 to \$830. Other substantial gains were in the construction and transportation, communication,

Table 4.8: Early County Average Weekly Wage											
Category	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
All Industries	\$396	\$412	\$385	\$420	\$425	\$434	\$438	\$456	\$489	\$526	\$541
Agri, Forestry, Fishing	273	291	287	277	279	347	373	401	417	449	472
Mining	NA										
Construction	NA	307	NA	NA	NA	309	376	365	468	531	555
Manufacturing	NA	589	526	608	588	606	594	638	695	799	830
Transportation, Comm, Util	NA	NA	380	NA	436	412	469	482	540	518	549
Wholesale	NA	344	340	318	358	401	425	439	423	431	431
Retail	NA	184	189	200	204	200	198	200	214	210	224
Financial, Insurance, Real Estate	NA	NA	NA	NA	420	418	408	428	497	544	541
Services	NA	297	319	344	350	313	335	351	370	387	385
Federal Gov	NA										
State Gov	NA	386	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	514	NA	NA	NA
Local Gov	NA	NA	NA	279	304	305	340	338	366	367	390

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

tions and utility sectors.

The weekly wages in **Table 4.9** for all the categories in Georgia are higher than Early County with the notable exceptions of agriculture, forestry, fishing and manufacturing. This is another indication of the importance and strength of the farming and manufacturing sectors to Early County. Even though the region has traditionally marketed itself to companies as an area for cheap labor and land, in these two sectors, the County out performs state averages.

However, despite these successes, when compared to overall economic conditions in Georgia and the United States, Early County continues to lag behind.

### Personal Income by Type

**Tables 4.10 and 4.11** reveal that Wage & Salaries in Early County are lower as a percentage of total personal income than the state. In 2000, Wages & Salaries accounted for 53.86 percent of personal income in Early County, while the state average was 61.18

Category	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
<b>All Industries</b>	\$404	\$424	\$444	\$471	\$480	\$488	\$509	\$531	\$562	\$598	\$629
<b>Agri, Forestry, Fishing</b>	267	276	285	297	304	312	322	336	347	373	390
<b>Mining</b>	561	589	605	NA	NA	698	734	741	781	832	866
<b>Construction</b>	NA	434	439	451	461	479	508	534	556	590	623
<b>Manufacturing</b>	NA	450	473	503	511	531	555	588	620	656	684
<b>Transportation, Comm, Util</b>	NA	603	635	689	709	720	737	769	805	842	895
<b>Wholesale</b>	NA	603	632	669	695	711	729	762	809	873	932
<b>Retail</b>	NA	236	244	255	260	267	275	286	299	318	335
<b>Financial, Insurance, Real Estate</b>	NA	544	569	627	648	648	693	741	799	872	900
<b>Services</b>	NA	414	439	464	471	475	501	519	551	580	611
<b>Federal Gov</b>	NA	543	584	612	651	667	666	701	774	791	808
<b>State Gov</b>	NA	451	462	460	471	NA	493	517	533	561	579
<b>Local Gov</b>	NA	387	401	401	410	420	440	461	480	506	523

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Table 4.10 Early County Personal Income Type In 1996 Constant Dollars (%)										
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>Wages &amp; Salaries (1996 \$)</b>	83.65%	69.54%	69.87%	58.36%	53.86%	53.51%	53.16%	52.88%	52.68%	52.57%
<b>Other Labor Income (1996 \$)</b>	9.82%	8.63%	9.58%	7.69%	6.04%	5.91%	5.78%	5.67%	5.56%	5.47%
<b>Proprietors Income (1996 \$)</b>	-0.91%	10.56%	6.22%	14.04%	12.80%	12.63%	12.51%	12.42%	12.35%	12.31%
<b>Dividends, Interest, &amp; Rent (1996 \$)</b>	16.40%	16.95%	20.42%	16.99%	21.13%	21.30%	21.36%	21.29%	21.10%	20.79%
<b>Transfer Payments to Persons (1996 \$)</b>	21.64%	21.11%	23.08%	23.33%	23.47%	24.30%	25.13%	25.95%	26.75%	27.54%
<b>Less: Social Ins. Contributions (1996 \$)</b>	4.78%	4.72%	5.04%	4.37%	3.75%	3.88%	4.02%	4.15%	4.27%	4.38%
<b>Residence Adjustment (1996 \$)</b>	-25.82%	-22.08%	-24.14%	-16.05%	-13.56%	-13.77%	-13.93%	-14.07%	-14.19%	-14.30%

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

percent. Wage & Salaries in the county are not keeping pace with the state, which may be a reflection of the more skilled and higher paid people leaving the county for increased opportunities in other communities like Albany, Georgia and Dothan, Alabama. Transfer Payments are also consistently higher in Early County than the state average. Although this category is comprised of factors that do not directly indicate poverty, such as retirement benefits, Transfer Payments, generally indicate the level of public assistance in a particular community. In 2000, 23.47 percent of personal income was made of Transfer Payments in the county, compared to an 11.13 percent state average.

It is interesting to note however that Dividends, Interest & Rent is greater in Early County (21.13 percent in 2000) than the state (16.8 percent in 2000). This category generally indicates wealth, as it is made of income generated by investments. The higher levels may be related to the strength of the agriculture and manufacturing sectors in the County.

**Table 4.11  
State of Georgia Personal Income Type In 1996 Constant Dollars**

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>Wages &amp; Salaries (1996 \$)</b>	64.10%	62.15%	60.36%	59.07%	63.18%	63.09%	63.00%	60.94%	60.92%	60.92%
<b>Other Labor Income (1996 \$)</b>	8.41%	8.72%	8.68%	8.63%	6.84%	6.71%	6.60%	6.48%	6.38%	6.28%
<b>Proprietors Income (1996 \$)</b>	6.51%	6.97%	7.11%	7.96%	8.65%	8.52%	8.43%	8.34%	8.26%	8.19%
<b>Dividends, Interest, &amp; Rent (1996 \$)</b>	13.05%	15.79%	17.34%	16.31%	16.80%	16.76%	16.70%	16.61%	16.49%	16.34%
<b>Transfer Payments to Persons (1996 \$)</b>	13.72%	10.73%	10.94%	12.62%	13.13%	13.25%	13.43%	13.66%	13.93%	12.25%
<b>Less: Social Ins. Contributions (1996 \$)</b>	3.54%	4.10%	4.33%	4.45%	4.49%	4.67%	4.86%	5.04%	5.19%	5.33%
<b>Residence Adjustment (1996 \$)</b>	-0.25%	-0.25%	-0.10%	-0.15%	-0.11%	0.33%	0.70%	3.00%	3.21%	3.35%

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc

In Early County, earnings from farming are considerably higher than either the State of Georgia or the nation. Farming comprised 10.67 percent of the earnings in 2000, which is up from 4.49 percent in 1990. This number fluctuates considerably however, as it was -5.64 percent in 1980 and 7.81% in 1985. This can largely be attributed to the variables and uncertainties integral to agriculture such as annual weather conditions, particular crop grown, government subsidies and market demands. For the State of Georgia, farming was 0.98 percent in 2000 and only 0.78 percent in the United States. Clearly, agriculture is an important and dominant part of the County's economy.

Although earnings from manufacturing are steadily declining in the Early County, they remain by far the dominate sector. The percentage fell from 59.9 percent in 1980 to 36.76 percent in 2000; a substantial drop, yet still nearly three times the next largest sector-state and local government, at 12.92 percent. At the state level, manufacturing declined similarly from 22.54 percent in 1980 to 14.86 percent in 2000. The same shift is apparent nationally,

where manufacturing fell from 24.22 percent in 1980 to 15.93 percent in 2000. According to the projections from Woods & Poole, this downward trend in manufacturing will continue through the planning horizon. While manufacturing will remain by far the dominant sector of Early County's economy, trends such as globalization and foreign competition should be followed closely to anticipate potential consequences unseen at present.

The largest category of earnings at the state and national level is services at 26.77 percent and 29.16 percent respectively (2000). In Early, services were the third largest category at 11.39 percent (2000) behind manufacturing

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>Total (1996 \$)</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>Farm (1996 \$)</b>	-5.64%	7.81%	4.49%	15.57%	10.67%	10.64%	10.62%	10.66%	10.77%	10.94%
<b>Agricultural Services, Other (1996 \$)</b>	0.71%	1.32%	2.26%	5.56%	3.98%	4.10%	4.19%	4.29%	4.41%	4.53%
<b>Mining (1996 \$)</b>	0.19%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.63%	0.60%	0.60%	0.59%	0.59%	0.58%
<b>Construction (1996 \$)</b>	1.94%	1.70%	2.71%	2.12%	3.02%	2.98%	2.92%	2.84%	2.76%	2.66%
<b>Manufacturing (1996 \$)</b>	59.90%	49.04%	52.07%	40.93%	36.76%	35.63%	34.80%	34.12%	33.58%	33.16%
<b>Trans, Comm, &amp; Public Utilities (1996 \$)</b>	3.22%	3.60%	2.70%	2.26%	2.34%	2.25%	2.20%	2.17%	2.16%	2.16%
<b>Wholesale Trade (1996 \$)</b>	8.40%	6.31%	4.84%	3.95%	7.05%	7.16%	7.17%	7.19%	7.25%	7.33%
<b>Retail Trade (1996 \$)</b>	7.62%	6.88%	5.23%	5.26%	5.53%	5.51%	5.47%	5.40%	5.29%	5.16%
<b>Finance, Insurance, &amp; Real Estate (1996 \$)</b>	1.58%	1.36%	1.50%	2.49%	3.96%	4.28%	4.59%	4.90%	5.22%	5.54%
<b>Services (1996 \$)</b>	8.23%	8.19%	9.00%	7.49%	11.39%	12.16%	12.79%	13.30%	13.68%	13.93%
<b>Federal Civilian Government (1996 \$)</b>	1.49%	1.19%	1.26%	1.56%	1.39%	1.33%	1.28%	1.24%	1.21%	1.17%
<b>Federal Military Government (1996 \$)</b>	0.31%	0.47%	0.36%	0.33%	0.36%	0.37%	0.37%	0.37%	0.37%	0.37%
<b>State &amp; Local Government (1996 \$)</b>	12.05%	12.01%	13.58%	12.50%	12.92%	12.99%	12.99%	12.90%	12.73%	12.48%

Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc

**Table 4.13  
Early County: Earnings by Sector (in thousands)**

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>Total (1996 \$)</b>	\$124,440	\$147,844	\$158,499	\$171,398	\$163,472	\$169,846	\$177,344	\$186,277	\$196,751	\$208,999
<b>Farm (1996 \$)</b>	(\$7,019)	\$11,552	\$7,118	\$26,694	\$17,442	\$18,076	\$18,841	\$19,864	\$21,185	\$22,864
<b>Agricultural Services, Other (1996 \$)</b>	\$882	\$1,955	\$3,583	\$9,527	\$6,514	\$6,961	\$7,432	\$8,000	\$8,672	\$9,465
<b>Mining (1996 \$)</b>	\$237	\$165	\$0	\$0	\$1,023	\$1,026	\$1,061	\$1,107	\$1,156	\$1,209
<b>Construction (1996 \$)</b>	\$2,418	\$2,511	\$4,291	\$3,629	\$4,939	\$5,056	\$5,175	\$5,299	\$5,429	\$5,563
<b>Manufacturing (1996 \$)</b>	\$74,539	\$72,499	\$82,528	\$70,148	\$60,091	\$60,510	\$61,714	\$63,560	\$66,061	\$69,296
<b>Trans, Comm, &amp; Public Utilities (1996 \$)</b>	\$4,006	\$5,320	\$4,277	\$3,872	\$3,818	\$3,826	\$3,905	\$4,045	\$4,243	\$4,504
<b>Wholesale Trade (1996 \$)</b>	\$10,453	\$9,332	\$7,668	\$6,764	\$11,532	\$12,168	\$12,710	\$13,399	\$14,263	\$15,329
<b>Retail Trade (1996 \$)</b>	\$9,487	\$10,170	\$8,290	\$9,007	\$9,035	\$9,365	\$9,707	\$10,055	\$10,413	\$10,785
<b>Finance, Insurance, &amp; Real Estate (1996 \$)</b>	\$1,963	\$2,013	\$2,374	\$4,263	\$6,476	\$7,263	\$8,139	\$9,130	\$10,262	\$11,570
<b>Services (1996 \$)</b>	\$10,241	\$12,107	\$14,267	\$12,833	\$18,623	\$20,645	\$22,687	\$24,770	\$26,908	\$29,111
<b>Federal Civilian Government (1996 \$)</b>	\$1,858	\$1,759	\$2,003	\$2,680	\$2,276	\$2,258	\$2,277	\$2,317	\$2,376	\$2,454
<b>Federal Military Government (1996 \$)</b>	\$380	\$699	\$576	\$563	\$588	\$625	\$661	\$697	\$732	\$767
<b>State &amp; Local Government (1996 \$)</b>	\$14,995	\$17,762	\$21,524	\$21,418	\$21,115	\$22,067	\$23,035	\$24,034	\$25,051	\$26,082

Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

and state and local government. Retail trade also occupies a larger percentage of the state and national totals at 8.99 percent and 8.87 percent respectively (2000) than only 5.53 percent in Early County. The rural, sparsely populated character of the County is certainly a significant factor explaining the difference in these categories' dominance compared to the state and nation. (see Tables 4.12 through 4.17)

## SPECIAL AND UNIQUE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

<b>Table 4.14 Georgia: Earnings by Sector (%)</b>										
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Total</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>Farm</b>	0.16%	1.27%	1.36%	1.40%	0.98%	0.93%	0.89%	0.85%	0.82%	0.79%
<b>Agricultural Services, Other</b>	0.37%	0.41%	0.46%	0.53%	0.59%	0.60%	0.61%	0.62%	0.62%	0.62%
<b>Mining</b>	0.65%	0.48%	0.36%	0.29%	0.27%	0.25%	0.22%	0.21%	0.19%	0.18%
<b>Construction</b>	5.66%	6.57%	5.82%	5.39%	6.00%	5.86%	5.67%	5.46%	5.26%	5.06%
<b>Manufacturing</b>	22.54%	20.03%	17.51%	16.84%	14.86%	14.45%	14.05%	13.59%	13.08%	12.53%
<b>Trans, Comm, &amp; Public Utilities</b>	9.33%	8.85%	8.75%	9.43%	9.89%	9.99%	10.01%	9.96%	9.84%	9.63%
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	8.87%	9.04%	8.86%	8.17%	8.44%	8.36%	8.21%	8.05%	7.88%	7.71%
<b>Retail Trade</b>	10.33%	10.64%	9.17%	9.08%	8.99%	8.97%	8.93%	8.87%	8.80%	8.71%
<b>Finance, Insurance, &amp; Real Estate</b>	5.44%	5.59%	6.43%	6.86%	7.57%	7.66%	7.73%	7.78%	7.81%	7.82%
<b>Services</b>	15.63%	17.36%	21.95%	24.33%	26.77%	27.78%	29.02%	30.44%	32.02%	33.73%
<b>Federal Civilian Govern- ment</b>	5.64%	5.11%	4.66%	4.17%	3.39%	3.11%	2.87%	2.67%	2.49%	2.33%
<b>Federal Military Govern- ment</b>	3.72%	3.68%	2.69%	2.49%	2.06%	1.94%	1.83%	1.72%	1.62%	1.53%
<b>State &amp; Local Government</b>	11.67%	10.97%	11.97%	11.01%	10.18%	10.10%	9.95%	9.78%	9.58%	9.37%

Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

## Tourism

Since agriculture and manufacturing are declining industries in Early County, tourism, particularly “eco-tourism”, (tourism, that is nature-based), can be a way for the County to diversify its economy. During the planning horizon, it is recommended the governments of Early County work toward taking advantage of their geographic advantage and

**Table 4.15**  
**Georgia: Earnings by Sector (in \$ Millions)**

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>Total</b>	\$66,537,100	\$85,919,700	\$102,642,000	\$123,514,000	\$160,462,000	\$180,866,000	\$202,919,000	\$227,019,000	\$253,253,000	\$281,758,000
<b>Farm</b>	\$106,153,000	\$1,087,670	\$1,391,280	\$1,733,670	\$1,565,760	\$1,682,760	\$1,802,910	\$1,933,340	\$2,075,970	\$2,233,020
<b>Agricultural</b>	\$244,855,000	\$350,797	\$475,908	\$660,059	\$943,559	\$1,086,060	\$1,239,330	\$1,400,730	\$1,566,550	\$1,733,320
<b>Mining</b>	\$429,934,000	\$413,933	\$373,738	\$359,779	\$438,244	\$445,441	\$456,347	\$471,301	\$489,686	\$510,946
<b>Construction</b>	\$3,765,500	\$5,647,560	\$5,975,270	\$6,661,070	\$9,630,130	\$10,606,800	\$11,506,000	\$12,401,400	\$13,309,000	\$14,242,900
<b>Manufacturing</b>	\$14,997,800	\$17,211,700	\$17,973,700	\$20,801,400	\$23,849,500	\$26,143,500	\$28,510,600	\$30,854,700	\$33,129,100	\$35,298,600
<b>Trans, Comm,</b>	\$6,208,770	\$7,604,700	\$8,981,390	\$11,643,900	\$15,867,700	\$18,059,600	\$20,304,900	\$22,610,400	\$24,909,000	\$27,140,000
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	\$5,900,690	\$7,766,500	\$9,090,690	\$10,085,400	\$13,549,200	\$15,124,900	\$16,662,400	\$18,269,600	\$19,955,500	\$21,729,700
<b>Retail Trade</b>	\$6,870,370	\$9,141,230	\$9,413,850	\$11,216,700	\$14,426,000	\$16,215,300	\$18,126,500	\$20,144,900	\$22,276,700	\$24,530,800
<b>Finance</b>	\$3,617,310	\$4,803,430	\$6,600,850	\$8,476,150	\$12,153,700	\$13,862,800	\$15,688,500	\$17,666,000	\$19,784,200	\$22,033,100
<b>Services</b>	\$10,401,900	\$14,915,700	\$22,532,200	\$30,044,900	\$42,959,700	\$50,244,000	\$58,890,800	\$69,107,300	\$81,084,500	\$95,046,200
<b>Federal Civilian</b>	\$3,751,390	\$4,391,100	\$4,780,640	\$5,147,370	\$5,442,790	\$5,621,590	\$5,826,300	\$6,051,600	\$6,295,200	\$6,556,750
<b>Federal Military</b>	\$2,475,230	\$3,160,120	\$2,765,140	\$3,080,300	\$3,297,820	\$3,501,760	\$3,705,550	\$3,907,320	\$4,105,500	\$4,298,440
<b>State &amp; Local</b>	\$7,767,210	\$9,425,300	\$12,287,500	\$13,602,900	\$16,338,300	\$18,271,300	\$20,198,700	\$22,200,700	\$24,272,200	\$26,403,700

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

tremendous opportunities for building outdoor tourism with activities such as hunting, fishing, camping, bird watch-

Table 4.16 United States: Earnings by Sector (%)										
Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>Total</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>Farm</b>	1.23%	1.23%	1.25%	0.83%	0.79%	0.78%	0.76%	0.75%	0.72%	0.70%
<b>Agricultural Services, Other</b>	0.44%	0.51%	0.63%	0.63%	0.69%	0.69%	0.69%	0.68%	0.68%	0.67%
<b>Mining</b>	2.10%	1.66%	1.04%	0.89%	0.83%	0.79%	0.76%	0.73%	0.69%	0.66%
<b>Construction</b>	6.18%	6.19%	5.90%	5.40%	5.85%	5.75%	5.60%	5.44%	5.28%	5.11%
<b>Manufacturing</b>	24.21%	21.45%	18.97%	17.92%	15.93%	15.23%	14.59%	13.95%	13.32%	12.69%
<b>Trans, Comm, &amp; Public Utilities</b>	7.43%	6.97%	6.50%	6.73%	6.75%	6.66%	6.54%	6.43%	6.30%	6.17%
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	6.57%	6.22%	6.30%	6.12%	6.20%	6.11%	5.98%	5.84%	5.70%	5.55%
<b>Retail Trade</b>	9.78%	10.14%	9.16%	9.00%	8.87%	8.61%	8.37%	8.14%	7.92%	7.70%
<b>Finance, Insurance, &amp; Real Estate</b>	5.83%	6.03%	6.95%	7.96%	9.18%	9.34%	9.47%	9.57%	9.64%	9.69%
<b>Services</b>	18.31%	21.35%	25.34%	27.08%	29.16%	30.59%	32.11%	33.67%	35.28%	36.92%
<b>Federal Civilian Government</b>	4.47%	4.18%	3.91%	3.71%	3.14%	2.96%	2.80%	2.65%	2.50%	2.37%
<b>Federal Military Government</b>	1.96%	2.43%	1.94%	1.55%	1.25%	1.20%	1.14%	1.09%	1.03%	0.97%
<b>State &amp; Local Government</b>	11.47%	11.64%	12.10%	12.18%	11.35%	11.29%	11.18%	11.06%	10.93%	10.79%

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc

ing and farm tours, as well as drawing on the popular recreation opportunities offered by the Chattahoochee river. Nature-based tourism could have an enormous impact on business income and sale tax revenues in Early County.

In addition to eco-tourism, historical and cultural tourism should be considered to diversify the economy. Many tourists plan their vacations around, or to include, historic and cultural sites. Although Early County has relatively few such opportunities when compared to a more populated area, it should capitalize on what it does have. These resources include the Kolomoki Indian Mounds State Historic Park, historic downtown Blakely, the Coheelee Creek

**Table 4.17**  
**United States: Earnings by Sector (in billions)**

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>Total</b>	\$3,133,270	\$3,561,430	\$4,097,140	\$4,506,710	\$5,512,010	\$6,125,480	\$6,787,980	\$7,521,840	\$8,334,940	\$9,236,090
<b>Farm</b>	\$38,586.5	\$43,719.2	\$51,249.6	\$37,483.5	\$43,689.7	\$47,857.5	\$51,907.1	\$56,099.2	\$60,413.9	\$64,828.8
<b>Agricultural Services, Other</b>	\$13,875.8	\$18,083.1	\$25,894	\$28,538.9	\$37,867.9	\$42,138.4	\$46,574.6	\$51,364	\$56,520.4	\$62,056.7
<b>Mining</b>	\$65,932.8	\$59,186.7	\$42,579.1	\$40,302.5	\$45,540.3	\$48,440.8	\$51,461.5	\$54,611.2	\$57,890.8	\$61,300.6
<b>Construction</b>	\$193,519	\$220,510	\$241,731	\$243,138	\$322,680	\$352,152	\$379,842	\$409,052	\$439,801	\$472,104
<b>Manufacturing</b>	\$758,592	\$763,929	\$777,101	\$807,717	\$877,790	\$932,794	\$990,395	\$1,049,510	\$1,110,000	\$1,171,680
<b>Trans, Comm, &amp; Public Utilities</b>	\$232,755	\$248,374	\$266,311	\$303,367	\$372,145	\$407,808	\$444,234	\$483,360	\$525,331	\$570,292
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	\$205,960	\$221,496	\$258,219	\$275,724	\$341,651	\$374,537	\$406,039	\$439,532	\$475,077	\$512,729
<b>Retail Trade</b>	\$306,453	\$361,053	\$375,489	\$405,467	\$489,059	\$527,296	\$568,405	\$612,558	\$659,971	\$710,869
<b>Finance, Insurance, &amp; Real Estate</b>	\$182,810	\$214,835	\$284,928	\$358,925	\$506,185	\$572,351	\$642,912	\$719,984	\$803,853	\$894,770,
<b>Services</b>	\$573,750	\$760,538	\$1,038,030	\$1,220,240	\$1,607,450	\$1,873,830	\$2,179,600	\$2,532,800	\$2,940,370	\$3,410,190
<b>Federal Civilian Government</b>	\$140,121	\$148,845	\$160,018	\$167,212	\$172,986	\$181,506	\$190,237	\$199,308	\$208,727	\$218,504
<b>Federal Military</b>	\$61,484.2	\$86,435.5	\$79,656.7	\$69,637.1	\$69,114.4	\$73,365.3	\$77,610.5	\$81,811.1	\$85,934.1	\$89,945.4
<b>State &amp; Local</b>	\$359,434	\$414,422	\$495,935	\$548,953	\$625,852	\$691,400	\$758,756	\$831,842	\$911,057	\$996,817

Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc

Covered Bridge and Civil War-related sites.

## Education

The public school system in Early County fares well when compared to state averages, and is generally better than similar rural communities. As noted in the Population Element, the County's dropout rate is only 2.7 percent compared to 6.4 percent at the state level (2001).

High school graduation test scores vary annually, but are generally higher than the state average. The strength of the local public schools has certainly benefited the county in retaining and attracting businesses. Higher Education opportunities are available within reasonable commuting distance in Bainbridge at Bainbridge Community College, Darton College and Albany State University in Albany, as well as out-of-state opportunities in Dothan. In addition, Albany Technical College provides training on a branch campus located in Blakely.

	EARLY		US		GA	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
<b>Executive, Administrative and Managerial (not Farm)</b>	4.99%	9.51%	12.32%	13.45%	12.26%	14.03%
<b>Professional and Technical Specialty</b>	9.35%	13.70%	14.11%	20.20%	12.39%	18.68%
<b>Technicians &amp; Related Support</b>	1.79%	NA	3.68%	NA	3.58%	NA
<b>Sales</b>	8.21%	10.01%	13.79%	13.25%	12.28%	13.64%
<b>Clerical and Administrative Support</b>	13.72%	11.99%	16.26%	15.44%	16.00%	15.14%
<b>Private Household Services</b>	1.54%	NA	0.45%	NA	0.51%	NA
<b>Protective Services</b>	2.17%	NA	3.72%	NA	3.70%	NA
<b>Service Occupations (not Protective &amp; Household)</b>	10.40%	10.15%	13.04%	12.01%	9.77%	13.57%
<b>Farming, Fishing and Forestry</b>	9.11%	2.83%	2.46%	0.73%	2.20%	0.64%
<b>Precision Production, Craft, and Repair</b>	12.31%	17.65%	13.33%	8.49%	13.86%	9.02%
<b>Machine Operators, Assemblers &amp; Inspectors</b>	14.84%	8.28%	6.83%	9.45%	8.50%	10.83%
<b>Transportation &amp; Material Moving</b>	5.58%	9.91%	4.08%	6.14%	4.60%	6.63%
<b>Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, helpers &amp; Laborers</b>	6.00%	NA	3.94%	NA	4.34%	NA
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census						

## Special Events

Four annual performances by the Arts Council

Annual Kolomoki Festival, 2nd Saturday in October

Arts on the Square, 2nd Saturday in May

Holidays on the Square, 1st Saturday in December

Annual Easter Egg Hunt

## Civic Associations

In addition to traditional economic development agencies such as the local Chamber of Commerce, civic groups should be considered as a result of their ability to mobilize members for the benefit of the community. In Early County, these groups include:

Lions Club	Pilot Club	Habitat for Humanity
Rotary Club	Garden Club	Arlington Kiwanis Club
Blakely Shriners Club	Eastern Star	
Masons	Boy Scouts	

## C. LABOR FORCE

Table 4.18 revealed expansion in the following occupations for the county: Executive, Administrative and Managerial (not Farm) from 4.99 percent in 1990 to 9.51 percent in 2000; Professional & Technical Specialty from 9.35 percent in 1990 to 12.29 percent in 2000, Clerical & Administrative Support from 11.01 percent in 1990 to 10.93 per-

cent in 2000, Executive and Managerial from 6.18 percent in 1990 to 13.7 percent in 2000; Sales from 8.21 percent in 1990 to 10.01 in 2000; Precision Production, Craft and Repair from 12.31 percent in 1990 to 17.65 percent in 2000, and; Transportation from 5.58 percent in 1990 to 9.91 percent in 2000. Significant declines were seen the following occupations: Farming from 9.11 percent in 1990 to 2.83 percent in 2000 and Machine Operators, Assemblers and Inspectors from 14.84 percent in 1990 to 8.28 percent in 2000.

<b>Category</b>	<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>	
<b>TOTAL All Occupations</b>	565	100.00 %	567	100.00 %
<b>Executive, Administrative and Managerial (not Farm)</b>	38	6.73%	27	4.76%
<b>Professional and Technical Specialty</b>	51	9.03%	71	12.52%
<b>Technicians &amp; Related Support</b>	15	2.65%	NA	NA
<b>Sales</b>	43	7.61%	49	8.64%
<b>Clerical and Administrative Support</b>	51	9.03%	66	11.64%
<b>Private Household Services</b>	17	3.01%	NA	NA
<b>Protective Services</b>	7	1.24%	NA	NA
<b>Service Occupations (not Protective &amp; Household)</b>	46	8.14%	52	9.17%
<b>Farming, Fishing and Forestry</b>	35	6.19%	26	4.59%
<b>Precision Production, Craft, and Repair</b>	37	6.55%	134	23.63%
<b>Machine Operators, Assemblers &amp; Inspectors</b>	140	24.78%	48	8.47%
<b>Transportation &amp; Material Moving</b>	41	7.26%	66	11.64%
<b>Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, helpers &amp; Laborers</b>	44	7.79%	NA	N/A
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics				

Occupations in Early County changed over the ten-year period similarly to those on the state and national levels, with two notable exceptions. Whereas Precision Production, Craft and Repairs grew significantly in the County, the classification lost prominence in the state and nation. Conversely, Machine Operators, Assemblers & Inspectors lost percentage share in Early County, while it grew in both Georgia and the U.S.

The table also shows steady increase in the occupations of Executive/Administrative/Managerial, Professional

<b>Category</b>	<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>	
<b>TOTAL All Occupations</b>	2087	100.00 %	1867	100.00 %
<b>Executive, Administrative and Managerial (not Farm)</b>	90	4.31%	131	7.02%
<b>Professional and Technical Specialty</b>	267	12.79%	264	14.14%
<b>Technicians &amp; Related Support</b>	37	1.77%	NA	NA
<b>Sales</b>	227	10.88%	193	10.34%
<b>Clerical and Administrative Support</b>	287	13.75%	204	10.93%
<b>Private Household Services</b>	38	1.82%	NA	NA
<b>Protective Services</b>	55	2.64%	NA	NA
<b>Service Occupations (not Protective &amp; Household)</b>	253	12.12%	197	10.55%
<b>Farming, Fishing and Forestry</b>	72	3.45%	47	2.52%
<b>Precision Production, Craft, and Repair</b>	230	11.02%	404	21.64%
<b>Machine Operators, Assemblers &amp; Inspectors</b>	290	13.90%	118	6.32%
<b>Transportation &amp; Material Moving</b>	112	5.37%	139	7.45%
<b>Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, helpers &amp; Laborers</b>	129	6.18%	NA	NA
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics				

and Technical Specialty, Clerical/ Administrative Support and Transportation & Material Moving for Early County, the state and the nation. Occupations in Farming, Fishing and Forestry have declined drastically for Early County, the State of Georgia and the nation. See Table 4.18 for a comparison of Early County, the state of Georgia and the United States.

**Table 4.19 through Table 4.22** illustrate the same categories of employment for each of the cities in Early County. There is a tremendous variety among the cities, with only three occupation sectors that uniformly changed in the same directions. Farming, Fishing and Forestry, and; Machine Operators, Assemblers & Inspectors both decreased in the four cities between 1990 and 2000. While at the same time, Transportation & Material Moving increased in prominence in each during the same period. In all the cities except Jakin, Precision Production, Craft and Repairs increased substantially, whereas it fell substantially in Jakin.

In the City of Arlington (**Table 4.19**), significant changes were seen in only two categories: Precision Production, Craft and Repairs, which grew from 6.55 percent to 23.63 percent between 1990 and 2000, and; Machine Operators,

Assemblers & Inspectors which declined from 24.78 percent in 1990 to just 8.47 percent in 2000. During this same time, Sales; Clerical and Administrative Support; Service Occupations; and Transportation & Material Moving all showed positive gains, while Executive, Administrative and Managerial; Professional and Technical Specialty, and; Farming, Fishing and Forestry declined in percentage.

Category	1990		2000	
<b>TOTAL All Occupations</b>	111	100.00%	87	100.00%
<b>Executive, Administrative and Managerial (not Farm)</b>	11	9.91%	7	8.05%
<b>Professional and Technical Specialty</b>	6	5.41%	8	9.20%
<b>Technicians &amp; Related Support</b>	7	6.31%	NA	NA
<b>Sales</b>	2	1.80%	6	6.90%
<b>Clerical and Administrative Support</b>	6	5.41%	7	8.05%
<b>Private Household Services</b>	10	9.01%	NA	NA
<b>Protective Services</b>	0	0.00%	NA	NA
<b>Service Occupations (not Protective &amp; Household)</b>	7	6.31%	6	6.90%
<b>Farming, Fishing and Forestry</b>	7	6.31%	2	2.30%
<b>Precision Production, Craft, and Repair</b>	7	6.31%	25	28.74%
<b>Machine Operators, Assemblers &amp; Inspectors</b>	32	28.83%	4	4.60%
<b>Transportation &amp; Material Moving</b>	10	9.01%	23	26.44%
<b>Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, helpers &amp; Laborers</b>	6	5.41%	NA	NA
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics				

The City of Blakely saw similar, yet less dramatic moves in the categories of Precision Production, Craft and Repairs and Machine Operators, Assemblers & Inspectors as well (see Table 4.20). Precision Production, Craft and Repairs, grew from 11.02 percent to 21.64 percent between 1990 and 2000, while Machine Operators, Assemblers & Inspectors declined from 13.9 percent in 1990 to 6.32 percent in 2000. In addition, Executive, Administrative and Managerial occupations increased significantly from 4.31 percent to 7.02 percent. Occupations that fell in percentage were: Sales; Clerical and Administrative Support; Service Occupations, and; Farming, Fishing and Forestry. Categories that increased slightly include Professional and Technical Specialty, and Transportation & Material Moving.

In the City of Damascus, illustrated on **Table 4.21**, substantial positive changes were seen in Sales; Precision Pro-

Category	1990		2000	
<b>TOTAL All Occupations</b>	64	100.00%	77	100.00%
<b>Executive, Administrative and Managerial (not Farm)</b>	2	3.13%	15	19.48%
<b>Professional and Technical Specialty</b>	2	3.13%	6	7.79%
<b>Technicians &amp; Related Support</b>	2	3.13%	NA	NA
<b>Sales</b>	5	7.81%	2	2.60%
<b>Clerical and Administrative Support</b>	10	15.63%	16	20.78%
<b>Private Household Services</b>	0	0.00%	NA	NA
<b>Protective Services</b>	0	0.00%	NA	NA
<b>Service Occupations (not Protective &amp; Household)</b>	0	0.00%	3	3.90%
<b>Farming, Fishing and Forestry</b>	7	10.94%	0	0.00%
<b>Precision Production, Craft, and Repair</b>	13	20.31%	7	9.09%
<b>Machine Operators, Assemblers &amp; Inspectors</b>	7	10.94%	7	9.09%
<b>Transportation &amp; Material Moving</b>	8	12.50%	11	14.29%
<b>Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, helpers &amp; Laborers</b>	8	12.50%	NA	NA

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

duction, Craft and Repairs, and; Transportation & Material Moving. Slight increases were seen in Professional and Technical Specialty; Clerical and Administrative Support, and; Service Occupations. Significant declines were in the categories of Farming, Fishing and Forestry, and; Machine Operators, Assemblers & Inspectors. The only occupations that declined slightly were in the Executive, Administrative and Managerial category.

As seen on **Table 4.22**, the City of Jakin had significant increases in two categories- Executive, Administrative and Managerial, and; Professional and Technical Specialty. Smaller gains were made in Clerical and Administrative Support.

Category	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
<b>Labor Force (thousands)</b>	125,840	126,346	128,105	129,200	196,814	132,304	133,943	136,297	137,673	139,368	140,863	141,815
<b>Employed (thousands)</b>	118,793	117,718	118,492	120,259	123,060	124,900	126,708	129,558	131,463	133,488	135,208	135,073
<b>Unemployed (thousands)</b>	7,047	8,628	9,613	8,940	7,996	7,404	7,236	6,739	6,210	5,880	5,655	6,742
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	5.6%	6.8%	7.5%	6.9%	6.1%	5.6%	5.4%	4.9%	4.5%	4.2%	4.0%	4.8%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

port, and; Transportation & Material Moving. Substantial decreases occurred in Sales; Farming, Fishing and Forestry, and; Precision Production, Craft and Repairs. The only category that minimally decreased was Machine Operators, Assemblers & Inspectors

## **EMPLOYMENT STATUS**

Tables 3.23 through 3.26 indicate that the county's unemployment rates are, almost without exception, significantly higher than both the nation and the state. Review of unemployment statistics over the last few years show that while unemployment has risen at the state and national levels, it has declined from 8.9% in 1999 to 7.8% in 2003 in Early County. However, the County ranked (in 2002) 124th out of 159 counties in Georgia. This may be attributed to the area's dependence on the agriculture and manufacturing sectors and the lack of a significantly diversified economy. Jobs in agriculture and manufacturing are steadily declining due to technology and foreign competition. Furthermore, the lack of job opportunities in Early County are causing many people to seek employment in other communities within a reasonable driving distance. Table 3.27 shows that in 2000, approximately 24% of Early County's workforce was employed outside the county.

Table 3.28, Labor Force Participation, shows the makeup of the Labor Force in each political jurisdiction in Early County. Table 3.29 shows Early County data compared to the same categories on the state and national levels in percentage form. Immediately, it is clear that participation in the labor force has declined between 1990 and 2000 at all three levels of government, however Early County has a significantly lower participation percentage. In 2000, only 57.44% of the population participated in the Labor Force, whereas the state average was 66.07% and the national average 63.92%. This shows the relative strength of Georgia's Labor Force Participation compared to the nation, but

Table 4.24 Georgia: Labor Statistics											
Category	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Labor Force	3,300,380	3,263,876	3,353,566	3,467,191	3,577,505	3,617,165	3,738,850	3,904,474	4,014,526	4,078,263	4,173,274
Employed	3,118,253	3,099,103	3,119,071	3,265,259	3,391,782	3,440,859	3,566,542	3,727,295	3,845,702	3,916,080	4,018,876
Unemployed	182,127	164,772	234,495	201,932	185,722	176,306	172,308	177,179	168,824	162,183	154,398
Unemployment Rate	5.5%	5.0%	7.0%	5.8%	5.2%	4.9%	4.6%	4.5%	4.2%	4.0%	3.7%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

Table 4.25 Early County: Labor Statistics											
Category	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Labor Force	5,136	5,225	5,352	5,143	5,062	4,888	4,818	4,860	4,696	4,653	4,768
Employed	4,817	4,873	4,754	4,648	4,588	4,493	4,454	4,457	4,275	4,240	4,406
Unemployed	319	352	598	495	474	395	364	403	421	413	362
Unemployment Rate	6.2%	6.7%	11.2%	9.6%	9.4%	8.1%	7.6%	8.3%	9.0%	8.9%	7.6%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

highlights the lower percentage in Early County.

Labor Force participation, or lack thereof, is made up of several components that require a closer look at the

Population Element to fully interpret. For instance, a community

Table 4.26 Past Unemployment Comparison														
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Early County	6.2%	6.7%	11.2%	9.6%	9.4%	8.1%	7.6%	8.3%	9.0%	8.9%	7.6%	5.9%	6.6%	7.8%
United States	5.6%	6.8%	7.5%	6.9%	6.1%	5.6%	5.4%	4.9%	4.5%	4.2%	4.0%	4.7%	5.8%	NA
State of Georgia	5.5%	5.0%	7.0%	5.8%	5.2%	4.9%	4.6%	4.5%	4.2%	4.0%	3.7%	4.0%	5.1%	5.2%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

<b>TABLE 3.27 Commuting Pattern in Early County</b>		
	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Worked in County of Residence</b>	3710	3379
<b>Worked outside county of Residence</b>	736	1064
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census		

could have a high percentage of either (or both) children or elderly. Because most of these people do not participate in the Labor Force, their numbers will lower the overall participation. Certainly, able-bodied unemployed citizens lower the Labor Force participation levels, but so do disabled individuals. Therefore, while in general, a low percentage of participation is not desirable, it may at the same time

highlight other community needs such as youth and senior programs.

## **D. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES**

### **1. Economic Development Agencies**

#### **EARLY COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

The Early County Economic Development Authority and the Blakely-Early County Chamber of Commerce are the two primary entities that promote economic development in the county. The Economic Development Authority provides financial incentives like tax revenues, bonds and property tax abatements as incentives for companies to relocate or to expand in Early County. The Chamber of Commerce helps market the communities to attract new businesses and promote the needs of existing businesses. Both organizations work very closely in developing and implementing economic development strategies for the county. The Economic Development Authority operates a 200 acre industrial park that currently has excess water and sewer capacity.

#### **SOUTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

The Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center was created by the 1989 Georgia Planning Act and pro-

Category	Early County		Arlington		Blakely		Damascus		Jakin	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
<b>TOTAL Males and Females</b>	<b>8759</b>	<b>9190</b>	1084	1161	4036	4023	242	181	104	120
<b>In Labor Force</b>	<b>5108</b>	<b>5279</b>	617	627	2325	2050	125	90	67	79
<b>Civilian Labor Force</b>	<b>5096</b>	<b>5272</b>	617	627	2321	2043	123	90	67	79
<b>Civilian Employed</b>	<b>4751</b>	<b>4845</b>	565	567	2087	1867	111	87	64	77
<b>Civilian Unemployed</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>427</b>	52	60	234	176	12	3	3	2
<b>In Armed Forces</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	0	0	4	7	2	0	0	0
<b>Not in Labor Force</b>	<b>3651</b>	<b>3911</b>	467	534	1711	1973	117	91	37	41
<b>TOTAL Males</b>	<b>3926</b>	<b>4061</b>	465	523	1689	1654	86	83	54	48
<b>Male In Labor Force</b>	<b>2642</b>	<b>2593</b>	306	295	1062	888	54	43	44	36
<b>Male Civilian Labor Force</b>	<b>2642</b>	<b>2586</b>	306	295	1062	881	54	43	44	36
<b>Male Civilian Employed</b>	<b>2521</b>	<b>2389</b>	284	272	975	788	49	42	41	34
<b>Male Civilian Unemployed</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>197</b>	22	23	87	93	5	1	3	2
<b>Male In Armed Forces</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0
<b>Male Not in Labor Force</b>	<b>1284</b>	<b>1468</b>	159	228	627	766	32	40	10	12
<b>TOTAL Females</b>	<b>4833</b>	<b>5129</b>	619	638	2347	2369	156	98	50	72
<b>Female In Labor Force</b>	<b>2466</b>	<b>2686</b>	311	332	1263	1162	71	47	23	43
<b>Female Civilian Labor Force</b>	<b>2454</b>	<b>2686</b>	311	332	1259	1162	69	47	23	43
<b>Female Civilian Employed</b>	<b>2230</b>	<b>2456</b>	281	295	1112	1079	62	45	23	43
<b>Female Civilian Unemployed</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>230</b>	30	37	147	83	7	2	0	0
<b>Female In Armed Forces</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	0	0	4	0	2	0	0	0
<b>Female Not in Labor Force</b>	<b>2367</b>	<b>2443</b>	308	306	1084	1207	85	51	27	29

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

vides planning and community development services to the 14 counties and 46 cities in Southwest Georgia. The non-profit agency provides technical assistance to all of the local governments and in some instances private citizens. Some of the functions of the RDC include: Community/Economic Development, General Government Services, Historic Preservation, Mapping and Geographical Information Services,

Planning and Zoning, Grant Writing and Administration, and Loans.

## GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Georgia Tech's Economic Development Institute (EDI) provides assistance to improve the productivity, quality

and management practices of manufacturing firms in Georgia. They work collaboratively with small and large companies to solve problems or investigate opportunities in a manner that is customer- and quality-driven for their clients.

**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

UGA Small Business

Development Center is funded by a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration to consult, and train, small business owners.

**Table 3.29  
Labor Force Participation %**

Category	Early County		Georgia		United States	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
<b>TOTAL Males and Females</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>In Labor Force</b>	<b>58.32%</b>	<b>57.44%</b>	67.89%	66.07%	65.28%	63.92%
<b>Civilian Labor Force</b>	<b>58.18%</b>	<b>57.37%</b>	66.41%	65.00%	64.39%	63.39%
<b>Civilian Employed</b>	<b>54.24%</b>	<b>52.72%</b>	62.60%	61.43%	60.34%	59.73%
<b>Civilian Unemployed</b>	<b>3.94%</b>	<b>4.65%</b>	3.80%	3.57%	4.05%	3.66%
<b>In Armed Forces</b>	<b>0.14%</b>	<b>0.08%</b>	1.48%	1.07%	0.89%	0.53%
<b>Not in Labor Force</b>	<b>41.68%</b>	<b>42.56%</b>	32.11%	33.93%	34.72%	36.08%
<b>TOTAL Males</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>Male In Labor Force</b>	<b>67.29%</b>	<b>63.85%</b>	76.65%	73.11%	74.48%	70.75%
<b>Male Civilian Labor Force</b>	<b>67.29%</b>	<b>63.68%</b>	73.87%	71.20%	72.82%	69.81%
<b>Male Civilian Employed</b>	<b>64.21%</b>	<b>58.83%</b>	70.07%	67.65%	68.18%	65.81%
<b>Male Civilian Unemployed</b>	<b>3.08%</b>	<b>4.85%</b>	3.80%	3.55%	4.63%	3.99%
<b>Male In Armed Forces</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.17%</b>	2.78%	1.91%	1.66%	0.94%
<b>Male Not in Labor Force</b>	<b>32.71%</b>	<b>36.15%</b>	23.35%	26.89%	25.52%	29.25%
<b>TOTAL Females</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>Female In Labor Force</b>	<b>51.02%</b>	<b>52.37%</b>	59.88%	59.43%	56.79%	57.54%
<b>Female Civilian Labor Force</b>	<b>50.78%</b>	<b>52.37%</b>	59.59%	59.15%	56.60%	57.39%
<b>Female Civilian Employed</b>	<b>46.14%</b>	<b>47.88%</b>	55.78%	55.57%	53.10%	54.04%
<b>Female Civilian Unemployed</b>	<b>4.63%</b>	<b>4.48%</b>	3.81%	3.59%	3.51%	3.35%
<b>Female In Armed Forces</b>	<b>0.25%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	0.29%	0.28%	0.19%	0.15%
<b>Female Not in Labor Force</b>	<b>48.98%</b>	<b>47.63%</b>	40.12%	40.57%	43.21%	42.46%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

## **GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The department is the state's official economic development agency that encourages business investments, the expansion of existing industries, and securing new markets for Georgia's products. Additionally, it markets Georgia as an ideal location for the tourism and motion picture industries. The Department of Economic Development was formally known as the Georgia Department of Industry Trade and Tourism.

## **BETTER HOMETOWN PROGRAM**

The Better Hometown Program is a self-help, community development program for small cities with populations under 10,000. Its purpose is to improve the quality of life through sound planning and implementation by community stakeholders, with a particular focus on the traditional downtown area. The Better Hometown Program develops local vision and leadership to actively facilitate economic development through use of the model of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Program. The four components of this approach focus on: Organization, Design, Economic Restructuring and Promotion. Designated cities receive technical assistance, manager/board training, regional networking sessions and resources to assist the community in revitalizing the downtown area.

## **GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS: BUSINESS & FINANCE ASSISTANCE DIVISION**

This division administers various community and economic development grant and loan programs and provides financial packaging assistance to small businesses. The division oversees and monitors local Revolving Loan Funds (RLF) throughout Georgia that were created through the Employment Incentive Program. The division manages the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Grant Program and the ARC Revolving Loan Fund. It also administers the Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community (EZ/EC) Program, the Regional Economic Business Assistance (REBA) grant program, and the Regional Assistance Program (RAP).

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## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION**

The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) provides grants for infrastructure development, local capacity building and business development to help communities alleviate conditions of substantial and persistent unemployment and underemployment in economically distressed areas and regions.

## **USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Rural Development achieves its mission by helping individuals, communities and businesses in rural areas obtain the financial and technical assistance needed to address their diverse and unique needs. Rural Development works to make sure that rural areas can participate fully in the global economy by supporting essential public facilities and services such as water and sewer systems. It is also active in promoting economic development with loans to businesses through banks and community-managed lending pools. In addition, Rural Development also provides technical assistance to help communities undertake community empowerment programs.

## **2. Economic Development Programs**

### **BUSINESS TAX CREDITS**

The Georgia Job Tax Credit Program provides tax credits on Georgia income taxes for any qualifying business or headquarters engaged in tourism, manufacturing, warehouse and distribution, and research and development. It does

not include retail businesses.

The tax credits are based on an annual ranking of counties' census tracts that places them in economic tiers using the following factors:

- \* highest unemployment rate for the most recent 36 month period;
- \* lowest per capita income for the most recent 36 month period;
- \* highest percentage of residents whose incomes are below the poverty level according to the most recent data available;
- \* average weekly manufacturing wage according to the most recent data available.

Early county is classified as a Tier 1 county. Georgia counties are ranked Tier 1 through Tier 4, depending on annual economic conditions. Higher rankings indicate better conditions, and fewer incentives are available. There are 71 Tier 1 counties that represent the state's least developed areas. Companies creating five or more new jobs in a Tier 1 county may receive a \$3,500 tax credit. Thirty-five counties are ranked Tier 2. Companies creating 10 or more new jobs in a Tier 2 county may receive a \$2,500 tax credit. There are also 35 Tier 3 counties. Companies creating 15 or more new jobs in a Tier 3 county may receive a \$1,250 tax credit. The remaining 18 counties are ranked Tier 4. Companies creating 25 or more new jobs in a Tier 4 county may receive a \$750 tax credit. There are no Tier 3 or 4 counties in Southwest Georgia. (all tiers based on 2004 data)

The Georgia Investment Tax Credit is based on the tiers used in the Job Tax Credit Program. This program allows a corporation or person that has operated an existing manufacturing facility in the state for the previous three years to obtain a credit against the state income tax liability for any new capital investments. Companies expanding in Tier 2 counties must invest \$3 million to receive a three percent credit. This credit increases to five percent for recycling,

pollution control and defense conversion activities.

The Freeport Tax Exemption is a method whereby a community can exempt certain types of industrial inventories from ad valorem taxes. The exemption is used in phases of 20 percent increments for five years. There are three types of inventory that are eligible for exemption.

Raw materials or goods-in-process

- \* Finished goods held by manufacturer
- \* Finished goods destined for out-of-state shipment

A Retraining Tax Credit is for employers who provide retraining for employees. Employers are eligible for a tax credit equal to 25 percent or up to \$500 for the costs of retraining per full time student. The training must:

3. Enhance the functional skills of the production line;
2. Be approved by the Department of Technical and Adult Education;
3. Be provided at no cost to the employee.

The Child Care Tax Credit is available to employers who provide or sponsor child care for employees. Employers are eligible for a tax credit of up to 50 percent of the operating cost for the center.

The Manufacturing Machinery Sales Tax Exemption provides for exemption from sales tax for manufacturing equipment based on the following conditions:

- \* Machinery used directly in the manufacturing of tangible personal property when the machinery is bought to replace

or upgrade machinery in a manufacturing plant presently existing in the state.

\* Machinery used directly in the manufacturing of tangible personal property when the machinery is incorporated as additional machinery for the first time into a manufacturing plant presently existing in this state.

Primary Material Handling Sales Tax Exemption provides for exemption from sales tax on purchases of primary material handling equipment which is used directly for the handling and movement of tangible personal property in a new or expanding warehouse or distribution facility that has a value of \$10 million or more.

Job Tax Credit for Joint Development Authorities allows an additional \$500 job tax credit for a business locating within the jurisdiction of a joint authority of two or more contiguous counties.

## **REVOLVING LOAN PROGRAM**

The Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) is a program administered by the Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center that provides gap financing to encourage private investment in a project. The maximum amount from the RLF is \$125,000 and the minimum amount is \$40,000. Projects are expected to have a minimum of \$2.00 in private investment for each \$1.00 in RLF. The term for the loan is up to 10 years. The interest rate with the RLF is the fixed prime rate. The financing amount is up to 90 percent of the eligible cost and requires at least a ten percent cash/equity injection. Funding is available for fixed assets (land, building and equipment) and working capital. Typical financing structure for the program is 56.7 percent bank, 33.3 percent RFL and 10 percent small business. The bank has first mortgage on 100 percent collateral, while RDC has the second mortgage position.

## **UTILITY RATE BREAKS**

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A utility rate break tool is offered by Georgia Power Company in a joint effort with the Public Service Commission to encourage business growth in Georgia's most economically distressed communities. Existing firms must increase energy use to be eligible for the rate break. These price incentives include a two-year, 10 percent discount on base rates for companies creating one to nine jobs and a 15 percent discount for companies that create ten to nineteen jobs. A 20 percent discount is offered to those companies creating twenty or more jobs. There is also an additional five percent discount for expanding in an already served facility vacant for six months, or one of the eighty distressed counties as defined by the state.

### **EMPLOYMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAM**

The EIP is a financing program that may be used in conjunction with traditional private financing to carry out economic development projects which will result in employment of low and moderate income persons. EIP Funds can be used for the following:

1. Public water and sewer systems, distribution and/or collection lines, wastewater treatment projects, rail spurs, and various other types of public facilities.
2. Financing for fixed assets including: land, new facilities, rehabilitation of existing facilities, machinery, equipment, etc.

### **ONE GEORGIA AUTHORITY**

OneGeorgia Equity Fund Program is used to provide financial assistance that includes grants, loans and other forms of assistance to assist applicants in promoting the health, welfare, safety, and economic security of the citizens of the state through the development and retention of employment opportunities in areas of greater need as defined by the Georgia Business Expansion and Support Act of 1994, as amended Awards are only given to projects in Tier 1 and 2

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counties, although Tier 3 counties may be considered under certain circumstances. There are only Tier 1 and 2 counties in Southwest Georgia.

The Early County Economic Development Authority received \$250,000 from the Equity Fund in 2004 to assist the expansion efforts of Golden Peanut Company. The funds will help the company retain 30 existing jobs and create 20 additional ones. In addition, the expansion is expected to benefit regional peanut farmers by increasing the demand for their products.

OneGeorgia Edge Fund Program can provide financial assistance to eligible applicants that are being considered as a relocation or expansion site and are competing with another state for location of a project; and, where the EDGE Fund is used when the health, welfare, safety and economic security of the citizens of the state are promoted through the development and/or retention of employment opportunities.

### **CDBG SECTION 108 PROGRAM**

The CDBG Loan Guarantee Program (Section 108 Program) is an economic and community development financing tool authorized under Section 108 of Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended. The program is a method of assisting non-entitlement local governments with certain unique and large-scale economic development projects that cannot proceed without the loan guarantee. In order to be eligible, a project must result in significant employment of benefit for low and moderate income persons.

### **REDEVELOPMENT FUND PROGRAM**

The Redevelopment Fund provides flexible financial assistance to local governments to assist them in imple-

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menting challenging economic and community development projects that cannot be undertaken with existing public sector grants and loans. The Redevelopment Fund will reward locally initiated public/private partnerships by providing financing to leverage private sector investments in commercial, downtown and industrial redevelopment and revitalization projects. While all CDBG funded projects that create jobs must meet applicable low and moderate-income criteria, the Redevelopment Fund will allow projects to be approved using a "eliminating slums or blight" national objective. The "slum and blight" emphasis will allow many smaller scale projects (in downtowns, blighted industrial areas, etc.) to be competitive for Redevelopment Fund financing. The Redevelopment Fund may support and extend DCA's existing CDBG programs in order to allow redevelopment projects with "challenging economics" to be made competitive for DCA, private and other public funding investments.

### **3. Economic Development Training Programs**

#### **1. Quick Start**

Georgia's Quick Start program is nationally recognized for providing high-quality training services at no cost to new or expanding businesses in Georgia.

#### **2. Albany Technical College**

Albany Technical College provides technical education and training support for evolving workforce development needs of Southwest Georgia. The college utilizes traditional, online and distance learning methods. The following purposes of Albany Tech are based on the concept that education benefits individuals, businesses and the community:

\* To provide quality competency-based associate degrees, diplomas, and technical certificates of credit programs that prepare students for employment in business, technical sciences, allied health, personal services and industrial careers.

\* To provide basic adult education and development programs to help adults improve life skills and prepare for continued education and training.

\* To contribute to the technological advancement of area businesses and industry through education and training.

\* To offer comprehensive continuing education courses and programs for the advancement of skills, knowledge and personal growth.

### **3. Albany State University**

The primary mission of Albany State University is to educate students by offering Bachelor's, Master's and Education Specialist degrees and a variety of non-degree educational programs. The University emphasizes the liberal arts as the foundation for all learning by exposing students to the humanities, fine arts, social sciences and the sciences.

Global learning is fostered through a broad-based curriculum, diverse University activities and the expanding use of technology. The University offers six advanced degrees: a master of science in criminal justice, a master of public administration, a master of business administration, a master of science in nursing, a master of education in 11 majors, and an education specialist degree. The University offers a Board of Regent's engineering transfer program and a dual degree program in engineering with Georgia Tech.

### **4. Darton College**

Darton College is a two-year college and offers 55 transfer degree majors, 20 two-year career degree programs

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and certificate programs. Darton is the nursing and allied health education center for Southwest Georgia. Eight allied health programs are offered to serve the needs of the health-care industry in the region. These include dental hygiene, emergency medical service, health information technology, human services technology, medical laboratory technology, occupational therapy assistant, physical therapy assistant and respiratory care. Graduates from the nursing program consistently have among the highest first-time pass rate on the licensing exam

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT**

The economic data revealed that manufacturing and agriculture are the prominent components of the local economy in Early County and the cities of Arlington, Blakely, Damascus, and Jakin. However, because of the long-term uncertainty of these sectors, the local governments of Early County should not depend solely on these industries as their economic base. The entire county must focus on expanding its economic base by developing diverse new industries. At the same time, considerable effort should be put into maintaining the County's dominance in the manufacturing and agriculture sectors. Although these sectors are in decline locally, and clearly losing prominence on the state and national levels, they will continue to dominate the economic base through the planning horizon. Diversification, particularly in industries related to local manufacturing and agricultural products, will help Early County prosper into the future.

The Early County Economic Development Authority should continue to focus its efforts on retaining existing industries. It should be a priority for the local governments to maintain good relationships with existing industries and actively help them meet their current and future needs. As recognized by the Georgia Department of Economic De-

velopment, the most effective economic development strategies start with retention and expansion of existing businesses.

The local governments and the Development Authority should consider providing financial and tax incentives to existing industries that are planning to expand their operations and provide new jobs. Careful consideration should be given to building a new industrial park or expanding the existing one to facilitate new businesses. Entrepreneurial development should be also be a priority in order to generate new, locally-owned businesses.

Because of the impact global competition has had on the manufacturing and agricultural sectors, the county may want to consider further involvement with the global economy. It may be possible to attract foreign investments for relocation to rural areas such as Early County. Foreign companies could be attracted to such locations because of the elimination of tariffs on their products and the low cost of labor and land. Additionally, transportation costs could be reduced significantly. At the same time, increased effort should be applied to marketing the products of Early County to foreign markets. Overseas markets could provide expanded opportunities for local agricultural and manufactured goods.

Value added industries should also be developed and attracted to the County. These businesses utilize products, or even by-products from local industries to create new products. Possibilities may exist utilizing waste from the Georgia Pacific lumber mill to turn it into useable products. Local agricultural products could also be further, or uniquely processed creating new markets. Value added industries can be successful because they utilize locally produced goods to make distinct products. In some cases, goods are made from another industry's by-product that

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would otherwise have to be disposed of. As a result, both industries benefit.

Nature and cultural based tourism should also be fully explored to help to diversify the local economic base. A marketing plan should be developed focusing on these aspects of tourism. Nature and cultural based tourism are growing industries nationally and could have a significant impact on sales tax revenues in Early County. Even though Early County may never attract enormous numbers of tourists, the benefits of economic diversification should not be overlooked.

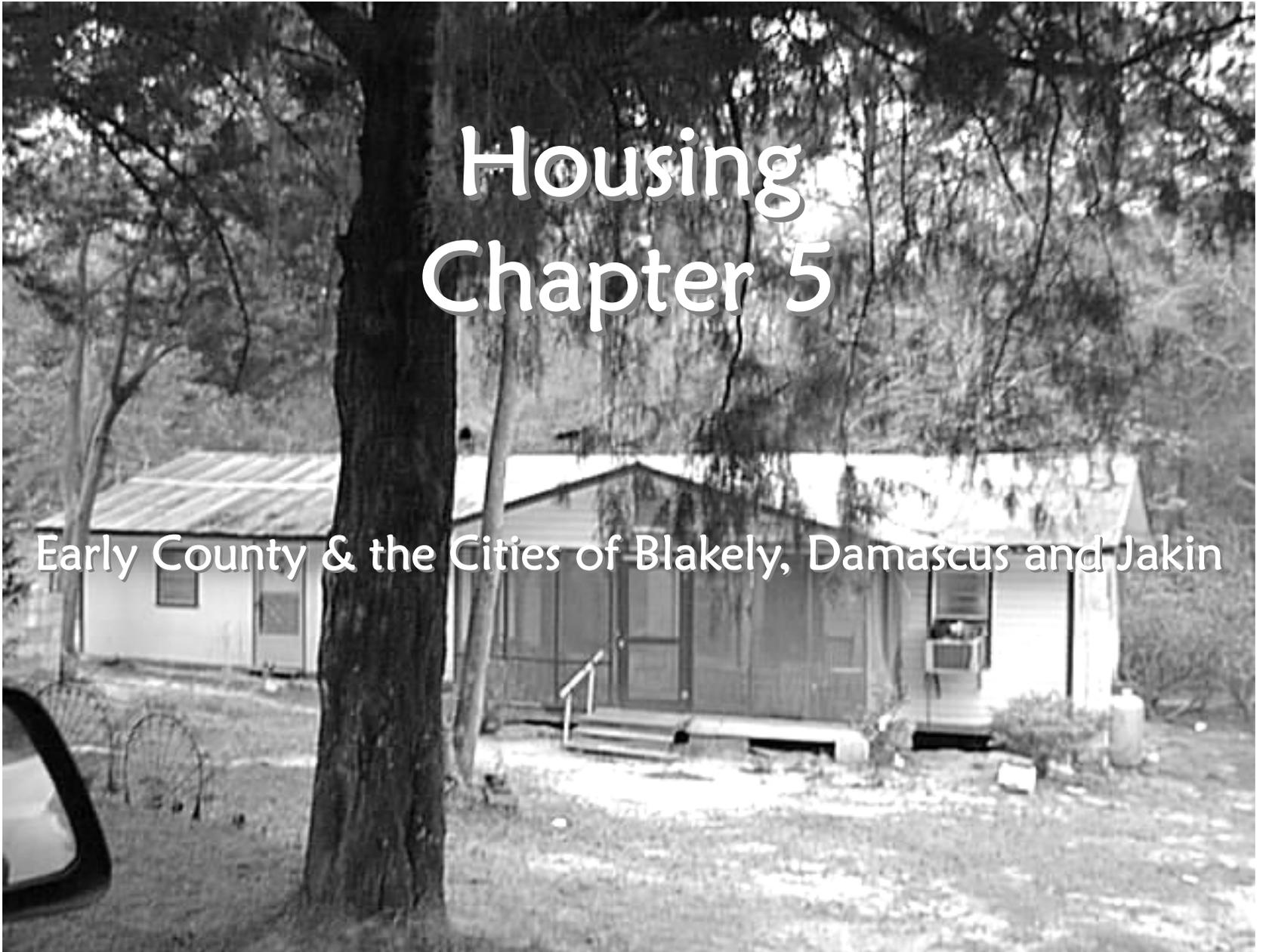
The local governments should also focus attention on encouraging citizens to shop locally. Many of the county's residents are purchasing a significant amount of goods and services in outside of the county because of the lack of local retail establishments. A market study should be considered to determine what types of businesses are in demand locally. In addition, a campaign should be implemented to educate citizens on the negative impacts their purchasing decisions can have on the local tax base.

Although the economy of Early County could always do better, it is not struggling quite as much as other, similarly situated areas. To remain competitive into the future, it should first focus on the retention of existing businesses



# Housing Chapter 5

Early County & the Cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin



# Housing

## A. Introduction

It is important to take a close look at existing housing supply in Early County and its municipalities to determine the amount and type of housing needed in the next twenty years. These tables seek to familiarize the reader with a summary of housing data for Early County. The housing element provides the information necessary for a community to evaluate and assess their existing housing situation and plan for future needs. This analysis of local housing characteristics is important to the comprehensive planning process in that it serves to identify housing development trends, existing or projected deficiencies in the housing supply and the causes, scope and nature of barriers to the adequate provision of housing for all sectors of the current and future population.

Care should be taken interpreting housing statistics from the Census Bureau regarding types of housing because the reporting standards for 1980 are different from those in 1990. The Census Bureau counted all houses in 1990 as opposed to only year-round housing units in 1980. In 1990, seasonal/migratory housing units were not reported separately.

A local assessment of the housing inventory is made in this element which determines whether the existing housing stock suits the needs and desires of the community in terms of quantity, quality, affordability, type and location. The assessment also takes into account the types of programs and policies needed to address the improvement of neighborhoods through infrastructure development, obliteration of blighted neighborhoods and substandard housing.

the need or potential for low or moderate income housing opportunities. In addition, a thorough analysis assists the community in determining the number and types of housing needed throughout the twenty year planning horizon, as well as the programs and assistance needed to improve housing conditions and neighborhoods. Such efforts may be implemented by the efforts of the private sector, non-profit organizations, public-private partnerships or the public sector.

In examination of the historic and current data related to the number and types of housing units, their age and condition, the occurrence of owner or renter occupied units, vacancy ratios and housing costs are important to an understanding of the adequacy and availability of a community's housing stock.

The housing stock needs to be evaluated in terms of:

- ✦ The number and types of housing units
- ✦ The age and condition of housing
- ✦ Owner and renter occupancy
- ✦ Housing Costs
- ✦ Location of existing housing

Household tenure and affordability

Utilizing this information on the existing housing situation, each community will need to determine if the existing housing stock meets the present needs of its residents and provides affordable and safe housing for all residents.

## B. Number and Type of Housing Units

In general, housing units are classified as single-family, (one-unit, detached or attached), multi-family, or mobile/manufactured housing. An examination of the number and housing type can help identify a region's over or under reliance on particular housing types. In 2000 the U.S. Census reported housing types using these general descriptions. In previous census periods, housing types were reported using these characteristics along with seasonal, migratory and recreational units in addition to year round housing units. However, these changes appear to have had very little impact on Early County housing totals. The tables below provide information on the number and type of housing units in Georgia, Early County and the region between 1980 and 2000. In the cases of small cities such as Damascus and Jakin, housing characteristics were either not available (NA) or not reported (NR) for census years 1980 and 1990.

TABLE 5.0: HOUSING TYPES IN GEORGIA			
Category	1980	1990	2000
<b>TOTAL Housing Units</b>	<b>2012640</b>	<b>2638418</b>	<b>3281737</b>
<b>Single Units (detached)</b>	<b>NR</b>	<b>1638847</b>	<b>2107317</b>
<b>Single Units (attached)</b>	<b>NR</b>	<b>73412</b>	<b>94150</b>
<b>Double Units</b>	<b>NR</b>	<b>89368</b>	<b>90370</b>
<b>3 to 9 Units</b>	<b>NR</b>	<b>276220</b>	<b>305920</b>
<b>10 to 19 Units</b>	<b>NR</b>	<b>138876</b>	<b>129276</b>
<b>20 to 49 Units</b>	<b>NR</b>	<b>55704</b>	<b>57825</b>
<b>50 or more Units</b>	<b>NR</b>	<b>38103</b>	<b>97628</b>
<b>Mobile Home or Trailer</b>	<b>152948</b>	<b>305055</b>	<b>394938</b>
<b>All Other</b>	<b>NR</b>	<b>22833</b>	<b>4313</b>
<b>Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)</b>			

In 2000, a total of 5,338 housing units were recorded by the Census Bureau in Early County. The largest shares of these units, or 60 percent of total housing units in the county were located in the unincorporated area. The second largest share of housing stock was located in the City of Blakely and it represented 42 percent of the county's total housing units. In the smaller Cities of Damascus and Jakin, the share was 2 percent and 1.6 percent of the county total. The distribution of the percentage of housing units throughout Early County has not changed significantly in the past twenty years. Ac-

According to previous census numbers, the number of housing units in the state increased by 24.4 percent, which was slower than the increase in population. Regionally, the opposite is true; the number of housing units grew faster than resident population.

Total housing units in Georgia increased 39 percent between 1980 and 2000; however, much of this increase may be attributed to the manner in which total housing units was redefined in 1990. Between 1990 and 2000 the number of housing units in Early County increased by 11.6 percent to total 5,338 units. This increase includes the addition of less than 100 seasonal units in the 1990 census count. In the City of Blakely, the number of housing units increased by 14.8 percent to total 2,287 units in 1990. The latest Census reports that the Cities of Damascus and Jakin had 111 and 87 total housing units respectively.

<b>TABLE 5.1: HOUSING UNITS IN EARLY COUNTY</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>TOTAL Housing Units</b>	NR	4714	5338
<b>Single Units (detached)</b>	NR	3389	3182
<b>Single Units (attached)</b>	NR	55	89
<b>Double Units</b>	NR	148	130
<b>3 to 9 Units</b>	NR	109	77
<b>10 to 19 Units</b>	NR	18	0
<b>20 to 49 Units</b>	NR	13	61
<b>50 or more Units</b>	NR	0	24
<b>Mobile Home or Trailer</b>	NR	919	1767
<b>All Other</b>	NR	63	8
<b>Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)</b>			

In the 2000 Census, Georgia’s housing stock consisted of 67.2 percent single family houses, 2.7 percent double units; 9.3 percent 3 to 9 units; 3.9 percent 10 to 19 units; 1.7 percent 20 to 49 units; and 2.9 percent with 50 or more units and 12 percent mobile homes. Regions were also very diverse regarding the distributions of units by type.

Single-family homes dominate the housing stock in Early County. Multi-family dwellings represent only 5.4 percent of the total dwelling units in Early County. By contrast, across the State of Georgia, multiple family dwellings comprise 23.6 percent of the total units in the state. In the City of Blakely, multi-family homes represent 10.8 percent

<b>TABLE 5.2: HOUSING UNITS IN REGION 10</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>TOTAL Housing Units</b>	NA	125392	145588
<b>Single Units (detached)</b>	NA	80859	88145
<b>Single Units (attached)</b>	NA	2372	3290
<b>Double Units</b>	NA	7499	7206
<b>3 to 9 Units</b>	NA	9218	10231
<b>10 to 19 Units</b>	NA	1799	1536
<b>20 to 49 Units</b>	NA	591	882
<b>50 or more Units</b>	NA	202	1654
<b>Mobile Home or Trailer</b>	NA	21766	32423
<b>All Other</b>	NA	1086	221
<b>Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)</b>			

of the dwelling units. The City of Damascus has virtually no multi-family housing. Twelve apartment units are located in the City of Jakin along Highway 84.

The most outstanding trend recognized in the housing type analysis is the notable increase in the number of mobile homes which occurred across the nation between 1990 and 2000. In 1990, mobile homes represented 8 percent of Georgia’s housing stock, and in 2000 it has risen to 12 percent. This trend has been duplicated in the southwest Georgia region. With the exception of Dougherty County, all of the counties in the South-west Georgia region re-

corded very high percentages of mobile homes in their housing stock and many exceeded the state percentage by double or triple the percentage.

Early County and the City of Blakely have recorded significant increases in the number of mobile homes in the housing stock over recent decades. This trend is being mimicked in the smaller cities of Damascus and Jakin. According to a regional assessment by the University of Georgia, Early County is one of five counties in the region in which more than 30 percent of their total housing units were mobile. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of mobile homes increased from 19 percent of the to-

<b>TABLE 5.3 HOUSING UNITS IN BLAKELY</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>TOTAL Housing Units</b>	2050	2095	2287
<b>Single Units (detached)</b>	NR	1477	1397
<b>Single Units (attached)</b>	NR	55	70
<b>Double Units</b>	NR	148	120
<b>3 to 9 Units</b>	NR	98	44
<b>10 to 19 Units</b>	NR	18	0
<b>20 to 49 Units</b>	NR	13	61
<b>50 or more Units</b>	NR	0	24
<b>Mobile Home or Trailer</b>	164	247	571
<b>All Other</b>	NR	39	0
<b>Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)</b>			

tal units to 33 percent in Early County. This represents a greater increase and a greater share of 2000 total units than was reflected at the state level. Across the state, the share of mobile home remained the same (12 percent) between 1990 and 2000. By comparison, the Cities of Blakely and Jakin recorded mobile home shares of 25 percent and 18 percent in 2000. The share of mobile homes in Damascus was even higher at 30 percent of the housing stock. Within the region the share increased from 17 percent to 22 percent between 1990 to 2000.

At approximately one-half the construction cost per square foot of conventionally site-built homes, mobile/manufactured housing is quite popular. It represents an important housing option for low-income households and is the primary form of unsubsidized affordable housing in the country. The significant percentage increase in mobile homes is likely due to their low initial cost, availability and convenient financing.

Trends to be noted in Early County and its municipalities: single family units and mobile homes dominated the housing stock while single multi-family units made up a small percentage. The current supply of housing does not offer adequate alternatives for individuals or families that match their housing needs, preferences, or their income in the next twenty year planning horizon. Even though there is an unmet demand for both renter and owner-occupied housing, the relatively small size of the local housing markets combined with other factors appears to be a disincentive to private development. Consumers are not aware of choices and what is needed to participate in the housing market. A large portion of the future demand for housing will come from individuals and households under age 35

TABLE 5.4: HOUSING UNITS IN DAMASCUS			
Category	1980	1990	2000
<b>TOTAL Housing Units</b>	NR	128	111
<b>Single Units (detached)</b>	NR	101	78
<b>Single Units (attached)</b>	NR	0	0
<b>Double Units</b>	NR	0	0
<b>3 to 9 Units</b>	NR	0	0
<b>10 to 19 Units</b>	NR	0	0
<b>20 to 49 Units</b>	NR	0	0
<b>50 or more Units</b>	NR	0	0
<b>Mobile Home or Trailer</b>	NR	27	33
<b>All Other</b>	NR	0	0
<b>Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported</b>			

and over age 65, the two groups growing at the fastest rates. These are also two groups that tend to have lower incomes. Manufactured housing is an increasing proportion of Early County and its municipalities housing stock. There are not enough suitable rental units and few new multi-family units are being built. These are areas that the leadership of Early County and the cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin will need to address. For a projection of future housing needs, Section H, Projected Housing Needs see below.

Table 5.30 Projected Housing Types for Early County & Municipalities						
Municipality	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>Early</b>						
<b>Total Units</b>	5338	5356	5374	5392	5410	5428
<b>Single - Family</b>	3271	3282	3293	3304	3315	3326
<b>Multi-Family</b>	292	293	294	295	296	297
<b>Mobile Homes</b>	1767	1773	1779	1785	1791	1797
<b>Blakely</b>						
<b>Total Units</b>	2287	2295	2303	2311	2319	2327
<b>Single-Family</b>	1397	1402	1407	1412	1417	1422
<b>Multi-Family</b>	249	250	251	252	253	254
<b>Mobile Homes</b>	571	573	575	577	579	581
<b>Damascus</b>						
<b>Total Units</b>	111	112	112	114	115	116
<b>Single-Family</b>	78	79	80	81	82	83
<b>Multi-Family</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Mobile Homes</b>	33	34	34	34	35	35
<b>Jakin</b>						
<b>Total Units</b>	87	88	88	89	89	90
<b>Single-Family</b>	57	58	58	59	59	60
<b>Multi-Family</b>	14	14	14	14	14	15
<b>Mobile Homes</b>	16	16	16	16	16	16
Source: Southwest Georgia RDC						

### C. Age and Condition of Housing

Since housing units deteriorate with age, age is sometimes used as a sign of the condition or quality of housing. In particular, housing units greater than 40 years old are often in need of major repairs.

This is the age that is generally accepted when remodeling and/or significant repairs become necessary. Counties with a high proportion of older housing are scattered throughout the state. However, there are three clusters of counties

where more than 50 percent of the housing stock was built before 1960. One of these clusters is located in southwest Georgia. In general Georgia's rural areas tend to have older housing stock than its urban areas. Residents in these areas are more likely to be faced with significant costly home repairs in the near future.

Two standard measures are used by the census to determine housing condition. These traditional indicators of housing quality include the percentage of housing built in a community prior to 1939 (although some of these units may have been restored or remodeled) and the percentage of units which lack complete plumbing facilities. The percentage of housing built prior to 1939 is also affected by the total amount of new construction in any given area. The tables below depict these housing characteristics for Georgia, Early County and the Cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin.

According to these indicators, the State of Georgia has made substantial progress in improving housing conditions over the past two decades. (One must also keep in mind the tremendous amount of new construction occurring across Georgia over the last twenty years.) During this period, the statewide percentage of housing units constructed prior to 1939 decreased from 29 to 8 percent and the percentage of units lacking complete plumbing declined from 13 percent to 1 percent. According to the 2003 Geor-

<b>TABLE 5.5: HOUSING UNITS IN JAKIN</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>TOTAL Housing Units</b>	NR	63	87
<b>Single Units (detached)</b>	NR	47	57
<b>Single Units (attached)</b>	NR	0	0
<b>Double Units</b>	NR	0	0
<b>3 to 9 Units</b>	NR	11	14
<b>10 to 19 Units</b>	NR	0	0
<b>20 to 49 Units</b>	NR	0	0
<b>50 or more Units</b>	NR	0	0
<b>Mobile Home or Trailer</b>	NR	5	16
<b>All Other</b>	NR	0	0
<i>Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)</i>			

<b>TABLE 5.6: GEORGIA HOUSING CONDITIONS</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Complete Plumbing Facilities</b>	NA	2609956	3252197
<b>Lacking Plumbing Facilities</b>	35769	28462	29540
<i>Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)</i>			

gia County Guide, only (2) building permits were issued for Early County and those permits were for single family houses.

An examination of these aspects of the overall housing picture in Early County indicates that while housing conditions have also improved substantially over the past two decades, they have yet to

TABLE 5.7: EARLY COUNTY HOUSING CONDITION			
Category	1980	1990	2000
Complete Plumbing Facilities	NR	4511	5236
Lacking Plumbing Facilities	511	203	102
Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)			

TABLE 5.8: Region 10 Housing Condition			
Category	1980	1990	2000
Complete Plumbing Facilities	NA	123036	143361
Lacking Plumbing Facilities	6187	2356	2227
Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)			

match the state average above. By comparison, in 2000, 10 percent of the county's housing stock was built prior to 1939 and 2 percent of homes were without complete plumbing. According to these factors, housing condition varies throughout the incorporated cities in Early County and each of the cities has higher percentages of older housing units than the county average. The City of Jakin's proportion of homes built prior to 1939 well exceeds the state norm at 29 percent. In spite of this

statistic, nearly all of Jakin's housing stock is in standard condition or needing only minor repairs. In the Cities of Blakely and Damascus, the percentage of homes built prior to 1939 is 13 and 11 percent respectively.

Substandard ness in housing units according to the census definition is a poor indicator of housing quality. Leaking roofs, rotting floors, poor insulation and other major problems indicates low quality housing that implies reduced livability and property value, but homes

TABLE 5.9: BLAKELY HOUSING CONDITION			
Category	1980	1990	2000
Complete Plumbing Facilities	NR	2000	2247
Lacking Plumbing Facilities	186	95	40
Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)			

TABLE 5.10: DAMASCUS HOUSING CONDITIONS			
Category	1980	1990	2000
Complete Plumbing Facilities	NR	121	111
Lacking Plumbing Facilities	NR	7	0
Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)			

with these conditions do not appear in the census figures. The quality of housing is generally lower in rental and rural housing stock.

Several blighted areas were identified in the Blakely survey. These areas have poor housing and in particular cases, poor roadways. Residential development has also occurred on many landlocked

lots and subsequently, rough paths have been created as access routes. Neighborhood blight is a factor in the following areas: The SE neighborhood east off of Jessie Johnson Street and between Evergreen and Palmetto Avenue, south of Washington Avenue between Lee and Main Streets, also the Deal Street neighborhood and the neighborhood encompassing Dean Street and Fort Gaines Street, also along Church Street and Tarver Street from Pine Avenue to Jones Street is also blighted. A cluster of vacant dilapidated properties is noted in NE Blakely between Howell Avenue and Hilton Drive. These three low-income areas have been targeted for infrastructure and housing rehabilitation projects. They are generally referred to as the Hogan Avenue, North Church Street and the Howell Street neighborhoods.

TABLE 5.11: JAKIN HOUSING CONDITIONS			
Category	1980	1990	2000
Complete Plumbing Facilities	NR	63	87
Lacking Plumbing Facilities	NR	0	0
Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)			

TABLE 5.12: GEORGIA HOUSING BUILT BEFORE 1939			
Category	1980	1990	2000
1939 or Earlier	296662	212294	192972
Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)			

The City of Blakely has adopted the Georgia Standard Building Code and the Standard Housing Code as well as other mandatory codes. Presently, only vacated dilapidated structures are targeted for enforcement of the housing code and demolition of dilapidated structures has been progressing steadily yet slowly. The lack of sufficient stan-

TABLE 5.13: EARLY COUNTY HOUSING BUILT BEFORE 1939			
Category	1980	1990	2000
1939 or Earlier	1279	755	527
Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR - Not Reported)			

standard low or moderate income replacement housing is a problem in the city.

The City of Damascus has a majority of its housing stock in standard condition. Some dilapidated structures still exist in the city. No concentrated areas of blight exist in the city, but are scattered throughout. The City of Damascus is presently pursuing an interest in adopting Building and housing codes, but hesitate to do so because they have no means of enforcement.

Although a large percentage of the homes in the City of Jakin were built prior to 1939, very few housing quality problems were noted. Much of the older housing stock has been well maintained. In addition, some relatively recent construction has taken place in the city. Therefore, approximately 75 percent of the city's housing stock was in standard condition, the remainder needs minor repairs. Very few dilapidated structures were recorded.

TABLE 5.14: REGION 10 HOUSING BUILT BEFORE 1939			
Category	1980	1990	2000
1939 or Earlier	19127	12393	10193
Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR - Not Reported)			

Although no thorough housing condition survey was taken in the unincorporated areas, several small areas of blight have been identified. They include the area on the southern outskirts of the Damascus city limits along Kestler Avenue. Several dilapidated structures exist in this area. A small cluster of substandard housing also exists north of the City of Jakin. There are quite a few individual structures which are dilapidated or in need of major repairs exist throughout the unincorporated county. Many old farm tenant houses are in need of destruction. The city recently annexed a blighted area (River Drive) into the City limits and made paving and infrastructure improvements. There is

also growing concern over the numbers of seasonal hunting camps that are sprouting up in the county. These often consist of several trailers and recreational vehicle or simplistic shelters which are pushed up into the woods.

<b>TABLE 5.15: BLAKELY HOUSING BUILT BEFORE 1939</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>1939 or Earlier</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>213</b>
<b>Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)</b>			

#### **D. Owner and Renter Occupancy (Housing Tenure and Affordability)**

<b>TABLE 5.16: DAMASCUS HOUSING BUILT BEFORE 1939</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>1939 or Earlier</b>	<b>NR</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)</b>			

Housing Tenure is the term used to make a distinction between owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing units. A housing unit is owner-occupied if the owner or co-owner lives in the unit even it is mortgaged or not fully paid for. All occupied units that are not owner-

occupied are classified as renter-occupied.

As noted previously, the 1990 census housing data cannot be compared to earlier census reports without caution, due to changes in reporting methods. However, only slight differences were recorded in the percentage of total vacant units across Georgia during recent census periods. The tables listed depict the housing occupancy characteristics for Georgia and Early County.

The number of vacant dwelling units in Georgia decreased from 10 to 8.3 percent of the total units between 1990

<b>TABLE 5.17: JAKIN HOUSING BUILT BEFORE 1939</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>1939 or Earlier</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)</b>			

TABLE 5.18: GA OCCUPANCY CHARACTERISTICS			
Category	1980	1990	2000
TOTAL Households	1869754	2366615	3007678
Housing Units Vacant	140988	271803	275368
Housing Units Owner Occupied	1215206	1536759	2029293
Housing Units Renter Occupied	654548	829856	977076
Owner to Renter Ratio of Vacancy	NA	0.32	0.51
Owner Vacancy Rate	NA	2.36	2.24
Renter Vacancy Rate	NA	12.36	8.46
Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)			

percent.

At the state level, both the numbers of owner occupied and renter occupied housing units increased substantially since 1990 and 2000. A 6.4 and 3.3 percent change was recorded for owner occupied and renter occupied units. The number of owner occupied units increased 29.8 percent in Early County during the same period and accounted for 64 percent of the county's housing units in 2000. The number of renter occupied units declined 1.6 percent during the same

and 2000. In Early County, the percentage of vacant units to total units rose from 9.5 to 12 percent. Census reports for the City of Blakely show similar percentages of vacant dwelling units, 7 percent to 9.3 percent. In 2000, the City of Jakin also had higher percentages of vacant units than the county and state at 17 percent percent. In contrast, the City of Damascus percentage of vacant units remained stable at 18 percent. The region recorded similar percentages, from 9.6 percent to 11.2

TABLE 5.19: EARLY COUNTY OCCUPANCY CHARACTERISTICS			
Category	1980	1990	2000
TOTAL Households	4303	4301	4703
Housing Units Vacant	364	451	643
Housing Units Owner Occupied	2885	2948	3401
Housing Units Renter Occupied	1418	1315	1294
Owner to Renter Ratio of Vacancy	NA	NA	0.09
Owner Vacancy Rate	NA	NA	0.41
Renter Vacancy Rate	NA	NA	10.45
Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)			

period to represent a share of 24 percent of the county's housing stock. The trend in the City of Blakely over the period was also toward greater home ownership. Between 1990 and 2000, a 9.8 percent change in the number of owner occupied units was recorded in the city. Still, in 2000, only 57 percent of the total housing stock was owner occupied. The renter occupied housing stock represented 34 percent of the total housing stock.

No historical census figures are available for the Cities of Damascus and Jakin. In 2000, 61 percent of the housing units in the City of Damascus were owner occupied and 50.5 percent of those located in the City of Jakin were owner occupied. In the region 59 percent of the housing stock was owner occupied and 29 percent was renter occupied.

In 2000, owner vacancy rates in the State of Georgia (2.24) were much higher than those in Early County and all communities, except Jakin (6.38). This factor can be attributed to a more active housing market and competitive building in growth areas. Across the region, the owner occupied vacancy rate was 2.3 in 2000. By comparison, Early County's vacancy rate was .41 percent. No vacancy rates were available for the cities of Blakely and Damascus.

Renter vacancy rates were also much higher in Early County as compared to Georgia. An 8.46 percent rate was recorded in 2000 for Georgia, compared to an overall 10.45 percent renter vacancy rate in Early County, an 8.12 percent rate in Blakely and a 9.68 percent in Jakin and a 34.29 percent rate in the City of Damascus. Little rental housing stock is available, and a portion of that stock is in poor condition. Regionally, the renter vacancy rate was 9.29 percent.

The county and its municipalities do not have many renter and owner opportunities from which new residents or residents wishing to upgrade their housing can select. In addition, it is difficult to purchase small tracts or lots in

county due to the large tract owners engaged in agricultural and forestry pursuits. Many large tracts of land have been kept intact in the county for these and family tradition reasons. The acquisition of properties suitable for building is less a problem in the cities, however in many areas where infill development would seem possible; property owners are also unwilling to sell. In particular, there appears to be a need for standard low income and moderately priced housing stock.

## E. Housing Costs

Housing costs continue to rise faster than wages, making it even harder for millions of Americans to afford decent, modest housing, according to a report released in August 2003 by the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC). The organization estimates that the nation “housing wage” for 2003 is \$15.21 an hour, or \$31,637 a year – almost three times the federal minimum wage. In addition, a single worker household must earn an hourly wage of \$11.13 in Georgia to be able to afford a two-bedroom unit costing \$23,140 and \$8.35 in non-metropolitan counties to be able to afford a two-bedroom unit costing \$17,365.

<b>TABLE 5.20: REGION 10 OCCUPANCY CHARACTERISTICS</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>TOTAL Households</b>	106089	113152	129220
<b>Housing Units Vacant</b>	NA	12150	16424
<b>Housing Units Owner Occupied</b>	68395	74027	86583
<b>Housing Units Renter Occupied</b>	37695	39215	42581
<b>Owner to Renter Ratio of Vacancy</b>	NA	NA	1.22785714285714
<b>Owner Vacancy Rate</b>	NA	NA	2.37142857142857
<b>Renter Vacancy Rate</b>	NA	NA	9.29857142857143
<b>Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)</b>			

Housing affordability is a measure of the housing cost burden placed on households. Specifically, if a household pays more than 30 percent of their gross income on housing, including utilities, they are said to be cost-burdened.

Tables listed below provide housing costs in Georgia, Early County and the Cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin for the recent decennial. Over the past twenty years the disparity between the median values of homes ownership in Early County

compared to the State of Georgia has increased dramatically as the homes in Early County maintained much lower costs. In actual dollars, the median value grew from \$25,100 to \$46,600 in Early County. By contrast, in Georgia overall, the increase in value was from \$23,100 to \$100,600. Housing median values in the City of Blakely were substantially greater at \$48,400. Comparisons made in the Cities of Damascus and Jakin, where housing median values

were less \$40,000 and \$46,700 in 2000.

The low cost of housing in Early County and Damascus may be partially attributed to the lower cost of land and development, a concentration of older homes, concentrations of small elderly households and may reflect the large number of manufactured homes in the county. Such figures also indicate the existence of a lower cost of living. The housing market in Early County is meeting the demands of a population with be-

<b>TABLE 5.21: BLAKELY OCCUPANCY CHARACTERISTICS</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>TOTAL Households</b>	2021	1957	2083
<b>Housing Units Vacant</b>	100	147	213
<b>Housing Units Owner Occupied</b>	1303	1175	1304
<b>Housing Units Renter Occupied</b>	718	773	770
<b>Owner to Renter Ratio of Vacancy</b>	NA	NA	0
<b>Owner Vacancy Rate</b>	NA	NA	0
<b>Renter Vacancy Rate</b>	NA	NA	8.12
<b>Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)</b>			

<b>TABLE 5.22: DAMASCUS OCCUPANCY CHARACTERISTICS</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>TOTAL Households</b>	90	102	82
<b>Housing Units Vacant</b>	NR	24	20
<b>Housing Units Owner Occupied</b>	61	92	68
<b>Housing Units Renter Occupied</b>	29	12	23
<b>Owner to Renter Ratio of Vacancy</b>	NA	NA	0
<b>Owner Vacancy Rate</b>	NA	NA	0
<b>Renter Vacancy Rate</b>	NA	NA	34.29
<b>Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)</b>			

TABLE 5.23: JAKIN OCCUPANCY CHARACTERISTICS			
Category	1980	1990	2000
TOTAL Households	50	56	66
Housing Units Vacant	NR	6	15
Housing Units Owner Occupied	37	40	44
Housing Units Renter Occupied	13	17	28
Owner to Renter Ratio of Vacancy	NA	NA	1
Owner Vacancy Rate	NA	NA	6.38
Renter Vacancy Rate	NA	NA	9.68
Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)			

low average per capita incomes.

According to census reports, renter median values were also much lower in Early County compared to the state figures. The median value of a rental in 2000 was \$505 across Georgia, compared to \$172 in Early County. Very similar rental values exist in the Cities of Blakely and Damascus at \$161, \$208. The City of Jakin recorded a relatively higher median rental value at \$259. Moderately priced and high end rentals are in short supply in this rural county.

## F. Location of Existing Housing

The City of Blakely has several concentrated areas of substandard housing. In the past, the City of Blakely has applied resources from the Community Development Block Grant Program to improve the infrastructure and housing needs in the city. Street paving, drainage improvements and sewer collection system additions were made. Housing improvements are also needed in other areas of the city.

The City of Blakely has several areas of housing and neighborhood improvements and will seek to improve these areas through CDBG funding as well as other grant sources. Two additional areas

TABLE 5.24: GA HOUSING COSTS			
Category	1980	1990	2000
Median Property Value	23100	71278	100600
Median Rent	153	365	505
Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported_)			

targeted for improvements in the short term are the North Church Street/North Avenue area and the Howell Avenue and Howell Street areas. Recreational improvements are currently being planned for the Howell Street neighborhood.

Although there is a defined need to improve housing conditions in the City of Blakely, little non-traditional assistance has been available to the community. Local lenders provide home financing, but there are not enough agencies or non-profit organizations in the community which concentrate on low to moderate income housing. A local affiliation of the Habitat for Humanity organization has been formed and have built (2) homes.

The City of Blakely has made some progress with dilapidated housing through the use of condemnation. A more aggressive enforcement of fines for substandard properties would assist the community in improving and maintaining housing stock, arrest the decline of homes which now are in need of major repairs from falling into dilapidation and in the long run, help improve the property values in the community.

Early County and the Cities of Damascus and Jakin do not have active demolition programs currently. The City of Damascus has adopted building codes, but has no means of enforcement. Building and housing codes are not enforced throughout the remainder of the county, nor are building permits required.

## **G. Low Income and Public Housing**

A product of the Great Depression and the New Deal, public housing was the first large-scale, low-income housing program established by the federal government. This program was created by the U.S. Housing Act of 1937, to provide both temporary housing and much needed jobs (through the construction of housing). Since a completed in-

<b>TABLE 5.25: EARLY COUNTY HOUSING COSTS</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Median Property Value</b>	25100	40500	46600
<b>Median Rent</b>	56	232	172
<b>Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)</b>			

ventory of all subsidized housing units in Georgia does not exist, data on public housing are used to provide a general indication of the prevalence of subsidized housing.

The City of Blakely Housing Authority owns a total of 159 public housing units throughout the city. These public housing units are dispersed throughout the city with locations on Cedar Springs Road in the southwestern portion of the city, on Damascus Road in the eastern side and on Howell Street in the northern portion of the city. The units are one, two, three and four bedrooms, with all occupied and 35 families on the waiting list. The most popular units are the two bedrooms. The cities of Jakin and Damascus have no public housing units.

Only a few other low income housing opportunities are available in the county. In addition to the Public housing program, the HUD programs are utilized by the community. Presently, two apartment complexes, Tanglewood Apartments at East Liberty Street and County Lane Apartments on South Main Street provide Section 8 rental subsidies. Both of these apartments are in good condition.

Much of the low income rental housing stock in the City of Blakely is in substandard condition. Replacement units are needed for those units that are occupied and a continued effort is needed to demolish the existing dilapidated structures. Unless the housing stock that is now in need of major repair is maintained, the cycle of housing stock deterioration will continue. Neighborhood decline will follow.

<b>TABLE 5.26: REGION 10 HOUSING COSTS</b>		
<b>Category</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Median Property Value</b>	\$47,871	\$63,708
<b>Median Rent</b>	\$212	\$292
<b>Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR - Not Reported)</b>		

TABLE 5.27: DAMASCUS HOUSING COSTS			
Category	1980	1990	2000
Median Property Value	NR	42900	48400
Median Rent	NA	226	161
Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)			

## H. Projected Housing Needs

A larger portion of the future demand for housing will come from individuals and households under age 35 and over age 65, the two groups growing at the fastest rates. These are also two groups that tend to have lower incomes. The less than 35 age group comprises the leading edges of future workforce housing needs.

According to the Georgia Department of Human Resources, “Georgia has the fourth fastest growing 60+ population and the third fastest growing 85 + population in the United States” The population of 60 and older is expected to increase 52.6 percent between 2010. According to the 2000 Census, persons 65 and over occupied 16.5 percent of the housing units in Georgia. In a study completed by the University of Georgia in 2001, Region 10 had one of the greatest percentages of elderly residents in the state.

TABLE 4.28: BLAKELY HOUSING COSTS			
Category	1980	1990	2000
Median Property Value	NR	25000	40000
Median Rent	NR	200	208
Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)			

The study also revealed that there are not enough suitable rental units in rural areas and few new multi-family units are being built. The current supply of housing does not offer adequate alternatives for employees to choose housing to match their needs, their preferences, or their resources. The workforce is too often forced to “make do” by living with relatives commuting long distances or settling for housing of marginal quality. Even though there is an unmet demand for both rental and owner-occupied housing, the relatively small size of local housing markets com-

TABLE 5.29: JAKIN HOUSING COSTS			
Category	1980	1990	2000
Median Property Value	NR	36300	46700
Median Rent	NR	361	259
Source U.S. Census 1980, 1990, 2000 ( NR -Not Reported)			

combined with other factors appear to be insufficient to attract appropriate private development. Neither the private sector nor government can address the problem alone, broad-based partnerships are needed.

Economic development in rural Georgia is suffering because of an inadequate supply of workforce housing. A positive strategy to address

workforce housing is needed.

The age distribution of the population and recent changes in that distribution have important implications for the formation of new households and the demand for new housing units, as well as the need for age-related housing and services.

The increase in population and the changes in household characteristics will have a direct impact on the housing needs for the future. The older residents will need different types of housing and related services. As reported by the 2000 Census, the Hispanic population grew by about 127 percent between 1990 and 2000, compared to 300 percent statewide. The Spanish-speaking residents face obstacles in obtaining decent affordable housing.

## I. Housing Assessment Summary and Policy Implications

Home ownership represents one of the corner stones of American society. It is also a major investment for a community and a neighborhood. Preserving existing property and promoting home ownership stimulate economic growth, investment and pride in the community. According to recent research, it helps residents and public safety per-

sonnel reduce crime, substance use, and delinquency. The reason for the reductions involves a significant increase in the sense of civic pride and responsibility exhibited by homeowners.

Housing cuts across numerous different economic sectors and literally touches the entire community. The preservation of the housing stock in Early County, Blakely, Damascus and Jakin is essential to the community's economic and social well-being and central to the insurance of neighborhood integrity. The public, private and non-profit sectors must work together throughout the twenty year planning period to improve local housing condition, housing availability, home ownership rates and neighborhood character.

Special programs and policies will be needed to address the housing needs of the growing elderly population, household under 35 years of age and the Hispanic populations through the planning horizon. More than ever, the formation of partnerships between private sector housing developers, financial institutions, the public sector, non-profit organizations and social service agencies will be needed to promote the development of prosperous and healthy neighborhoods, since the capacity of Early County governments to implement housing initiatives and programs is limited by small staffs and resources.

Several significant housing problems have been identified in the housing inventory. These problems include the deterioration of the older housing stock, the unavailability of low income housing in standard condition, lower than average home ownership rates associated with areas of low income, lack of adequate standard rental properties, few vacant units from which new residents can select a residence, lack of moderately priced units available for sale or rent, the occurrence of neighborhood blighted areas, and vacant dilapidated structures.

Housing condition appears to be a problem in the City of Blakely where some blighted neighborhoods have been identified. The City of Damascus has a few blighted areas, but they are confined to small areas. The housing condition in the City of Jakin is very good. In addition, infrastructure improvements are needed in many neighborhood areas of Blakely. Although progress is being made incrementally in improving these problems through the efforts of the public sector, more assistance is needed in the private and non-profit sectors to overcome these problems.

The deterioration of the housing stock is mainly due to the high concentration of elderly persons unable to financially or physically care for their homes and the high incidence of poverty in blighted neighborhoods. Substandard and dilapidated housing conditions are especially prevalent in low-income rental neighborhoods. Scattered dilapidated housing units throughout the remainder of the county must be dealt with or additional eyesore will develop. Standard replacement housing for sale or rent for low to moderate income residents is needed as replacement housing for dilapidated housing in blighted areas, as is rehabilitation of housing in need of major repairs.

The availability of small tracts of land for housing development is a problem in the county and the need for moderately to higher scale housing is needed. Many persons employed in the southern end of the county have sought housing in Dothan, Alabama, Alabama after difficulties in finding adequate, quality housing in southern Early County. The high percentages of housing units needing major repair must also be addressed or these homes will fall into a state of dilapidation during the twenty-year planning period. Rehabilitation of these homes will also assist in retaining property values in throughout the county. Aggressive demolition programs are also needed to obliterate blighted areas and improve lots for potential re-development.

Building and housing code enforcement on a countywide level will be needed to aggressively combat housing

stock deterioration. Currently, if mobile homes do not meet City of Blakely codes, they are frequently moved to the county which has no regulation. Neighborhood clean-up programs are needed to improve the appearance of many low income areas of Blakely and in other areas scattered throughout the county. The Blakely-Early County Clean Community Commission is presently developing neighborhood organizations to address this issue.

The low rates of home ownership are also a result of the low median income and credit worthiness. More first time home ownership programs are needed in the county for low to moderate income single families. While mobile home ownership has emerged as an affordable housing option, it is not without policy implications. Presently, mobile homes on owned property are taxed as real property by the county. As mobile homes, begin to replace the older housing stock, the community will have to face the consequences of having shorter term, more transient housing stock replacements, less of the traditional neighborhood atmosphere and a lower tax base. Presently, only the City of Blakely regulates the development of mobile homes. More low to moderate-income rental housing is needed.

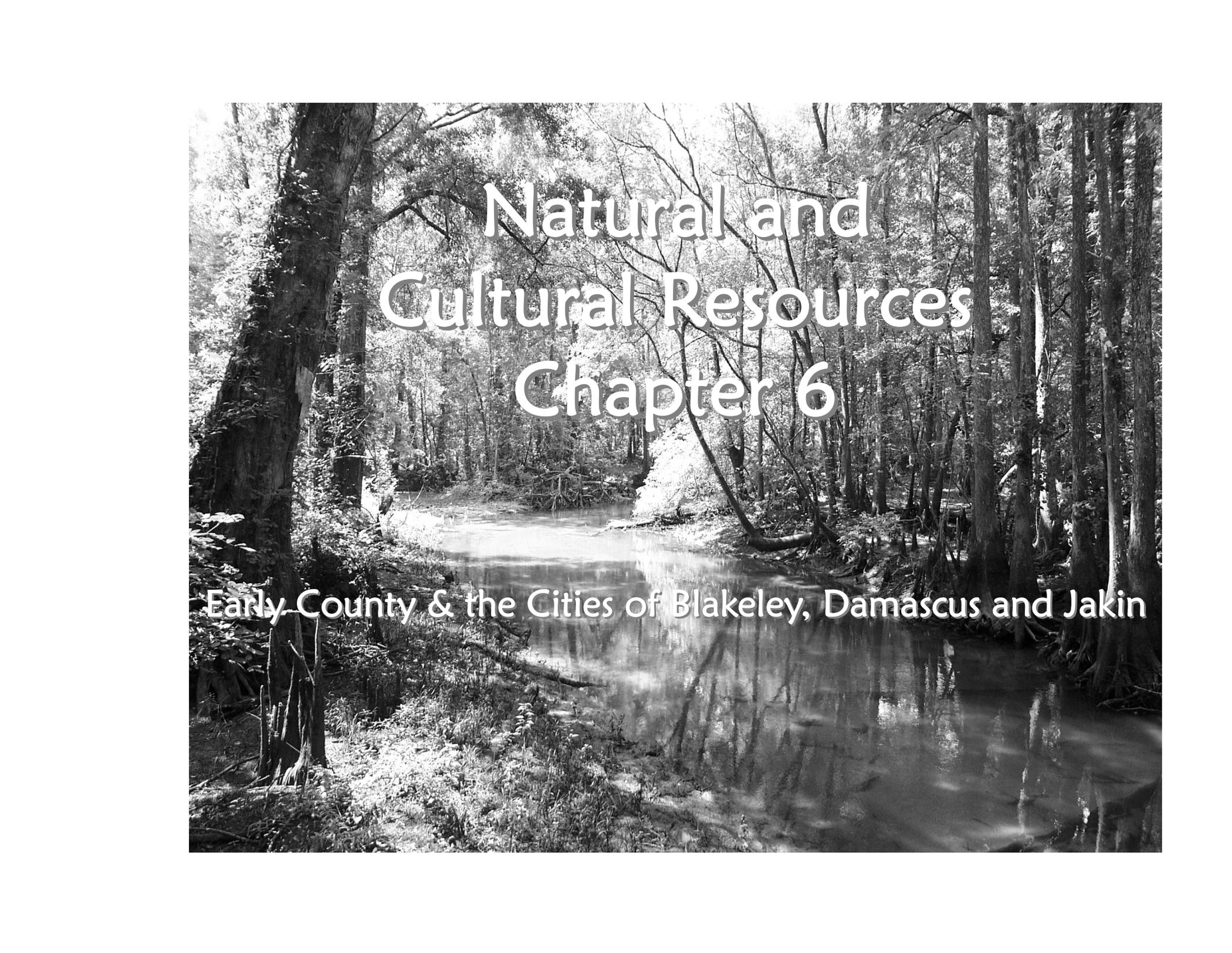
Large numbers of homes occupied by person 65 years of age and older signal potential problems for decision makers attempting to deliver services to this potentially vulnerable group. The elderly are adversely affected by tax increases because they are living on fixed income. Program that involve reducing the high costs of heating and cooling and installing insulation are necessary to assist these individuals.

Local housing policies and special programs will be needed as the elderly population continues to increase through the planning horizon. Additional programs for maintenance assistance, home equity conversion mortgage programs, housing rehabilitation programs, smaller affordable low and moderate income housing units and shared

housing programs for those that are "house rich, income poor" will be needed. The need for group homes and nursing homes will also increase in the county.

Additional efforts to tap into federal and state rehabilitation programs, loans or grants will be needed as the Early County community meets these housing challenges. Community knowledge on the available programs and methods of leveraging grant and loans will be necessary to compete for funding.

Available housing programs should be referenced as Early County strives to improve its housing stock. Activities that enhance the distribution of information on housing grant and loan programs and the coordination of housing planning activities between the public and private sector and housing assistance organizations is needed. Future housing needs will mainly be met through the initiatives of the private sector, supply and demand dynamics and the efforts extended in individual communities to implement housing planning goals, policies and programs relating to local needs.

A black and white photograph of a forest stream. The water is calm, reflecting the surrounding trees and foliage. The forest is dense with tall, thin trees and thick undergrowth. The text is overlaid in a white, serif font, centered in the upper half of the image.

# Natural and Cultural Resources Chapter 6

Early County & the Cities of Blakeley, Damascus and Jakin

## Natural and Cultural Resources

### A. Introduction

**A**ll land use planning decisions should be founded in an examination of a community's natural resource base. The Minimum Planning Standards require that an inventory and assessment of the natural, environmentally sensitive, historic, archaeological, and cultural resources of Early County and each of its local governments be conducted. This can help provide the basis for determining how natural and cultural assets might be most wisely utilized, developed, managed or preserved for the maximum long-term benefits. This analysis includes an assessment of the development potential, constraints or the limitations associated with the resources, as well as an examination of the need to protect those resources for future use. An examination of the impacts of land development trends and other human activities and the vulnerability of natural resources is needed to determine whether protection of the resources is important to the future health and economic well being of the community. Beyond the basic inventory and analysis, several additional analyses or environmental reviews are required by the Georgia Planning Act or other Georgia laws.

The preservation of historic and archaeological resources is one of many factors, which can positively impact a community's quality of life, visual appeal, tourism potential, downtown or neighborhood revitalization, and future economic development opportunities. The preservation and protection of historic properties, landmarks, districts, sites and landscapes plays an important part in maintaining and developing an appealing sense of place. Pride in Early County's heritage is an important ingredient in developing a vision of the future rooted in past traditions and history.

In recognition of the fact that natural resources and water quality extend beyond political boundaries and that local environmental protection is really regional and state environmental protection, special efforts are being made to promote protective land use management practices in Georgia. To this effort, the Department of Natural Resources established the Part V Minimum Environmental Planning Standards in accordance with the Georgia Planning Act. The Part V Standards establish minimum criteria for the protection of three areas of critical concern in Georgia. These standards pertain to the protection of significant groundwater recharge areas, water supply watersheds, and wetlands. There are no water supply watersheds located in Early County or its municipalities; therefore no local governments were required to pass an ordinance for its protection. The county and cities, however, have all adopted DCA approved wetland protection and groundwater protection ordinance.

In addition, the State of Georgia passed the River and Mountain Protection Act in 1991. This Act established minimum development standards and protective criteria for River Corridor Protection Plans designed to protect any perennial river or watercourse with an average annual flow of at least 400 cubic feet per second. A river and stream designation is determined by appropriate U.S. Geological Survey documents. The entire length of the Chattahoochee River in Early County meets the 400 cubic feet per second threshold and has adopted a Protected River Corridor Ordinance. At the time this plan is being written (Spring, 2004), the Department of Community Affairs and the Environmental Protection Division are working on revisions for the requirements of this ordinance. Therefore within the current planning period the County may be required to update their Protected River Corridor Ordinance. No other Protected River Corridors exist in Early County or its municipalities.

The Georgia Planning Act also mandates that local administrative processes be developed to coordinate reviews of Developments of Regional Impact. DRIs are large-scale projects, which may have social, economic, political or environmental impacts on significant geographical areas. The review process is designed to allow for the mitigation of any negative impacts associated with a project prior to their occurrence.

In addition, the Georgia Planning Act established a process for the local nomination and statewide ranking of Resources

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of Regional Importance. These are special natural, historic, cultural or archaeological resources that a community feels need additional protection beyond what may already be provided through current laws and regulations. Resource Management Strategies will be developed for the top ranking RIRs after they are identified by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Currently there are no RIRs in Early County. No attention is given in this plan to coastal resources, mountain protection or steep slopes over 25 percent, all of which do not occur in Early County.

## **B. Inventory of Natural Resources**

### **Location**

Early County is located in southwestern Georgia. It is situated in the second tier of counties located north of the Florida border and its western border on the Chattahoochee River is shared with Alabama. Bordering Early County in Georgia are Clay, Calhoun, Baker, Miller, Seminole Counties. Early County is approximately 100 miles north of the Gulf of Mexico and has a warm and humid climate.

### **Physiography and Geology**

Early County lies in the Atlantic Plain and Coastal Plain Province physiographic classifications. A small portion of the county located in the northwestern corner is located in the Fall Line Red Hills classification. The majority of the county lies in the Lime sink Region of the Dougherty Plain. The Dougherty Plain District is bounded by the Fall Line Hills on the northwest and the Tifton Upland to the southeast. It is characterized by flat to gently rolling hills with few streams. The district is primarily underlain by limestone, which contains networks of underground solution cavities. When large cavities collapse they pull materials from above into the void, and sinkholes are created on the land surface. These vary in size from small shallow depressions a few feet in diameter to several hundred acres. The sinks generally contain water, forming small lakes that have seasonal water

changes. Many of these sinkholes transmit surface water and runoff into the limestone making the drainage area, by a large measure, subterranean. Springs serve as the main source for many of the local streams. Elevations in the area generally range between 100 to 260 feet Mean Sea Level.

The geology of the Dougherty Plain District has sands and limestone of Upper Cretaceous Age to Middle Eocene Age (65 million to 40 million years ago) overlying the youngest Fall Line Hills formation. The next younger deposits are carbonate rocks, primarily limestone of late Eocene and Oligocene Age (40 million to 26 million years ago).

A gentle dip to the southeast is maintained with this depositional sequence. The limestone forms part of the principal artesian aquifer and supplies most of the ground water to the southwest Georgia area and most of the Coastal Plain of Georgia. This aquifer is primarily recharged by precipitation in the area where the formations intersect with the land surface. The major rivers in the outcrop area contribute recharge when regional rainfall is low. When rainfall is high, the aquifer charges the rivers. Normally, shallow wells less than 200 feet deep can be developed that produce up to 3,000 Gallons Per Minute (GPM) of high quality water.

The small portion of the northwestern corner of Early County located in the Fall Line Hills District is characterized by flat-topped hills or ridges and deep gullies or washes. As a whole, this district is highly dissected by streams. The softness of the strata composed of sands, clays and gravels together with the high altitude of the plain above the rivers, timber removal and cultivation of the land have helped cause extensive erosion in some areas. The geology of the Fall Line Hills District is comprised of sedimentary rock composed of sands, clays and gravels which were deposited over a basement complex of crystalline rocks similar to those in the Georgia Piedmont. The exposed sediments are of late Cretaceous to early Tertiary Age, 100 million to 65 million years ago.

Some sand and gravel members have permeability such that they are charged with water where exposed and become

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aquifers when confined below the land surface. Skillfully developed wells can yield up to 1,200 GPM from some of these sand aquifers. High yield wells normally range in depth from 200 to 1,000 feet.

There are several recorded regions of limestone that occur in Early County. These are primarily located along the border of Calhoun County and along the southwestern border of the county along the Chattahoochee. Gravel, crushed limestone, and sand are mined in the county and along its border.

## **Relief and Drainage**

The topography of Early County consists mainly of nearly level to strongly sloping, dominantly well drained soils on uplands. Elevations range from 100 to 270 feet. Steep slopes are those generally considered to be over 18 to 25 percent. No steep slopes in this range are located in Early County, Blakely, Damascus or Jakin. Therefore, they are not addressed in this plan. The Chattahoochee River combined with its major tributaries of Coheele, Kirkland, and Sowhatcree Creeks drain the western part of Early County. For the most part, Dry and Spring Creeks drain the remainder of the county.

## **Soils**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 1985 developed a soil survey of Calhoun and Early Counties. The soil survey data includes a description of the soils, their location and a discussion of their suitability, limitations, and management of the soils for specified land uses.

The survey indicates that Early County is underlain by Coastal Plain Sedimentary Rock. Sandy, loamy and clayey marine sediment commonly overlies the rock. The Claiborne Undifferentiated Formation of the Tertiary Period underlies the northern part of Early County. The Eocene and Oligocene Residuum, Undifferentiated Formation of the Tertiary Period underlies most of the northern quarter of Early County. The Libson Formation underlies the most northwestern part of Early County and the Ocala Limestone Formation of the Tertiary Period underlies the southern three quarters of Early County. A high stream terrace parallels

the Chattahoochee River in western Early County. The soils in this deposit were formed in more recent sediment than the soils on the uplands. Stream alluvium is adjacent to all of the streams in the survey area.

The following information identifies the soil associations of Early County. The NRCS defines a soil association as an area with a distinctive soil pattern consisting of one or more soils and at least one minor soil. The name of the association follows the major soil. The eleven soil associations located in Early County, their primary location and individual characteristics are listed below.

### **Nearly Level Soils on Flood Plains or Low Stream Terraces.**

1. Herod-Muckalee: Poorly drained soils that are mainly loamy throughout on flood plains with a slope of zero to two percent. These soils are located along Branch Creek east of Damascus in the unincorporated area, the northern portion of Dry Creek northeast of Blakely and along Factory, Coheele, Chancy Mill, Sowhatcee, Weaver, Sheffield Mill, Kirkland and Dry Creeks in the eastern half of Early County.

2. Meggert-Muckalee: Poorly drained soils that have a loamy surface layer and a clayey subsoil or poorly drained soils that are mainly loamy throughout, on flood plains and stream terraces with a zero to two percent slope. These soils are located along Spring, Perry, Wamble, Blue and Branch Creeks in eastern Early County.

### **Nearly Level Soils on High Stream Terraces and on Flood Plains**

3. Kolomoki-Hornsville-Buncombe: Well drained or moderately drained soils that have a loamy surface layer a predominately clayey subsoil, on high stream terraces, and excessively drained soils that are predominantly sandy throughout, on flood plains.

Slopes of this association run zero to five percent. These soils are located along the banks of the Chattahoochee River, Early County's western border.

### **Nearly Level Soils on Uplands**

4. Goldsboro-Grady-Rains: Moderately well drained soils that have a loamy surface layer and loamy subsoil, on low lying smooth areas, and poorly drained soils that have a loamy or sandy surface layer and a clayey or loamy subsoil in depressions and drainage ways. These soils are located in the eastern portion of the top half of Early County and in the eastern half of the county's southern tip.

5. Grady-Rains-Goldsboro: Poorly drained soils with a slope between zero to 2 percent that have a loamy or sandy surface layer and a clayey or loamy subsoil, in depressions and drainage ways, and moderately well drained soils that have a sandy surface layer and a loamy subsoil, in low lying smooth soils. This association is found on the county's eastern side near the Baker County border.

### **Nearly Level to Gently Sloping Soils on Uplands**

6. Faceville: Well drained soils that have a loamy surface layer and a clayey subsoil and slopes of between zero to 12 percent, on ridge tops and hillsides

7. Orangeburg-Red Bay-Norfolk: Well-drained soils that have a sandy or loamy surface layer and a loamy subsoil, on ridge tops and hillsides with slopes of zero to twenty-five percent. This association is mainly found near the Sawhatchee Creek, in the north-eastern portion of the county near the Chattahoochee River and in the eastern portion of the top half of the county.

8. Faceville-Greenville-Tifton: Well drained soils with slopes between zero to twelve percent that have a loamy surface layer and a clayey subsoil or a predominately sandy surface layer and a loamy subsoil, on ridge tops and hillsides. This association is found mainly in the northwestern part of the county and is one of the predominate soils in the City of Blakely.
9. Tifton-Norfolk-Grady: Well drained soils that have a sandy surface layer and a loamy subsoil, on ridge tops and hillsides, and poorly drained soils that have a loamy surface layer and a clayey subsoil, in depressions having slopes between 0 to 8 percent. This is the predominate soil in the Cities of Damascus and Jakin and is located in the eastern portion of the top half of the county as well as throughout the western portion of the county.
10. Troup-Wagram-Lakeland: Well drained soils that have a sandy surface layer and thick sandy subsurface layer and a loamy subsoil and excessively drained soils that are sandy throughout, on ridge tops and hillsides with slopes of 0 to 25 percent. This association is found mainly along the Chattahoochee River and nearby the little Kolomoki Creek and the Temple Creek.
11. Wagram-Norfolk-Orangeburg: Well drained soils that have a sandy surface layer or a sandy surface layer and thick sandy subsurface layer and a loamy subsoil, on ridge tops with a zero to twenty-five percent slope. A limited amount of this soil association is located in the eastern portion of the top half of the county near the Calhoun and Baker County borders.

The soil limitations for Early County soil series are listed in **Table 6.0**. A slight limitation means that soil properties are generally favorable and that limitations are minor and easily overcome. Moderate limitations indicate that limitations can be overcome or alleviated by planning design, or special maintenance. A severe limitation indicates that soil properties are unfavorable and that limitations can only be overcome by costly soil reclamation, special design, intensive maintenance, limited use or by a combination of these measures. An Early County soils map is included (**Figure 6.9**) and depicts generalized soil types throughout the county

## Prime Agricultural Land

The abundance of prime farmland in Early County is one of the contributing factors to the region's success as one of

**TABLE 6.0: EARLY COUNTY SOIL SERIES LIMITATIONS**

Residential Series	Septic Tank Foundations	Sewage Fields	Light Lagoons	Local Commercial	Traffic Ways
Herod	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe
Muckalee	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe
Meggett	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe
Kolomoki	Severe	Moderate	Severe	Severe	Moderate
Hornsville	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Moderate
Buncombe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Moderate
Goldsboro	Severe	Severe	Severe	Moderate	Moderate
Grady	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe
Rains	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe
Greenville	Slight	Slight/Mod	Moderate	Slight	Moderate
Faceville	Slight	Slight/Mod	Mod/Severe	Slight	Moderate
Orangeburg	Slight	Slight/Mod	Mod/Severe	Slight	Slight
Red Bay	Slight	Slight/Mod	Mod/Severe	Slight	Slight/Mod
Norfolk	Slight	Slight	Moderate	Slight	Slight
Tifton	Slight	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Slight
Roup	Slight	Moderate	Severe	Moderate	Slight
Wagram	Slight	Slight	Moderate	Slight/Mod	Slight
Lakeland	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe

**Source: Soil Survey of Calhoun & Early Counties/ USDA/ SCS**

Georgia's top agricultural producers. The majority of land in Early County is considered to be over fifty percent prime farmland, with the major exclusions being the land areas located along the Chattahoochee River and Spring Creek. Some prime farmland is also located within the city limits of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin. The Soil Survey of Calhoun and Early Counties should be referenced for the specific location of prime farmland. Table 6.6 indicates the prime farmland soils.

Prime farmland as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture, is the land best suited to producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. The soil quality, moisture supply and length of growing season attributed to prime soils are adequate to economically produce sustained high crop yields. Prime farmland produces the highest yields with minimal inputs of energy and money. Farming in prime soils results in the least damage to the environment. The supply of prime farmland is limited and should be utilized with wisdom and foresight.

According to the 1985 Soil Survey of Early and Calhoun Counties, approximately 328,905 acres, or about 65 percent of the 506,500 total land acres of the two counties meets the requirements for prime farmland. The majority of prime farmland in Early County is located in map units (soil associations) 3,6,7,8 and 9 in Early County. Soils in Early County are particularly well suited to the production of peanuts, small grains, grain sorghum, pecans, wheat and cotton. According to the 1997 Percentage of Prime Farmland in Non-Federal Forest Land Map generated by the NRCS, Early County has 20-40 percent of its prime farmland being used as forestland.

Outside of the 328,905 acres of prime farmland in Early and Calhoun Counties, the 1985 soil survey designated another 67,108 acres as farmland of statewide importance. These soils, although they do not meet the requirements for prime farmland, are important to the agricultural resource base of the county. These soils are more erodible, droughty, seasonally wet, difficult to cultivate and are usually less productive than prime farmland. The protection of prime farmland from erosion and unchecked development is important to the future of Early County. Critical cropland erosion has been a problem in parts of Early County, particularly in the central and northern sections of the county. Although extensive gully erosion does not exist, several areas of cropland with erosion rates of greater than 31 tons/ac/yr are found in the county as well as many dispersed areas with erosion rates of 16 to 30 tons/ac/yr.

Soils in Early County are presently protected by the regulations of the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act. This Act requires that a permit be obtained for certain land disturbing activities in Georgia including clearing, dredging, grading, excavating, transporting and filling. However, certain land disturbing activities such as the cultivation of farmland are exempt. These land disturbing activities that fall under the act are required to follow the Best Management Practices outlined in the State Soil and Water Conservation Services, "Manual for Erosion and Sedimentation Control in Georgia." The act also establishes a 25-foot buffer along state waters and a 50-foot buffer along designated "trout streams" where no land disturbing activities are allowed to take place.

The City of Blakely Building Official is certified to issue Erosion and Sedimentation Act Permits. In Early County and the Cities of Arlington, Damascus, and Jakin, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division administers the permits required by the Erosion and Sedimentation Act.

Early County falls in the Flint River District of the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission. The Commission is a voluntary organization that administers federal technical assistance to Georgia citizens concerning soil erosion and flood prevention. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) section of the USDA facilitates many programs aimed at farmland and

soil conservation, water quality, and wildlife habitat conservation.

According to the Early County community and the communities of Blakely, Damascus, and Jakin the rules and protective regulations mentioned above are adequately protecting the soil resources of the county and will continue to be adequate during the planning period if growth remains as projected. No further protective measures are anticipated during the planning period.

<b>TABLE 6.1: EARLY COUNTY FARMLAND SOILS</b>	
Clarendon CnA	Norfolk NoB
Duplin DuA	Norfolk NoC
Faceville FeA	Orangeburg OeA
Faceville FeB	Orangeburg OeB
Faceville FeC2	Orangeburg OeC
Goldsboro GoA	Red Bay ReA
Greenville GsA	RedBay ReB
Greenville GsB	Red Bay ReC
Hornsville HvA	Riverview Ro
Kolomoki KoA	Tifton TaA
Marlboro MaA	Tifton TaB
Marlboro MaB	Tifton TaC
Norfolk NoA	
<i>Source: Calhoun &amp; Early Counties Soil Survey, 1985</i>	

## Prime Forest Land

Forestry and silviculture industries play an important part in the heritage and economy of Early County. In 2003, there were eight wood processing or utilizing companies in the county. These enterprises included a pulp and paper mill, several sawmills, and secondary wood using businesses. These include the Georgia Pacific Company, Grimes Logging Company, McDowell Pulpwood Company, Moore Logging Company, Robinette Frame Company, Graham Timber, Georgia Timber, and Toby Warr Sawmill. Wiregrass Pulp and Timber Company also work in the area out of Columbia, Alabama.

Forested areas in Georgia are periodically surveyed by the Forest Service branch of the United States Department of Agriculture. The most recent survey taken in 1996 indicated that acres of forest land within the twenty-two county Southwest Georgia Forestry area went up 9% since 1988 with approximately 2.9 million acres of forest land or 52 percent of the area's total land acreage. The survey methodology works best on a regional scale and is not recommended for interpretation on the county level. At the county level, the statistics are merely the best approximations.

The 1996 survey indicated that the total volume of growth for softwood in the region was up 19 percent from 1988 to 122 Million Cubic Feet (MCF) annually, and hardwood was up 34 percent to 55 MCF annually. Removal of softwood was up 17 percent to 132 MCF annually and hardwood was up 11Percent to 34 MCF.

In 1996, there were an estimated 152,400 acres of timberland (46.6 percent of total land) in Early County according to the USDA Forest Service, Southern Experiment Station. By forest type, this accounted for an estimated 25,700 Longleaf-slash, 41,300 Loblolly-shortleaf, 15,400 Oak-pine, 23,800 Oak-hickory, 41,200 Oak-gum-cypress, 600 Elm-ash-cottonwood, and 3,400 acres of non-stacked timber. None of these resources are located in a national forest. Approximately 200 acres are owned by the state, 200 are owned by the county or municipality, 200 are owned by miscellaneous Federal agencies, and 24,400 are owned by the forest industry. Of the remaining private owners 115,700 acres are owned by individuals and 10,700 acres by cor-

porations.

The largest and only increase in acreage of any forest type from the 1988 survey was in the amount of Loblolly-shortleaf. This type grew from 29,691 acres to 41,300 acres while the total acres of timberland had gone down from 165,154 acres to 152,400 acres. Loblolly-shortleaf pine is one of the most economically valuable pines due to its ability to grow quickly and to be used in construction, paper and pulp production, and for utility poles. This increase illustrates the change in the silviculture economy in the county.

There is no data to show exactly how much of the land in Early County is considered Prime Timberland. Prime timberland is defined by the NRCS as “land that has soil capable of growing wood at the rate of 85 cubic feet or more per acres/year (at culmination of mean annual increment) in natural stands and is not in urban or built-up land uses or water.” However, in 2002 the NRCS determined that out of the 24,405,000 acres of forest land in the State of Georgia, 7,076,000 acres is considered prime timberland. It is also known that 20-40 percent of Early County’s prime farmland is being used as forest land.

According to forestry officials and local residents, there are no known old growth stands of trees in need of special protection in Early County. All tree lines along the Chattahoochee River are deemed important and some protective measures are deemed necessary during the long term planning horizon. One of the most important methods of protecting timber resources in the region is to promote reforestation of cut lands. Replanting after cutting of existing forests where no development will occur is an important need in the region according to the Forestry Service.

In general, the Georgia Forestry Commission provides technical assistance for individuals, industry, and local units of government concerning treatments of forested land and commercial forest products. Treatments include training, technical assistance, and permitting of prescribed burning activities; public education; and the sale of quality seedlings for reforestation purposes. The Commission also operates a Rural Fire Defense Program to protect against unchecked fires. In an effort to decrease the amount of wildfire damage to homes, the Commission recommends the use of development requirements for fire control vehicle access on building permits and site reviews. They also recommend the implementation of greenbelt requirements and education in landscaping design for homes developed in the county.

The Georgia Forestry Commission offers technical and financial assistance to all municipalities interested in the propagation and care of urban trees. The City of Blakely is recognized as a Tree City USA and has developed an ordinance to protect urban tree life. In the cities of Damascus and Jakin, trees are abundant and the establishment of protective ordinances is not deemed necessary due to limited development activities projected through the planning period.

Forestry Commission recommends protection of water resources from possible non-point source pollution by silviculture activities through the use of the Georgia Forestry Commission's Best Management Practices (BMPs). These practices address streamside management zones, stream crossings, access roads, timber harvesting, site preparation, reforestation, forest protection, chemical treatments, and fertilization.

## **Surface Waters**

Early County is located within the Chattahoochee and Flint River Basins. The Chattahoochee River Basin extends from northeastern Georgia to the Florida border in the Southwest corner of Georgia and the Flint River Basin extends from Hartsfield Airport south of Atlanta to the Florida border in the Southwest corner of Georgia. Rivers and streams located in the county include the Chattahoochee River on the county's western border and numerous streams and creeks located throughout the county.

These include Long Branch Creek in the east; Spring Creek, which flows from Clay and Calhoun Counties; and Branch, Dry, Blue, Womble and Lime Creeks, which join Spring Creek in southern Early County. In the northern portion of the county, Lake Kolomoki, Kolomoki, and Temple Creek flow through the Kolomoki State Park area. Tributaries of the Chattahoochee River in western Early County include the Grimsley Mill and Factory Creeks, the Odum and Freeman Bridge Creek, and the Coheelee and Chancy Mill Creek. Lake Clara is located at the beginning of the Sowhatchee Creek, which has several tributaries including the Weaver Creek and Sheffield Mill Creek. Kirkland and Dry Creek also run to the Chattahoochee in the southern portion of the county. Aycocks Creek is located in the eastern portion of the southern tier of the county.

These waterways provide excellent habitats for fish and wildlife and many recreational opportunities for Early County residents. The Chattahoochee River provides one of the most important wildlife habitats in the southwest Georgia region and supports high populations of game fish. No major creeks or streams flow through the Cities of Blakely, Damascus or Jakin.

## Quantity

Withdrawals over 100,000 gallons per day on a monthly average from surface waters require a permit from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. In Early County in the year 2000, 9.63 Million Gallons per Day (MGD) were permitted to be withdrawn from surface waters for irrigation and another 0.8 MGD were permitted for livestock use. In 2003, Early County had two surface water withdrawal permits for industrial purposes. Both permits extract water from the Chattahoochee River for industrial purposes. The Great Southern Paper Co. (now Georgia-Pacific) is permitted to withdrawal 144 MGD with a monthly average of 115 MGD, and Homestead Energy Resources, LLC is permitted to withdrawal 16,130 MGD with a monthly average of 16,130 MGD.

The Flint River Basin and Chattahoochee River Basin Management Plans were developed and last revised in 1997 as required by the Georgia River Basin Planning Act. River basin plans are “intended to facilitate the coordination of water quality

and quantity management efforts of public and private sector partners within the practical management unit that a basin provides.” The plans achieve this by investigating and reporting on the river basin characteristics, water quantity, environmental stressors, assessments of water quantity and quality, concerns and priority issues, implementation strategies, and future issues and challenges.

In 2001, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) placed a moratorium on new agricultural groundwater and surface water withdrawal permits within the Flint River Basin. The moratorium is scheduled to last until 2005 when the state will conclude its studies on water quantity and agricultural water use within the basin. The results of these studies will be used to decide the future of water permit allocation within the basin. Therefore they will have a direct effect on the economy of Early County due to the agricultural industry’s dependence on irrigation and the paper and pulp industry’s dependence on water.

The ACF Compact will also be a factor in deciding ground and surface water withdrawal permit allocation within the Chattahoochee and Flint river basins. The ACF Compact is the congressionally authorized negotiation processes for Georgia, Alabama and Florida to negotiate water allocation formulas for the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) river basins. Since the three states did not reach an agreement on the ACF Compact by August 31, 2003, the agreement will be decided upon in federal court. Depending on how the agreement is formulated, water withdrawal permits in the Chattahoochee and Flint River basins for uses other than drinking water may be limited or impossible to get.

## Quality

Point source pollution, (which is the pollution discharged directly from a specific, definable source such as an outfall pipe from a sewerage treatment facility or industry), in these surface waters is controlled by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program, which controls water pollution by regulating point sources for municipal, industrial, and other facilities that discharge pollutants into waters of the United States.

In 2001 there were five NPDES permits existing in Early County. Three permits for the City of Blakely's municipal sewerage treatment facilities and two industrial permits for Georgia Pacific Corp. and Georgia Tubing Co. Non-point source pollution is regulated by the Erosion and Sedimentation Act, the Georgia Surface Mining Act, and the Georgia Forestry Commission's BMPs.

The Georgia EPD Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Program is undertaking the mandate from the Clean Water Act and creating and maintaining a list of impaired waters for the state. This is referred to as the 303(d) list and includes stream segments that are considered partially supporting and not supporting their designated use. The designated use is determined by the state and in the State of Georgia there are three classifications used: drinking water, recreation, and fishing. All of the streams on the list in Early County have a designated use of "fishing." This designation determines what levels certain pollutants can be at while staying safe for its designated use.

A TMDL is a calculation that establishes the maximum amount of a pollutant that can be present in a stream segment while keeping it safe for its designated use. TMDL Reports are prepared by both the Environmental Protection Division (EPA) and Georgia EPD and include an assessment of the impaired stream, possible reasons for the impairment, how much the impairing pollutant must be reduced by to make the stream segment safe for its designated use. TMDL Implementation Plans are developed using the information in the reports and include the names of the pollutant causing impairment, the activities that are the potential cause of the impairment, the amount the pollutant must be reduced by, a list of local stakeholders, and activities that will be undertaken to reduce the pollutant causing impairment.

The following is a list of stream segments in Early County that are on the 303(d) list:

- **Coheelee Creek** - a five mile segment from Chancy Mill Creek to the Chattahoochee River is impaired due to a biota impacted designation. As a result, the segment is considered to be partially supporting its designated use of fishing. This means there has been a negative effect on the insect, fish, and plant population of that stream segment. Fish populations

in these stream segments were tested using the Index of Biotic Integrity. Stream segments with fish populations rated as “Poor” or “Very Poor” were included in the 303(d) list as partially supporting. The source of this impairment is listed as non-point, which is defined as pollution sources that do not have a single point of origin or are not introduced into a receiving stream from a specific outlet. The pollutants are generally carried off the land by storm water runoff. No specific pollutant has been identified as the cause for the impact on biota, nor has this stream segment had any other pollutants exceeding state standards.

- **Weaver Creek** - a five-mile segment from its headwaters to Sawhatchee Creek is impaired due to a biota impacted designation. As a result, the segment is considered to be partially supporting its designated use of fishing. This means there has been a negative effect on the insect, fish, and plant population of that stream segment. Fish populations in these stream segments were tested using the Index of Biotic Integrity. Stream segments with fish populations rated as “Poor” or “Very Poor” were included in the 303(d) list as partially supporting. The source of this impairment is listed as non-point, which is defined as pollution sources that do not have a single point of origin or are not introduced into a receiving stream from a specific outlet. The pollutants are generally carried off the land by storm water runoff. No specific pollutant has been identified as the cause for the impact on biota, nor has this stream segment had any other pollutants exceeding state standards.
- **Baptist Branch** - a two-mile segment downstream of Blakely is impaired due to a biota impacted designation. As a result, the segment is considered to be partially supporting its designated use of fishing. This means there has been a negative effect on the insect, fish, and plant population of that stream segment. Fish populations in these stream segments were tested using the Index of Biotic Integrity. Stream segments with fish populations rated as “Poor” or “Very Poor” were included in the 303(d) list as partially supporting. The sources of this impairment are listed as urban runoff and a municipal sewerage treatment facility. Urban runoff is defined as storm water from city streets and adjacent domestic or commercial properties that may carry pollutants of various kinds into the sewer systems and/or receiving waters and streams.

The other source is from a malfunction in the City of Blakely's sewerage treatment facility. The city has since corrected this problem. No specific pollutant has been identified as the cause for the impact on biota, nor has this stream segment had any other pollutants exceeding state standards.

- **Dry Creek** - a twelve-mile segment from its headwaters south of State Road 200 to Spring Creek is impaired due to low levels of dissolved oxygen. Dissolved oxygen is oxygen that is dissolved in water and therefore available for use by plants, shellfish, fish, and other animals. If the amount of oxygen is too low, aquatic plants and animals may die. Test results show that this segment of Dry Creek was only out of compliance with state standards for minimum levels of dissolved oxygen in only 11 percent to 25 percent of the tests performed. Therefore the segment is considered to be partially supporting its designated use of fishing. The source of this impairment is listed as urban runoff, which is defined as storm water from city streets and adjacent domestic or commercial properties that may carry pollutants of various kinds into the sewer systems and/or receiving waters and streams. No specific pollutant has been identified as the cause of low levels of dissolved oxygen, nor has this stream segment had any other pollutants exceeding state standards.
- **Spring Creek** - a twenty-two mile segment starting at State Road 62 in Early County and ending at Aycocks Creek in Miller County is impaired due to a biota-impacted designation and low levels of dissolved oxygen. A biota impacted designation means there has been a negative effect on the insect, fish, and plant population of that stream segment. Fish populations in these stream segments were tested using the Index of Biotic Integrity. Stream segments with fish populations rated as "Poor" or "Very Poor" were included in the 303(d) list as partially supporting. Dissolved oxygen is oxygen that is dissolved in water and therefore available for use by plants, shellfish, fish, and other animals. If the amount of oxygen is too low, aquatic plants and animals may die. Test results show that this segment of Dry Creek was only out of compliance with state standards for minimum levels of dissolved oxygen in only 11 percent to 25 percent of the tests performed. Therefore the segment is considered to be partially supporting its designated use of fishing. The source of this impairment is listed as urban runoff, which is defined as storm water from city streets and adjacent domestic or commer-

cial properties that may carry pollutants of various kinds into the sewer systems and/or receiving waters and streams. No specific pollutant has been identified as the cause of low levels of dissolved oxygen, nor has this stream segment had any other pollutants exceeding state standards.

TMDLs have been developed for most 303(d) listed streams within the Flint and Chattahoochee River Basins. However, no TMDL Implementation Plans have been prepared for any streams located in Early County. Within the planning horizon all stream segments on the 303(d) list will have implementation plans developed for them. The Environmental Protection Division has plans to address the impairments through a watershed protection strategy.

As of now there are no responsible parties mandated to reduce the pollutants causing impairment in Georgia's 303(d) listed streams. However, it is likely that TMDL calculations for stream segments will become the determining factor in issuing industrial and municipal NPDES permits. This means that EPD may deny any new or expanded NPDES permits if the amount of the proposed pollutant to be discharged into a particular stream segment will surpass the TMDL established for that pollutant in that particular stream segment.

### **Protected River Corridors**

The River and Mountain Corridor Protection Act of 1991 established Minimum Planning Standards for use in the development of River Corridor Protection Plans and the definitions pertaining to designated river corridors. Georgia defines a "protected river as a designated waterway having a water flow of 400 cubic feet of water per second or higher. The major thrust of the minimum standards for River Corridor Plans is aimed at preserving the land area within 100 feet of all designated river banks so as to provide a buffer allowing for the free movement of wildlife from area to area, to help control erosion and river sedimentation, to absorb floodwaters and to help preserve the qualities which make a river a suitable habitat for wildlife, recreation and drinking water by limiting density of development and by prohibiting septic tank drain fields within the 100 buffer.

The Department of Natural Resources has designated the entire length of the Chattahoochee River in Early County as a protected river corridor as depicted in Figure 6.7. In 2001, Early County adopted a Protected River Corridor Ordinance for this section of the Chattahoochee. The ordinance preserves land within a 100 foot buffer area from the banks of the river by restricting land use and ground disturbing activities. The major tenants of the ordinance are: the establishment of a two-acre minimum lot size for single family houses constructed within the 100 foot buffer (the area within the buffer cannot be counted toward the minimum lot size area); the exclusion of commercial or industrial development within the buffer; and the prohibition of septic tank drainfields within the buffer. No river or creek corridors have been designated for protection in the Cities of Blakely, Damascus, or Jakin.

The Chattahoochee River is one of the main tributaries of the Apalachicola, Chattahoochee, and Flint basin (ACF basin). The headwaters of the Chattahoochee River mark the northernmost extent of the ACF basin. Beginning in Union and Towns Counties, Georgia, the Chattahoochee River drains the southern slope of the Blue Ridge Physiographic Province where it flows southwest to the Alabama state line. At that point the Chattahoochee flows in a southerly direction to its confluence with the Flint River near the Florida State line for a total of approximately 434 miles.

The Chattahoochee River provides the western boundary between Georgia and Alabama. One of Early County's largest businesses and largest surface water users is a paper mill located in the southwestern portion of the county along the river. Barge transportation is also provided along this great natural resource. The Chattahoochee River is widely known for its abundant fish and wildlife resources. The diverse mixture of agriculture and forestry practices in Early County provides ample habitat for wildlife including deer, turkey, squirrel, rabbit, dove, quail, songbirds and furbearers. The non-game fish resources along the Chattahoochee River are also very diverse. The Chattahoochee River is also an important recreational resource for Early County residents.

The Chattahoochee River has been subject to limited amounts of urban development as it runs through Early County. The majority of the river corridor is privately owned and is held in large plantation holdings, much of which has been preserved in a natural state or is utilized for agricultural or forestry reasons. Nearly all of the development along the Chattahoochee River in Early County is located at or below the George W. Andrews Lock and Dam which is located below Columbia, Alabama in the center of the county's western border. Development above this area is very sparse. Altogether, there is limited commercial and industrial development located along the river and public access is limited to several small unobtrusive developments. Located just above this dam is the Stratus Petroleum Company facility. Several small residential developments are located near the river in the very southern portion of the river in Early County in what is described as the Saffold area, or Confederate Navy Yard. The predominant commercial/industrial land uses along the river are also located in the southern portion of the county border. These include the Georgia Tubing Company, Cedar Springs Plywood Mill, Georgia Pacific and Star Paper Tube. Several public access facilities are located along the river, however, they are small developments. Public access is available above the George W. Andrews Lock and Dam at the Coheelee Creek, and Odum Creek Public Use areas.

Urbanization, which can disrupt the natural equilibrium of a river system, has had little impact on the Chattahoochee River corridor located in Early County. The river corridor has thus far been protected from pollutants from urban construction, runoff, municipal waste water operations and septic tank development which could enter the river and adversely affect water quality. The lack of development of impervious surfaces which prevents infiltration and increases storm water runoff has helped to maintain the natural functions of the river corridor.

There are a number of State and Federal laws and regulatory programs which directly or indirectly affect rivers and river corridors: Federal Clean Water Act, Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, National Flood Insurance Program, The Georgia Water Quality Act, the Georgia Safe Drinking Water Act of 1977, the Metropolitan and River Corridor Protection Act, 1991, the Erosion and Sedimentation Act, 1975-, and the Georgia "Vital Areas" Legislation 1973, among others.

## Floodplains

Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) were developed for Early County in 1995, by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as part of the National Flood Insurance Program. The map illustrates special flood hazard areas within the unincorporated areas of Early County and the City of Jakin. Special flood hazard areas are determined with reference to the “100-year” flood standard, the national standard which National Flood Insurance Program regulations are based. However there is not data on these maps for Blakely, Damascus, or Arlington. A Generalized Flood plains map for Early County (**Figure 6.8**) is included but all specific queries as to the exact location of Floodplain areas should come from the Early County Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM).

## Wetlands

Wetlands are areas that are flooded or saturated by surface or groundwater often and long enough to grow vegetation adapted for life in water-saturated soils. In order to develop the vegetative and soil characteristics necessary to qualify as a wetland, an area might only be flooded for one week out of the year. Wetlands range from lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, creeks, swamps, marshes and water bodies that are flooded year round to those flooded only occasionally. These include intermittent springs, bogs, bottomland forests, pine flatwoods, wet meadows, and sinkholes. The ecological parameters used to delineate wetlands include hydric soils, hydrophytic vegetation, and hydrological conditions.

Wetlands are a major determinant of land use in Early County. According to Georgia Wetlands. Trends and Policy Options, there were approximately 14,147.1 acres of wetlands in Early County in 1986 which ranked them as 60th out of all Georgia counties with regard to the largest amount of wetland acreage. Wetlands comprise 4.3 percent of all land area in Early County and are well dispersed throughout the county. Presently, Early County, Blakely, Damascus, and Jakin have adopted Wetland Protection Ordinances that are consistent with the Environmental Planning Criteria set forth by the Department of Natural Resources.

The Wetland Protection Ordinance is a way for local governments to check to make sure disturbed Jurisdictional Wetlands are reviewed by the Army Corp of Engineers. The ordinance says if development is happening within 50 feet of a Wetland Protection District Boundary, as determined from the Generalized Wetland Map, then an Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit is required before a local building permit can be obtained. The Department of Community Affairs and the Department of Natural Resources are currently reviewing the requirements for these ordinances and may revise them. If they are revised then Early County and cities will be required to update there wetland ordinance within the 10 year planning horizon to conform to the new standards.

Generalized representational maps of wetland locations in Early County, Blakely, Damascus, and Jakin are depicted on **Figures 6.0** through **6.3**. These maps are provided in the comprehensive plan as very general planning guides. The National Wetland Inventory Maps produced by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service depict all wetlands five acres and larger. The Fish and Wildlife Service maps were derived from aerial photography and are used as the official wetland maps of the county. These maps are available at the Early County Governmental Building. These maps should be utilized as general guidelines for determining if complete wetland delineation is necessary. Users must be aware that aerial photos might not catch all wetlands areas due to environmental conditions during the photography.

Wetlands are prolific and well dispersed throughout unincorporated Early County. The largest concentrations of wetlands are located in the very southern portion of the county and in the northern portion of the county along the eastern and western areas north of Blakely. The Big Pond along the county's eastern border is a significant wetland area. Several other large wetland areas are located in the northernmost corner of the county, south of Missionary Church and Slayton Roads. In western Early County, several significant wetland areas are found south of the Great Pacific Corporation near the Chattahoochee River and north of Wilson Road at Porters Pond. With the exception of Kolomoki Lake, Creek and its associated streams, wetlands in the very northern and central area north of Blakely are sparsely scattered. The unincorporated area of Cuba got its name from the

number of wet areas surrounding it, many of which are wetlands.

Within the City of Blakely, several significant wetlands are located north of College Street and east of Redbud Street. Large wetland areas are located in the eastern part of town that was recently annexed. Other significant wetland areas in the city are located north of Hogan and Palmetto Avenues. A large wetland area is located south of the city limits, which also dissects a southern peninsula shape of southern Blakely above Arnall Boulevard.

In the City of Damascus, wetlands are largely located on the eastern side of the city, however several large wetland areas are located on the western side of town. These are found northeast of the SW Georgia Academy, as well as southeast of the school. Other significant wetlands are located on the southwestern city limits area and near the southern half of the railroad line. Several large concentrations of wetlands over five acres are located in the northeastern quadrant of Damascus as well as in the southeastern quadrant.

The National Wetlands Inventory maps show several wetland areas in the City of Jakin. These include areas along creeks in the southwestern and northeastern section of town. Other wetlands are recorded in the northwest portion of town and several are located on the fringes of the heart of town. One other significant wetland is centrally located on the eastern boundary.

The State of Georgia and the Federal Government have determined that wetlands play a vital role in maintaining water quality as well as providing habitat for plants and animals. As such, wetlands are an integral part of the hydrology of all water systems. Thus, wetlands are protected under federal law. Section 404 of the Clean Water Act prohibits the discharge of dredge or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands without a permit. The State of Georgia has not been authorized to issue such permits. Consequently, the jurisdictional determination on all wetlands and any permits issued under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act are administered by the Army Corps of Engineers.

## Groundwater

Underground aquifers occur from the Fall Line Red Hills south in the western half of the coastal plain. The main recharge area for the deep underground (Ocala) aquifer is the Limesink Region in SW Georgia and the Valdosta Limesink Region. In addition, streams recharge the superficial sand aquifers near the surface. The principal artesian aquifer, the major source of drinking water for the coastal zone is largely in the Ocala Limestone of Eocene age. This stratum dips beneath the Miocene and younger sediments so that, in coastal Georgia it lies hundreds of feet below the surface. Other aquifers lie above in the Hawthorn Formation are very important for many purposes including irrigation.

There are four subsurface delineations of principal groundwater aquifers south of the fall line including the Cretaceous-Tertiary, Clayton, Claiborne, and Floridan/Jacksonian principal artesian aquifers. Early County lies in the recharge area of two principal artesian aquifers, the Claiborne and Floridan/Jacksonian. These aquifers are mainly recharged by precipitation in the area where formations intersect the land surface. Generally aquifers are recharged anywhere where water filters into the ground. Major rivers in the outcrop area contribute recharge when the rainfall is low. When rainfall is high, the aquifer recharges the rivers.

## Quantity

Withdrawals over 100,000 gallons per day on a monthly average from groundwater requires a permit from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. In 2003 there were two industrial and one municipal groundwater withdrawal permits existing in Early County. One industrial permit is held by Great Southern Paper Company (now Georgia Pacific) that allows them to withdrawal 0.200 MGD on a monthly average and 0.125 MGD on a yearly average. The water for this permit is withdrawn from the Tallahatta, Wilcox, Clayton aquifer systems in the Chattahoochee River Basin. The other industrial permit is held by Georgia Tubing Corporation that allows them to withdrawal 0.504 MGD on a monthly average and 0.504 MGD on a yearly average. The water for this permit is withdrawn from the Claiborne, Tallahatta, Wilcox aquifer systems in the Chattahoochee

River Basin. The City of Blakely holds the only municipal permit in the county. They are permitted to withdrawal 2.700 MGD on a monthly average and 2.700 MGD on a yearly average from the Clayton, Claiborne, Cretaceous aquifer systems in the Chattahoochee River Basin. The total amount of permitted industrial and municipal withdrawals from groundwater in Early County is 3.404 MGD monthly average and 3.329 MGD yearly average.

In 2000, it was estimated that there was 37.54 MGD permitted to be withdrawn from groundwater for irrigation in Early County. Other, non-permitted groundwater withdrawals include 0.02 MGD for the City of Jakin's public water supply, 0.03 MGD for the City of Damascus' public water supply, 0.36 MGD for various industrial and mining activities, 0.46 MGD for commercial and domestic uses, and 0.02 for livestock operations.

In 2001, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) placed a moratorium on new agricultural groundwater and surface water withdrawal permits within the Flint River Basin. The moratorium is scheduled to last until 2005 when the state will conclude its studies on water quantity and agricultural water use within the basin. The results of these studies will be used decide the future of water permit allocation within the basin. The results of these studies will have a direct effect on the economy of Early County due to the agricultural industry's dependence on irrigation and the paper and pulp industry's dependence on water.

The ACF Compact will also be a factor in deciding ground and surface water withdrawal permit allocation with in the Chattahoochee and Flint River basins. The ACF Compact is the congressionally authorized negotiation processes for Georgia, Alabama and Florida to negotiate water allocation formulas for the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) river basins. Since the three states did not reach an agreement on the ACF Compact by August 31, 2003, the agreement will be decided upon in federal court. Depending on how the agreement is formulated, water withdrawal permits in the Chattahoochee and Flint River basins for uses other than drinking water may be limited or impossible to get.

## Quality

All developable land in Early County is designated as a significant groundwater recharge area by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Recharge refers to the process of precipitation infiltrating into the soil, which adds to the volume of an aquifer. These areas are where the most significant recharge to the state's aquifers occurs, which therefore makes these areas important for protecting groundwater from pollution. These are the areas where the state has focused its groundwater protection measures. On top of significant groundwater recharge areas the entire State of Georgia has been evaluated as to the pollution susceptibility of shallow aquifers. See Figure 6.4 for significant groundwater recharge areas in Early County.

The Environmental Protection Agency developed the DRASTIC methodology to determine a land area's general vulnerability of shallow aquifers to pollution from common land use practices, also called the pollution susceptibility rating. The DRASTIC methodology is based on seven parameters that include depth to water, net recharge, aquifer media, soils, slope, impact of vadose zone, and hydraulic conductivity. Using the DRASTIC methodology, the United State Geological Survey has determined that the majority of the land in Early County, including the land area in the Cities of Blakely, Damascus, and Jakin is considered to have a high pollution susceptibility. Pollution susceptibility ratings consist of high, medium (average), or low.

High DRASTIC indices reflect the occurrence of areas with shallow water tables and permeable materials above the water tables. DRASTIC maps are not site specific and are best used for generalized planning. Some areas bordering the Chattahoochee River and particularly along the Sowhatchee, Weaver, and Sheffield Mill Creek are considered medium pollution susceptibility areas. The land area nearby the Little, Kolomoki, Temple and Fall Bridge Creeks in northern Early County are also considered medium pollution susceptibility areas. Protection of the groundwater resources in medium or high pollution susceptibility areas from contaminating or extensive land development is important if the abundant and excellent quality of potable groundwater in the region is to be maintained. See Figure 6.5 for pollution susceptibility in Early County.

While the groundwater recharge areas in Early County and the cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin are sensitive environmental areas; the likelihood of adverse impacts to groundwater quality in the county is minimal. This is due to the use of sanitary sewer systems in the most densely populated portions of the county (particularly the cities), the current regulatory measures for residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural and other land uses, the lack of concentrated septic tank development throughout the county, large lot sizes in the county, and the lack of development activity throughout the county.

However, groundwater is protected by a Groundwater Protection Ordinance adopted by Early County and each of the cities. The ordinance establishes a one and one half acre minimum lot size for single-family houses not served by public water or sewer that are located within a significant groundwater recharge area. Minimum lot sizes can be increased by calculating the expected volume of flow from a home's septic system then further increased depending on whether the house is within a low, medium, or high pollution susceptibility area. See **Figures 6.4 & 6.5**.

Groundwater contamination is protected in Early County by the Early County Health Department regulations and other local, state, and federal regulations including the Georgia Water Quality Control Act for land treatment facilities, local groundwater recharge protection ordinances, the Georgia Hazardous Waste Management Act, the Georgia Solid Waste Management Act, the Georgia Underground Storage Tank Act, and the Development of Regional Impact process. Wellhead protection ordinances have been adopted by the Cities of Blakely, Damascus, and Jakin. These ordinances protect public drinking water wells by restricting detrimental land uses within a 100-foot radius of all public wells. There is no need for the county to develop a wellhead protection ordinance since no public water system exists.

### **Public Water Supply Sources**

All public water supplies come from groundwater sources, which are protected by Early County Health Department regulations and other local, state, and federal regulations including the Georgia Water Quality Control Act for land treatment facilities, local groundwater recharge protection ordinances, the Georgia Hazardous Waste Management Act, the Georgia Solid Waste Management Act, the Georgia Underground Storage Tank Act, and the Development of Regional Impact process. Wellhead protection ordinances have been adopted by the Cities of Blakely, Damascus, and Jakin. These ordinances protect public drinking water wells by restricting detrimental land uses within a 100-foot radius of all public wells. There is no need for the county to develop a wellhead protection ordinance since no public water system exists.

### **Plant and Animal Habitats**

As a result of mounting concern over conservation of the nation's native flora and fauna, the United States Congress passed the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to provide for the conservation of endangered and threatened species of wildlife, fish, and plants. Soon after, the State of Georgia passed the Wildflower Preservation Act and the Endangered Wildlife Act in 1973. Protection of endangered and threatened species depends on the enforcement of this trio of regulations in Georgia.

The following is a list of special concern animals, plants, and natural communities in Early County, Georgia that are known to occur and which DNR has records of locations in their databases. The information in this list comes from the Georgia Natural Heritage Program, administered by the Wildlife Resource Division of DNR. "US" indicates species with federal status (Protected, Candidate or Partial Status). Species that are federally protected in Georgia are also state protected. "GA" indicates Georgia protected species.

*Animals*

- *Elliptio arctata* Delicate Spike
- *Etheostoma edwini* Brown Darter
- *Etheostoma swaini* Gulf Darter
- *Fundulus escambiae* Eastern Starhead Topminnow
- US · *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* Bald Eagle
- *Heterodon simus* Southern Hognose Snake
- *Ichthyomyzon gagei* Southern Brook Lamprey
- US · *Lampsilis subangulata* Shinyrayed Pocketbook
- US · *Medionidus penicillatus* Gulf Moccasinshell
- GA · *Notropis harperi* Redeye Chub
- US · *Pleurobema pyriforme* Oval Pigtoe
- *Pteronotropis hypselopterus* Sailfin Shiner
- GA · *Pteronotropis welaka* Bluenose Shiner
- *Scartomyzon lachneri* Greater Jumprock

- *Aesculus parviflora* Bottlebrush Buckeye
- GA · *Arnoglossum diversifolium* Variable-leaf Indian-plantain
- *Arnoglossum sulcatum* Grooved-stem Indian-plantain
- *Brickellia cordifolia* Flyr's Nemesis
- GA · *Carex baltzellii* Baltzell Sedge
- GA · *Carex dasycarpa* Velvet Sedge
- GA · *Epidendrum conopseum* Green-fly Orchid
- GA · *Lythrum curtissii* Curtiss Loosestrife
- *Macranthera flammea* Flame Flower
- GA · *Matelea alabamensis* Alabama Milkvine
- GA · *Melanthium woodii* Ozark Bunchflower
- GA · *Myriophyllum laxum* Lax Water-milfoil
- *Peltandra sagittifolia* Arrow Arum
- GA · *Pinguicula primuliflora* Clearwater Butterwort
- *Ponthieva racemosa* Shadow-witch Orchid
- *Quercus arkansana* Arkansas Oak
- *Quercus sinuata* Durand Oak
- GA · *Rhododendron prunifolium* Plumleaf Azalea
- GA · *Salix floridana* Florida Willow
- GA · *Sarracenia leucophylla* Whitetop Pitcherplant
- GA · *Sarracenia minor* Hooded Pitcherplant
- GA · *Sarracenia psittacina* Parrot Pitcherplant
- US · *Sarracenia rubra* Sweet Pitcherplant
- US · *Schwalbea americana* Chaffseed
- GA · *Sideroxylon thornei* Swamp Buckthorn
- *Tephrosia mohrii* Dwarf Goats Rue
- US · *Trillium reliquum* Relict Trillium
- *Utricularia olivacea* Leafless Dwarf Bladderwort

## Plants

These rare plant and animal species are felt to be adequately protected in Early County, and the Cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin by the existing state and federal laws. However, education on the existence of and on recognition of these species will be encouraged throughout the twenty year planning horizon. In addition, residents of the county will be encouraged to assist the Georgia Natural Heritage Program in the identification or sightings of endangered and threatened species in the county.

According to this data there are no natural communities of special concern animals or plants in Early County. However, three areas were identified during public input sessions as important habitats for plants and animals. Sawhatchee Creek and Old Factory Creek were identified as being areas that support endangered species. Odoms Creek was identified as containing wild native orchids. These important areas were said to be located on private lands and were considered to be protected due to this fact.

### Major Park, Recreation, and Conservation Areas

An inventory of major federal, state and regional parks and wildlife management areas, nature preserves and national forests is pertinent in the natural resources element. Local parks and recreation areas are addressed in the community facilities element of the plan. Early County is fortunate to be home to the Kolomoki Mounds State Park, located in the northern portion of the county near the Clay County border between Highways 39 and 27. The park is six miles north of the City of Blakely surrounding Little Kolomoki Creek. This state resource is a recreational as well as archaeological resource of prehistoric significance. The 1,293 acre park not only provides a variety of recreational facilities, but contains seven large Indian mounds.

The Kolomoki Indian mounds and nearly 1,000 acres in surrounding land area were presented to the State of Georgia Department of Natural Resources as a gift from the Rotary Club of Blakely in 1938. The mounds have been investigated by qualified archaeologists since 1918 and were designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1966 by the U.S. Department of Interior. Throughout the years, much controversy was created around the archaeological cultural period interpretations of southeastern archaeologists. Much of this controversy developed after carbon dating techniques were introduced in 1949, confusing earlier interpretations of the archaeological sites. It was not until 1992, that the “Kolomoki problem” of cultural period identification was resolved.

Seven Indian mounds are located in the park. Kolomoki, with its surrounding villages, burial mounds, temple mounds, and ceremonial plaza was a very important population center of the region. By today’s standards, it was a small city, but extremely large for the cultural level of its day. It has been estimated that a population of two thousand people in the main village is not improbable.

Mound “A”, also known as the Great Mound, was built solely as the base for a temple. The temple was made of poles, matting and thatch. This mound is 325 by 200 feet at its base and 56.5 feet high at its summit. Since the southern half of the top platform is about three feet higher than the northern half, it is probable that there originally existed two clearly defined top plat-

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forms with a structure on each.

Mound “D” twenty feet high and about one hundred feet in diameter, is a large and complex burial mound. Mound “E”, smaller than “D”, was also a burial mound. This was the first of the mounds in the Kolomoki group to have been scientifically excavated. The excavated mound is a permanent exhibit and is located in the museum building, which also houses many of the fine pottery remains left as burial offerings in the mounds. Smaller mounds “B, G, F and C” are also nearby.

In addition to the above archaeological resources, the park presently contains a swimming pool, the Georgia-Pacific Amphitheater, picnicking areas and shelters, group camping, pioneer camping and 35 combination tent and trailer sites for individual campsites. Fishing and boating are allowed at the park on the 87 acres of Lake Kolomoki and Lake Yohola. The park also contains a miniature golf course, a playground area, barbecue shelters and group shelters with electric lights, grills, refrigerators, range, sink with hot and cold water, restrooms, tables and chairs.

A portion of the Miller County Wildlife Management area is located in eastern Early County along the Miller County border off of Georgia Highway 39. This property is available for hunting parties. Odom Creek Public Use Area is located on the Chattahoochee River and provides a place to launch small boats into the river. The Fannie Askew Williams Park is also located on the Chattahoochee River and provides picnic and passive recreational activities. The historic Coheele Creek Covered Bridge is located in the park and is accessible to the public.

The Nature Conservancy owns and manages 889 acres in northwestern Early County called Shackleford-Williams Bluff. The Bluff protects populations of several rare animals, including the gopher tortoise, Bachman's sparrow, Apalachicola dusky salamander, and the bald eagle. The Nature Conservancy Management activities by staff and volunteers include prescribed burns to maintain and restore longleaf pine communities, identification and control of exotic species, erosion control at the bluffs, roads and ravines and boundary marking. Additional inventories are being conducted to investigate the possible presence of ad-

ditional rare species.

The Kolomoki State Park and the Miller County Wildlife Management area are adequately protected by existing state agencies. No significant developmental impacts threaten either resource.

### **Scenic Views and Sites**

The majority of unincorporated Early County and some portions of the landscapes in the Cities of Blakely, Damascus, and Jakin exhibit a very bucolic, agrarian appeal. Many unpaved canopy roads are scattered throughout the county. However, due to the lack of development activity and the predominately rural character of the county, none of these resources warrant protection currently. No scenic vistas or sites have been identified in Early County or the cities of Blakely, Damascus, or Jakin, which warrant protective measures during the planning short term planning horizon.

### **Protected Mountains, Coastal Resources, and Water Supply Watersheds**

Protected mountains and coastal resources do not exist in Early County; therefore they are not addressed in this plan. Water supply watersheds are defined by DNR as areas of land upstream of a governmentally owned public drinking water intake. All potable water in Early County and its surrounding region is derived from an aquifer system. No water supply watershed exists in Early County, therefore the Department of Natural Resource's Criteria for Protection of Water Supply Watersheds is not addressed in this plan.

## Developments of Regional Impact

According to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), Developments of Regional Impact (DRI) are developments of sufficient scale whose impacts are likely to be felt outside of the jurisdiction in which they are located. The Georgia Planning Act requires any local government with a proposed DRI within its jurisdiction to submit the project for intergovernmental review and comment before taking any action to further the project. DCA has developed guidelines to establish what is considered a DRI. Projects that meet or exceed the minimum thresholds established in the guidelines may pose special environmental threats. Presently, no formal administrative process has been developed in Early County, Damascus, or Jakin to provide for the project threshold review required by the state. Review is informally handled in the City of Blakely. Updating the City of Blakely Zoning Ordinance to include the DRI review process in zoning applications will strengthen the DRI process. Further education on this issue would benefit the other communities in the county.

## Regionally Important Resources

Regionally Important Resources (RIR) are natural, historic, or archaeological resources which have natural boundaries extending beyond a single political jurisdiction or one which has value to a broad public constituency which is vulnerable to the actions and activities of man. RIRs can be designated by any individual or organization, but all parties affected by designation have a say in whether the nomination is accepted. A RIR can be nominated at any time by contacting the Department of Community Affairs and allowing them to evaluate the resource for its eligibility as a RIR. If the resource is accepted, a Regional Resource Plan must be developed by the local governments, individuals, and organizations affected by the plan. The plan can protect resources by requiring review of projects that might potentially affect the RIR.

Presently there are no RIRs in Early County, nor are any being considered for nomination. Spring Creek, however, is a good candidate for a resource whose natural boundaries extend beyond a single political jurisdiction. The importance of this resource is evident in the Spring Creek Watershed Partnership and the Memorandum of Understanding that outlines each partici-

pating party's role in the conservation of Spring Creek. The parties involved in the partnership are the United States Department of Agriculture Natural resource Conservation Service, Golden Triangle Resource Conservation and Development Council, Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District, US Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Counties of Clay, Early, Calhoun, Miller Decatur, and Seminole.

### **C. Assessment of Current and Future Needs**

Early County has an excellent array of natural resources, which are important to the community. Protection of these resources is important to the future economic well being of the community. However, due to the limited amount of development activity occurring across the county and the minor likelihood of adverse impacts associated with such slow growth or decline, there is currently limited support for intense conservation measures.

According to the preceding inventory of the natural resource base and the accompanying assessment of the impacts of growth and development on each element, Early County communities generally conclude that existing protective programs as well as state and federal regulations are adequately protecting the county's natural resource base. No other additional measures will be pursued by Early County regarding water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, floodplains and soil types. Natural and cultural resources maps begin on page 6-60.

## Identification of Historic and Cultural Resources

A preliminary survey of historic resources was made in Blakely, Damascus, and Jakin during the early 1980's by a team of two surveyors under the supervision of the Southwest Georgia Development Center's Historic Preservation Planner. This survey consists of a basic identification of all properties in those communities built prior to the early 1930s. Neither surveyor had architectural history credentials, however, both were trained to determine the age of structures by their style, materials used, workmanship and structural system. No full preliminary survey was made for unincorporated Early County until 1996 when both the county and cities were surveyed by a private historic preservation consultant.

In 1996, 313 historic properties were surveyed in Damascus, Jakin, the unincorporated sections of the county, and the portion of Arlington that is in Early County, and 160 were surveyed in Blakely. A Georgia Historic Resources Survey Form was filled out for each of the properties and includes a very basic architectural description, a photograph, and location on a base map. Some historical information such as previous owners, architect, date of construction, etc. was obtained on some properties, usually from the occupant of the building or a neighbor. These surveys may be used as tools for locating properties which are potentially eligible for listing in the Georgia and National Registers of Historic Places. All properties in the State of Georgia that are listed in the National Register are automatically listed in the Georgia Register of Historic Places.

The county and the cities may want to consider supporting another historic resources survey in 2016 or soon after since the 1996 survey will be considered to be outdated. Funding for survey work can be obtained from the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

## National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the list of sites, structures, objects, buildings, and districts, maintained by the National Park Service, that are considered by national standards to be worthy of preservation. According to the Park Service,

listing in the National Register honors a historic place by recognizing its importance to its community, State, or the Nation. Under Federal law, owners of private property listed in the National Register are free to maintain, manage, or dispose of their property as they choose provided that there is no Federal involvement. Owners have NO obligation to open their properties to the public, to restore them or even to maintain them, if they choose not to do so.

To nominate historic resources to the National Register of Historic Places a Georgia Historic Property Information Form must be filled out. This form can be obtained from the Historic Preservation Planner at the Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center or from the Historic Preservation Division (HPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR). HPD administers the National Register Program in the State of Georgia, which means they review the nominations and recommend to the National Park Service whether a resource is worthy of listing in the National Register or not.

In Early County there are seven historic resources listed in the National Register of Historic Places and they include:

- The Coheelee Creek Covered Bridge located 2 miles north of Old River Road in the Hilton Community. This resource was listed in the National Register on May 13, 1976. The bridge is a wood frame kingpost type covered bridge constructed in 1883 and was called the southern most covered bridge in the US. The bridge was used until approximately 1980, when a new bridge was built a few hundred feet east of the original and the road was rerouted to the new bridge. The bridge is still in its original spot and is not part of the Fannie Askew Williams Park.
- Early County Courthouse located on the Courthouse Square in Blakely. It was listed in the National Register on September 18, 1980. The Courthouse was designed by the Atlanta architecture firm of Morgan and Dillon and was constructed in 1905.
- Harrell, Jane Donalson, House located on CR 1975 off US 84 in Jakin. It was listed on the National Register on June 17,

1982. The house was constructed in 1855 and serves as a good example of a plantation plain house type with Greek Revival detail.

- Kolomoki Mounds are located 8 miles N of Blakely on US 27 at the Kolomoki Mounds State Park. The mounds were listed in the National Register on October 15, 1966 but was designated a National Landmark on July 19, 1964. National Landmark status is the Federal government's formal recognition that a historic resource has national significance. The Kolomoki Indian Mounds is a significant historical and archaeological resource, which is protected as a State Park. There are seven burial and temple mounds built by the Kolomoki culture from approximately 1000AD to 1400AD.
- Butler, James and Clara, House located at 418 College St. in Blakely. The house was listed in the National Register on November 1, 2002. The house is considered a good example of a Folk Victorian style Georgian cottage, and is one of two examples in the City of Blakely.
- Bank of Jakin is located at 135 S. Pearl St. in Jakin. It was listed in the National Register on July 7, 2003. Constructed in 1912, the building is important due to its history as a bank when Jakin had a population of approximately 2000 people, and as the Jakin Post Office from 1923 to 1988.
- Blakely Court Square Historic District is bounded by Powell St., Smith Ave., Church St., and Bay St. and comprises most of downtown Blakely. It was listed in the National Register on May 5, 2002. The district draws its historic significance from the Sparta Plan that downtown is laid out on, its development as the commercial center for Early County, and the good examples of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial buildings.

### **Significant Historic Resources Not Listed in the National Register of Historic Places**

The following is an inventory of the most significant historic resources located throughout Early County. This list was de-

veloped using the information in the 1993 Early County Comprehensive Plan, the 1996 Historic Resources Survey, a windshield survey of the county, and by utilizing public input. The list includes historic residential, commercial, institutional, rural, transportation, and cultural sites. It also includes resources that are not yet 50 years old, but will reach that threshold within the twenty year planning horizon. The 50-year mark is significant because it is one of the most basic requirements for listing a historic resource in the National Register. No significant historic industrial resources have been identified. Early County is rich in agricultural history and has many historic rural resources in the form of rural landscapes, farm complexes, crossroads communities, bridges, barns, and plantations. Several bridges and farms are included in the list below. Most of these resources are eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Potential historic districts are not mentioned in this list and will be discussed in the next section.

### **National Register Historic Districts**

According to the National Park Service a National Register Historic District must possess a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. The Blakely Court Square Historic District is the only designated district in Early County. It was officially listed in the National Register of Historic Places on May 9, 2002. The district includes the courthouse square and most of the central business district. The district draws its historical significance from the Sparta Plan that downtown is laid out on, its development as the commercial center for Early County, and the good examples of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial buildings. Important buildings include the Early County Courthouse, the Confederate Flagpole, Blakely City Hall, the Blakely Post Office, the Blakely Theatre, the Alexander Building, the Early County Jail, Blakely Episcopal Church, and Blakely Baptist Church. Although this is the only district in the county, several potential National Register Districts do exist.

### **Potential National Register Historic Districts:**

- **Old Damascus Historic District** – Encompasses the area known at Old Damascus that is located off of State Road 200 to

the west of the City of Damascus. The district would include resources along County Road 188, 189, and 230, as well as State Road 200 from the city limits of Damascus to County Road 189.

- **Jakin Historic District** – This district is currently in the process of becoming listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The district includes most of Pearl Street within the city limits and includes several homes and a few commercial buildings.
- **Damascus Residential Historic District** – This is a small district that includes the houses along Railroad Ave and the houses and churches at the intersection of State Roads 200 and 45.

SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC RESOURCES IN UNINCORPORATED EARLY COUNTY	
Resource	Location
Unique Mill House	Dam at Lake Louise, near Blakely
Mt. Ararat Church	Freeman Road, Early County
Pleasant Grove Cemetery	Old River Road, Early County
Black Pleasant Grove Church and Cemetery	Old River Road, Early County
Hilton Methodist Church	Hilton, Early County
Howard's Mill	Between Jakin/Cedar Springs
Cedar Spring Cemetery	Cedar Springs
Drew Roberts House	Cedar Springs
Lee Ricks	Cedar Springs
Lane and Chambers House	Cedar Springs
Good Hope AME Church Cemetery	Two miles west of Cedar Springs, off GA Hwy 273
Evergreen AME Cemetery	Eight miles N of Blakely, off 27 turn east, one quarter mile
Green Cemetery	Rt 4, E of GA 363, just S of Sheffield Mill Creek Crossing

SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC RESOURCES IN BLAKELY	
Resource	Location
Powell Opera House	Blakely 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Collier Bldg.
Bolling H. Robinson House	212 Westward Avenue
Strickland Evans House	302 Westward Avenue
Harris-Wade-Halstein-Hobbs House	301 Westward Avenue
Arthur Hammond House	Chattahoochee Avenue
Robinson-Grimsley-Davis House	226 Fort Gaines (Orig. Log Home)
Williams Boyett House	310 N Main Street
Westbrook-Jones-Daub House	228 Liberty Street (Remodeled)
Loyless Pearl House (1845)	641 River Street (Remodeled)
Butler-Cherry-McDowell-Fryer House	402 N. Main Street
Standifer-Thompson-Jordan House	110 Magnolia Street
Stewart-Vinson-Hall-Singleton House	421 River Street
Henderson-Brown-Hayes	645 River Street
Blakely Cemetery	North Church Street
Wesley Chapel CME Church Cemetery	North Church Street
Quail Motel	Smith Avenue and South Main Street
Royal Inn	Smith Avenue
Early County Hospital	Smith Avenue and Flowers Drive

- **Damascus Commercial Historic District** – This district includes the properties on State Road 200 between Kestler Ave. and Bull St.
- **Cedar Springs Historic District** – This district encompasses the entire community of Cedar Springs.

SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC RESOURCES IN DAMASCUS	
Resource	Location
Damascus All School/Georgia Academy	GA Hwy 200
Phillips House	Bull Street
W. T. Dowdy Street	Bull Street
Hightower-Craft Home	GA 45 and RR Avenue
Haddock-Collins House	RR Avenue
Hightower-Blaylock House	RR Avenue
Hightower-Crozier House	Arlington Road
W. E. McDowell	GA 200 Damascus-Blakely
Depot Building GA 45	

- **North Main Street Historic District** – North of Blakely’s downtown central business district along North Main St. to approximately Arlington Ave. is a potential residential historic district.
- **South Main Street Historic District** – Many houses south of Smith Avenue along Church and South Main Sts. are eligible for the National Register as a residential historic district.
- **River and College Street Historic District** – West of downtown Blakely there is a potential residential historic district which roughly includes River and College Sts. and some intersecting streets.
- **Woodlawn Drive Historic District** – Many of the houses along Woodlawn Dr. date from the 1940s-1960s. While some of these houses are not yet considered historic, they will meet the criteria for listing in the National Register within the planning horizon.

### Advantages to National Register Listed Properties

Listing properties in the National Register of Historic Places is important not only for the recognition, but it opens them

up for tax advantages for rehabilitating these buildings. There are two state tax incentive programs for rehabilitating historic buildings and one federal program. The state has a property tax frieze and a small tax credit program for all types of historic

HISTORIC MARKERS IN THE COUNTY	
Covered Bridge over Coheele Creek	GA 62 Six miles S of Blakely
Three Notch Trail	GA 39 Two miles S of Blakely & GA 39 Four miles N of Blakely
Confederate Navy Yard, Saffold	US 84 3.5 miles W of Jakin
Early County Origin Marker	At the courthouse in Blakely
Confederate Flagpole	At the courthouse in Blakely

resources while the federal program is a tax credit only available for income producing properties. Districts are a good way to give a revitalization tool to the largest amount of buildings. For a building to be eligible it must contribute to the historic integrity of the district.

### Archaeological Resources

The State of Georgia has no formal state-wide archaeological survey program. The large size of the state and the nature of archaeological resources make the costs of such studies prohibitive. The University of Georgia, Department of Anthropology serves as the central state file for archaeological information and constitutes the official inventory of archaeological sites in Georgia for Georgia’s Historic Preservation Program. Due to looting and damage, archaeological resource information is protected.

The earliest known human inhabitants of the region now known as Early County came into the area approximately ten thousand years ago, at the end of the last Ice Age. European settlers began to enter the area in the early nineteenth century and were probably somewhat established in present-day Early County by the time the land was officially ceded by the Creek Indians in 1814. Over the last ten thousand years, humans have left a substantial material record of their lives. The study of this material record forms the basis of *archaeology* and the basic unit of this record is the *archaeological site*. To date, there have been 200

archaeological sites recorded in Early County, mostly concentrated along streams; however, there are almost certainly many more sites that have not been discovered. Archaeological sites in Early County range from locations where hunters manufactured stone tools 10,000 years ago to prehistoric villages with earthen mounds to small late nineteenth/early twentieth century farmsteads.

Archaeological sites, like historic buildings, are considered *cultural resources* and, if they meet eligibility requirements set forth in the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), *historic properties*. Unlike historic buildings, however, archaeological sites are not always evident to the untrained eye. While some archaeological sites have obvious above ground indicators such as earth mounds, or chimney remnants, most consist of *artifacts* (object made or modified by humans such as stone tool, pottery, bottle glass) and *features* (post holes, trash pits, stone hearths, human burials, etc.) that are *underground*.

How do you know if an area contains an archaeological site? The only sure way to know is to have a professional archaeologist sample, or *survey*, the area. There are, however, some general criteria you can apply to help prioritize areas. Prehistoric (Indian) sites are most commonly located near water sources such as streams, springs, or lime sinks. Historic (Euro/Afro-American) sites are commonly located close to old/historic roads. Both prehistoric and historic sites are generally located on level to gently sloping ground and on well-drained soils. Previous disturbance can also affect a location's potential to contain archaeological sites. For example, road/utilities right-of-way has usually been subjected to heavy disturbance and is not likely to contain any intact archaeological deposits. Cultivation, however, does not necessarily destroy archaeological sites and does not, by itself, indicate a low potential area. Such criteria, even when developed into a formal predictive model, should only be used as a tool at the most basic planning level. Hiring a professional archaeologist/consultant is an effective way of streamlining the compliance process and insuring that archaeological resources are being treated according to the law.

While cultural resources work is most often done in response to Section 106 of the NHPA, meaning that there is some federal involvement (i.e., federal funds, permits, etc.), it is important to remember that there are also state laws to consider. Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA) 12-3-621 states that a person who is **not** operating under Section 106 must have writ-

ten landowner permission to conduct archaeology on private property and must provide written notification to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) at least five (5) business days prior to excavation. Other code sections apply more generally to human remains, but are relevant because of the possibility of discovering such remains at archaeological sites. OCGA 31-21-6 requires notification of local law enforcement upon the disturbance of human remains. If law enforcement determines that it is not a crime scene, DNR is notified of the discovery.

Key points to remember when considering archaeology in development and compliance:

- Humans have been in the area now known as Early County for at least 10,000 years, so the potential for finding evidence of past human activity (i.e., archaeological sites) is generally high.
- Unlike historic buildings, archaeological sites often have no above ground components that would indicate their presence.
- While factors such as distance to water and/or old roads, slope, soil drainage, and previous disturbance can help prioritize areas of archaeological concern, the only sure way to know whether an area contains archaeological sites is to conduct an archaeological survey.
- Most archaeology is done in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and regulations implementing that act (36 CFR Part 800). These laws insure that projects receiving federal funds (CDBG/EIP grants, FDIC loans, etc) or requiring federal permits (e.g., Section 404 of Clean Water Act) take affects to archaeological resources into account.
- In addition to federal laws, there are state laws to consider as well. Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA) 12-3-621 requires written landowner permission and DNR notification of intent to conduct non-Section 106 archaeology on private property. OCGA 31-21-6 requires notification of local law enforcement upon discovery or disturbance of human remains.

The Kolomoki Indian Mound sites are only archaeological sites in the county open to the public. In the 13th century, Ko-

lomoki was the largest ceremonial center in Southern Georgia. It is probable that a population of two thousand inhabited the village with its burial mounds, temple mound and ceremonial plaza. Scientific excavations indicate that two groups inhabited the site. The first settlement, about 800 A.D., was made by Indians who combined features of the Swift Creek culture, of local origin and the Weeden Island culture which had developed further to the south. About 1000 A.D. this culture developed into the Kolomoki culture which continued, in the burial mounds, Weeden Island features. Seven mounds are preserved within the park. These mounds were built by the Kolomoki people, who occupied the site until the 13th century. Mound A, the base for a temple is one of the largest in the United States. During the 16th century, the site was occupied by the Indians of the Lamar culture who were descendents of the historic tribes of this area. Exhibits in the museum depict Indian history in this area from about 5,000 B.C. to the end of the Kolomoki period, sometime during the 13th century. For more information on Kolomoki Mounds State Park, please see the Major Park, Recreation, and Conservation Areas section of this element.

### **Historic Preservation Resources and Organizations**

There is great interest in Early County's heritage and historic traditions throughout the county. This is exemplified by the work of the Early County Historical Society, formed in 1968. This organization has published three volumes of Early County history. The Historical Society provides educational materials and columns regarding Early County history to the local newspaper and holds many informative historic and cultural programs. A museum is currently being developed in two buildings on North Main Street in Blakely. In addition, the group occasionally offers tours of historic buildings and homes. Currently, none of the school systems in the county provide a formal Heritage Education Program for school children and there is little interest in the development of a program in the school system. Public input on this subject suggested that this should be the job of the historical society.

The City of Blakely was one of the first communities in the State of Georgia to participate in the Better Hometown Program. The Better Hometown Program (BHT) was developed and is administered by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The program is based off of the National Main Street Program and their trademarked strategy, *National Main Street Approach to Downtown Revitalization*. The Main Street Approach uses four basic tenets: organization, promotion, design, and economic restructuring, with an emphasis on historic preservation.

The BHT utilizes the same philosophy of the Main Street Program but is less intensive and does not require a full-time paid manager. The BHT Program in Blakely does not have a paid manager, but does have a plethora of volunteers and financial support from the city and county. For 2004 the City of Blakely has committed \$25,000 toward the program and Early County has committed an additional \$2,500. The local DCA regional office has a person on staff to provide assistance to Better Hometown cities. Façade design assistance is available to Better Hometown and Main Street cities through the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation.

The Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center (RDC) has a Historic Preservation Planner on staff that can provide assistance in most areas of historic preservation including downtown revitalization, National Register nominations, technical assistance, identification of historic resources, planning, etc.

### **Current and Future Needs**

As with natural resources, the cultural and historic resources in Early County are not significantly threatened by development pressures and other human activities. It appears that this will be true in the future because population projections show no significant growth in Early County over the twenty-year planning horizon. However, the biggest threat to historic resources in Early County is neglect. Historic housing in town or in rural areas is not usually rehabilitated due in part to the availability of cheap rural land and affordable manufactured housing. Due to the projected marginal increase in population over the twenty year planning horizon these factors are likely to continue to contribute to the neglect of historic housing.

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The establishment of locally designated historic districts is one way to protect historic resources. Local historic districts are created through a local ordinance and usually establish design guidelines for the exterior appearance of buildings within its boundaries. A historic preservation commission is formed to review plans for exterior work on buildings within the district to certify that the plans follow the locally established guidelines. However this was not an identified need, nor is this something that the public or local governments feel comfortable with. No local governments have the staff to manage a locally designated historic district. Although no local historic districts have been established in Early County, the City of Blakely does have provisions in their zoning ordinance concerning the exterior design of buildings in downtown to help preserve the historic aesthetic. The city's zoning administrator enforces this ordinance.

Downtown Blakely has been preserved and revitalized due in part to the Better Hometown Program, explained above. The Better Hometown will continue to serve as an organization to help preserve the historic resources of downtown Blakely while maintaining its economic vitality.

The two resources with the highest degree of protection are the Coheele Creek Covered Bridge and the Kolomoki Mounds. The Kolomoki Mounds have the virtue of being part of a state park and are cared for and protected by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. The Coheele Covered Bridge is located in Fannie Askew Williams Park, which is owned and operated by Early County.

Historic and cultural resources in Early County also receive some degree of protection from federally funded or permitted projects under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Section 106 requires that any federal undertaking, meaning federally funded or permitted project, must undergo a review to identify any potential effects the proposed project may have on historic and cultural resources. If the project is found to have an adverse effect on any historic or cultural resources listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, an agreement to mitigate the effects of the proposed project must be reached

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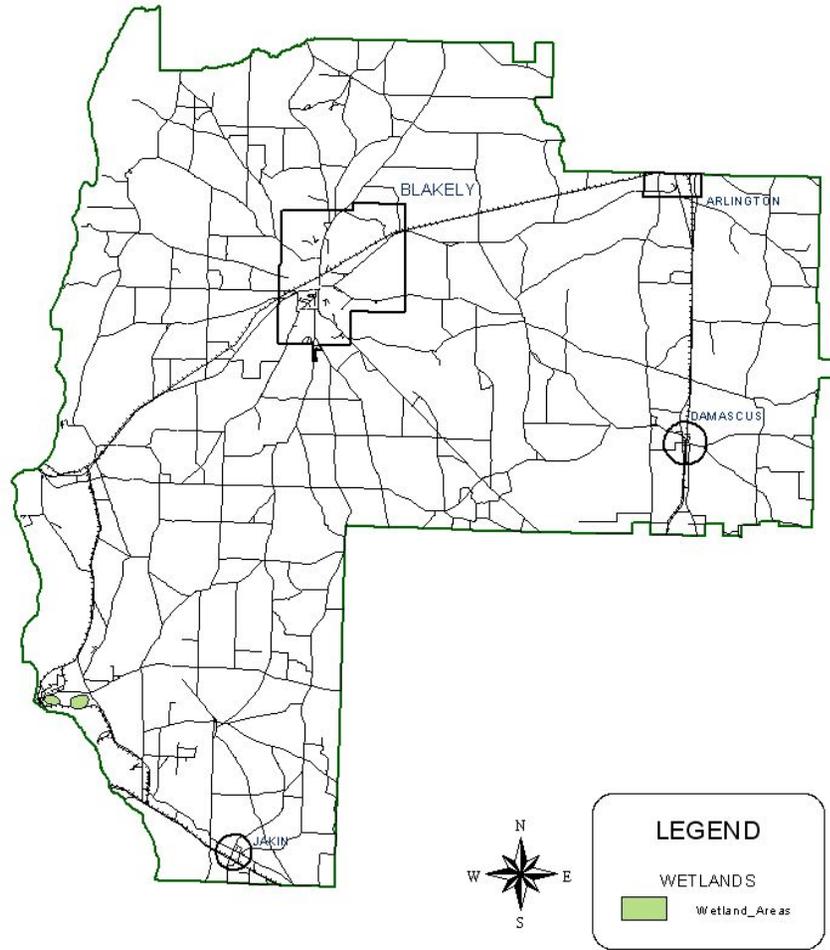
between the entity undertaking the project and the Georgia Historic Preservation Division.

According to the preceding inventory and assessment of cultural and historic resources, Early County communities generally conclude that existing protective programs as well as state and federal regulations are adequately protecting the county's cultural and historic resources.

## Natural & Cultural Resources Maps

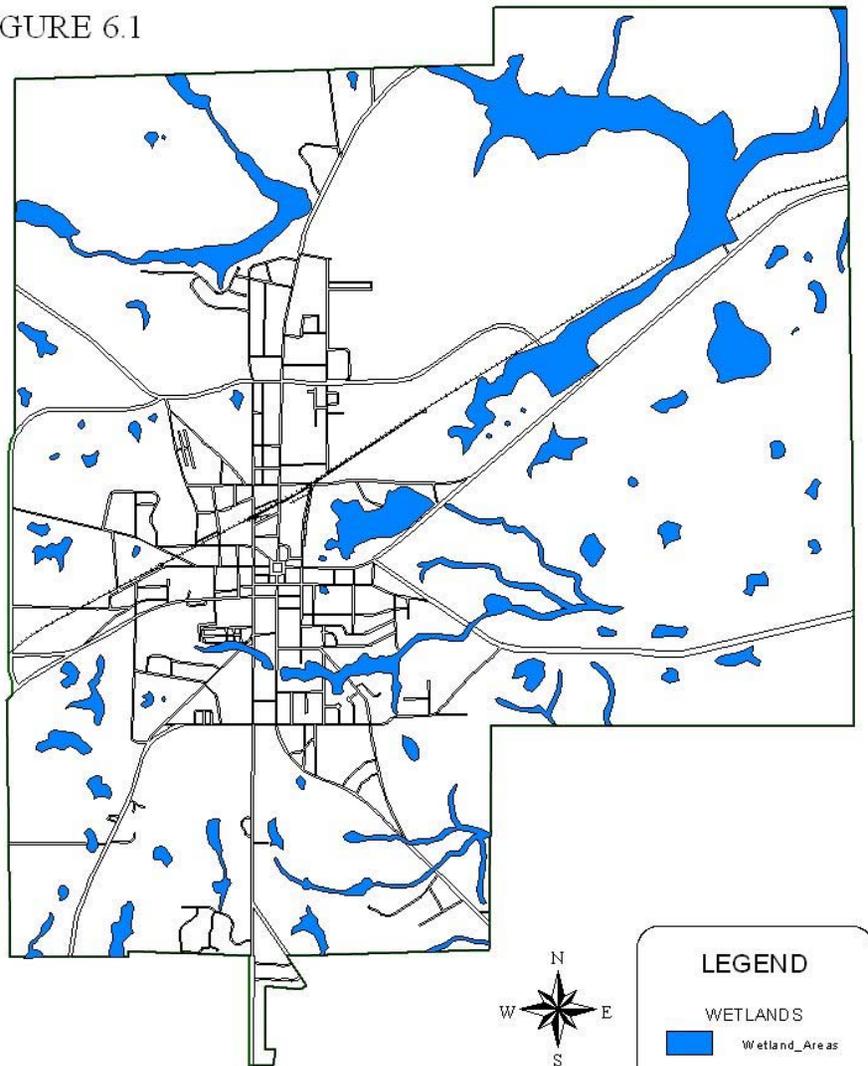
- Generalized Wetlands
- Blakely Wetlands
- Damascus Wetlands
- Jakin Wetlands
- Groundwater Recharge
- Pollution Susceptibility
- Prime Farmland
- Protected River

FIGURE 6.0



SOUTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER	RIVERS, CREEKS, STREAMS AND GENERALIZED WETLANDS	EARLY COUNTY
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FIGURE 6.1

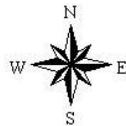


SOUTHWEST GEORGIA  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
CENTER

GENERALIZED WETLANDS

CITY OF  
BLAKELY

FIGURE 6.2



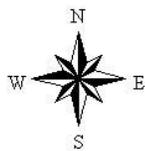
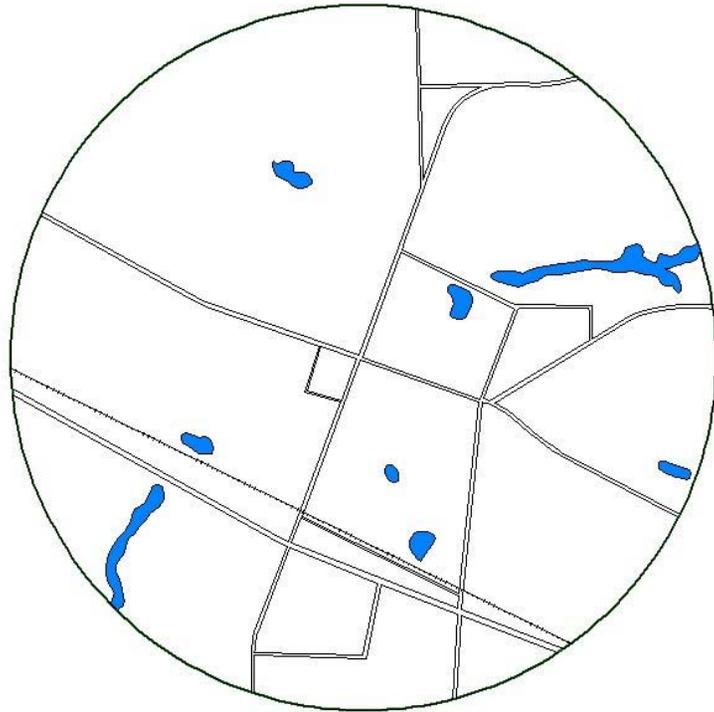
**LEGEND**

WETLANDS

 Wetland\_Areas

SOUTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER	<b>GENERALIZED WETLANDS</b>	CITY OF DAMASCUS
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FIGURE 6.3



**LEGENDS**

WETLANDS

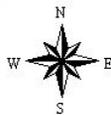
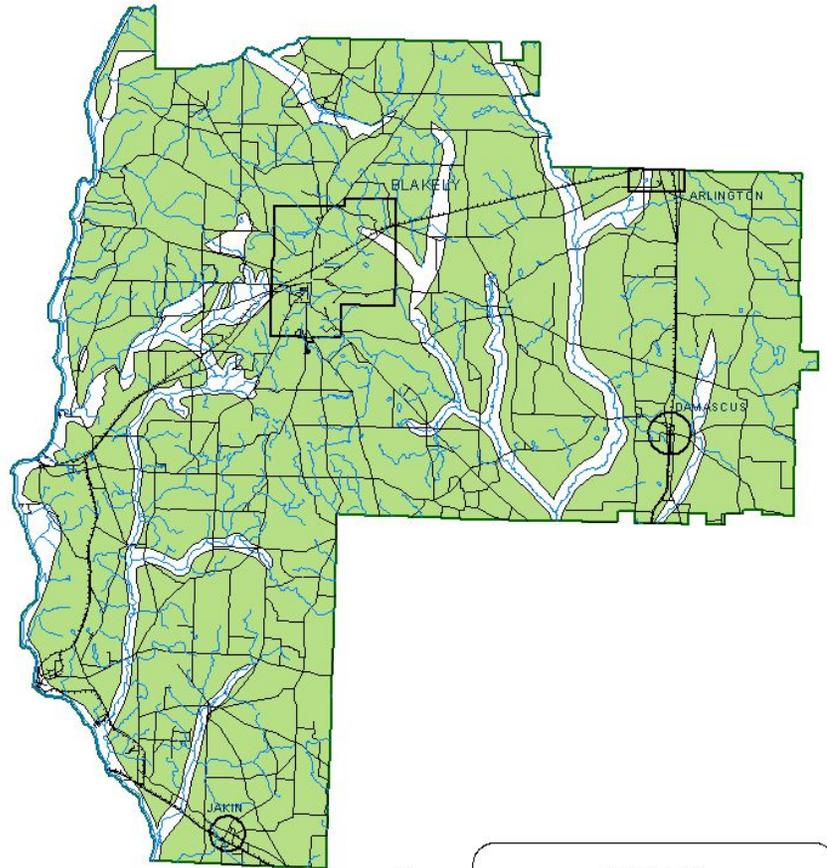
 Wetland\_Areas

SOUTHWEST GEORGIA  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
CENTER

GENERALIZED WETLANDS

CITY OF  
JAKIN

FIGURE 6.4



**LEGEND**

GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AREAS

Groundwater\_Recharge\_Area

SOUTHWEST GEORGIA  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
CENTER

MOST SIGNIFICANT GROUND WATER  
RECHARGE AREAS

EARLY  
COUNTY



FIGURE 6.6

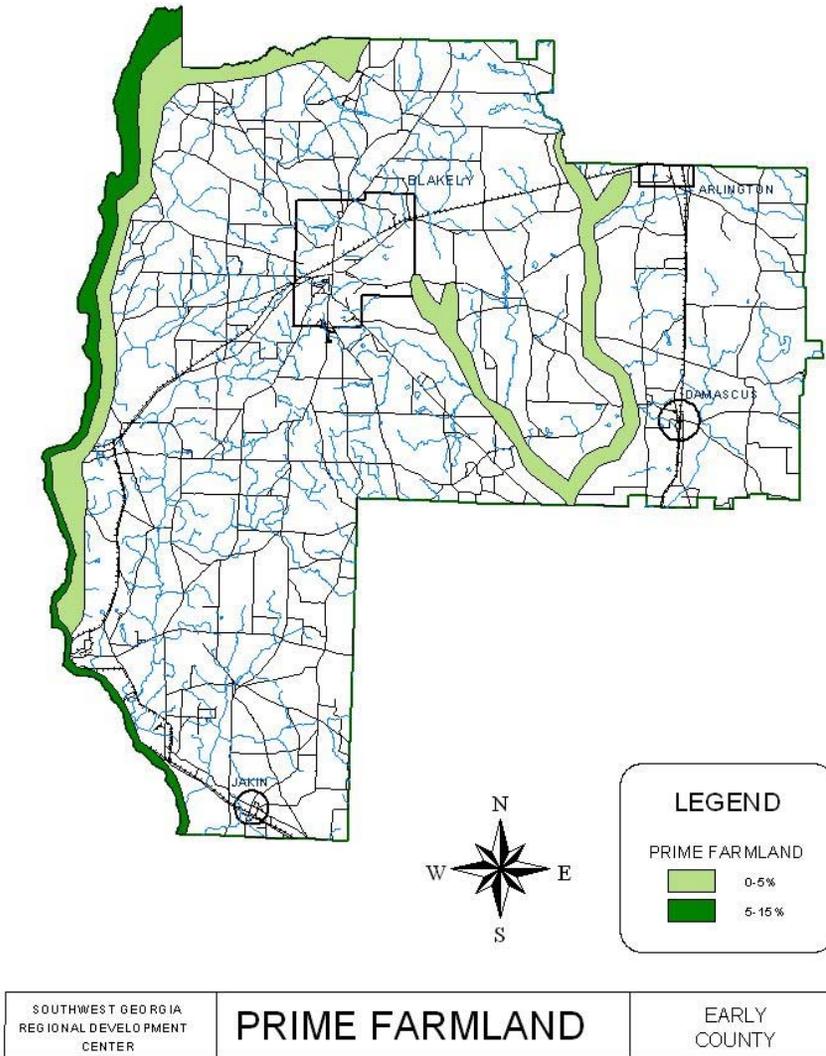
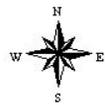
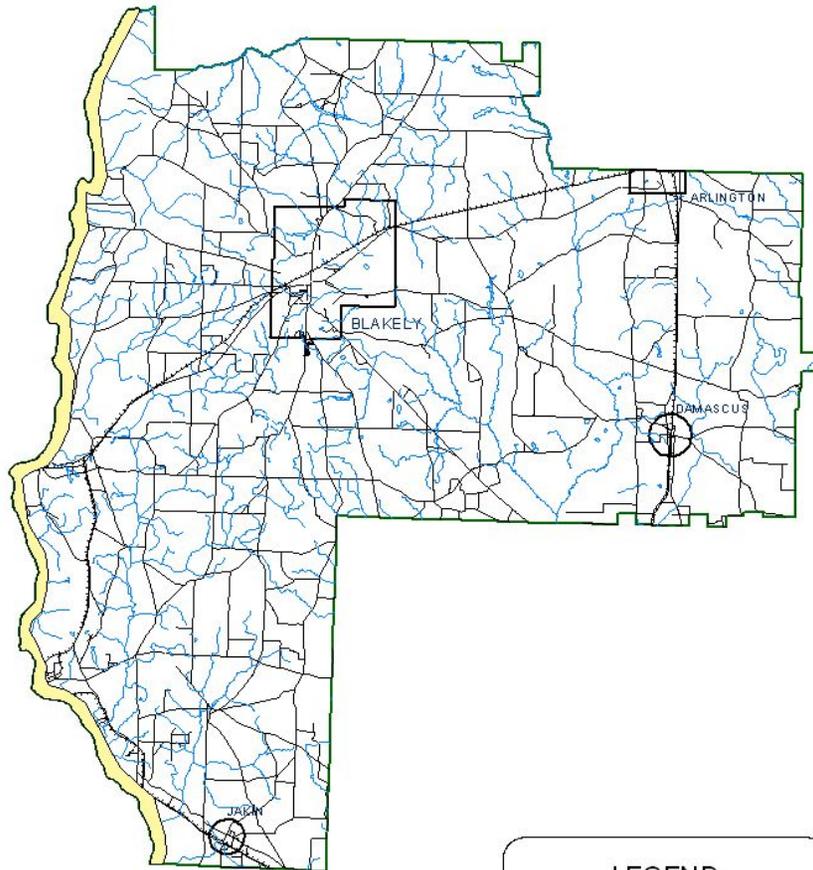


FIGURE 6.7



**LEGEND**

PROTECTED RIVER CORRIDOR

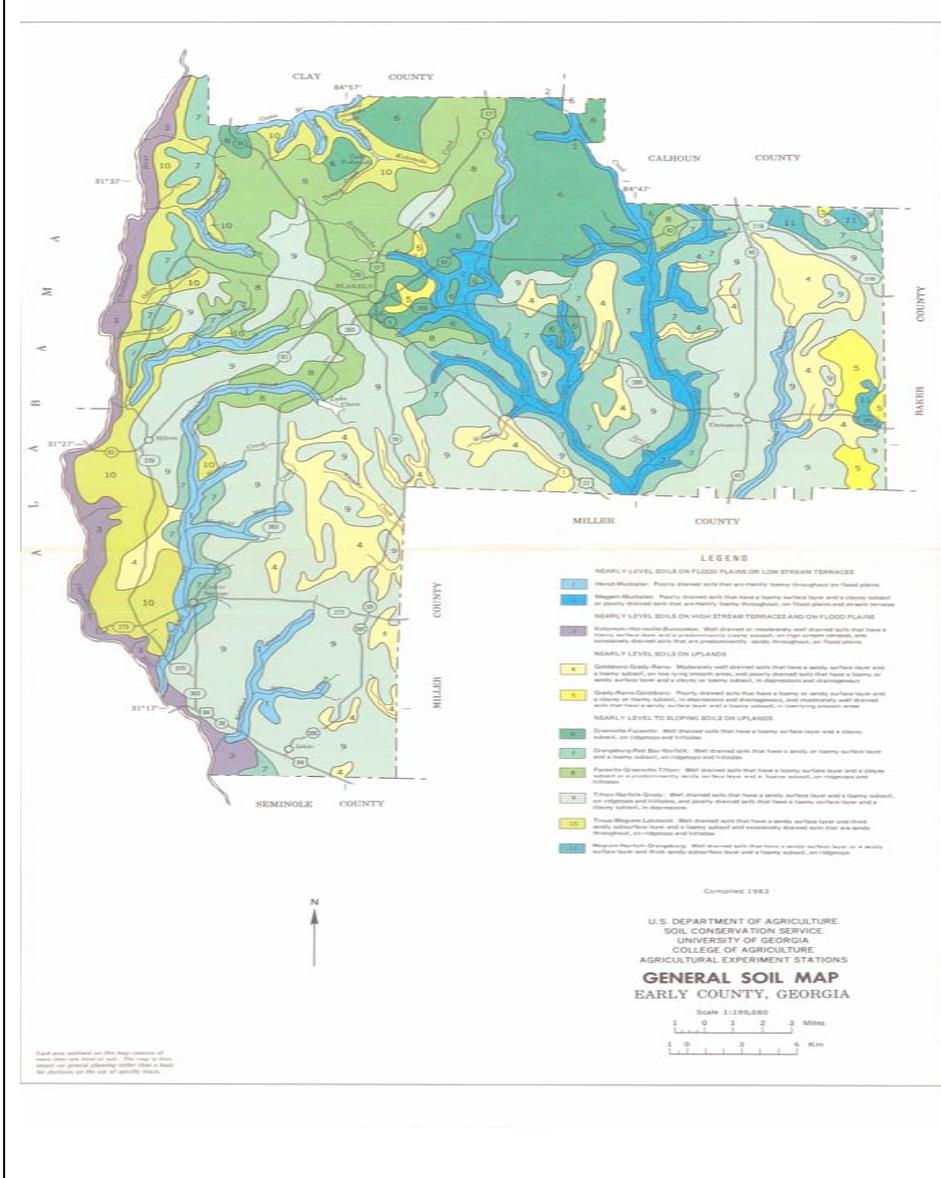
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SOUTHWEST GEORGIA  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
CENTER

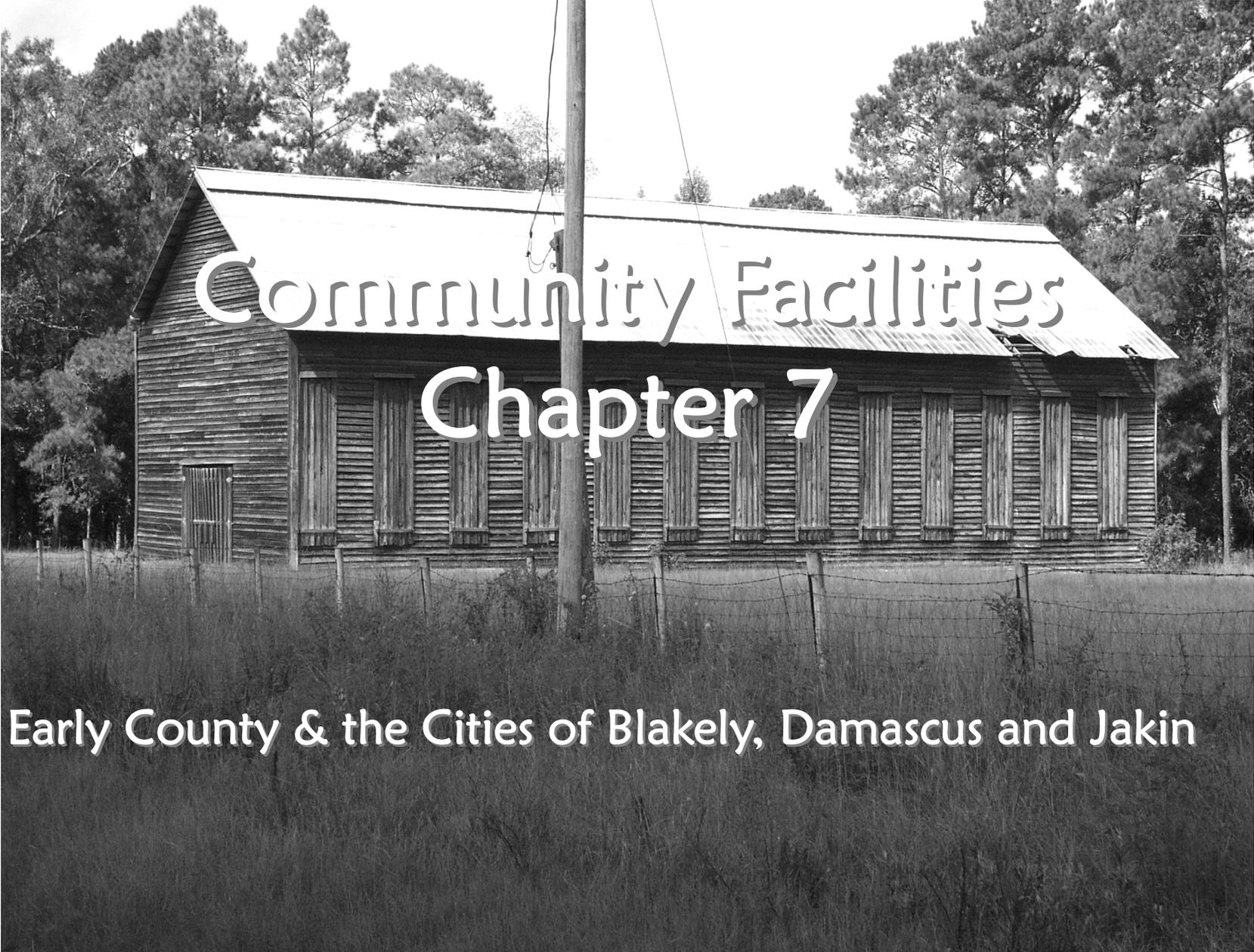
**PROTECTED RIVER CORRIDOR**

EARLY  
COUNTY

Figure 6.8







# Community Facilities

## Chapter 7

Early County & the Cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin

# Community Facilities & Services

## A. Introduction

**T**he quality and availability of community facilities and services, both public and private in nature, are a major determinant in the location of new or expanded residential, commercial and industrial development. These services are also an indicator of the present quality of life in a community. Planning for the provision of community infrastructure and services will play an important role in the wise use and development of land in Early County.

The community facilities element of the Comprehensive Plan addresses the following services and facilities: 1) transportation network, 2) water supply & treatment, 3) sewer and wastewater, 4) solid waste, 5) public safety, 6) hospitals, 7) recreation, 8) government facilities, 9) education facilities and 10) libraries.

The current and future adequacy of community facilities and the level of services in Early County jurisdictions can be assessed based on present needs as well as anticipated population and economic growth. The services are also examined with regard to their capacity to meet the needs and goals identified in other planning elements. This assessment considers methods of maximizing the use of existing or future services or facilities. Such analysis will be beneficial as the communities schedule improvements in their capital budgets in years to come. The population growth projections included in this plan do not indicate that any substantial growth in the demand for community facilities in Early County will occur in the near future, pending any substantial increases in economic development activities. Instead, Early County communities will attempt to better meet the needs of its existing population.

## **B. Public Safety**

An inventory of Early County's public safety services includes law enforcement, fire protection, emergency medical services and E-917. Provision of these resources is expensive; however, they must be highly maintained to retain a continued sense of community well being.

In 1998, The Georgia Crime Information Center Report indicated that a total of 117 index crimes were reported in Early County. Of these, 34 were violent crimes and 83 were property crimes. The crime index for 1998 was reported at 2,006.38. For a while, DUI arrests had been on a steady increase in the county. However, in recent years, DUI arrests have significantly decreased. Whereas in 1993, there were 152 DUI arrests, in 1998, only 83 DUI arrests were made.

### **Inventory: Early County Department of Public Safety**

Since the initial writing of this plan Early County and the cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin have consolidated law enforcement services. All law enforcement services in Early County now come under one administrative agency and that agency is the Early County Department of Public Safety located at 18610 East South Boulevard. In addition there are also two substations, one located in Blakely at the Early County Courthouse and one located in Damascus at the City Hall Building. Currently, the City of Jakin does not operate a police substation.

The Early County Department of Public Safety is approximately 13,000 square feet, which does not include the Early County Emergency Management Operations Center located in the same building. The facility is actually 26 years old, but is in fair condition and is handicapped accessible.

The Early County Department of Public Safety currently has 52 full-time employees and 4 part-time employees. The Uniform Crime Report (UCR) states that on average, most law enforcement agencies have 3.5 full time law enforcement employees

per every 1,000 in population. Based on these numbers, the Early County Department of Public Safety should employ approximately 43.05 law enforcement personnel. In addition, the report also indicates that the average southern town has approximately 2.6 sworn police officers for every 1,000 inhabitants. These rates represent averages and should be used only as guides or indicators of recommended or desirable police force strength in individual communities.

All officers at the Early County Department of Public Safety including the jailers, sworn officers, and communications officers are P.O.S.T certified, receiving a minimum of 20 hours annually of in-service training in addition to their mandate training to become certified.

On average the Department of Public Safety receives 703 calls, 80 incident reports, 113 warrants, 130 civil papers, 167 tickets and 37 accident reports per month. All dispatching for this department is done through the Early/Calhoun E-911 Communications Center which is a contract agreement with the Early County Board of Public Safety.

Besides the Public Safety Department, the Early County Jail is located on the same premises. It is 15,513 square feet and is in good condition. The jail has a holding capacity of 75 inmates and an average daily capacity of 45 inmates.

The Damascus Police Department is presently staffed by one full time Chief of Police having state certification. The Chief remains on call during all hours and receives calls dispatched through the Early County Sheriff's Department. On average, the Department receives approximately twelve calls per month or 144 annually. Approximately twenty-four calls are investigated annually. Due to a fire in 1992, previous records of police calls and cases are unavailable for comparison.

The Department has no specialized computer equipment or programs, and currently does not participate in the Neighborhood Watch program. The majority of the local law enforcement problems are related to domestic violence and drug use, sales and associated crimes.

## Assessment

One of the main questions that arise when there is a consolidation of public services is whether all parties will be adequately served. Early County, like most other counties also has to tackle this difficult question in assessing the use and quality of its public safety department. Since the Early County Department of Public Safety has enough qualified law enforcement personnel (3.5 per 1000 population) based on national trends, the question then arises whether the coordination and provision of services is adequate. For the most part, Early County and the cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin are satisfied with the coordination and provision of services. However, issues regarding coordination of services have concerned residents in both Jakin and Damascus.

Although the City of Damascus has a police substation located in the town, the residents feel that the one police officer is not adequate to serve their community. This is due in part to concerns about that officer's health and his availability to meet all the obligations of his position when he is ill. The residents of Damascus would like to see some type of alternative law enforcement personnel policy developed to ensure that they always have some type of full time law enforcement personnel on staff patrolling the community. Currently, all calls directed to the Damascus Police Department are dispatched to the Early County Department of Public Safety if no one answers the Damascus Police Department phone. Nonetheless residents have voiced a concern about having some type of uniformed officer periodically seen in the community during the planning horizon.

The City of Jakin is approximately 30 miles away from the City of Blakely and although the residents are very appreciative of the services that are offered through the Early County Department of Public Safety, they would also like to see a police substation located in the city limits of Jakin during the planning horizon. The residents feel that the substation would make the city safer and more secure.

The Early County Jail Complex holding capacity is adequate at this time to manage the needs of the community.

Early County, like most communities has experienced rapid increases in public safety problems related to drug sales and use. Although the county participates in the DARE Program, other creative and educational efforts are needed to help in the curtailment of drug related problems. The community would like to access special drug prevention programs and grant funds as often as possible during the future. All public safety agencies are dealing with increased case loads related to domestic violence. During the planning period, the community will seek out special conflict resolution programs and grants relating to this issue. Another special program, the Neighborhood Watch Program is recommended for expansion through the planning horizon. In addition, it is recommended that communities study the potential for cross-training of community public safety personnel.

During the writing of this plan, the Early County Board of Public Safety voted to join the Pataula Drug Task Force , a federally funded task force organized to fight drugs in an eight county area. The board joined the task force to help combat the growing problem of methamphetamine labs. In addition, the task force will provide the Board of Public Safety with access to more undercover officers. It will cost approximately \$23,000 per year to join the task force and funding will be provided through the current budget.

### **E-911/Emergency Medical Services**

Early County currently has enhanced E-911 services. The emergency services provided through Early County government are provided county-wide. Each of the communities in Early County utilizes enhanced E-911. Emergency medical service is provided by the Early Memorial Hospital Ambulance Service located at the hospital on Columbia Drive. The program is funded through revenue fees and hospital funding. Calls to the service are dispatched through Nurses Services at the hospital. Between July 1, 1992 and June 1, 1993, 860 calls were received by the service. Five full-time and four part-time basic certified EMT's cover the shifts at the service. No specialized training is offered in the area for these professionals. The Early Memorial Hospital owns and utilizes three emergency vehicles. The new 911 program and the Emergency Medical Service program operated out of Early Memorial Hospital has served the county well in past few years.

## Early County Rural Volunteer Fire Department

The Early County Rural Volunteer Fire Department consists of ten fire stations covering the unincorporated county and the Cities of Arlington (Early County Portion) Blakely, Damascus and Jakin. The Departments are funded from the county gen-

TABLE 7.1: EARLY COUNTY RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENT				
Department	Service Area	ISO	Employees	Bays
Rock Hill	5 Mile Radius	9	5 volunteers: 1 certified	1
Lucile	5 Mile Radius	9	4 volunteers: 1 certified	1
Cuba	5 Mile Radius	9	5 volunteers: 1 certified	1
Jakin	5 Mile Radius	9	4 volunteers: 2 certified	1
Colomokee	5 Mile Radius	9	3 volunteers: 1 certified	1
Arlington	5 Mile Radius	9	14 volunteers: 12 certified	2
Damascus	5 Mile Radius	9	8 volunteers: 1 certified	2
Urquhart	5 Mile Radius	9	5 volunteers: 1 certified	1
Blakely	5 Mile Radius	9	8 volunteers: 6 certified	1
Cedar Springs	5 Mile Radius	9	5 volunteers: 0 certified	1
<i>Source: Early County Rural Fire Coordinator, 2003</i>				

eral fund in the unincorporated areas and from the general funds of the cities. Table 7.0 provides information on the station locations and the number of bays in each of the county's fire stations. Each rural fire department has a five-mile radius service area. Informal mutual aid agreements exist which allow the volunteer fire departments to assist other departments on calls. All unincorporated regions are covered by a service area.

The current ISO rating of each rural fire department is "Class nine". In order to reduce the communities ISO ratings, future plans will attempt to increase each fire fighting truck to a 1250 gallon carrying capacity with at least 350 GPM pumping capacity

on all newly purchased “Class A” trucks. Table 7.1 provides a description of the fire fighting trucks utilized by each station. One Class A-Pumper was recently purchased for the Blakely Station. The remainder will be replaced on an as needed basis. Trucks are presently outfitted with one radio per truck, two sets of breathing apparatus per vehicle, two spare air tanks, four turn out suits per vehicle and other miscellaneous equipment including fire rakes, flaps, pike pole, ladders, ax, dry bar, rope, bolt cutter and shovels. Lights and portable generators are available through the Early County Rescue Unit.

Early County Volunteer Fire Stations consist of one bay with room for one fire fighting vehicle with the exception of the

**TABLE 7.2: EARLY COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT VEHICLES**

Fire Department	Year/Model	Mileage	Condition
Arlington	92 GMC	277,593	Poor
Blakely	81 Chevy	8,152	Good
Cedar Springs	88 Ford	65,000	Very Good
Cuba	78 Chevy	84,602	Poor
Damascus	89 Mack	255,000	Very Good
Jakin	91 Ford	20,000	Very Good
Kolomoki	96 Firefighter	107,245	Very Good
Lucile	88 Mack	106,500	Very Good
Rock Hill	89 Mack	210,781	Very Good
Urquhart	78 Chevy	8,192	Poor
Van	79 Ford	28,782	Good

*Source: Early County Rural Fire Coordinator, 2003*

Cities of Damascus & Arlington station which has two bays and allowances for two trucks. One training room is available in each station, except for Blakely, Arlington and Damascus, which has two rooms.

The Department has a part-time coordinator and personnel on call. A minimum of twenty hours of local training is pro-

<b>TABLE 7.3: EARLY COUNTY RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENT PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS 2004-2008</b>		
<b>Department</b>	<b>Improvement</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
Arlington	Replace Fire Knocker (2004)	\$75,000.00
Urquhart	Replace Fire Knocker (2005)	\$75,000.00
Cuba	Replace Fire Knocker (2006)	\$75,000.00
Lucile	Replace Fire Knocker (2007)	\$75,000.00
Cedar Springs	Replace Fire Knocker (2008)	\$75,000.00
<i>Source: Early County Rural Fire Coordinator, 2003</i>		

vided annually by the coordinator for all volunteers. In order to be certified, each fire fighter must pass the Georgia Fire Course 101 at the Georgia Fire Academy in Forsyth, Georgia. The county does not have a burn house available for training purposes.

Fire alarm calls are dispatched through the E-911 Central Dispatcher. A varied system of two-way radios, telephones and in-

<b>TABLE 7.4: BLAKELY FIRE DEPARTMENT VEHICLES</b>		
<b>Year-Make</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Condition</b>
2003-International	4900	Excellent
2002-Surrey	Firehouse	Excellent
2001-KME		Excellent
2000-International	4900	Excellent
1993-Chevy	C1500	Good
1988-Ford	E-1 Pumper	Fair
1987-Ford	C8000	Fair
1984-Chevy	C30	Fair
1975-Ford	F700	Fair
<i>Source: Early County Rural Fire Coordinator, 2003</i>		

**TABLE 7.5: BLAKELY FIRE DEPARTMENT PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS 1998-2015**

Year	Improvement	Estimated Cost	Status
1998	New Pick-up	\$16,000.00	Bids out now
2000	New comb. Pumper	\$175,000.00	Purchased in 2001
2000	Construct sub station	\$75,000.00	In the 5 yr. Plan
2001	Haz mat truck/training	\$200,000.00	On-going
2004	Refurbish ladder truck	\$50,000.00	On-going
2005	Construct Sub station	\$80,000.00	On-going
2006	Equipment service truck	\$75,000.00	On-going
2008	EMS replacement vehicle	\$200,000.00	On-going

*Source: Blakely Fire Department Chief, 2003*

dividual beepers are used to communicate during emergency situations. In 2002, all beepers and radio equipment were replaced with all new equipment across the county. All departments have a minimum of five beepers and one hand-held radio for each chief.

The Georgia Resource Conservation and Development Council and State and Water Conservation Commission have funded the development of thirty dry hydrants. The dry hydrants are located within a five mile radius of each station. Presently all thirty dry hydrants are installed and have uses.

### Assessment

The improvement of equipment and training and recruiting of volunteer fire fighters is essential to the Rural Volunteer Fire Departments future. Through the planning period the fire knockers in the following community's will need replacing: Jakin, Cedar Springs 2008 and Urquhart- 2005, Arlington-2004, Damascus-2005, Cuba-2006, and Lucile-2007. Additional needs include the upgrading of turn out gear and pagers as well as maintenance and upgrading of fire fighting vehicles.

## **Blakely Fire Department**

The Blakely Fire Department is located on the Courthouse Square adjacent to the City Hall. The building has 2,500 square feet and four bays which house three fire engines and one service van. This station serves the corporate city limits. Service is also provided within five road miles of the city limits on a contract basis. Approximately twenty calls per month are handled by the department. The department has experienced a substantial increase in the number of calls for vehicle extrication in recent years.

The department's communications system consists of a base station, one remote, twelve portables, five mobiles and twelve pagers. Motorola tone and voice beepers are used by the fire fighters. The 911 system is located at the county's central dispatch. The Department averages twenty calls per month and presently has an ISO rating of "Class 5".

Fifteen full-time certified paid employees and 14 part-time, paid per call employees that have completed at least sixty hours of training make up the department. Rookies must take 120 hours of training in the first year including sixty hours at the Georgia Fire Academy. Monthly local training is conducted by the Chief and a Lieutenant. The staff is equipped with six sets of Survivair and five sets of 151 breathing apparatus mechanisms. These are in poor to fair condition. The Department's twenty-three Globe turn out suits are in good condition. The Blakely Fire Department utilizes five vehicles including two pumpers, one jaco, a pickup and an equipment van. Table 7.3 displays the year, make, model and condition of the Blakely Fire Department vehicles.

## **City of Damascus/ City of Jakin Fire Department Inventory**

The City of Damascus has a volunteer fire department, with a total of 11 certified firefighters. The current facility is a double bay (shared with the county rural fire department) and is in poor condition. During the planning horizon, the elected officials of the City of Damascus will work toward enhancing fire protection services, by decreasing the ISO rating and purchasing new equip-

ment and a new building.

## Fire Department Assessments

The Insurance Service Office (ISO) of Georgia is responsible for evaluating the adequacy of fire departments in Georgia. The ISO rating system ranks communities from one to ten (with one being excellent service and 10 indicating no fire protection) based on nine criteria. These criteria include the fire station service areas, station staffing, pumping and storage capacity and the availability of water, among others. The class in which a community is placed plays a large part in determining individual fire insurance rates.

According to the ISO, a fire station should have an efficient service area of two and one half miles in any direction from the station. The ISO also recommends that each non-reserve piece of equipment should be staffed with six fire fighters.

### Blakely Fire Department Assessment

The Blakely Fire Department constructed a new fire station in 1998 with 4 bays and is no longer in need of a new station with an adequate training room and a bay to house a ladder truck. During the long term planning period the city will need two additional fire sub stations in order to reduce response time in the service area. Additional facilities needed in the short term planning period include a burn building and tower for training purposes. The city does not presently need any additional full time fire fighters to be adequately staffed.

The present water system has served the city well. However in order to reduce the ISO rating, improvements will be needed. By 1997, an additional storage tank and well were completed on the west side of town. Installations of dry and regular hydrants are no longer needed because the department has recently added approximately 25 new hydrants. The installation of twenty dry hydrants was financed through a grant program of the Georgia Resource Conservation and Development Council. The establishment of dry hydrants was completed in 1995. City improvements to water lines are recommended in the water sys-

tem portion of this section.

Communication improvements in the form of Enhanced-911 were completed with the new enhanced 911 center being completed in 2002. The new center is instrumental in assisting in coordinated emergency response throughout the county. In 1998 the Early County Fire Department upgraded its computer system. In the long term planning period, it will be important for the Department to maintain vehicles and equipment with regular replacement cycles. During the update of this comprehensive plan, the department received a \$238,000 grant to purchase hazardous materials vehicles and trailers and other hazmat equipment. Increased calls for vehicle extrication in recent years have resulted in the need for an EMS vehicle and equipment. Table 7.4 lists the Department's proposed improvements through the long term planning period. The twenty-year planning goal is to improve equipment, water capacity and personnel to essentially lower the ISO rating to a protection Class 3.

## **C. Community Water and Sewer Systems**

### **Early County Water System Inventory**

Early County does not have a community water or sanitary sewer treatment system. The development of public water and sewer systems is not anticipated during the planning horizon due to low growth projections and lack of concentrated development in the unincorporated areas. However, the county does have a large incidence of high pollution susceptibility areas and significant groundwater recharge areas. As such, the county will remain cognizant of the dangers posed by increased use of septic tank systems, as it monitors development and growth throughout the planning horizon.

### **City of Blakely Water System Inventory**

The City of Blakely operates a public water system with service available throughout the city limits with the exception of several small undeveloped areas. No private water systems are licensed in the city limits. The public water system served 2,127

residential and 301 commercial and industrial customers in 1992. Between 1990 and 2000, the city experienced an increase of 216 residential customers or 17.3 percent and increase of 10.7 percent or 29 actual commercial and industrial customers.

The city's water system is permitted for an annual daily withdrawal of 7.2 MGD. A new withdrawal permit was applied for in 1993. The current system is designed to produce 3.181 MCD, leaving a reserve capacity of 200 percent. The average daily use in 1992 was 7.149 MGD.

The system has a total of two elevated storage tanks with a total capacity of 1,250,000 gallons. These are located near City Hall and Lucile Road. The City Hall tank has been in use since 1966 and is in good condition. The Lucile Road tank stores 1,000,000 gallons and was developed in 1985. It is in excellent condition. Four water wells are utilized in the City of Blakely.

A total of 80.6 miles of water lines run through the city. The majority, or 34.8 miles are made of ductile iron. Cast iron waterlines comprise 27.6 miles of the total, while PVC lines contribute 18.2 percent of the total. The ductile lines are between 30 to 50 years old, the cast iron lines are anywhere between 50 and 70 years old and the PVC lines are all less than twenty-five years old. All lines are in good to excellent condition.

### **City of Blakely Sanitary Sewer System Inventory**

The City of Blakely operates a sanitary sewer system that generally serves the entire city with the exception of several small pockets where there is little or no development. In 1992, approximately 1,785 residential and 252 commercial and industrial customers were served. Since 1982, an additional 106 residential customers and seven commercial/industrial customers were served.

The sewage treatment plant is located on Plant Street in the southeastern portion of the city south of Highway 200. The plant is an extended aeration facility with a total capacity of 3.75 MGD. The system's average daily use in 1992 was 1.183 MGD

TABLE 7.8: BLAKELY SANITARY SEWER LINES			
Line Size	Length	Line Size	Length
15 inch	4.8	8 inch	28.6
12 inch	8.3	6 inch	5.2
10 inch	3.4	4 inch	2.4
<i>Source: City of Blakely, 2003</i>			

and the maximum daily use in 1992 was 3.23 MGD. Thus in 1992, the city’s sanitary sewer system had a reserve capacity of 0.52 MGD. Wastewater treatment system improvements began in 1993 to replace or rehabilitate sewer lines to relieve “bottlenecking” in several areas and a 500,000-gallon per day holding pond at the wastewater treatment plant was constructed.

The system encompasses two aeration ponds. Pond A, located outside of city limits southeast of the city is a four acre facility. Pond B is a five-acre facility located in northeast Blakely a little southeast of Highway 62. A total of 52.7 miles of sewer line run through the city. Table 7.6 depicts the type of sanitary sewer lines in use in Blakely. The size of the sewer lines is listed in Table 7.9.

The city’s sewer lines require continuous maintenance and repair due to their age. Approximately ten percent of the lines are in bad condition and greater than fifty years old, approximately forty percent are in poor condition and greater than fifty years old, approximately thirty percent are in good condition and less than twenty years old, and approximately 10 percent are in excellent condition and are less than five years old. Seven well dispersed lift stations are located throughout the city.

### City of Damascus Water System Inventory

The City of Damascus operates a public water system, but no sanitary sewer system. The water system serves all of the development in city limits. The city’s well is located in the southeastern area of Damascus on Kestler Avenue. It has a depth of seventy-five feet. The city’s elevated storage tank has a 75,000 gallon capacity and is approximately fifteen years old. It is in

good condition. The average daily use of the system is 150,000 GPM. The city’s water system was approved twenty-eight years ago. At this time the majority of the old lines were replaced and the current lines are in good condition. However, the city still has some very old lines, which may need special maintenance or replacement during the planning period.

### City of Jakin Water System Inventory

The City of Jakin operates a community water system, but no sanitary sewer system. The city received a grant and a GEFA loan for a new water system in 2003. The city is hoping to extend water lines sometime in the future so that all citizens in the city limits will be able to have drinking water in their homes. However, the current water system has two wells and has a new used pressure tank – 50,000 gallons on Pearl Street. Water system lines range from four to six inches. The system consists of 2,850 feet of one-inch line, 925 feet of two-inch line, and 3,850 feet of four-inch line and 3,550 feet of six-inch line. This system is 36 years old and is in poor condition. The water tank has a hole in the bottom, the plumbing on the well needs upgrading and the lines are in need of replacement or upgrading. Only the city limits are served.

**TABLE 7.9: BLAKELY SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM CAPACITY**

Lift Station	Pump Capacity	Motor Size	Year Installed	Year Upgraded
Flowers Drive	400 G.P.M.	5.0 H.P.	1980	2002
Fort Road	140 G.P.M.	7.0 H.P.	1987	No Upgrade
Lake Louise	700 G.P.M.	15.0 H.P.	1990	2000
Baptist Branch	300 G.P.M.	3.2 H.P.	1980	No Upgrade
Hwy. S.R. 200	300 G.P.M.	3.2 H.P.	1988	No Upgrade
Hwy. S. R. 62 East	140 G.P.M.	7.0 H.P.	1987	No Upgrade
Hwy. S.R. 62 By-Pass	800 G.P.M.	40.0 H.P.	1988	No Upgrade
B-Pond	600 G.P.M.	7.5 H.P.	1990	1995
A-Pond	400 G.P.M.	5.0 H.P.	1990	2000

Source: City of Blakely, 2003

### **Early County Water & Sewer Systems Assessment**

The County does not have community water or sewer systems.

### **City of Blakely Water System Assessment**

The City of Blakely is well served by its water system; however, water extensions are planned in the planning horizon as needed. The majority of the city is already served. Areas not served are listed on the planning priority list. The development of a new well was needed in western Blakely in 1995. A new elevated storage tank planned for 1998 enabled the city to meet its need through the planning horizon. Additional improvement will depend on the success of local economic development activities and their impact on growth trends. With proper maintenance, the city's improved water system will serve the citizens for approximately fifty to seventy-five years.

### **City of Blakely Sewer System Assessment**

Unless economic development activities spur greater than projected growth trends, the City of Blakely's sanitary sewer system will remain adequate to serve the city through the planning period. Other priorities include the rehabilitation of old sewer lines and manholes.

### **City of Damascus Water System Assessment**

The current water system in Damascus is adequate to serve local needs and projected population trends. The city's water system has no meters and is in good condition. The elevated storage tank was need painted and cleaned in 1999. In the next five to ten years it is expected that the city will need to replace the well pump. In the long term planning period, the city will upgrade its monitoring system to meet new sampling regulations.

### **City of Jakin Water System Assessment**

The City of Jakin would like to continue to improve their water system during the planning horizon and extend service to a residential area along its fringes. Since the city has just received a loan and grant funds to upgrade their water system, they are content with the current system and would like to be sure the new water tank is maintained properly in the planning horizon.

A customer profile for the utility service is outlined in Table 7.7. Between 1992 and 2002 the number of residential and industrial customers increased significantly and the actual number of commercial customers increased minimally. In spite of these records, natural gas use increased in the past decade. During 1992, 141,690 Million Cubic Feet (MCF) were purchased. By comparison, 126,470 MCF and 136,450 MCF were purchased in 1982 and 1987.

### **Assessment of the City of Blakely Utilities**

During the following five years the major system improvements needed are the extension of gas lines to the new elementary school. Club Drive, Meadowbrook and Westview Subdivisions, North Howell Street, Walker Springs Road, Cedar Ave, Baptist Branch Street and from Jesse Johnson Street east on South Boulevard. Further extensions and system upgrades will depend upon the city's success in attracting industrial development. These improvements will be financed through the general MEAG Budget.

### **City of Blakely Electrical Systems Inventory**

The City of Blakely is a MEAG member and has operated an electrical utility system since 1904. The services are included in the corporate city limits. Under served areas are generally found in sections of the city where development has not occurred. Six three-phase KV feeders from two substations size 336 AAAC Aluminum at 12 KV comprise the system. There has not been any growth in residential, commercial or industrial users between 1997 and 2002 as Table 7.8 demonstrates. Actually the City has seen a significant decrease in MEAG customers since 1997.

**City of Blakely Electrical Systems Assessment**

Blakely’s electrical delivery system is in good condition and more than adequate to serve the city in

the following ten years. The city is in

the planning stages for a second substation to be located on the city’s south side. This would divide the present load and provide surplus load for future growth. This improvement should meet the demands projected during the planning horizon. During the short-term work program the light fund was utilized to finance a re-phase upgrade for the general system in 1993 and for the new substation and re-phasing in the southern part of the city in 1994. During 1999, system-wide upgrades and maintenance of the utility’s transformer, wire size and voltage drop were needed.

**D. Schools**

**Early County School System Inventory & Assessment**

Early County is served by three public schools including a primary, middle, a high school and one private school. Table 7.12

lists all of the schools in Early

County both public and private. In 1994, a new elementary school, totaling 6.3 million dollars was constructed on a 66.6 acre tract on the Highway 62 West Bypass. The new middle school constructed in 1997, totaling 3.2 million, is located on Columbia Street. The high school auditorium and the high school were renovated in 2000.

Grades Pre-K through 5 are housed at the elementary school, grades 6-8 at the middle school, and 9-12 at the high school.

TABLE 7.10: BLAKELY MEAG CUSTOMERS			
Year	Residential	Commercial	Industrial
1997	2078	412	2
2002	832	64	1
<i>Source: City of Blakely, 2003</i>			

TABLE 7.11: BLAKELY ELECTRICAL CUSTOMERS			
User	1992	1997	2002
Residential	2,024	2078	2139
Commercial	403	412	419
<i>Source: City of Blakely, 2003</i>			

The Early County Middle School and Early County High School are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The Early County Elementary School is accredited by the Georgia Accrediting Commission. Currently, the student population is 2711 students in Pre-K through 12 for the 2003-2004 school years. Tables 7.10 through 7.11 lists elementary, middle and high school enrollment between 1995 and 2004 based on the Early County School System calculations. 74 percent of the students are eligible for free and reduced price lunches.

The Early County School System Budget for fiscal year 2004 totaled approximately \$18, 830,575.00 which reflects revenue from local, state, federal funds and grants. The Early County School System offers many excellent programs including gifted education instruction for students in grades 1-12. The elementary school has three computer labs, with two of the labs being upgraded with hardware and software. Every teacher and student at the middle school has a laptop computer that can be taken home for computerized instructional activities. Classrooms at all three schools are networked, which allows teachers and students high speed Internet accessibility. Administrators, teachers, counselors, media specialists, data clerks, and bookkeepers are able to utilize computers to schedule, generate grade record keeping, and food service accounting. Fiber optic and/or wireless computer networking is used to connect servers to the central hub to access and transmit student information at all three schools.

The high school offers both academic and vocational training and has students jointly enrolled in Bainbridge College's Post Secondary Option Program, and Albany Tech's (Blakely Campus) dual enrollment program. For the 2002-03 school year, a total of 166 seniors graduated, with 16 receiving both a college prep/technical career seal, 44 receiving a college preparatory seal, 13 receiving special education diplomas, 86 receiving a vocational career seal, and 7 receiving a certificate of attendance.

As a result of SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax), the Board of Education is constructing a 12-room addition at the elementary school, totaling approximately 7.5 million dollars. The middle school gym has been re-roofed and modifications inside the gym are being completed. A HVAC unit will be installed in the elementary gym, along with other repairs. The cafeteria and kitchen at the high school will be expanded, and modifications will be done in the Agri-Science lab, the welding lab, the

welding shop, and the locker room/concession area. Plans are being made for construction of a new high school gym using SPLOST funds.

### Southwest Georgia Academy Inventory

The county is also served by one private school, the Southwest Georgia Academy located in the City of Damascus on Georgia Highway 200. This school serves grades K4-12. The school is located on a 17.24 acre site consisting of a 62,395 square foot building including classrooms, cafeteria, administrative offices, teachers lounge, storage and counselor’s office. The school also has a 2,400 square foot library, a gym and large outdoor recreation areas.

TABLE 7.12: HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT 1995-2004	
Year	Enrollment
1995	691
1996	777
1997	732
1998	747
1999	714
2000	727
2001	738
2002	772
2003	789
2004	787
<i>Source: City of Blakely, 2003</i>	

### Southwest Georgia Academy Assessment

This private school is in good condition. It will require basic maintenance through the planning period. New carpet was needed for the elementary building in 1995.

## E. Library Facilities

### Inventory of Early County Library Facilities

The Lucy Hilton Memorial Library, a member of the Desoto Regional Library System is located at 11880 Columbia Road in the City of Blakely. It contains approximately 10,000 square feet. This public facility serves all of Early County from one branch. There is also a library located in the city of Jakin. The Jakin community library and museum was erected in 1995 and has three rooms; one houses adult book and five computers, one contains children’s books and a television and one is a museum. The fa-

<b>TABLE 7.13: MIDDLE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT 1995-2004</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
1995	663
1996	621
1997	649
1998	676
1999	677
2000	664
2001	647
2002	663
2003	669
2004	648
<i>Source: City of Blakely, 2003</i>	

<b>TABLE 7.14: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT 1995-2004</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
1995	1284
1996	1353
1997	1389
1998	1417
1999	1419
2000	1416
2001	1427
2002	1375
2003	1306
2004	1276
<i>Source: Early County Board of Education, 2003</i>	

cility employs one full time librarian and several volunteers.

The library’s collection includes 32,000 volumes consisting of 27,000 books, 28 compact discs, 92 periodicals, 220 audio-cassettes, 600 video cassettes and six newspaper subscriptions. Library personnel include one full time librarian and one branch head. The library’s current Facilities Plan was written in 1989 with a focus on public libraries increased usage in modern society with continued support from local government for utilities, building maintenance and staff funding.

Two part-time employees are also employed including a library page and a library assistant. Attendance records are not kept at the library; however, special program attendance generally averages 123. Special programming includes year round story telling for children, art exhibits and exhibits of special collections.

### **Assessment of Early County Library Facilities**

The minimum standards established by the Georgia Department of Education, Division of Public Library Services minimum standards recommend 0.7 square feet of public li-

brary space per capita or a minimum of 17,500 square feet, whichever is greater for a library in the population range of 0 to 24,999. The medium standard for this population range is 0.9 SF/Capita and the optimal standard is 7.0 SF/Capita. By these standards, the Lucy Hilton Memorial Library would currently require 17,500 square feet to meet minimal standards. It currently does not meet these standards. With the addition of the Jakin facility, the Early County community has come closer to meeting this standard.

The standard measuring stick for the number of volumes in a public library is 2.5 books per capita. This standard indicates a need of 29,450 books in 1993 and 27,902 books in the year 2013. Current holdings of books do not exceed the recommended

<b>TABLE 7.15: PUBLIC &amp; PRIVATE SCHOOLS</b>					
<b>Public School</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Grades</b>	<b>Square Feet</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Units/Reserve</b>
Early County High School	12020 Columbia Street	9-12	149,000	35	47 I.U./0
Early County Middle School	12053 Columbia Street	6-8	98,453	14	45 I.U./0
Early County Elementary School	283 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.	K-5	115,008	32	65 I.U./0
Alternative School					
Private School	Location	Grades	Square Feet	Acres	Units/Reserve
Southwest Georgia Academy	Georgia Highway 200	K4-12	62,395	17.24	22 I.U./0
<i>Source: Early County Board of Education, 2003</i>					

total. The suggested ratio is 40/60 children to adult volumes. Projections of library facility and book needs through the year 2013 indicates that during the planning horizon, the adequacy of library holdings needs to be addressed.

#### SWGA Academy Library Facilities Inventory & Assessment

The Southwest Georgia library is 2,400 square feet and contains 9,000 plus volumes. The library subscribes to twenty-three periodicals and also holds many video cassettes and audio cassettes.

## **Early County Public School Libraries Inventory**

The Early County High School library is 5,000 square feet and has 10,101 volumes, 82 periodical subscriptions, 464 films, and 382 audiocassettes. Early County Middle School has a 5,152 square foot library comprised of 10,549 volumes, 46 periodicals, and 312 film strip kits. Primary students have access to 18,117 volumes including 42 periodicals, 372 videocassettes and 266 audio cassettes.

## **Early County School Libraries Assessment**

All public and private school library facilities are deemed adequate by the community for the short-term planning period, although the community desires increased library holdings. In the long term planning period, additional volumes and library space is desired. Library services and facilities will be needed for a relatively stable to slightly declining population in the long term planning period.

## **F. Cultural Events or Facilities**

### **Early County Cultural Events or Facilities Inventory**

The Kolomoki Mounds State Park hosts many unique events each year. These include: the Kolomoki Festival, the Junior Rangers Program, the Astronomy Program and the Annual Easter Egg Hunt. These events attract people from all areas of Georgia, Alabama and Florida. This park is itself is a great cultural resource. In addition, the Courts Square Arts Council brings a variety of musical and theatrical events to the community each year. These programs are presently held in the high school auditorium. The Lucy Hilton Maddox Memorial Library also offers art exhibits and other cultural displays.

### **Early County Cultural Events or Facilities Assessment**

The citizens of Early County have a desire and need for the development of additional cultural facilities and programs throughout the planning horizon. Events and facilities are recommended which will meet the needs of Early County's diversified

population. Residents in Early County would like to develop cultural events and activities for the younger, working age population to ensure that they continue to stay in Early County during the planning horizon. In general the community facilities housing such events are in need of repair or restoration. These include the Mangham Auditorium and the Old Blakely Theater. Restoration plans for the Blakely Theater are underway by the Court square Arts Council. There is potential for the community to attract residents from nearby counties with additional advertising and promotion of local events.

### **Recreation Facilities Inventory and Assessment**

Since 1979, recreation facilities and services in Early County have been primarily offered through the Blakely-Early County Recreation Department. This Department is located at 1656 North Main Street in Blakely and is funded by the City of Blakely and Early County on a 50/50 percentage ratio. Fund raising and community support is also important to the Department, which utilizes a Board of Directors to guide the development of goals, programs and fund raising activities. In past years, the Department has actively sought and successfully administered Land Water and Conservation Funds as well as using Local Development Funds and Recreation Assistance Funds to augment local financial resources. The Department has a full time director as well as two additional full time and 38 part-time staff persons.

The Department offers youth baseball, softball, tee ball, basketball, two soccer seasons, flag football, adult softball and hosts as well as participates in a district Golden Olympics for seniors with the local Blakely Senior Center. The Blakely Senior Center, located on Meadowbrook Drive in Blakely, provides fitness and recreation activities for senior residents. **Table 7.13-A** lists all parks in the county overseen by the Blakely-Early County Recreation Department. The Department administers a total of 20 acres of parkland with an additional 51 acres being added in 2004. Each of these parks is located in the City of Blakely. The City of Jakin recently built a local park complete with a gazebo. In addition, one local park exists in the City of Damascus, which is overseen by the City of Damascus. There are public parks/boat landings and passive recreation facilities located along the Chattahoochee River that borders the west side of the county. These public use areas include Odom's Creek and Cohelee Creek boat

ramps. The Chattahoochee provides some recreational outlet for nearby residents although no major recreational facilities are located on the river. Other recreational facilities are available at the Kolomoki State Park, a 1,993-acre facility that includes a putt-putt golf course, two campgrounds, two lakes for fishing and canoeing, two swimming pools, a group camp available for rental, as well as several nature trails throughout the park. Private recreational facilities in the county include one country club that encompasses a nine-hole golf course, one pond and a swimming pool. The county is rich in wildlife and much hunting is done on private land through lease agreements. See **Table 7.13** for a listing of Early County

Parks and Recreation facilities.

<b>TABLE 7.16: RECREATION FACILITIES</b>			
<b>Park Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Facilities</b>
Northside	Blakely-Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.	9.4	2 Lighted Ball Fields, Concession Stand, Batting Cage
Howell	Liberty Street	4.3	2 Lighted Ball Fields
Meadowbrook	Meadowbrook Drive	3.5	1 Non-Lighted Ball Field, Concession Stand
Washington Park	Rose Drive	7.2	Swimming Pool, Bathroom/Changing House, Basketball Court
Bessie Scott Gym	Howell Street	2	Basketball Gymnasium
Sports Complex	Chancey Mill Road	51	5 Lighted Football/Soccer Fields 6 Lighted Tennis Courts 2 Concession Stands
<i>Source: Early County Board of Education, 2003</i>			

One source of Parks and Recreation levels of service is the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. This five-year plan serves several purposes: 1) assess the adequacy of existing recreation opportunities in Georgia, 2) determine

the demand and need for additional recreation opportunities, 3) identify major issues facing recreation providers and 4) recommend and implementation plan to address the issues. The plan is divided into four sections. The first section summarizes research and provides background information that may help recreation providers make decisions that affect their communities. The second section analyzes Georgia's outdoor recreation supply, demand and needs. This section includes an explanation of the roles

of different levels of recreation providers and spotlights several land protection programs of unique importance. The third section lists recreation issues of statewide importance, suggests strategies and actions for addressing identified issues and identifies priorities for Land and Water Conservation fund allocations. While the final section includes a number of technical appendices offering more details on many of the topics discussed in the previous sections.

The main section used to identify level of service standards suitable for Early County Parks and Recreation was the second section, which outlined parks and recreation needs. See **Table 7.13-B** for an outline of parks and recreation activities, the units per population and the service radius. The chart is based on National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) estimates and can be used to thoroughly determine whether the current amount of park space is adequate. For the most part, the parks and recreation department in Early County has made great strides towards meeting the National Recreation and Parks Association Standards. Since the initial writing of this plan, funding for the new sports complex was obtained and construction began on the new facility. Although the increase in parks and recreation facilities has been monumental, Early County is still inadequate in some of the activity areas. These areas include badminton, basketball, track, hard court and golf. The main reason why the level of service for those particular activities is inadequate is because of the distance a resident from Jakin, Damascus or in the more rural parts of the county would have to travel to utilize the facilities. The majority of residents from those areas would have to travel more than the service radius allows.

During the planning horizon, the Early County Parks and Recreation Department should continue to make improvements on parks and recreation facilities. The department should continue to seek out grant funding opportunities to enhance parks and recreation opportunities throughout Early County.

## **G. Transportation System**

The quality and design of a local community's transportation system impacts the pattern and types of development occurring in a community. It also influences the acquisition and elaboration of economic development activities. As such, it is an

important element of comprehensive planning. An analysis of streets and roads, pedestrian circulation, railway access, air service infrastructure, trucking carriers and waterway navigation is examined in this section.

### Early County Streets and Roads Inventory & Assessment

An inventory and assessment of community streets, roads and sidewalks is necessary to plan for future motorized and pedes-

<b>TABLE 7.17 B: SCORP RECREATION FACILITY NEEDS</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Units Per Population</b>	<b>Service Radius</b>	<b>Early County (2000 population: 12,362)</b>
Badminton	1 per 5,000	¼-1/2 mile	Inadequate
Basketball	1 per 5,000	¼-1/2 mile	Inadequate
Tennis	1 per 2,000	¼-1/2 mile	Adequate
Baseball	1 per 5,000	¼-1/2 mile	Adequate
Baseball (lighted)	1 per 30,000	¼-1/2 mile	Adequate
Soccer	1 per 10,000	1-2 miles	Adequate
Quarter-Mile Track	1 per 20,000	15-30 minute travel time	Inadequate
Softball	1 per 5,000	¼-1/2 mile	Adequate
Hardcourt	1 per 10,000	1-2 miles	Inadequate
Golf	1 per 50,000	20 miles	Inadequate
Swimming Pool	1 per 20,000	15-30 minute travel time	Adequate
<i>* based on NRPA (National Recreation &amp; Parks Association) standards</i>			

trian traffic circulation systems. An analysis of these systems examines the types of roads available, the circulation system, road-way deficiencies, signage and bridge adequacies and pedestrian needs.

In 1991, the Georgia Department of Transportation reported that Early County had 724.84 miles of roadway, making it rank 53rd in relation to the highest in the state. The Georgia Department of Transportation records traffic counts at approximately 150 sites in Early County. The majority of these sites are located in the City of Blakely. Table 8.22 depicts the Average Daily Traffic counts of the most frequented routes in Early County.

In 1991, a total of 5,515 passenger motor vehicle registrations were recorded and 3,238 trucks, 1,076 trailers 96 motorcycles 11 buses for a grand total of 9,936 vehicle registrations were recorded. Between 1985 and 1991 a 7.8 percent increase in the number of motor vehicle registrations was recorded.

Early County is approximately ninety-four miles from Interstate 75, seventy-five miles from the Interstate connector 185 in Columbus and approximately fifty miles from Interstate 10 in Florida. These are the closest interstate routes. The county is served by two federal routes. One, U.S. Highway 27 (GA. 1) descends through the county from southern Calhoun County moving through the City of Blakely and veering eastward to flow out of the county east of Cuba to Miller County. U.S. 27 is a major artery linking Florida (1-10) and Indiana. Located in the southern portion of the county is U.S. 84 (GA 38) running in an east-westerly manner through Saffold and Jakin. This route provides access to Dothan, Alabama.

State routes account for 157.76 miles of the county's total roadway. Nine major state routes provide access to and within Early County. These include Georgia Highway 200, which runs east-west connecting the City of Newton to Damascus and Blakely. Georgia Highway 216 runs east west from Baker County to the City of Arlington. Georgia Highway 62 connects Arlington, Blakely (looping partially around Blakely) and Hilton in an east/west pattern and is the artery, which ties together U.S. highways 82 and 84 (Corridor Z). Georgia Highway 39 runs north/south in from Clay County through Blakely and south into Jakin. Also running north/south is Georgia 45 which provides access through the Cities of Arlington and Damascus on its way south. Georgia 370 runs between Georgia 62 and Georgia 273 that runs east-west in the southern portion of the county. Georgia Highway 39 basically runs from Blakely south to the Saffold community. In addition US Highway 27/ Georgia 1 Bypass also runs

north/south and is a four lane highway which runs from the Florida Line to Columbus Georgia.

County roads account for 613.8 miles of the county’s roadways and city streets comprise 43.04 miles in the county. Total unpaved mileage in the county was 47.7 percent or 297.61 miles in 1997. Paved mileage comprised the remaining 416.58 miles or 58.3 percent. Early County ranked 116th in the state in 2002 with regard to the percentage of paved mileage (one=highest).

**City of Blakely Streets and Roads Inventory**

<b>TABLE 7.18: EARLY COUNTY MAJOR, MINOR AND LOCAL COLLECTOR ROUTES</b>		
<b>Major Collector Routes</b>	<b>Minor Collector Routes</b>	<b>Local Collector Routes</b>
1. Georgia Route 39	1. Fort Gaines Street	1. North Church Street
2. Georgia Route 200	2. North Church Street	2. Howell Street
3. Georgia Route 216	3. Washington Avenue	3. Arlington Avenue
	4. River Street	4. Redbud Street
	5. College Street	5. River Street
	6. Liberty Street	6. Pit Road
	Bay Street	7. North Woodlawn Avenue
	Flowers Drive	8. South Boulevard
	Chattahoochee Avenue	9. Flowers Drive
	County Avenue	10. Cedar Avenue
	Bainbridge Road	11. Bain bridge Road
		12. Lucile Post Road
		13. Elm Avenue

Blakely’s road system basically conforms to the gridiron pattern, with most roads oriented in a north/south pattern or east/west pattern. Variations in the basic gridiron patterns have occurred, namely radial routes resembling the spokes of a wheel. The hub of the wheel is the County Courthouse and Courthouse Square. Other variations include the curvilinear street patterns developed in the city’s many

residential areas.

An examination of the state functional classification system indicates that the first order thoroughfare is the minor arterial category. The major collectors channel traffic to higher-class streets and disperse traffic within a given locality. Such streets may have considerable through traffic and should avoid passing through residential neighborhoods. See **Table 7.14** for a listing of all major, minor and local collector routes. The majority of the streets in Blakely are paved; however, there are some streets needing paving particularly in the east-central section of the city. Paving of these streets will aid traffic flow and increase neighborhood value.

The square in Blakely is a two-lane, one-way counter clockwise route with angle parking on both sides. Traffic must yield on all routes before entering the square. Traffic control around the courthouse square in Blakely is necessary to maintain a viable downtown Central Business District and to minimize congestion and traffic hazards.

This route is the most heavily traveled route in the urban area. U.S. 27 is 30 to 36 feet wide with curb and gutter through the city. Just to the north and south of the Courthouse Square, there is on street parking on both sides of the route, leaving only twenty travel ways for two-lanes. Most truck traffic on the route is located on the north side of town.

In the downtown area this route is forty feet wide with curb and gutter and there is no on street parking. State route 62 narrows to 24 feet wide on each side of town outside the downtown area. The route also passes through the downtown. Truck traffic on this route is heavier on the west side of town than the east and the 62 By-Pass has also improved traffic circulation through the heart of town.

State Route 39 north of Blakely carries a high percentage of trucks. The route is twenty feet wide with relatively little amounts of development along it. State Route 39 south of Blakely and State Route 200 generate little traffic in the downtown area and carry little truck traffic.

TABLE 7.19: RURAL TRANSIT PROGRAM POLICIES	TABLE 7.20: RURAL TRANSIT PROGRAM RIDERSHIP SCHEDULE	
Guidelines	Rider ship Rate Schedule (One Way Trip)	Cost
All Residents are Eligible to Ride	00-04 miles	\$7.50
Trip requests must be made by 3pm the day before the trip	05-10 miles	\$3.00
1 month advance notice for charters	11-30 miles	\$5.00
Fares can be paid one week in advance or collected at the time the ride is provided	Over 31 miles	\$7.00 for each additional mile over 30miles.
Frequent rider discount will require rider to pay full fare for half of the requested trips then the remaining half free.	<p>U.S. 27 is the major north-south route through Blakely. This route is the most heavily traveled route in the urban area. U.S. 27 is 30 to 36 feet wide with curb and gutter through the city. Just to the north and south of the Courthouse Square, there is on street parking on both sides of the route, leaving only twenty feet for two-lanes. Most truck traffic on the route is located on the north side of town.</p> <p>In the downtown area this route is forty feet wide with curb and gutter and there is no on street parking. State route 62 narrows to 24 feet wide on each side of town outside the downtown area. The route also passes through the downtown. Truck traffic on this route is heavier on the west side of town than the east and the 62 By-Pass has also improved traffic circulation through the heart of town.</p>	
Customers must cancel all trips they no longer need.		
No Cancelled trips will be marked as “no show” and customers will be responsible for the cost of that trip. NO services will be provided unless such “no show” costs are paid.		
Senior Citizen Discount-50% of normal rate (any person 60 yrs of age or over)		
Frequent Rider Discount-50% of normal rate (any person purchasing 10 or more trip within a seven day period)		

### **Average Daily Traffic**

The average daily traffic in Blakely is light to moderate on the majority of the routes. According to the 2002 DOT Coverage Count Report, the only sections of Blakely experiencing significant traffic flow are located in and around the courthouse square. The most heavily traveled areas include U.S. 27 around the square and along North and South Main Street. In particular, the section of South Main Street connecting to Columbia Street is the most heavily traveled in the city. Traffic along Columbia Street near the Early Memorial Hospital and the High School is also relatively high. See the appendix for Early County Average Daily Traffic Counts.

### **City of Blakely Streets and Roads Assessment**

During the short-term planning period, the City of Blakely will continue to work on completing paving projects. Improvements to the sidewalks and circulation around the courthouse square will be implemented. The completion of the U.S. Highway 27 By-Pass will aid in the traffic circulation around the square. Additional signalization will be needed near the new elementary school facility. The Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Merchants Association will need to work with local officials to establish a focused plan for parking in the central business district during the short-term planning period. Development regulations and aesthetic regulations need to be addressed for property in the 27 By-Pass areas. In general, a local plan to improve the aesthetics on the major entrances to town is needed. The Keep America Beautiful organization will coordinate local officials and economic development agencies to develop such a plan.

Over the planning horizon, the city will monitor areas, which have shown some growth in average daily traffic. For the most part, no congestion or heavy daily traffic patterns have been identified which need attention over the long-term planning period.

### **City of Damascus Streets and Roads Inventory**

The City of Damascus is served by Georgia Route 45, which runs in a north/south manner through town. State route 200 cuts through town in an east/west direction. County Road 197 also moves west from the center of the city. The average daily traffic at point 141 on Georgia 200 in Damascus increased from 1,011 to 1,596 between 1984 and 1992. Georgia 45 also showed a good increase in this period from 922 to 1,527. Traffic in the city remains modest.

The City of Damascus has no parking, signalization, turn radius or other traffic circulation problems. The major street and road problem in the city is maintenance and paving of the existing roads.

### **City of Damascus Streets and Roads Assessment**

The City of Damascus has no outstanding traffic problems or problems associated with roads and streets needs beyond paving and resurfacing. It does need to address continual problems with potholes. The paving of three tenths of a mile on Railroad Avenue is needed as is paving behind the Fire Station. Priorities for paving between 1996 and 1998 include six tenths of a mile on Sammons Street, Bull Street, and Chesire Street. These needs will be addressed through the planning horizon on a prioritized basis. The community will seek DOT and county assistance whenever possible.

### **City of Jakin Streets and Roads Assessment & Inventory**

State Route 38 serves Jakin cutting east-west through the southern portion of the city. The north-south route in the city is State Route 39. Traffic is light through the city. Residential streets and roads are adequate to meet current traffic demands and are expected to continue to be adequate through the planning period. There are no parking, signalization or other traffic circulation problems in the City of Jakin.

### **Rail Service Inventory**

Early County is served by three rail service companies including the Norfolk-Southern Railroad which transverses the county in an east/west manner passing through Arlington, Blakely and crossing the Chattahoochee River to the west. The CSXT

Railroad also serves the southern portion of the county. It parallels the route of U.S. 84 which runs through the City of Jakin and west past Saffold. Near Saffold, a privately owned rail line company, the Chattahoochee Industrial Railroad runs parallel to the Chattahoochee River to connect with the Norfolk-Southern Railroad and the CSX Transportation. This rail line offers piggyback service.

### **Rail Service Assessment**

The current rail service is an asset to the Early County community, which will work to ensure the viability of the lines continued existence through the planning period.

### **Early County Airport Inventory**

The Early County Airport, located on Georgia Highway 62 has a 5,500 foot paved runway with pilot controlled lighting for private aircraft. Lighting is on a timer and radio controlled. Navigational aides currently available at the airport include the VASI system. However, the Early County Airport was one of ten airports in Georgia to receive a grant to improve the navigation system. A global positioning satellite link, an approach system featuring the latest in airport safety will be installed with this grant to aid planes in inclement weather. Twin engine, small jet and helicopters utilize the facility. There is one T-Hanger and sixteen tie downs are available at the facility. Fuel supply services along with minor power plane repair are also available. The Federal Aviation Administration requires a comprehensive twenty-year plan for all airports.

### **Other Air Strips**

Many unmarked airstrips for private crop dusting services are used throughout the county. In addition, the Georgia Pacific Company has a 5,600 foot paved runway near Cedar Springs.

The closest commercial airports are located in Dothan, Alabama, Tallahassee, Florida and Albany, Georgia. The Dothan Airport is located thirty-two miles southwest of Blakely and the Southwest Georgia Regional Airport is located fifty miles northeast

of Blakely. There are several regional carriers that serve the Southwest Georgia and Southwest Florida region including: Delta Connection (COM Air), Air Tran, Northwest and Southwest Airlines.

### **Early County Airport Assessment**

The local communities are well served by the airport facilities mentioned above. If future economic development positively impacts community growth, additional improvements to the facility will be examined.

### **Early County Navigable Waterway Inventory & Assessment**

Early County is situated on the Chattahoochee River, which offers barge terminals and port service. The river is navigable to the Gulf of Mexico. Public docks are located across the river and private docksides on the eastern bank offer companies' space for their own barge terminals.

### **Early County Rural Transit Program Inventory & Assessment**

The Early County Rural Transit Advisory Committee was set up by the County Commission to oversee the affairs of the Early County Rural Public Transit System. The committee was formed in July of 2002 when Early County received both state and federal funding to administer a rural transit program. The Early County Rural Transit Program currently has 3 vehicles in total: 1 regular vehicle which holds 13 passengers in total and 2 wheel chair lift vehicles which accommodate 10 regular passengers and 2 wheel chair passengers in total. The program receives 80 percent federal funding, 10 percent state funding and 10 percent funding from the Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center. The program is regulated by the state but run by a private company. The operating hours of the transit program is 6 am to 8 pm and the system is set up to service the public as well as government (DHR/Medicaid) and private programs with transportation needs. The cost of the program is based on the number of miles the rider intends to travel, but costs are kept low to ensure low to moderate income residents have access to the program. Tables **7.15 & 7.16** outline trip costs and guidelines for transit passengers.

The rural transit program is also in existence in surrounding southwest Georgia cities and counties as well. Every county has their own program structure and there are differing rider ship rate schedules throughout Region 10-Southwest Georgia. Although still in the early stages of development and usage, the Early County Rural Transit Program has proven to be extremely beneficial to Early city and county residents.

During the planning horizon, the transit advisory committee will base system expansion on rider ship trends. In 2004, however, the committee expects to purchase 3 new vehicles based on current rider ship statistics. In addition to the purchase of new vehicles, the committee will also continue the funding relationship with the RDC and will establish trip connections to neighboring cities including, Albany, Dothan and Donaldsonville.

## **H. General Governmental Facilities**

### **Early County Government Facilities Inventory & Assessment**

Early County has approximately 40 government buildings, which serve a multitude of functions. See **Table 7.6** that lists the location, condition and square footage of Early County governmental buildings. According to the county administrative staff, each of the Early County government facilities is in good condition. The buildings range from the county courthouses to storage facilities and administration buildings. In recent years, many repairs have been made to the various buildings to ensure the services provided are adequate and buildings well maintained.

During the planning horizon, the goal will be to maintain the current government facilities to the best of the county's ability. Well monitored maintenance schedules will prevent major repair costs from arising.

### **City of Blakely Government Facilities Inventory**

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**Table 7.5** lists the location, condition and square footage of all governmental facilities in the city. The Blakely City Hall/ Fire Department is located on Magnolia Street. It was built in 1939 and renovated in 1970. It consists of two floors and currently houses the fire department, City Administrator, City Clerk and Treasurer, Chief Building Official, City Council Meeting Room, City Court and Mayor’s Office.

**TABLE 7.22: EARLY COUNTY GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS**

<b>Building</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Square Footage</b>	<b>Condition</b>
Administration Building	17 McDonald Street	2,768	Good
Buildings and Parks Storage Building	796 Jesse Johnson Street	1,920	Good
Airport Office Building	15302 Magnolia Street	1,840	Good
Airport Maintenance Hanger	15302 Magnolia Street	8,000	Good
Airport Paint Hanger	15302 Magnolia Street	6,800	Good
Investigation Office Building	822 Jesse Johnson Street	2,923	Good
Road/Shop Building	796 Jesse Johnson Street	6,100	Good
Extension Building	14415 Magnolia Street	4,216	Good
Vacant Building	12685 Magnolia Street	4,216	Good
Tax Assessor Building	15157 River Street	2,411	Good
Health Department	618 Flowers Drive	5,478	Good
Rescue Unit Building	18610 East South Boulevard	1,920	Good
Jail Complex	18610 East South Boulevard	11,166	Good
Jail Storage Building	18610 East South Boulevard	1,440	Good
Maddox Memorial Building	11880 Columbia Street	9,300	Good
Day Care Center (ATC)	Harold Ragan Drive	4,632	Good
Kolomokee Courthouse	Highway 277	874	Good
Freeman Courthouse	Freeman Rd. W	874	Good
Jakin Courthouse	Highway 395	874	Good

<b>TABLE 7.23: EARLY COUNTY GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS (cont.)</b>			
<b>Building</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Square Footage</b>	<b>Condition</b>
Urquhart Courthouse	Highway 397	874	Good
Lucile Courthouse	Highway 395	874	Good
Hilton Courthouse	Highway 62 West	874	Good
Cedar Springs Courthouse	County Road 300 South	874	Good
Damascus Courthouse	Highway 200 East		Good
Rowena Courthouse	Highway 45	874	Good
Kolomokee Firehouse	Highway 277	576	Good
Rockhill Firehouse	Rockhill Road	576	Good
Blakely Firehouse	McDonald Street	576	Good
Jakin Firehouse	Highway 395	576	Good
Urquhart Firehouse	Highway 397	576	Good
Lucile Firehouse	Highway 395	576	Good
Cuba Firehouse	Highway 275	576	Good
Damascus Firehouse	Highway 200 East	1,650	Good
Arlington Firehouse	Highway 62 East	1,350	Good
Cedar Springs Firehouse	Cedar Springs Road	576	Good
Early County Courthouse	Court Square	19,530	Good
Coheelee Creek Park & Covered Bridge	Highway 62 East	7.75 acres	Good
Odom Creek Parks	Old River Road	93 acres	Good

The City Shop building houses the Maintenance Department for all city vehicles and equipment. It is located on Plant Street without central air or heat. The city has two storage buildings. One was constructed in 1962 and one in 1965. These buildings are generally used for storage of the Street Department vehicles and vehicle maintenance. Plant Street is the location of the

City Warehouse building which is utilized for purchasing, special projects and warehouse stockade. The Sanitation Building is also located on Plant Street. This building houses the Sanitation Office and break room. Blakely's utility barn is situated on Plant Street. It houses the light, water, sewer, gas and street departments. It also includes a break room and parking area. The city currently has two well buildings located on Singletary Street. Both were constructed in 1985. The buildings will be used for storage. Well Building #2 contains motor and pump for well #2.

**TABLE 7.6: BLAKELY GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS**

<b>Building</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Year Built</b>	<b>Square Feet</b>	<b>Condition</b>
City Hall	Court Square	1939	5,145	Good
Fire Department	Magnolia Street	1999/2000	1200	Excellent
Cemetery Office	Chattahoochee Avenue	1975	540	Good
Storage Building #1	Plant Street	1962	1,700	Fair
Storage Building #2	Plant Street	1965	3,570	Fair
City Shop	Plant Street	1987	4,000	Fair
City Annex	McDonald Street	1940	2,107	Good
City Warehouse	Plant Street	1968	6,000	Fair
Sanitation Department	Plant Street	1979	3,540	Fair
Utilities Barn	Plant Street	1972	5,950	Fair
Well Building #1	Singletary Street	1985	484	Good
Well Building #2	Singletary Street	1985	400	Good
Restrooms/Concession Area	Meadowbrook Drive	1975	1,680	Good
Swimming Pool/Office	Howell Avenue	1986	1,440	Excellent
Community Center	Howell Avenue	1975	5,289	Good
Senior Center	Meadowbrook Drive	2001	unknown	Excellent
<i>Source: City of Blakely, 2003</i>				

Two community centers serve the city. The new City of Blakely Senior Center is located on Meadowbrook Drive, the other is located on Howell Avenue. This facility is used by the Young Achievers and the Head-Start Program. The Howell Ave Community Center was constructed in 1986 and has handicap accessibility. The new one was built in 1975 and is also handicap accessible. This building consists of an office, concession area, restroom and showers. The Cemetery Caretakers Office found on Chattahoochee Avenue was constructed in 1972 and is handicap accessible.

### **City of Blakely Government Facilities Assessment**

The Blakely City Hall is a soundly constructed building in good condition. The building space is not adequate for the planning period in terms of space and handicap accessibility. This will provide expansion space for the City Hall. Facility improvements include the need to enlarge and replace the central air conditioning unit, enlargement of the city clerk's office, relocation of the City Council Chambers and the Building Office to the first floor and the installation of a drive through utility collection window.

The city shop maintenance and storage structure will be fairly adequate through the planning horizon. Improvements needed include a temporary storage area (for used oil, freon and anti-freeze in 1994) and a vehicle shed cover was needed in 1995. By 1996, a larger new EPD approved diesel fuel tank was needed. After installation of the new tank, the existing tank will need to be removed from the site. The oldest of the city's storage buildings is in poor condition and the newest is in good condition. The old storage building will become obsolete in 1995 when the new parking shed is built along the street/utility storage building.

The city warehouse was constructed in 1968 and was enlarged by 3,100 square feet in 1995 to meet projected storage demands. With the enlargement of a covered parking area off of the east side of the building, this facility will adequately serve the community through the year 2015. The city utility barn is in fair condition and if economically feasible, an expansion of 1,500 square feet in the office and 2,340 square feet of additional covered parking will be needed at that time. Cost estimates for these

projects total \$16,000. In the long term planning period, the construction of an additional storage shed for spare transformers will be needed at the utility barn at an estimated cost of \$4,500. The city well building will adequately serve the community through the planning period. The care-takers office at the Blakely Cemetery will be adequate for the following five years; however, the storage area needed expanding in 1998.

The community centers are in good condition and will adequately serve the community through the planning period. The Blakely-Early County Recreation Board no longer operates any public swimming pools. The Adult Learning Center activities were moved to Albany Technical College (Early County Campus). This building was demolished to make room for a new fire station.

### **City of Damascus & City of Jakin Government Buildings**

The City of Damascus owns two governmental buildings: Damascus City Hall, which houses the council chambers and the police department and the Damascus Fire Station. The Damascus City Hall is in good condition and adequate for the current uses of the building. The Damascus Fire Department is in poor condition and during the short-term planning period, the elected officials of Damascus will seek out grant opportunities to fund the purchase of new equipment and a new building.

The City of Jakin has one city building, which houses the city hall, the council chambers and the library. The facility was recently renovated and is in excellent condition. During the planning horizon, the city would seek to maintain the current facility to ensure future adequacy.

## **I. Health Services**

### **Early Memorial Hospital Inventory**

The Early Memorial Hospital located on Columbia Road in Blakely and it is the only hospital located within Early County. The hospital provides services for all residents in both the unincorporated and incorporated areas of the county. The building is

approximately 31,396 square feet and is in good condition. While the current facility is adequate, the hospital owns additional acreage behind the existing developed area which would be available for future expansion if necessary.

The hospital offers many services including medical/surgical, pediatrics, obstetrics, geriatrics, nursery, cardiac monitoring, radiology, and emergency services. In addition, outpatient services include clinical laboratory services, radiology, respiratory and surgical services. The hospital has forty-nine beds and had an average daily occupancy of 22.0 patients. The Early Memorial Nursing complex consists of 127 beds. The state has indicated that no further expansion of the number of nursing home beds would be approved in the near planning future. According to the State, Early County had forty more beds than needed.

Employed at the hospital are two family practitioners and a staff of 109 employees. These include seventeen RNs, fifteen LPNs, five hospital aides, thirty-seven lab, x-ray, dietary medical records and housekeeping aides, two EMTs, four secretaries and 34 assorted professional, administrators and service employees. The nursing staff receives continuous education and nurses and

<b>TABLE 7.7 : DAMASCUS &amp; JAKIN GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS</b>				
<b>Building</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Year Built</b>	<b>Square Feet</b>	<b>Condition</b>
Damascus City Hall				Good
Damascus Fire Department				Poor
Jakin City Hall/ Library/ Council Chambers				Excellent
<i>Source: City of Damascus/ City of Jakin</i>				

nurses aides work on three shift schedule. The hospital has a new, modern clinical laboratory equipped to perform a twenty-two Test SMA, stat and single chemistries, electrolytes, arterial gases, isoenzymes, coagulation studies and hematology.

### **Early Memorial Hospital Inventory & Assessment**

Early Memorial Hospital is located in Blakely at 630 Columbia Road. The facility originally opened in 1964 as a 30-bed

facility. The hospital currently has 49 beds, an average daily occupancy of 22 patients, approximately 100 employees in total which include: two full-time physicians, eleven full-time licensed practical nurses, thirteen full time registered nurses, five hospital aides, thirty-seven lab/x-ray technicians, two emergency medical technicians, four secretaries and 34 associated professional, administrative and service employees. According to the Georgia Department of Community Health, Division of Health Planning, communities should strive to have approximately 3 hospital beds per 1000 population. Based on this standard, the Early County Memorial Hospital is more than adequate (the county would need to have about 37 hospital beds). The nursing staff receives continuous education and both nurses and nurses' aides work on three shift schedules. The Early Memorial Hospital maintains full accreditation by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. The core values of the hospital staff include: compassion, integrity, commitment, excellence, teamwork and effectiveness.

In 1995, the facility administrators entered into a long-term lease agreement with John D. Archbold Memorial Hospital, which has given the hospital the opportunity to participate in an efficient, multi-hospital system that delivers quality healthcare at the lowest possible cost. Since establishing an affiliation with the Archbold Memorial Hospital, Early County Memorial Hospital is able to provide a multitude of services including:

- \* **Respiratory care**
- \* **Sub acute Care/Swing bed**
- \* **Emergency Department**
- \* **Laboratory**
- \* **Obstetrics/Gynecology**
- \* **Radiology/Mammography/CT Services**
- \* **Physical Therapy/Speech Therapy**
- \* **Acute Care**
- \* **Dietary Consulting**
- \* **Emergency Medical Transport (Fulltime ACLS)**

**\* Home Health Services**

**\* Hospice**

**\* Community Education (Health Talk)**

In addition, attached to the hospital is a 127-bed skilled and intermediate care nursing home. The Nursing Home originally opened as a 40-bed facility. In 1975, 12 beds were added bringing the total to 52 beds. A new wing with 75 additional beds was added to the nursing home in 1980, making a total of 127 beds. In 1984, the hospital once again went through another renovation and a new construction phase when a new emergency room, medical records, security and clinical laboratory were added. In 1997, the front of the hospital was renovated to provide a 1,200 square foot Rehabilitation Department. With this renovation, the hospital is able to provide Physical Therapy and Speech Therapy services equal to that of larger hospitals. In 1998, a new roof, an in-house CT scanner and new nurses' stations were added. The hospital staff will continue to live up to the hospital's established core values in order to provide the best possible care for all patients and families of patients.

**Early County Health Center Inventory**

The Early County Health Center is located on South Flowers Drive in Blakely, Georgia. All Early County residents are eligible for some of the Center's programs and others are determined by financial need. Service fees are based on a sliding scale. Early County currently funds approximately 23 percent of the Health Department's operating budget.

The number of clients actually seeing a nurse at the Health Center was approximately seven or eight thousand in 2003. These visitation figures do not reflect the number of visits or services provided for WIC vouchers, school certificates, immunization records, environmental services or the numerous administrative requests directed toward the clerical staff. Approximately ninety percent of the Department's clientele are low to moderate income.

Four transportation companies serve the Department's clientele. These are the Arlington Health and Transportation, Med-

Tran, Incorporated Vazquez Medical Transportation Services and the Early County Rural Transit Program.

The Health Center provides many services, which include:

\* Immunizations, comprehensive health exams for children and teenagers, hearing, vision and scoliosis screening for children, WIC food supplements and nutritional information to low income pregnant women and new mothers, pregnancy planning, prevention and pre-natal care services, medical care and surgery to income eligible children with special health problems through referral to Children's Medical Services, breast and cervical cancer screening and follow up, hypertension monitoring, medications and nutritional services, diabetes management, HIV/AIDS testing, counseling and education, screening and treatment for sexually transmitted disease, tuberculosis testing and screening, sickle cell screening, premarital blood testing and rubella counseling, septic tank and well permitting and water supply sampling, rabies control and animal testing and permitting and inspection of restaurants, motels and personal care homes.

The health center staff includes two full-time registered nurses, one full-time licensed practical nurse, four full-time clerical support staff, one part-time clerical support staff person and one environmentalist (serving Early and Miller Counties).

### **Early County Health Center Assessment**

The existing Early County Health Department staff and facilities are currently pressed by the ever-demanding medical needs of a large community unable to afford the high cost of medical care. As medical care costs have increased, more and more residents have turned to the health department for assistance. Client health care visitation rates have increased dramatically.

Besides this, the health department personnel is understaffed and underpaid. Nurses make less money working for the health department than they would at other medical facilities. The health department administrators struggle to maintain the current staff due to the low pay. Another major concern for the health department administration during the planning horizon is

the increase in state mandates with a continual decrease in state funding. During the planning horizon, the health center staff will seek alternative funding methods to provide the services needed for the ever-growing medical needs of Early County residents.

Although the current facilities are in good condition, the Health Department also needs an additional room for conferences, group education and Board Meetings.

### **Early County Mental Health Department Inventory & Assessment**

The Early County Mental Health Center is located on South Church Street. It is a member (satellite office) of the Albany Area Service Center Board, which is a non-profit organization providing mental health, development disability and addictive disease services to citizens in Baker, Calhoun, Dougherty, Early, Lee, Miller, Terrell and Worth counties. The Board is accredited by the Joint Commission Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. Its mission is to educate and assist citizens to be healthy and independent in their community. The agency's vision is that mental health, mental retardation, and substance abuse services will be readily available to individuals and their families. Mental health services in Early County and surrounding areas are aimed at diagnosing and successfully treating adults, children and adolescents with mental illness and emotional disturbances. The ultimate goal is to provide needed services for consumers to help them recover from their illness and to function at their highest possible level within the community. The Early County Mental Health Center currently serves approximately 80-100 clients a week. In addition, the center holds clinics throughout Early County twice a month. The values and principles of the Early County Mental Health Center under the Albany Area Community Service Board include:

#### **Values & Principles**

- \* We believe all people should be treated with dignity and respect.
- \* We are dedicated to the education of consumers, family members and the community.
- \* We believe that quality service should be provided in a variety of locations convenient to consumers and families.
- \* We are committed to respond to the needs of the community.

- \* We believe each consumer is unique and that services should be individualized based on consumer choices.
- \* We strive to find new ways to use current resources and generate new ones through community partnerships.
- \* We are committed to understanding and respecting cultural differences.
- \* We believe people should receive services, which respect their privacy and confidentiality.
- \* We strive for consumer satisfaction.
- \* We believe in ethical conduct of all staff.

Through its affiliation with the Albany Area Community Service Board, the Early County Mental Health Center is able to provide a number of different programs which include: 1) an adult unit, 2) a children and adolescent unit, 3) a psycho-social rehabilitation unit and 4) the Early Miller Service Center. Each of the program units within Early County are extensively utilized by the residents of not Early County, but of surrounding counties as well.

Some of the other services/programs offered through the Albany Area Community Service Board include: diagnostic treatment, medical and nursing assessment, individual counseling and therapy, group and family therapy, medication administration and pharmacy, court-ordered evaluation, services to criminal justice system, family education, crisis intervention, crisis stabilization, psychosocial rehabilitation services (PSR), community service team (CST), community support individual (CSI), residential services and intensive day treatment (IDT).

Within the past 10 years (1993-2003), the mental health center was able to establish Kids-Can and relocate the psycho-social rehabilitation center to a new building. During the next ten years (2004-2014), mental health center administration staff would like to expand facilities and services to meet the many demands of the clients of Early County. In addition, the center would like to develop more client-oriented services such as women's groups, substance abuse programs and day treatment programs that will be housed in Early County. Currently, many of the programs within the network of the Albany Area Community Service Board are located in Albany and the staff would like to see branches of programs such as Hope For Women and Intensive Day Treatment located within Early County.

## **J. Senior Citizens Center Inventory and Assessment**

Two Senior Citizen Centers serve Early County residents. The City of Blakely Senior Center is located at 310 Meadowbrook Drive, while the Community Service Center, operated by the Community Action Council is located at 1241 South Main Street. Currently the facilities are adequate to serve the population; however, with the Early County population aging rapidly, it is imperative that elected officials begin planning for an increase in the senior citizen population and an increased need for senior center facilities.

## **K. Solid Waste Management**

Solid waste management for the county and the cities (Blakeley, Damascus and Jakin) is handled through the Blakely/Early County Transfer Station. All solid waste is disposed of in other county's landfills by a private waste hauler. There are no public landfills in the county. For a complete inventory, assessment and implementation program, see the Early County Consolidated Solid Waste Management Plan. This plan addresses all issues related to solid waste in depth





# LAND USE

EARLY COUNTY & THE CITIES OF BLAKELY, DAMASCUS  
AND JAKIN

## Land Use

### A. Introduction

The intent of the land use element is to provide an opportunity for local officials to gather information on existing land use patterns and trends. Once gathered, the data can be used to identify community needs. Local officials can then create goals and translate them into policies and procedures needed to address the community needs identified. These goal driven policies and procedures are then used to guide growth in a manner consistent with the economic development, housing, natural and historic resources and community facilities elements of this plan.

The land use section is made up of three components: an inventory of the existing conditions; an assessment of current and future needs; and an articulation of community goals and associated implementation program designed to meet the perceived needs. These individual components represent the basic planning level requirements designed for the rural areas; their number and detail will multiply should development increase in the county and cities in the future.

A brief overview of the historical development of Early County follows this introduction to provide prospective on the development of existing land uses. It is a starting point in the development of the components mentioned above.

## B. Historical Development Patterns

### *Early County*

When Baker County was formed out of the territory belonging to Early County in 1825, it became necessary to seek a new location for the county's courthouse and jail. Blakely then became the county seat and much of the development was directed to the city and radiated out along transportation routes. Roads were already laid between Fort Gaines and Florida from the Indian Boundary line. The River Road ran through Jakin as early as 1820. Cedar Springs, one of the county's oldest settlements is located in southern Early County. Settlers chose the site for the seven springs found there.

New routes from Blakely to the river were established serving the river plantations, as were other routes radiating out to the crossroads communities developing around the county. Saffold, a crossroads community was located one mile from the Chattahoochee River in Southern Early County. Jakin and Damascus (earlier known as Kestler) were established as crossroads communities as were the communities of Lucile, Hen Town and Cuba. Residential development in the county has continued to be located in these communities. The majority of the industrial development in the county has been located in the City of Blakely or near the river in the southern portion of the county. Commercial development has also primarily developed in or near the Cities of Blakely, Damascus or Jakin or in the smaller crossroads communities.

Settlement in the unincorporated county has generally occurred in a linear fashion along county highways and roads or is clustered near unincorporated communities such as Hen Town, Lucile and Cuba. Development has also occurred around the old Saffold Navy Yard area. Other development patterns in the county are associated with farms

and agricultural enterprises. Historically, the major transportation routes radiating out of the City of Blakely giving access to markets in surrounding counties have provided the major axis for growth and development within the county.

### *City of Blakely*

The City of Blakely was established as Early County's county seat in 1825. Development quickly surrounded the courthouse square and began spreading outward. In 1880, the railroad was extended from Albany, Georgia to the eastern portion of Alabama, through Blakely. This resulted in a second economic boom during which the community spread out further along transportation routes. Additional commercial development was then added to that already in place to serve the citizens and county facilities in Blakely.

### *City of Damascus*

Damascus, formerly Krestler, existed as a community prior to the Civil War. However, it did not become a city until after 1880. Damascus owes its development to the construction of a rail line and a train depot in 1897. Businesses that utilized the rail line to transport goods quickly sprang up around the depot. Residential and commercial development took place around the periphery of the depot.

### *City of Jakin*

The City of Jakin's development pattern is much like the City of Damascus. It too grew up around a railroad depot where various commercial pursuits located in order to facilitate the efficient shipment of their products. As in

the case of Damascus, residential development soon was constructed around the nucleus of the town, which was composed of the railroad facilities and commercial businesses.

## C. Inventory & Assessment of County/ City Needs

### 1. EARLY COUNTY

#### a. Early County Inventory of Existing Land Use

*Data for the inventory of existing land use was collected by means of a windshield survey. It was then combined with tax office resources (consolidated tax digests) and GIS method data. Generalized existing land use maps are included at the end of the land use element.*

In 2002, the total area of the unincorporated portions of the county amounted to 306,002 acres of predominantly rural land. Early county's rural nature is reflected in the predominance of agriculture and forestry land uses which comprise 295,145 acres or 96 percent of the unincorporated county's total land use. Today, agriculture consists of 143,645 acres or 47 percent of the unincorporated county's total land use.

Currently, forestry consists of 151,500 acres or 50 percent of the unincorporated county's total land use. It is interesting to note that these figures for agriculture and forestry acreage do not represent a significant change from those found in the county's first consolidated comprehensive plan, prepared in 1994. Compared to the initial figure in

1994, the numbers show a slight increase, about 1 percent, in acreage dedicated to agricultural and forestry use over the 10 year period.

Residential land uses comprise 9,062 acres or 2.9 percent of the county's total land use. This figure emphasizes the lack of significant growth in the unincorporated areas of the county. In 1994, residential land use represented less than 2 percent of the existing land use within the county. Today, the figure still remains at less than 3 percent.

Existing residential land uses remain primarily devoted to single-family dwellings. Although residential uses are scattered sparsely throughout the majority of the county, some denser subdivision development is located near the unincorporated communities of Saffold Navy Yard, Cedar Springs, Lucile, Cuba, Hentown and near the outskirts of the incorporated cities. Residential development has generally gravitated to the existing paved transportation routes, although the county maintained unpaved routes also are frequently utilized for residential development.

Very little land in the unincorporated county is utilized for either commercial enterprise or industrial activity. The commercial land use accounts for 426 acres (.0014% of the unincorporated area) and the industrial land use accounted for 1,224 (.004% of the unincorporated area). Together, these classifications account for less than 0.1 percent of the total land use as they did in 1994. Commercial activity is located sporadically along the major transportation routes and intersections in the county. Clusters of industrial activity in the county are located in the southwestern section of the county near the Chattahoochee River and rail lines as it has over the previous 10 year period.

Public/institutional land uses remains low. This use contributes 131 acres or less than 0.1 percent of the total land in the county. The majority of the county's public and institutional facilities are located in Blakely, the county

seat, and along active crossroads in the unincorporated area. Blakely's recent annexation of the Early County Elementary School is consistent with this trend.

The fourth largest category of land use remains the Parks/Recreation/Conservation category. Approximately 639.7 acres continues to be in conservation use and 1,299 acres remain in recreational use. This category of land use has not increased in acreage over the last 10 years.

The largest use of this type is the Kolomoki State Park located in the northern portion of the county. Two other public parks are located in the unincorporated county along the Chattahoochee River including Odums Landing and Coheelee Creek public landing. This land use classification provides a total of 1,938 acres or 0.6 percent of the county's total land use.

The transportation, utilities and communications category consists of 5,413 acres or 1.8 percent of the total land use. Roadway miles make up the bulk of this acreage. The county has 710 road miles utilizing 5,164 acres of land in the county and ranks 61<sup>st</sup> in the highest amount of road mileage.

## **b. Early County Assessment of Current and Future Needs**

### ***i.) Early County Existing Land Use Assessment***

Overall land use has not changed during the past thirty years in Early County. Growth continues to be a non-issue in the county. Early county remains sparsely developed with large tracts of land dedicated to agricultural use.

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Land use in Early County is generally regulated by an array of state and federal laws and several local regulations. The county has not implemented zoning, so the regulation of land use intensity is left primarily to the County Health Department. The Health Department enforces state mandated minimum lot sizes for developments with individual well and septic tanks. No water or sewer service is provided in the county except for a small number of uses on the fringe areas of the City of Blakely. At present, most citizens in the county utilize septic tanks as a permanent solution to their waste disposal needs—a job they weren't designed to do.

The Georgia Department of Transportation also influences the county's development density. Along state maintained roadways, the state discourages the use of flag lots in the subdivision of county land. Furthermore, they require minimum distances between driveways accessing lots.

The county itself has a subdivision ordinance and various other specific use ordinances such as a manufactured home and junkyard ordinance. As in the previous planning period, the current regulations do little to define the pattern of development occurring in the county. The current lack of land use regulations makes it difficult for the county to guide the efficient use of infrastructure or county resources and also makes it difficult to protect against haphazard development, development of incompatible land uses, or protect against the development of unwanted or unsightly land uses. However, at present there is significant resistance to any further land use controls. Private property rights continue to be fiercely defended in the county.

The predominant use of land in Early County continues to be agricultural and forestry uses. Much of these lands are held in large family or corporate land holdings and are not subject to encroachment by other land uses or

development pressures. These resources are primarily protected by the regulations of the NRCS. Many natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas including wetlands, groundwater, surface waters, significant recharge areas, river corridors, and prime farm soils/lands were identified in the natural resource element of this plan.

Today, there are few areas of major transition in the county. Some scattered transitions from agricultural lands to sparsely developed residential uses continue to occur, but no significant area trends have been noticed. Infill development remains possible around the fringe areas of Blakely where the breakup of agricultural land is most likely to occur. There is continued potential for conflicts between agricultural land users and suburban development in these areas. The potential for incompatible uses to develop in the fringe areas of Blakely is possible during the planning horizon. No development regulations or natural buffers are currently in place which might mitigate the negative effects of incompatible land uses in these areas, and it will probably remain this way for some time.

Several blighted residential and commercial places continue to exist in the county, but they usually consist of one or two structures together and are sparsely located. The county has many old dilapidated agricultural buildings and barns located on agricultural lands, which do not usually represent eyesores. A good condemnation program would help alleviate this problem; however, this is not seen as a palatable option for citizens of the county.

No specific market forces have been identified which will affect growth patterns in the county. However, the viability of the navigation channel on the Chattahoochee River will continue to influence the potential for development near the county's western border. NAFTA as well as changes to the national peanut program will certainly continue to affect the prominence of agricultural land holdings.

## *ii) Early County Projection of Future Land Use Needs*

There continues to be adequate land in Early County to serve the current and future population's land acreage needs for all land use classifications during the planning horizon. Future transitions of agricultural land are expected as the county is predicted to grow slowly. The success of future economic development opportunities will influence the direction land use takes.

### *Residential*

The Early County population is projected to increase slightly over the planning period. The per capita method indicates that 3,260 additional acres will be needed in the future. This will bring the figure for needed residential lands to 12,322 acres or a little over 4.0 percent of the county's total acreage in 2020. It is estimated that the majority of future residential growth will occur around the City of Blakely. Residential growth will continue to primarily develop in a linear manner throughout the county as residents make the most of existing roadway infrastructure.

### *Commercial and Industrial*

Commercial land use is currently accounts for .0014 percent of the county's land use. Through the planning period, it is expected that commercial land uses will more than double to 0.1 percent of the county's land use. Approximately 293 additional acres of land will be needed to be dedicated to commercial development in the county. By the year 2020, a total of 719 acres will be needed.

Census employment data for Early County can be combined with land use estimates, employment data and economic data to yield additional information as to the sufficiency of the amount land dedicated to commercial use. One method of measurement is the calculation of the number of employees per acre.

Currently, there are .29 commercial acres per employee. It is estimated that by the year 2023 the number of commercial acres per employee will increase slightly to .57 commercial acres per employee. Today the number of employees per acre is low, and the predicted slight increase of 430 commercial acres throughout the planning period, coupled with the projected gains in population, signal that the density of employees per acre will decrease; therefore, land dedicated to commercial use is expected to be sufficient.

According to projections, an additional 100 acres of industrial land is needed throughout the planning period in Early County unincorporated areas according to local estimates. It is expected that some of this growth will be related to agribusinesses. Should the majority of industrial growth be directed to the City of Blakely in the planning period, the additional acreage needed will be lower than estimated. There is plenty of land available for such development. The industrial classification is expected to contribute 1,224 acres or .004 percent of the county's total land use by 2020.

Census employment data for Early County can be combined with land use estimates, employment data and economic data to yield additional information as to the sufficiency of the amount land dedicated to industrial use. One method of measurement is the calculation of the number of employees per acre.

Currently, there are .87 industrial acres per employee. It is estimated that by the year 2023 the amount of industrial acres per employee will decrease slightly to .85 industrial acres per employee. Today the number of employees per acre is low, and the predicted stability of the land dedicated to industrial use, coupled with the projected gains in population, signals that the density of employees per acre will not increase significantly; therefore, land in industrial use should be sufficient.

There is potential for the attraction of commercial and additional enterprises in or near the river and rail transportation avenues in Southern Early County. The conversion of land uses to these and other categories is expected to be made from existing areas of the vacant agricultural/forestry categories. Due to the lack of public water and sewer services in the county, most of the commercial and industrial land uses are projected to continue to locate in or around the urban fringes of Blakely and is scattered development throughout the remainder of the county.

#### ***Land Uses Other than Residential, Commercial and Industrial***

The public/institutional category will not increase significantly in the planning period, due to the availability of better than adequate space in existing facilities. The majority of the county's public offices are expected to continue to locate in the county seat. Through the twenty-year planning horizon, an estimated fifty acres of additional land or a total of 181 acres will be needed in this category. This category will consist of less than .1 percent of the total land use in the unincorporated county.

The future acquisition of park, recreation and conservation land in the county will be dependent upon the development of a long-range acquisition and park expansion plan. The present emphasis continues to be on the maintenance

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nance and upgrading of par and recreation facilities. Baring the creation of a future acquisition plan, the amount acreage dedicated to these uses in the future will not change. It will remain at 1,836 acres or .006 percent of the unincorporated county's land use.

The majority of the county's parks, recreation areas and conservation areas are expected to remain and be established in the incorporated areas. According to the per capita method, and additional ten acres or 1,949 acres will be needed in the incorporated communities through the planning period. By 2020, this category including would represent 0.6 percent of the incorporated county's land area is projected to be in this category.

Future land use in the transportation, utilities and communications classification is not expected to increase much during the planning period according to local officials. The per capita estimates indicate that no additional land will be needed in this classification. But according to local estimates, approximately sixty acres of additional land or 5473 total acres is projected to be dedicated to this land use. This category would then represent 1.9 percent of the county's land use.

Land in agricultural use is expected to make up 133,111 acres or 43.5% of the unincorporated county's total acreage. This amount is slightly smaller than its 2004 figure where it made up 143,645 acres or 47% of the unincorporated county's total land area.

Land in forestry use is expected to make up 148,410 acres or 48.5% of the unincorporated county's total acreage. This amount is slightly smaller than its 2004 figure where it made up 153,001 acres or 50% of the unincorporated county's total land area.

**c. Early County Articulation of Community Goals and Associated Implementation Program**

*Future Land Use Map Narrative Statement*

Should the county develop, it is likely that it will be in the area around the outskirts of the City of Blakely. Growth is attractive in this area due to the presence of existing or nearby infrastructure. Annexation would be possible in the future for these areas. However, there is strong public sentiment that the city has annexed enough land for the foreseeable future. The majority of the sensitive areas in the county are located on large tracts of private land and are therefore unlikely to be disturbed in the planning period. Areas of historic or archeological interest are largely found within the county's state parks.

**2. CITY OF BLAKELY**

**a. City of Blakely Inventory of Existing Conditions**

*Data for the inventory of existing land use was collected by means of a windshield survey. It was then combined with tax office resources (consolidated tax digests) and GIS method data. Generalized existing land use maps are included at the end of the land use element.*

According to U.S. Census maps, the City of Blakely encompasses a total of 11,264 acres. The agriculture and forestry continue to account for 7,559 acres or 67 percent of the city's land use. Agriculture consists of 4,913 acres or 44 percent of the city's total land area. Large blocks of agricultural land continue to be located in the very eastern, north-

ern, and southern portions of the city. Some agricultural land is also located along the city's eastern border; however, they are not as expansive as in the other areas.

Forestry land consists of 2,646 acres or 23 percent of the city's total land use. These lands are generally located in the same areas as the agricultural land.

The residential land use in the City of Blakely consists of 1,400 acres or 12.4 percent of all land uses within the city. This figure has remained relatively constant over the planning period. Residential neighborhoods are well dispersed throughout the city where growth is clustered, with major concentrations in the central and northern portions of the city. Some residential development also exists along linear routes as major roads radiate out of the downtown. There is great potential for infill development to occur in many neighborhoods throughout the city.

Several blighted areas have been identified in the city including the Fort Gaines and Dean Avenue Street neighborhood, North Church Street area, and the Howell Avenue neighborhood. These areas are all located north of the Central Business District. Code enforcement has guided the clearance of some deteriorating houses in these and other areas. However, continued efforts to improve these areas need to be pursued, and two other areas added, Liberty Street and Bay Street.

Commercial activities account for 317.5 acres or 2.8 percent of the City of Blakely's total land use. This category has doubled in the amount of total acres it occupies, but still remains a small portion of the city's total land use. Much of the land classified as commercial is located in the Central Business District surrounding the courthouse square. The fringe area around the CBD has been subject to some transition in recent years. Expansion into the older

neighborhoods bordering the square has continued in recent years. Some of the city's historic homes have been utilized for commercial properties.

Strip commercial development has continued to add to the city's commercial base. Commercial development continues to blossom along North Main Street and along Magnolia Street towards Georgia Highway 200. The city's major shopping centers are located on Columbia Street and along South Main Street.

The industrial classification comprises 203 acres or 1.8 percent of the city's total land use. Industrial development continues to be mostly confined to the north and northeast of the Courthouse Square. Industrial development is most significant at the Blakely-Early County Industrial Park, located on Georgia Highway 62 near rail line service and the Early County Airport.

Public/Institutional land comprises 230 acres or 2 percent of the city's land use. This development is mainly located around the Courthouse Square area, Howell Street and Columbia Street, where the middle and high school are located as well as the public library and hospital. This use has remained largely unchanged over the planning period except for the addition of the Albany Tech Satellite Campus off the bypass.

Blakely's Park/Recreation/Conservation category comprises 619.5 acres or 5.5 percent. This represents a slight decrease over the planning period, but the drop is most likely the result of the overestimation of these lands in 1994. The Blakely-Early County Recreation Department facilities are located in the City of Blakely. Recreation areas are dispersed throughout the city. Major facilities are located on Meadowbrook Drive, Liberty Street and Howell Avenue. The majority of the acreage is conservation related.

The transportation, utilities, and communication category represents 601.3 or 5 percent of the city's total land use. These facilities are dispersed throughout the city. The total land dedicated to these activities has increased slightly over the 10 year planning period.

## **b. City of Blakely Assessment of Current and Future Land Use Needs**

### ***i.) City of Blakely Existing Land Use Assessment***

Blight continues to be addressed in the City of Blakely through the use of building code enforcement, condemnation procedures, the Clean Community Commission and neighborhood re-development efforts. The City of Blakely has planned target areas scheduled for infrastructure and housing rehabilitation improvements. The City will continue to concentrate on infrastructure and recreation improvements for the Howell Avenue area through programs such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).

The mitigation of incompatible land uses in the city continues to be regulated through the city's zoning ordinance. However, many of these uses existed prior to the development of the zoning ordinance and few have natural or designed buffers to shield them from each other. Some of the non-conforming land uses may continue to be corrected over time, but this is not expected significantly change the appearance of the contrasting areas.

Other neighborhood areas near busy highways continue to be subject to the development of abutting commercial developments as is the case with the neighborhood East of South Church Street and north of Columbia Street near the Early County High School. Many areas of mixed use exist on highways leading into the city. Magnolia Street is in

transition from old residential to commercial or professional office type use. A potential transitional area in the city is located along the newly developed U.S. 27 By-Pass. The ordinances relating to land development in this area will be reviewed for adequacy.

The City annexed the Early County Airport and the Early County Elementary School over the last ten years. There is adequate available land to carry them through the planning period, so future annexations are unlikely.

*ii.) City of Blakely Projection of Future Land Use Needs*

There is adequate land in the City of Blakely to serve the current and future population's land acreage needs for all land use classifications during the planning horizon. Future transitions of agricultural land and the undeveloped and unused category are expected as the city experiences modest growth. The city is planning for the capacity to provide expanded or upgraded public water, sanitary sewer, utilities, public safety and other services within the city limits as an attraction to commercial and industrial development.

*Residential*

The City of Blakely's population is projected to increase slowly over the planning period. Utilization of the GIS method indicates that the city will require 1,573.9 acres or 13.0 percent of the city's land for residential use in the year 2020. Residential development is projected to occur as infill development in many of the uncompleted residential areas.

*Commercial and Industrial*

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According to the GIS method of calculating future land use, it is estimated that an additional 118.5 acres of land will be dedicated to commercial development by the year 2020. Commercial development would then comprise 436 acres or 3.1 percent of the city's total land use.

Census employment data for the City of Blakely can be combined with land use estimates, employment data and economic data to yield additional information as to the sufficiency of the amount land dedicated to commercial use. One method of measurement is the calculation of the number of employees per acre.

Currently, there are .48 commercial acres per employee. It is estimated that by the year 2023 the number of commercial acres per employee will increase slightly to .50 commercial acres per employee. Today the number of employees per acre is low, and the predicted slight increase of 31.5 acres throughout the planning period, coupled with the projected gains in population, signal that the density of employees per acre will decrease; therefore, land dedicated to commercial use is expected to be sufficient.

According to per capita projections, an additional 189 acres of industrial land is needed throughout the planning period in the City of Blakely. However, there is plenty of land available for such development in the Industrial Park at present. Therefore, the amount of land needed in the future for industrial development is expected to remain at 203 acres or 1.8%.

Census employment data for the City of Blakely can be combined with land use estimates, employment data and economic data to yield additional information as to the sufficiency of the amount land dedicated to industrial use.

One method of measurement is the calculation of the number of employees per acre.

Currently, there are .32 industrial acres per employee. It is estimated that by the year 2023 the number of industrial acres per employee will decrease slightly to .29 industrial acres per employee. Today the number of employees per acre is low, and the predicted stability of acres dedicated to industrial use throughout the planning period, coupled with the projected gains in population, signals that the density of employees per acre will not increase significantly; therefore, land in industrial use should be sufficient.

#### ***Land Uses Other than Residential, Commercial and Industrial***

The public/institutional category will not increase significantly in the planning period, due to the availability of nearly adequate space in existing facilities. Some expansion and storage requirements will be met through the planning period in this category; however, the increase will be minimal. Through the twenty-year planning horizon, an estimated 25 acres of additional land or a total of 156 acres will be needed in this category. This category is projected to contribute 1.5 percent of the total land use in the unincorporated county in the year 2020.

An additional 29 acres of recreation, conservation and park acreage will be needed in the unincorporated communities through the planning period. By the year 2020, this category including would represent 629 acres or 8.4 percent of the city's land area. The current emphasis is on maintenance and upgrading of current recreational facilities. Future expansion plans will be developed during the planning period.

Future land use in the transportation, utilities and communications classification is not projected to increase significantly during the planning period. The per capita estimates indicate that 100 additional acres will be needed in this classification. This category would then represent 677.6 acres or 5.4 percent of the county's land use.

Land in agricultural use is expected to make up 4,956 acres or 44% of the city's total acreage. The amount of acreage dedicated to agricultural is expected to remain the same throughout the planning period.

Land in forestry use is expected to make up 2,478 acres or 22% of the city's total land use. This amount is slightly smaller than its 2004 figure where it made up 2,590 acres or 23% of the city's total acreage.

**c. City of Blakely Articulation of Community Goals and Associated Implementation Program**

***Future Land Use Map Narrative Statement***

Should the city develop further, the development will most likely be infill development on vacant parcels or areas once in agricultural use. It is unfeasible to predict potential infrastructure improvements needed due to the absence of any particular market forces; and further annexation from the county to city is not probable in the planning period.

The timing or sequencing of any infrastructure improvements is really a non-issue due to the absence of significant growth. Critical and sensitive areas are the same as well. Areas containing sites, buildings, or areas of local significance are primarily situated in the central business district.

### 3. CITY OF DAMASCUS

#### a. City of Damascus Inventory of Existing Conditions

*Data for the inventory of existing land use was collected by means of a windshield survey. It was then combined with tax office resources (consolidated tax digests) and GIS method data. Generalized existing land use maps are included at the end of the land use element.*

The City of Damascus is located in the southeastern section of Early County. The city's circular city limits continue to encompass 1,134.5 acres of land. The Seaboard Coastline railroad transverses the city in a north-south fashion around which a central grid-like settlement pattern has arisen. Surrounding this settlement pattern is a large buffer of agricultural land.

The majority of the city's land continues to be devoted to agriculture. There are 423.3 acres in agricultural use in the city. Agriculture accounts for 37 percent of the total city acreage.

Forestry accounts for 319.4 acres or 28 percent of the city's total acreage. The potential exists for the forestry land as well as the agricultural land to be converted to more urban uses, but it is unlikely in the near future, as farming interests are still strong in the city and the city is projected to experience very limited growth.

Residential land use has increased slightly over the previous planning period. Residential land use accounts for 140.5 acres or 12.3 percent of the total land acreage in the city, the majority of which is located along the major roads

through town including Brumby Avenue/Georgia Highway 45, Bull Street, Kestler Avenue. Railroad Avenue and Sanimons Streets have developed as small neighborhoods.

Commercial activity continues to be generally located at the crossroads of Brumby Avenue and Main Street although several small commercial businesses are scattered through town. Development in these areas has increased slightly to 17.4 acres or 1.5 percent of the city's total land use.

The city continues to be home to several large agricultural/forestry-processing enterprises. These industrial land uses continue to comprise 69.6 acres 6.1 percent of the total land use of the city. This industrial development is located northeast of the railroad.

Public/institutional lands continue to contribute 16.9 acres or 1.5 percent of the city's total land use and is mainly comprised of the Post Office and City Hall/Fire Station.

Damascus has 74.8 acres of 6.6 percent of its land in the parks/recreation/conservation category. These figures represent a slight increase over the planning period. The city ball fields are but one of the properties included in the 74.8 acres.

Transportation, utilities and communication land remains at 79.1 acres or 7.0 percent of all land in the city.

## **b. City of Damascus Assessment of Current and Future Land Use Needs**

### ***i.) City of Damascus Existing Land Use Assessment***

Two small areas of blight remain in the City of Damascus. These are located on Kestler Avenue and on Hightower Avenue. The Hightower Avenue area is situated in the middle of two industrial use areas and is without paved roads. Most land use transitions that have occurred have been related to the transition from agricultural use to residential development. Many of the city's commercial properties remain vacant and some on East Main Street are dilapidated. Revitalization of the existing commercial area continues to be a community concern. Industrial development other than expansion of existing facilities seems remote and would most likely occur in Blakely due to the existing infrastructure there.

No market forces exist which would affect future growth patterns in the city. The city expects little to no growth during the planning period. The city does have a zoning ordinance which protects against incompatible land uses should any develop. The only environmentally sensitive or locally valued areas identified in the natural and historic resources element, which are unsuitable for development, are the wetlands identified in the undeveloped land use category.

### **ii.) City of Damascus Projection of Future Land Use Needs**

#### ***Residential***

It is projected that the long-term future land use patterns in the City of Damascus will show a slight increase in the transition of agricultural lands adjacent to existing streets to residential uses. In addition, the potential for development of infill areas between existing residential structures is recommended. The future land use map shows an additional 28.7 acres in which residential use will be directed. Lots sizes in the rural community are often large. The future land use map for Damascus shows a total of 168.7 acres or 14.3 percent of the city's land use in the residential category.

### *Commercial and Industrial*

The commercial land use category is expected to increase slightly with an additional six acres or a total of 22.4 acres or 2 percent of the city's land use by 2020. This development is likely to occur through the development of unused land and through infill development in areas of existing commercial development.

Census employment data for the City of Damascus can be combined with land use estimates, employment data and economic data to yield additional information as to the sufficiency of the amount land dedicated to commercial use. One method of measurement is the calculation of the number of employees per acre.

Currently, there are .53 commercial acres per employee. It is estimated that by the year 2023 the number of acres per employee will increase slightly to .69 acres per employee. Today the number of employees per acre is low, and the predicted slight increase of 5 acres throughout the planning period, coupled with the projected gains in population, signal that the density of employees per acre will decrease; therefore, land dedicated to commercial use is expected to be sufficient.

By the year 2020 local estimates reserve no additional acres of land for industrial development. This percentage would remain stable at 6.1 percent of the city's total land use.

Census employment data for the City of Damascus can be combined with land use estimates, employment data and economic data to yield additional information as to the sufficiency of the amount land dedicated to industrial use. One method of measurement is the calculation of the number of employees per acre.

Currently, there are 2.2 industrial acres per employee. It is estimated that by the year 2023 the number of industrial acres per employee will decrease slightly to 2.1 acres of industrial land per employee. Today the number of employees per acre is low, and the predicted stability of land dedicated to industrial use throughout the planning period, coupled with the projected gains in population, signals that the density of employees per acre will not increase significantly; therefore, land in industrial use should be sufficient.

#### *Land Uses Other than Residential, Commercial and Industrial*

The Transportation/Communication/Utilities land use classification is projected to represent 89.1 acres or 7.5 percent of Damascus' future land use in the year 2020. The Park/Conservation/Recreation land use classification is expected to grow to 75 acres or 6.6 percent of the city's total land use.

Land in agricultural use is expected to make up 397 acres or 35% of the city's total acreage. This amount is slightly smaller than its 2004 figure of 420 acres or 37% of the city's total land area. Land in forestry use is expected to make up 295 acres or 26% of the city's total acreage. This amount is slightly smaller than its 2004 figure where it

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made up 318 acres or 28% of the city's total acreage.

**c. City of Damascus Articulation of Community Goals and Associated Implementation Program**

***Future Land Use Map Narrative Statement***

Damascus does not expect any significant amount of growth within the planning period. However, there is potential for infill development on vacant parcels and the conversion of agricultural lands to residential use. Annexations are improbable in the future as well. Timing or sequencing of infrastructure is not an issue. Critical and sensitive areas do not exist in the city, and areas containing sites, buildings or areas of interest are primarily located in the central business district.

**4. CITY OF JAKIN**

**a. City of Jakin Inventory of Existing Land Use**

*Data for the inventory of existing land use was collected by means of a windshield survey. It was then combined with tax office resources (consolidated tax digests) and GIS method data. Generalized existing land use maps are included at the end of the land use element.*

The City of Jakin is located in the southwestern portion of Early County just north of Early County's border with Seminole County. The city limits encompasses 803.1 acres. At 407 acres, agriculture accounts for 51 percent of

the city's land area.

Forestry accounts for 174 acres or 23 percent of the city's total land area. Forestry lands as well as agricultural lands are prevalent in all quadrants of the city. There is little interest in the farming or forestry community in converting this agricultural land to other uses and no outside market pressure to entice them.

The residential classification has increased slightly throughout the planning period. Residential uses now account for 133 acres or 16.5 percent of the total land use in the city. The residential use continues to be primarily single family--although one small apartment complex is located on U.S. 84. Residential development is mainly located along Pearl Street and in the eastern side of town near Jakin's old school.

Commercial activity continues to comprise 6.3 acres or 0.8 percent of the city's land acreage. Nearly all of the city's commercial activity is developed on U.S. Highway 84. No industrial land is developed in the City of Jakin.

The public institutional classification at 4.9 acres or 0.6 percent of the total. This category includes a cemetery, rural courthouse/fire station, post office and water service facilities. The city's Parks/Recreation/Conservation category remains at 12.5 acres or 1.6 percent of the land use within the city. The transportation, utility and communications continue to account for 51.4 acres or 6.4 percent of the city's land use.

## **b. City of Jakin Assessment of Current and Future Land Use Needs**

### ***i.) City of Jakin Existing Land Use Assessment***

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In general, the existing land use development patterns in the City of Jakin continue to poses no major conflicts or issues. There are no blighted or transitional areas in the city or areas. Wetlands may be a potential land use constraint in some areas in agricultural use, but there is plenty of land for development purposes through the planning period. Future land use will be determined by the availability of agricultural parcels, which are sold for alternative uses. No market forces have been identified which might affect growth patterns. Even though there is currently no incompatible land uses in the city, the city has adopted a zoning ordinance to protect itself against potential adverse development strategies.

*ii.) City of Jakin Projection of Future Land Use Needs*

***Residential***

Future population and economic trends projected for the City of Jakin do not indicate the need to dedicate significant acreage of land in any future land use category due to a declining trend in population.

Residential development is encouraged along the existing roadway infrastructure. The future land use maps depicts a total of 133 acres of land dedicated to residential development or 16.5 percent of the total land use.

***Commercial and Industrial***

An additional 7.7 acres of commercial land use is dedicated to commercial enterprises during the planning period. This land use is to be encouraged along Highway 84 near existing clusters of commercial enterprises. The future land use map depicts 15 acres or 1.9 percent of the city's total land acreage in commercial development. Census employment data for the City of Jakin can be combined with land use estimates, employment data and economic data to yield additional information as to the sufficiency of the amount land dedicated to commercial use. One method of measurement is the calculation of the number of employees per acre.

Currently, there are .35 commercial acres per employee. It is estimated that by the year 2023 the number of commercial acres per employee will increase slightly to .79 commercial acres per employee. Today the number of employees per acre is low, and the predicted slight increase of 8.6 acres throughout the planning period, coupled with the projected gains in population, signal that the density of employees per acre will decrease; therefore, land dedicated to commercial use is expected to be sufficient.

The existing land use map does not depict any areas of industrial land use within the City of Jakin. With the exception of some agricultural industries, industrial land uses in the county will be directed to new and existing industrial parks and to existing clusters of industrial activities. Therefore, industrial development continues to show no industrial land use on the city's future land use map.

The City of Jakin contains no land dedicated to industrial use. Furthermore, no land is projected to be converted to industrial use throughout the planning period. Therefore, further examination is unwarranted.

#### **Land Uses Other than Residential, Commercial and Industrial**

Slight increases in the amount of land dedicated to the public/institutional classification are projected during the planning period in the City of Jakin. This growth is expected to occur near existing public infrastructure. This category is expected to contribute 9.9 acres or 1.2 percent of the city's total land use as depicted on the future land use map.

The transportation, utilities and communication land use category is projected to increase slightly to 54.7 acres on the generalized future land use map. It will then represent 6.8 percent of the city's total land use. The park, recreation and conservation category is expected to remain largely unchanged hovering around **14 acres** or 1.7 percent of the county's total land use. Land in agricultural use is expected to account for 385 acres or 48% of the city's total acreage. This amount is slightly smaller than its 2004 figure of 410 acres or 51% of the city's total acreage. Land in forestry use is expected to account for 192 acres or 23.9% of the city's total acreage. This amount is slightly larger than its 2004 figure where it made up 185 acres or 23% of the city's total acreage.

### c. Articulation of Community Goals and Associated Implementation Program

#### *Future Land Use Map Narrative Statement*

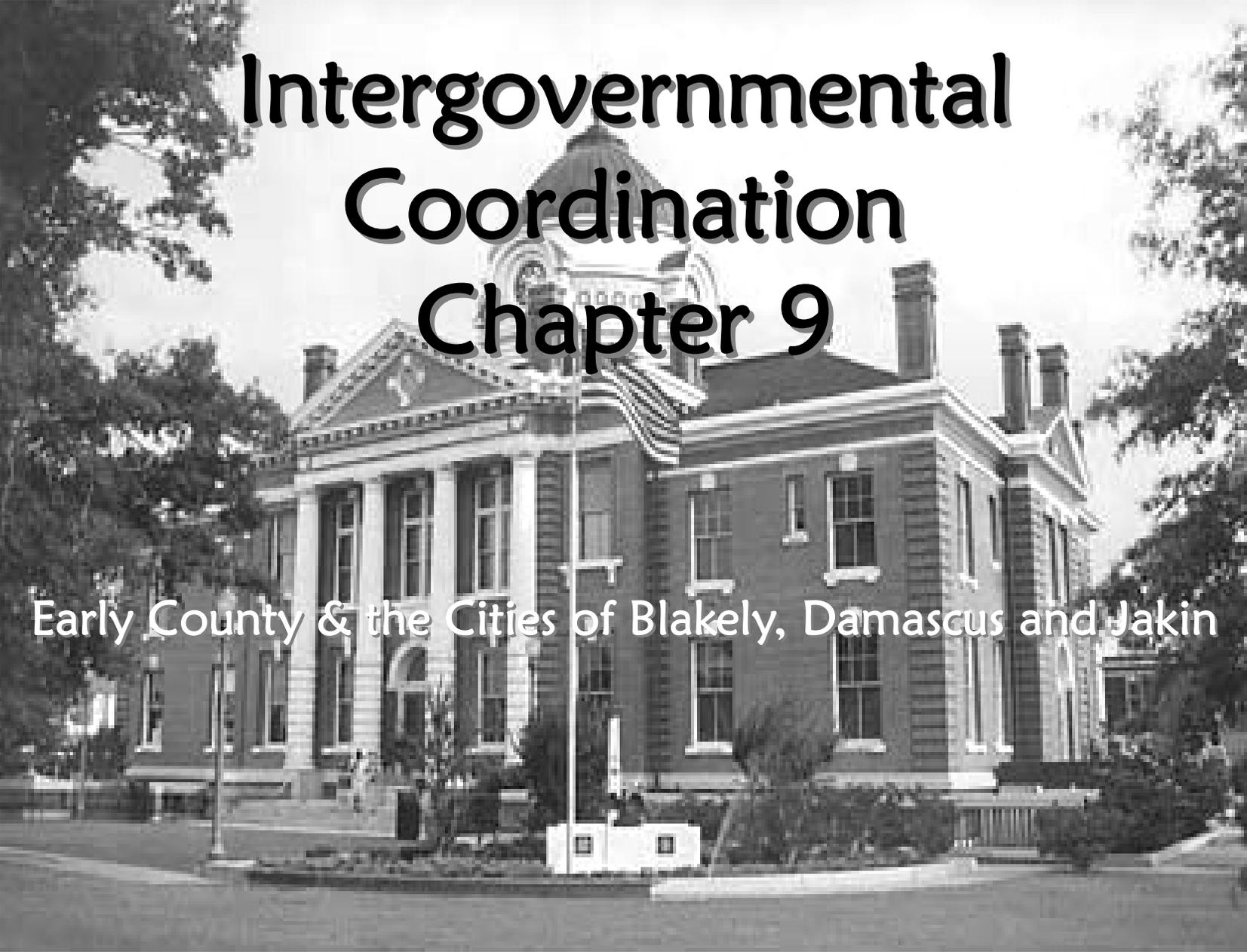
Should the City of Jakin develop, the development will most likely take the shape of infill on vacant lots or conversion of existing agricultural or forestry lands to residential use. Future annexations are highly unlikely; and the timing or sequencing of infrastructure improvements is a non-issue. Furthermore, critical and sensitive areas are randomly dispersed, and ill defined within the city and areas containing sites, buildings or areas of local interest are located primarily in the city's central business district.

**Table 8.0: Early County Current & Projected Land Use Percentages by Type of Use**

	Early Co.			Blakely			Damascus			Jakin		
	1992	2004	2023	1992	2004	2023	1992	2004	2023	1992	2004	2023
<b>Residential</b>	1.9%	2.9%	4.0%	11.3%	12.4%	13%	11.5%	12.3%	14.3%	8.3%	16.5%	16.5%
<b>Commercial</b>	.05%	.0014%	.1%	1.3%	2.8%	3.1%	.6%	1.5%	2.0%	.9%	.8%	1.9%
<b>Industrial</b>	.05%	.004%	.004%	1.6%	1.8%	1.8%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Public/Institutional</b>	.05%	.1%	<.1%	1.3%	2%	2.3%	1.5%	1.5%	2.5%	.6%	.6%	1.2%
<b>Transportation/ Communication Utilities</b>	1.75%	1.8%	1.9%	4.8%	5%	5.4%	7.0%	7.0%	7.5%	6.7%	6.4%	6.8%
<b>Park/Recreation/ Conservation</b>	.6%	.6%	.6%	8.7%	5.5%	8.4%	4.8%	6.6%	6.6%	1.7%	1.6%	1.7%
<b>Agriculture</b>	96%**	47%	43.5%	66.5%**	44%	44%	68.5%**	37%	35%	81.8%	51%	48%
<b>Forestry</b>	*	50%	48.5%	*	23*	22*	*	28%	26%	*	23%	23.9%

\*\*Includes Acreage From 'Undeveloped Category, \* Included in Percentage Shown for Agriculture





# Intergovernmental Coordination Chapter 9

Early County & the Cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin



## Intergovernmental Coordination

*The Intergovernmental Coordination Element provides local governments an opportunity to inventory existing intergovernmental coordination mechanisms and processes with other local governments and governmental entities that can have profound impacts on the success of implementing the local government's comprehensive plan. The purpose of this element is to assess the adequacy and suitability of existing coordination mechanisms to serve the current and future needs of the community and articulate goals and formulate a strategy for effective implementation of community policies and objectives that, in many cases, involve multiple governmental entities (DCA PlanBuilder,2004).*

### A. Introduction

Intergovernmental coordination is any effort, whether formal or informal in which governments collaborate with other governments, authorities, entities or businesses. The nature of the relationship amongst the parties can range from a formal contract for services to a word of mouth agreement.

With budget constraints and the increasing needs for public services and facilities, it has become advantageous on the part of governments to consolidate services in order to save time and money. Early County is no different and since the existing plan was written in 1993, the county and the cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin have consolidated some of their public services. The consolidation of public services and the facilitation of those services have required governments and various other public/private entities to work with each other to ensure smooth transitions. Early County and the cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin are no different and to adequately write and develop a truly comprehensive plan, intergovernmental coordination efforts within Early County had to be examined and the local governments were given the opportunity to look at ways to enhance relationships between each other. Fortunately, Early County and the cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin are governments that have been fairly successful with their

intergovernmental coordination efforts. The local governments in Early County have several boards that oversee the activities of the various intergovernmental coordination efforts. To date, the governments have no significant complaints about the allocation of resources or the duplication of services between the various entities.

## **B. Inventory & Assessment**

Intergovernmental Coordination efforts between Early County, adjacent governments, other entities/programs and the cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin include: 1) a solid waste transfer station, 2) parks and recreation, 3) fire services, 4) a tax commissioner, 5) ownership of the Black Family Property, 6) Chamber of Commerce funding, 7) the Development Authority, 8) the Joint Development Authority, 9) E-911 Services, 10) Fire Station Services, 11) Fire Emergency Mutual Aid Agreements, 12) Elementary, Middle & High Schools, 13) Law Enforcement Service and 14) the Hospital Authority.

The majority of the intergovernmental coordination efforts in Early County are between the county, the City of Arlington, the City of Blakely, the City of Damascus, the City of Jakin, the Development Authority and the Hospital Authority. No independent special districts exist in the county, nor is it eligible to participate in the Governor's Greenspace program due to its slow rate of growth.

The agreements that Early County and the cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin have with each other and neighboring governments and entities is based on contracts in the form of intergovernmental agreements and on word of mouth agreements. Each intergovernmental coordination effort may be slightly different, but the govern-

<b>TABLE 9.0: EARLY COUNTY INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION EFFORTS</b>				
<b>Intergovernmental Coordination Effort</b>	<b>Governments/ Entities/ Authorities Involved</b>	<b>Relationship to Comprehensive Plan</b>	<b>Nature of the Relationship</b>	<b>Primary Responsibility</b>
Service Delivery Strategy	Early County, Arlington, Blakely, Damascus and Jakin	Separate document. Minimizes conflicts over service provision described in Comprehensive Plan. Overall guidance and process for coordinating local government services. Formal process, dictated by state law	Adopted by local governments and includes dispute resolution process.	All Local Governments, although more responsibility on the County and Blakely due to the services provided.
Early County School System	Early Count Tax Assessor, County School Board	Comprehensive Plan identifies and addresses community needs	Budget allocation, support of initiatives	School Board
Solid Waste Transfer Station	Early County and Blakely	Solid waste issues are briefly described in the Comprehensive Plan: detail is given in the Early County Solid Waste Plan	Informal Agreement: provided by the City of Blakely	Early County and Blakely

ments are content with the existing agreements and really expressed an interest in maintaining the viability and usefulness of current relationships.

The nature of the existing coordination efforts is listed in **Table 9.0** and many of the intergovernmental coordination efforts are directed by various boards set up to provide direction for the progress of the coordination. Currently Early County has several boards. Some of the boards are divided by districts and others are not.

<b>Intergovernmental Coordination Effort</b>	<b>Governments/ Entities/ Authorities Involved</b>	<b>Relationship to Comprehensive Plan</b>	<b>Nature of the Relationship</b>	<b>Primary Responsibility</b>
Parks & Recreation	Early County and Blakely	Described in Community Facilities element. Long term goals devised during planning process.	Informal Agreement: provided by the City of Blakely	Early County and Blakely
Tax Commissioner Services	County and Blakely	Not addressed, however policies in Comprehensive Plan will certainly affect local tax rates	Intergovernmental Agreement: provided by Early County	Early County and Blakely
Ownership of Black Family Property	Early County and Blakely	None	Informal Agreement: jointly owned	Early County and Blakely
Chamber of Commerce/ Tourism Service Funding	Early County and Blakely	Described in Economic Development element. Long term goals devised during planning process.	Contract for Services: jointly funded (50/50)	Early County and Blakely

### Service Delivery Strategy

The local governments maintain and update as needed an approved Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) and a corresponding dispute resolution process that conform to the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan/Short Term Work Program. The services of each local government are coordinated by the Early County Service Delivery Strategy. The SDS was updated concurrently with the comprehensive plan and outlines the services provided by each government.

Due to the lack of growth and rural nature of the governments in Early County, changes to the SDS were pri-

<b>Intergovernmental Coordination Effort</b>	<b>Governments/ Entities/Authorities Involved</b>	<b>Relationship to Comprehensive Plan</b>	<b>Nature of the Relationship</b>	<b>Primary Responsibility</b>
Development Authority	Early County and the cities of Blakely, Damascus, and Jakin	Described in Economic Development element. Long term goals devised during planning process.	Informal Agreement: w/ representation from Blakely, Damascus & Jakin (100% Early County funding)	Early County
Joint Development Authority	Early County, Decatur County, Miller County, Seminole County and Early County	Described in Economic Development element. Long term goals devised during planning process.	Informal Agreement	Early County (in Early County)
E-911	Early County, Blakely, Damascus, Jakin, Early County Board of Public Safety	Described in Community Facilities element. Long term goals devised during planning process.	Informal Agreement: provided by Early County Funding provided by Early County/Blakely	Early County and Blakely
Law Enforcement	Early County, Blakely, Damascus, Jakin, Early County Board of Public Safety	Described in Community Facilities element. Long term goals devised during planning process.	Intergovernmental Agreement: Early County & Blakely (jointly funded). Informal Agreement: Early County, Damascus & Jakin (no funding)	Early County and Blakely

marily clerical in nature. The SDS document and process are sufficient mechanisms to coordinate the governments' current and future service provision. No problems were identified during this process. The services discussed in the Service Delivery Strategy are consistent with the provisions of the Early Consolidated plan. The services currently provided as well as those during the planning period that are discussed in the comprehensive plan do not exceed those identified in the SDS. No aspects of either the comprehensive plan or the SDS have been identified that present conflicts.

Land use disputes resulting from annexations are minimized or eliminated by provisions of the SDS. In conjunction with the SDS, a process to resolve any potential disputes was also adopted. This process requires that prior to ini-

<b>Intergovernmental Coordination Effort</b>	<b>Governments/ Entities/ Authorities Involved</b>	<b>Relationship to Comprehensive Plan</b>	<b>Nature of the Relationship</b>	<b>Primary Responsibility</b>
Fire Services	Early County and Blakely	Described in Community Facilities element. Long term goals devised during planning process.	Intergovernmental Agreement	Early County and Blakely
Fire Station	Early County and Arlington	Described in Community Facilities element. Long term goals devised during planning process.	Intergovernmental Agreement	Early County and Arlington
Fire Station	Early County and Damascus	Described in Community Facilities element. Long term goals devised during planning process.	Informal Agreement	Early County and Damascus
Hospital Authority	Early County & the Hospital Authority	Described in Community Facilities element. Long term goals devised during planning process.	Indigent Care Contract	Hospital Authority
Tourism Services	Chamber of Commerce, Early County, Blakely	Described in Community Facilities element. Long term goals devised during planning process.	Contract for services: funding from general fund.	Chamber of Commerce
Court Arts Square Council	Early County	Described in Community Facilities element. Long term goals devised during planning process.	Contract for services: funding from general fund	Arts Council
Emergency Management & Rescue	Early County, Blakely and Southern Nuclear Operating Company	Described in Community Facilities element. Long term goals devised during planning process.	Contract for Services: Early County, Blakely(partial funding), Southern Nuclear Operating Co., Inc.	Early County and Blakely

tiating any formal annexation activities, a municipality must notify the county and provide information about the nature of the proposed annexation. Provided the county has no objections, the city may proceed with the annexation. If the county has a bona fide objection to the annexation it can request the city modify or discontinue the proposal. This would include the proposed zoning of the property, although because Early County does not have zoning, this

aspect is less important. However, the county can still object to a city's proposed zoning of proposed annexed property. Mediation is used to resolve any disputes that arise.

The governments also adopted a process to resolve any potential disputes over the provision of new extra territorial water or sewer services. This procedure is similar to the annexation dispute resolution, in that the government contemplating action notifies the adjacent government of its plans and provides the opportunity to comment. The potentially affected government then determines if the proposal is consistent with its land use plan or ordinances. Mediation is required to resolve any disputes between governments.

As with the comprehensive plan, the service delivery strategy is developed collaboratively amongst the governments of Early County. In this manner, the governments assure that their land use plans are compatible and non-conflicting with the plans of other local governments.

Every service outlined below is included in the Strategy, which insures that the local governments have agreed upon the preferred method of service provision.

### **Local Coordination**

- **Law Enforcement:** the purpose of the coordinated law enforcement efforts is to ensure that all Early County residents are provided with the best possible safety and protection. In addition, the governments all participate in mutual aid agreements to support each other in times of crisis in which additional manpower is needed.
- **Fire Protection:** the purpose of the coordinated fire protection services is to ensure that all Early County citizens

are provided with adequate fire protection. The mutual aid agreements allow the governments to support each other in times of crisis in which additional manpower is needed.

- E-911: the purpose of this coordination effort is to ensure all Early County residents have adequate assistance in case of emergency. The coordination between the governments and E-911 staff is in regards to level of service standards and budget allocation.
- Hospital Authority: the purpose of this coordination effort is to ensure all Early County residents receive adequate healthcare options. The coordination between the governments and the hospital authority is in regards to funding allocation.
- Joint Development Authority: the purpose of this coordination effort is to allow governments within a five county region to work collaboratively to encourage growth and development in those counties. The counties within the joint development authority include: Early, Decatur, Early, Miller and Seminole.
- Early County School System: the purpose of this coordination effort is through funding from the county tax digest.
- Early County Family Connection: the purpose of this affiliation is to keep Early County governments abreast of the various resource referrals Family Connection offers.
- Early County Neighborhood Service Center: The purpose of this affiliation is to keep Early County governments abreast of the various services provided by the Southwest Georgia Community Action Council.
- Early County Housing Authority: the purpose of this affiliation is to keep Early County governments abreast of the availability of affordable housing in the county.

**Regional Coordination:**

- **Early County:** the purpose of intergovernmental coordination efforts with Early County is due to part of the city of Arlington being located in both counties. 59.7 percent of Arlington is in Early County and 40.3 percent of Arlington is located in Early County. In addition, many of the residents in Early County utilize services provided in Early County such as the hospital, etc.
- **Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center:** the purpose of the coordination efforts with the RDC and the governments of Early County is to provide technical assistance on various planning-related projects. The RDC assists Early County governments with the Regional Transit Program; the Early County Consolidated Comprehensive Plan, the Service Delivery Strategy, Zoning, Subdivision Regulations, Environmental Protection Ordinances and Requirements and Grant Writing. In essence, the RDC serves as a liaison between Early County governments and state and federal agencies.

#### **State Coordination:**

- **Georgia Environmental Protection Division:** the purpose of this coordination effort is to ensure that all environmentally sensitive resources are protected and maintained. In addition, the Environmental Protection Division is responsible for permitting.
- **Georgia Department of Community Affairs:** the purpose of this coordination effort is to ensure that the Local Minimum Planning Standards are used in the development of the consolidated comprehensive plan, the Service Delivery Strategy and zoning issues. In addition, the Department of Community Affairs offers a variety of grant opportunities for local governments.
- **Georgia Department of Industry, Tourism & Trade:** the purpose of this coordination effort is to keep Early County

governments abreast of economic development opportunities within the region and the state.

- Georgia Department of Transportation: the purpose of this coordination effort is to maintain state roads and highways and to inform Early County governments of various transportation-related funding projects.
- Georgia Department of Human Resources
- Georgia Department of Family and Children Services: the purpose of this coordination effort is to keep the governments of Early County abreast of the needs of the residents in regards to social services.

Most of the board members are appointed by the County Commission and they select members of the professional community that have the expertise to participate and provide adequate oversight on the activities of the service. See **Table 9.1** for a listing of the various boards in Early County.

As mentioned earlier, the residents of Early County are content with current intergovernmental coordination efforts and would like to be sure they maintain the relationships as they are, however there were a few areas that they felt could be improved. The residents of Damascus and Jakin would like to see more police presence in their communities to deter possible criminal activities. Since the law enforcement is coordinated between Early County and the cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin, the residents of the smaller communities would like to see more effort from the Board of Public Safety in the coordination of law enforcement services in their communities.

The governments of Early County have determined that the existing coordination mechanisms and agreements are adequate to serve the community's current and foreseeable needs. No problems or needs were identified elsewhere in the Comprehensive Plan that would benefit from improved or additional intergovernmental coordination.

### C. Goals

Since the residents of Early County and the cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin are content with current intergovernmental coordination efforts, they have not developed many goals because existing policies are sufficient. How-

ever on-going and new goals include:

**Goal 1:** To promote maximum local government effectiveness, efficiency and coordination through the identification and provision of mechanisms for resolving incompatible or conflicting statements within the local government comprehensive plan, and with the plans of other governmental entities.

**Objective 1:** Maintain intergovernmental relationships with other governments, entities and authorities.

**Policy 1:** The governments of Early County shall develop, update and maintain interlocal contracts for the provision of consolidated and jointly funded services with each other and other entities and authorities.

**Objective 2:** Improve communication amongst the governments.

**Policy 1:** The governments of Early County shall have joint quarterly meetings to discuss the provision of consolidated services, project (s) feasibility and to keep each other abreast of community affairs.

**Policy 2:** Develop meeting times and dates for the cities/counties to meet with each other to discuss policies and opportunities offered through regional and state agencies.

**Objective 3:** Identify and eliminate duplication of functions and services in the Early County governments.

**Policy 1:** The local governments shall jointly conduct an analysis of how governmental services in Early County and the cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin should be combined. The analysis shall include:

An implementation plan providing governmental structure options.

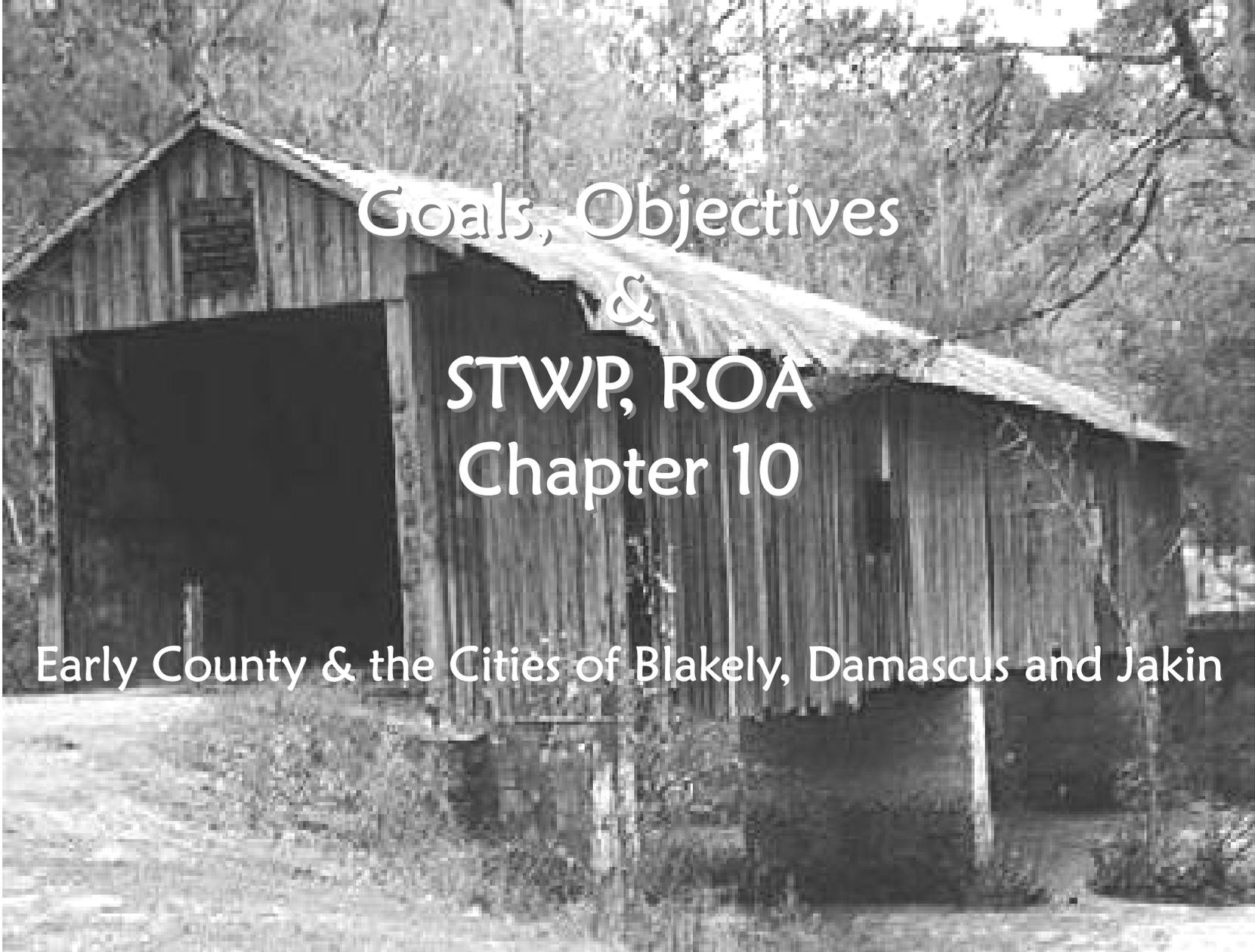
A review of the functions of city and county departments, advisory boards, citizen boards, authorities, and commit-

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tees to determine where separate but similar City and County functions could be performed more effectively by unified City-County entities. Each of the goals that Early County and the cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin have set is feasible and can be accomplished through diligence and effective implementation strategies.

<b>TABLE 9.1: EARLY COUNTY PUBLIC SERVICE BOARDS</b>		
<b>Board</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Appointments/ Recommendations</b>
Maddox Memorial Library Board	No designated term	County Commission, the city of Blakely & the Early County School Board
Regional Development Center Board	Yearly appointments	County Commission & the city of Blakely
Golden Triangle RC & D Board	No designated term	County Commission
Board of Public Safety	Two Year terms	County Commission
SW GA EMS Advisory Council	No designated term	County Commission
Board of Health	Six Year Terms	County Commission & the city of Blakely
Early County Development Authority	Six Year Terms	County Commission
Albany Area Community Service Board	Two Year Terms	Board of Health
Early County Board of Tax Assessors	Six Year Terms	County Commission
Early County Planning Commission	Four Year Terms	County Commission
Early County Hospital Authority	Four Year Terms	County Commission
Early County DFCS Board	Five Year Terms	County Commission
Blakely/Early County Recreation Department Board	Three Year Terms	County Commission & the city of Blakely
Southwest Regional Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, Addictive Diseases Board	Three Year Terms	County Commission





Goals, Objectives  
&  
STWP, ROA  
Chapter 10

Early County & the Cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin

## HOUSING: GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

**GOAL 1:** To promote the creation, beautification and preservation of new and existing residential neighborhoods which are safe, affordable, wholesome, attractive and free from blight in all Early County jurisdictions.

**Objective 1:** To promote efforts to improve the condition of the Early County housing stock through new construction of replacement units, renovation, rehabilitation and demolition programs.

**Policy 1.** To eliminate the number of substandard housing units in the City of Blakely by half by the year 2010 and to eliminate substandard housing by the year 2020.

**Policy 2.** To increase the use of demolition programs as warranted throughout each community in Early County to remove dilapidated and substandard housing.

**Policy 3.** To promote the implementation of unified building and housing codes throughout the county and its cities.

**Policy 4.** To progressively enforce building and housing code fines in the City of Blakely to thwart dilapidation.

**Policy 5.** To provide additional housing improvements through designation of CDBG target projects for rental and owner housing improvement grants and loans in the City of Blakely.

**Policy 6.** To promote the development of new low income and moderate income housing units in each Early County community through the concentrated efforts of the public, private and non-profit sectors and the acquisition of housing assistance, grants and low interest loan programs.

**Policy 7.** To encourage housing maintenance and rehabilitation by promoting the acquisition of grants, low interest loans, elderly assistance programs and promotion of rehabilitation programs by local churches and civic organizations throughout Early County in order to break the dilapidation cycle.

**GOAL 2:** To encourage the provision of housing of all types, densities and price ranges for current and future residents of Blakely, Damascus, Jakin and Early County.

**Objective 2:** To expand and diversity the housing opportunities available in Early County communities by the year 2010.

**Policy 1:** To encourage the development of group homes, nursing homes and home companion matching programs for senior citizens throughout Early County.

**Policy 2:** To promote the development of cluster dwellings for small households.

**Policy 3:** To promote infill development in residential neighborhoods and re-development of blighted areas of Blakely.

**Policy 4:** To provide sufficient zoning of a flexible nature which will accommodate all housing types and a range of densities in the Cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin.

**Policy 5:** To promote “mixed use development” allowing housing to be integrated with higher density uses in Blakely’s activity centers.

**Policy 6:** To encourage residential development in areas where supporting infrastructure is available.

**GOAL 3:** To provide adequate infrastructure and neighborhood parks in all residential areas to enable neighborhoods to prosper and become more appealing to development in each Early County community.

**Objective 3:** To promote the stability and viability of neighborhoods throughout the county.

**Policy 1.** Periodically survey Early County communities for housing condition to assess the need for further demolition, nuisance ordinances or rehabilitative housing measures.

**Policy 2.** Locate public infrastructure improvements, including parks, paved roads and water, sewer and drainage improvements in neighborhoods, so as to attract, maintain and encourage home ownership and the maintenance of rental property in each Early County community.

**Policy 3.** To encourage the protection and restoration of historically valued residential properties and neighborhoods throughout the county.

**Policy 4.** To assist with the rehabilitation and adaptive re-use of historically significant housing by promoting technical assistance and economic assistance programs.

**Policy 5.** To promote the designation of residential historic districts in the City of Blakely and to investigate the potential for the development of residential historic districts in the Cities of Jakin and Damascus.

**Policy 6.** To continue infrastructure improvement plans in low- income-minority “target” neighborhoods in the City of Blakely with needed infrastructure.

**Policy 7.** To encourage the development of neighborhood cleanup and beautification programs in all Early County communities with the assistance of the Blakely-Early County Clean Community Commission.

**GOAL 4:** To promote the development of a countywide housing task force.

**Objective 4.** To develop an organization that will be knowledgeable on housing issues, the State Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) and the availability of housing assistance programs offered by HUD, FMHA, the Federal Home Loan Bank, GHFA and other agencies, as well as to make recommendations for community self-help neighborhood improvement programs.

**Policy 2:** To encourage the public and private sectors to provide low and moderate income housing through the expansion of rental assistance programs, government financed home ownership programs, public housing programs and creative housing development partnerships.

**Policy 1:** To address the housing needs and concerns of special sectors of the Early County community including senior citizens, first-time home buyers, low and moderate income households and other special groups.

**GOAL 5:** To encourage the development of public-private partnerships between local developers, lenders, non-profits and the public sector which aim to promote quality residential development and improvement in Early County.

**Objective 5:** To support the state and federal policies prohibiting discrimination in the acquisition and rental of housing in all Early County communities.

**Policy 1.** Educate the public and staffs of the local jurisdictions on the Fair Housing Act.

**Policy 2.** Provide adequate allowances for group homes in the Blakely and Damascus Zoning Ordinances.

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**Policy 3.** To promote fair lending practices in Early County.

**GOAL 6:** To provide regulatory guidance where necessary throughout Early County to protect residential development and to provide for well planned developments.

**Objective 6.** To periodically review the amount, type and impact of development occurring in the county to determine if additional regulations are needed to insure that compatible and well-developed subdivisions and residential areas are created.

**Policy 1.** To upgrade the Early County Subdivision Regulations as needed to insure quality development.

**Policy 2.** To implement Manufactured Home Development Regulations in the City of Jakin and in Early County.

**Policy 3.** To insure that adequate tracts of land are zoned for residential zoning districts in the Cities of Blakely and Damascus.

## NATURAL RESOURCES: GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

**GOAL 1:** To maximize the long-term usefulness of Early County's natural resources for agricultural, economic development, aesthetic, recreational, wildlife habitat and other functional environmental reasons, by guiding development to suitable areas in order to minimize degradation of the natural resource base.

**Objective 1:** To maintain the quality of the natural systems in Early County throughout the planning period.

**Policy 1:** To utilize development regulations as warranted by development or natural constraints to direct land uses to the most suitable environments.

**Policy 2:** To protect sensitive environmental areas and habitats.

**Objective 2:** To promote the conservation of natural habitats of endangered and protected species in each Early County community.

**Policy 1:** To encourage landowners in each community to identify natural habitats of endangered species on private lands.

**Policy 2:** To increase countywide education on laws protecting local endangered species and habitats through school programs, media reports and local governmental staff training.

**Policy 3:** To encourage local residents to participate in the Freshwater Wildlife and Heritage Inventory.

**Policy 4:** To promote the use of conservation easements throughout the county to protect sensitive natural environments and plant and animal habitats.

**Objective 3:** To encourage the protection of prime farmland and other agriculturally important soils throughout Early County.

**Policy 1:** To support the Best Management Practices of the Soil Conservation Service, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, and the Georgia Forestry Commission.

**Policy 2:** To actively provide education on and advocate the enforcement of the Soil and Sedimentation Control Act.

**Objective 4:** To protect wetlands as important natural resources in each Early County communities.

**Policy 1:** To promote countywide awareness of the Federal 404 permitting process and the legal ramifications of non-compliance.

**Policy 2:** To provide for a wetland identification check in the City of Blakely building permit and zoning processes and in the Damascus zoning process as well as in land development regulations yet to be developed in the county and the City of Jakin.

**Objective 5:** To encourage the protection of the county's surface water and ground water resources.

**Policy 1:** To ensure the protection of well head areas in the Cities of Damascus and Jakin to protect potable groundwater supplies.

**Policy 2:** To promote county-wide awareness of the Soil and Sedimentation Act.

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**Policy 3:** To develop local administrative capabilities to issue Soil and Sedimentation permits during the planning period for the county, Damascus and Jakin.

**Policy 4:** To promote the protection of quality groundwater resources through enforcement of existing regulations.

**Policy 5:** To monitor the Tri-State Water Study and to support regional efforts to obtain professional expertise to represent South Georgia's interests in the study.

**Policy 6:** To regulate development along the Chattahoochee Corridor by developing future development regulations as warranted by future development trends.

**Objective 6:** To promote the preservation of scenic vistas and landscapes throughout the county.

**Policy 1:** To continually locate and define scenic vistas of importance in the county which are subject to the impacts of development pressures.

**Policy 2:** To promote effective land use measures and conservation measures necessary to maintain important landscape features which provide a sense of place Early County communities.

**Policy 3.** To encourage the preservation of historic features within the landscape.

## **HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES: GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

**GOAL 1:** To enhance the quality of life in Early County communities through the identification, preservation, protection, development and promotion of historic and archaeological resources and to stimulate related economic development and tourism activities.

**Objective 1.** To develop a countywide historic preservation plan which will deal with all aspects of historic and archaeological protection and development.

**Policy 1.** To support a countywide Historic/Archaeological Preservation Commission.

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**Policy 2.** To support grant applications for historic survey work for the identification of National Register nominations and identification and nomination of residential and commercial historic districts.

**Policy 3.** To support efforts to acquire certified Local Government status in Blakely-Early County.

**Policy 4.** To educate the public on the state and federal tax incentives related to historic preservation.

**Policy 5.** To establish a local information clearinghouse on historic preservation resources and literature.

**Policy 6.** To encourage the acquisition of historic preservation funds and cultural development funding from private foundations and all other sources.

**Objective 2.** To promote the development of tourism, heritage and other economic development activities related to historic and archaeological resources.

**Policy 1.** To support the development of a Chamber of Commerce Tourism \ Committee.

**Policy 2.** To encourage grant acquisition to develop printed matter on tourism attractions.

**Policy 3.** To develop countywide walking and riding tours of historical ~ interest in Early County.

**Policy 4.** To establish annual events such as home tours, cultural events, heritage days, etc. which would highlight historic resources and Early County's rich past.

**Policy 5.** To develop stronger relationships with the Georgia Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade, Plantation Trace Historic Region and the State Historic Planning Office.

**Objective 3:** To encourage the preservation of Early County's traditional Main Street commercial districts.

**Policy 1.** To support a Main Street Community in Blakely-Early County as soon as financially possible.

**Policy 2.** To support the nomination of the Courthouse Square Historic District.

**Policy 4.** To provide and solicit technical assistance in designing the renovation of the downtown commercial dis-

tricts in Early County communities.

**Policy 5.** To develop incentives for the rehabilitation of historic resources in the main street commercial districts in Jakin, Blakely and Damascus.

**Policy 6.** To encourage the beautification of the downtown historic areas through programs developed by the Blakely-Early County Clean Community Commission, Chamber of Commerce, Merchants Association, gardening clubs and other groups.

**Policy 7.** To promote planned street, landscaping and parking design in all downtown commercial areas in Early County.

**Policy 8.** To support development of professional marketing, promotional and special event strategies, as well as the development of special retail niches designed to retail business in historic commercial districts.

**Objective 4.** To promote heritage and cultural education throughout Early County.

**Policy 1.** To encourage heritage education in Early County public and private schools.

**Policy 2.** To encourage adult heritage education programs throughout the county.

**Policy 3.** To support heritage workshop training for local teachers.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: GOALS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES**

**GOAL 1:** To promote and support economic development in Early County through the enhancement of the business climate to support the retention and attraction of new businesses. This effort will require the community support of efforts toward enhancing all aspects of quality of life in the County.

**Objective 1.** Support the Early County Development Authority, the Blakely-Early County Chamber of Commerce, and the Merchants Association in community and economic development efforts

**Objective 2.** Utilizing local resources support the retention and expansion of existing business and industry, the attraction

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of additional industries.

**Objective 3.** Cooperate with other counties to avail the region of opportunities being emphasized by the state for regional projects and activities.

**Objective 4.** Support the efforts of the Early County Board of Education and Albany Technical College in their efforts to provide an educated, trained, and employable work force for the industries in the County.

**Objective 5.** Ensure that local infrastructure is adequate and environmentally sound for the support of further community and economic development in the County.

**Objective 6.** Bring to bear as many local, state, and federal resources as possible for economic development, availing the community of grants, loans, technical assistance and such other resources as may become available to the maximum possible extent.

**Objective 7.** Promote nature-based tourism in the county.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES: GOALS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

### Overall Goal

To provide excellent community facilities and services in Early County and the Cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin so as to enhance the quality of life of existing and future residents and to prepare for future growth and economic development opportunities.

### Law Enforcement

**GOAL 1:** To provide efficient and effective public safety services in Early County and the Cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin.

**Objective 1:** To improve the effectiveness of law enforcement activities through staff development and expansion, upgrading of communications and other equipment and the progressive use of special programs.

**Policy 1:** Continue upgrading and coordinating the dispatching system and radio systems.

**Policy 2:** To enhance computer operations by upgrading current systems.

**Policy 3:** To promote innovative law enforcement programs targeting decreases in domestic violence, drug traffic and thefts.

**Policy 4:** To continually upgrade the in-house training program for law personnel and to promote cross-training where sensible.

**Policy 5:** To study innovative methods of staff expansion including cross training of public safety personnel, use of auxiliary forces and the investigation of supplemental force grant funding.

**Policy 6:** To improve community awareness of conflict resolutions measures.

**Policy 7:** To expand the “Neighborhood Watch” program throughout the county, particularly in Damascus and Jakin and areas of high crime.

**Policy 8:** To improve coordination between other public safety departments, the courts and social services.

**Policy 9:** To study development of Enhance 911 emergency services.

**Policy 10.** To develop better outreach between the Sheriff’s Department and communities throughout the county.

## Fire Protection

**GOAL 1:** Continue to enhance fire protection services and equipment in Early County and the Cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin for the purpose of reducing the ISO rating of each fire station thereby lowering community insurance rates.

**Objective 1:** To provide adequate water supplies and hydrants network necessary to lower ISO ratings.

**Policy 1:** To promote the installation of dry hydrants through the county.

**Policy 2:** To upgrade city water systems as needed to provide excellent water supplies.

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**Objective 2:** To continue to upgrade fire fighting equipment in each station so as to effectively contribute to lower ISO ratings.

**Policy 1:** To replace equipment on a priority basis as needed insuring increased water carrying and pumping capacity.

**Policy 2:** To upgrade hoses on each vehicle.

**Objective 3:** To continue to improve communications systems during emergencies.

**Policy 1:** To continuously upgrade the communications system and equipment including radios, pagers and beepers as needed.

**Objective 4:** To encourage professional training and development of a sufficient number of fire fighters in each community.

**Policy 1.** To continually recruit and train new volunteers.

**Policy 2:** To coordinate training on a countywide basis whenever feasible.

**GOAL 2:** To ensure that public water supply systems are adequately maintained and upgraded to meet the needs of the communities for potable water, economic development activities, fire protection and other community needs.

**Objective 1:** To maintain and improve aged or deteriorating system infrastructure.

**Policy 1:** To routinely budget for cleaning, painting and other maintenance of water tanks.

**Policy 2:** To develop new wells to meet community needs for every day use including backup systems.

**Policy 3:** To provide for additional storage tanks required to support future economic development activities.

**Objective 2:** To protect groundwater supplies around well sites.

## Sanitary Sewer Treatment

**GOAL 1:** To provide sanitary sewer services to all residents of Blakely and provide new service dictated by future growth.

**Objective 1:** To upgrade system infrastructure as needed to maintain an efficient operation.

**Policy 1:** To rehabilitate or replace aging sewer lines as needed to insure adequacy.

**Policy 2:** To provide an adequate number of lift stations in the City of Blakely to allow for system growth.

**Policy 3:** To promote the extension of services to areas of new growth or annexed areas.

## Utilities

**GOAL 1:** To provide utilities to all possible customers in the City of Blakely service area through the long range planning period.

**Objective 1:** To continue to plan for system growth.

**Policy 1:** Plan for additional substations in the long term planning period.

**Policy 2:** To upgrade services by making transmission improvements when necessary and rephase upgrades.

## School Facilities and Services

**GOAL 1:** To enhance educational facilities, programs, and services in Early County so as to provide the opportunities needed to improve education and skills levels necessary to obtain a successful labor force.

**Objective 1:** To continue with plans to modernize Early County Public Schools.

**Objective 2:** To enhance the development and use of vocational training programs, GED programs and literacy programs.

**Policy 1:** To promote the use of the “Quick Start” program.

**Policy 2:** To support the development of an Albany Technical College satellite office (Blakely Campus).

**Policy 3:** To encourage the development of GED and literacy incentive programs in all communities and businesses to enable citizens to take advantage of programs through Albany Technical College.

**Policy 4:** To continue to encourage activities which would increase the availability of transportation to two and four year colleges in the region.

**Policy 5:** To support local awareness campaigns focusing on scholarships, student loan programs and HOPE grants through local events and media.

**Objective 3:** To promote community involvement in the development of local education activities and strategies.

**Policy 1:** To support and maintain existing programs to address local educational and employment issues.

**Policy 2:** To encourage businesses to support local school programs and participate in drives to raise scholarships, develop mentoring and apprentice programs as well as other special programs.

**Policy 1:** To establish a broad based community task force to address local educational and employment issues.

**Policy 2:** To encourage businesses to support local school programs and participate in drives to raise scholarships, develop mentoring and apprentice programs as well as other special programs.

## Libraries and Cultural Facilities

**GOAL 1:** To support libraries, and cultural arts organizations throughout Early County in an effort to expand cultural arts opportunities for local residents and to attract audiences from other counties.

**Objective 1:** To support growth in the public library holdings and to promote a community library in the City of Jakin.

## LAND USE: GOALS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

### Overall Goal

To provide adequate protection of residential neighborhoods, commercial, industrial and environmentally sensitive areas and all

other areas from encroachment by non-compatible land uses and to achieve a desirable arrangement of land uses which will promote efficient delivery of public services in Early County and its municipalities.

**Objective 1:** To facilitate the promotion of good land management practices designed to protect the county's traditional agricultural and forestry industries.

**Policy 1:** To support the use of land and soil conservation programs sponsored by the ASCS and SCS.

**Policy 2:** To promote countywide education and public awareness of EPA's 404 permitting process and the state Soil and Sedimentation Act requirements.

**Policy 3:** Encourage the clustering of future residential, commercial and industrial land uses in the unincorporated areas to avoid the scattered break up of large agricultural lands.

**Policy 4:** Develop land use regulations to protect sensitive environmental and prime agricultural lands as needed.

**Objective 2:** To protect and preserve existing residential areas and to promote the orderly development of new residential areas throughout the county.

**Policy 1:** To encourage infill development in residential areas of Blakely, Damascus, Jakin and unincorporated communities to insure efficient infrastructure and service delivery.

**Policy 2:** To develop consistent regulations for the development and siting of manufactured homes throughout the county and in the City of Jakin.

**Policy 3:** To encourage the development of adequate buffers between incompatible land uses and residential areas when developing new land use regulations.

**Policy 4:** To encourage re-development in Blakely neighborhood where blighted cavities exist.

**Policy 5:** To promote the development of neighborhood parks throughout the county.

**Objective 3:** To encourage aesthetically pleasing development along the U.S. 27 By-Pass, the 62 Loop and all entrances to the City of Blakely.

**Policy 1:** To review zoning ordinance regulations along major corridors and to develop special design standards as applicable.

**Policy 2:** To solicit grants for the purpose of improving the entrances to the cities.

**Objective 4:** To provide adequate land to encourage the development of commercial and industrial areas near existing public services.

**Policy 1:** To promote industrial development in parks and clusters.

**Policy 2:** To encourage infill development in the county's central business districts and existing shopping centers.

**Objective 5:** To coordinate land development regulations on the fringes of the incorporated and unincorporated areas and to monitor fringe area development for annexation purposes.

**Policy 1:** To support coordinated planning on fringe area development.

**Policy 2:** To annex land adjacent to Blakely when the service demand warrants such action.

**Objective 6:** To provide adequate land for all land use categories to meet the needs of the existing and future population of Early County.

**Policy 1:** To encourage the long-term development of parks and open space throughout Early County communities.

**Policy 2:** To encourage the conversion of agricultural lands within municipalities where services may best be developed and offered efficiently so as to protect the agricultural lands throughout the county.

**Policy 3:** To continue to develop industrial parks as needed.

**Policy 4:** To promote infill commercial development or re-development in areas suitable to commercial use.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION: GOALS, POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

Since the residents of Early County and the cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin are content with current intergovernmental co-

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ordination efforts, they have not developed many goals because existing policies are sufficient. However on-going and new goals include:

**GOAL 1:** To promote maximum local government effectiveness, efficiency and coordination through the identification and provision of mechanisms for resolving incompatible or conflicting statements within the local government comprehensive plan, and with the plans of other governmental entities.

**Objective 1:** Maintain intergovernmental relationships with other governments, entities and authorities.

**Policy 1:** Early County and the cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin shall develop, update and maintain interlocal contracts for the provision of consolidated and jointly funded services with each other and other entities and authorities.

**Objective 2:** Improve communication amongst the governments.

**Policy 1:** The governments of Early County shall have joint quarterly meetings to discuss the provision of consolidated services, project (s) feasibility and to keep each other abreast of community affairs.

**Policy 2:** Develop meeting times and dates for the cities/counties to meet with each other to discuss policies and opportunities offered through regional and state agencies.

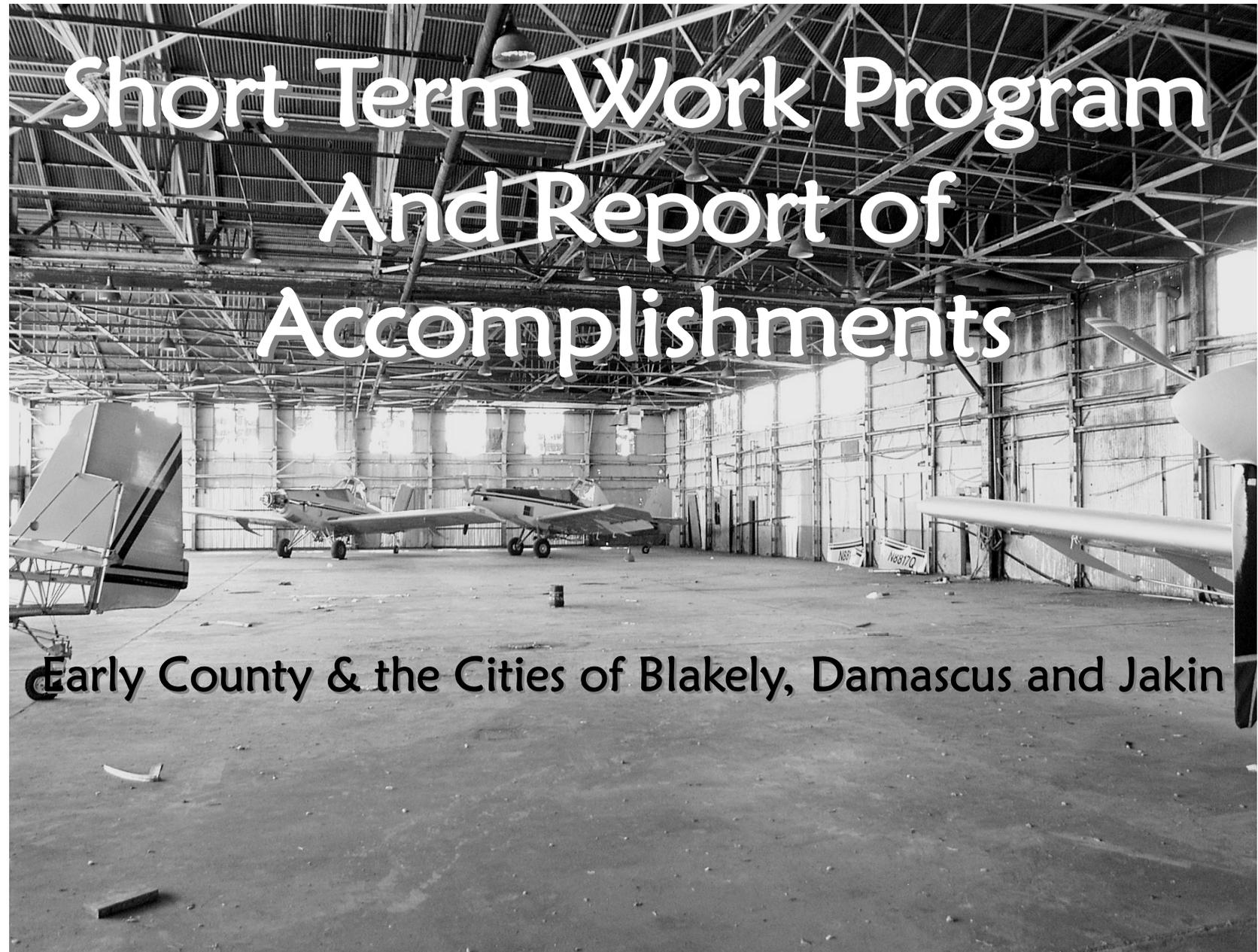
**Objective 3:** Identify and eliminate duplication of functions and services of Early County and the cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin.

**Policy 1:** The local governments shall jointly conduct an analysis of how governmental services in Early County and the cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin should be combined. The analysis shall include:

a.) an implementation plan providing governmental structure options

b.) A review of the functions of city and county departments, advisory boards, citizen boards, authorities, and committees to determine where separate but similar City and County functions could be performed more effectively by unified City-County entities.





# Short Term Work Program And Report of Accomplishments

Early County & the Cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin

## Early Report of Accomplishments 1999-2003

<b>Community Facilities</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Rural Courthouses: Paint and general repairs.	Completed	
Rural Fire Buildings: Paint and repair buildings.	Completed	
Equipment: Kolomoki: Replace fire knocker.	Completed	
Cuba: Replace fire knocker.	Postponed	Budgetary Constraints.
Purchase of jaws of life equipment.	Underway	
Health Department: Support the utilization of other available county facilities for staff training and conferences.	Completed	
Cultural Facilities: Pursue grant resources to renovate cultural center. (Theater)	Not Accomplished	This is a goal of the City of Blakely, not the county.
Recreation: make needed improvements to Parks and Recreation Facilities.	Completed	
Support the implementation of the County's recreation master plan.	Underway	
Pursue new facility for County Extension Service.	Completed	
Construct Day Care Center.	Completed	
Implement airport improvements project.	Completed	
Establish committee to assess feasibility of the need of a county office complex for housing state and federal programs.	Not Accomplished	Budgetary Constraints.
Update Service Delivery Strategy as needed.	Underway	

## Early Report of Accomplishments 1999-2003 Cont'd

<b>Economic Development</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Continue to develop and promote the County's speculative building.	Completed	
Consider the implementation of major highway beautification program.	Completed	
Continue to support the Blakely-Early County Chamber of Commerce.	Completed	
Support the initiatives of the Albany Technical College (Early County Campus).	Completed	
Continue to support the Development Authority of Early County.	Completed	
Apply for CDBG-EIP Grant for the expansion of local business (Nantze Springs Inc.)	Completed	

<b>Housing</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Adopt state building codes, administrative procedures and begin enforcement.	Not Accomplished	Budgetary Constraints

<b>Land Use</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Update Subdivision Regulations.	Completed	
Update Comprehensive Plan.	Underway	
Consider the implementation of county-wide clean up and beautification program (junk cars, litter, etc.)	Completed	

## Early Report of Accomplishments 1999-2003 Cont'd

<b>Natural and Historic Resources</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Establish special committee to develop local river corridor protection measures.	Not Accomplished	Not a priority.
Consider program to require cash bond of timber companies engaged in clearing activities to prevent damage to county infrastructure and clean up costs.	Completed	
Continue to promote Best Management Practices of Forestry and Agricultural Operations.	Underway	
Continue to educate staff and citizens on 404 Wetlands permitting process.	Underway	
Adopt river corridor protection measures (as required).	Completed	
Adopt ground water protection measures (as required).	Completed	
Adopt wetland protection measures (required)	Completed	
Consider adopting environmental ordinances for large commercial livestock operations (hogs, cattle, etc.)	Completed	
Continue to administer flood plain management program.	Underway	
Consider the establishment of a County-wide Historic Preservation Committee.	Completed	
Continue to support the maintenance of the Coheelee Creek covered bridge program and the Coheelee Creek Ecological Park project.	Postponed	

## Early Short Term Work Program Update 2004-2008

<b>Community Facilities</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Purchase jaws of life equipment	2004	County	\$15,000.00	General Fund/Grants
Support the implementation of the County's recreation master plan.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	County	\$10,000.00	General Fund/Grants
Replace fire department gear as needed	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	County	\$10,000.00	FIRE Grants
Update Service Delivery Strategy.	2004	County	\$2000.00	General Fund
Arlington: Replace Fire Knocker.	2004	County	\$75,000.00	General Fund
Urquhart: Replace Fire Knocker.	2005	County	\$75,000.00	General Fund
Cuba: Replace Fire Knocker	2006	County	\$75,000.00	
Lucille: Replace Fire Knocker.	2007	County	\$75,000.00	General Fund
Cedar Springs: Replace Fire Knocker.	2008	County	\$75,000.00	General Fund.
Apply for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to pave: a) Crystal Springs Loop, b) Summerset Loop and c) Sunnyside Lane.	2004	County	N/A	N/A
Pave county roads: a) Crystal Springs Loop, b) Sommerset Loop and c) Sunnyside Lane.	2004, 2005, 2006	County	\$650,000.000	CDBG/DOT/General Fund
Seek county contract with the Department of Transportation for paving 2 miles of Sandy Bottom Road.	2005	County	N/A	N/A

## Early Short Term Work Program Update 2004-2008 Cont'd

<b>Community Facilities</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Pave 2 miles of Sandy Bottom Road.	2005, 2006	County	\$350,000.00	DOT/General Fund
Continue to support Early Memorial Hospital through the Indigent Care Contract.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	County	\$540,000.00 per year	General Fund
Study feasibility of expansion of Health Department, implement if feasible	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	County	\$100,000	General Fund
Continue to support the intergovernmental contract for law enforcement cooperation between Early County, the City of Blakely and the Board of Public Safety.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	County	\$1,500,000.00 per year	General Fund
Ag Extension Department: Purchase a new mini-bus.	2004, 2005, 2006	County	\$60,000.00	CIPF
Ag Extension Program: Purchase a new pick-up truck.	2004, 2005	County	\$26,000.00	CIPF
Conduct county-wide property re-appraisal.	2005, 2006	County Tax Assessors Board	\$150,000.00	CIPF
Paint Early County Courthouse.	2004	County	\$33,000.00	General Fund
Update Solid Waste Management Plan.	2004	County	\$1840.75	General Fund
Implement airport improvements project.	2004-2008	County	\$1,000,000.00	General Fund/Grants
Support programs and policies in the areas of transportation, healthcare, housing and recreation that compliment the needs of an elderly population.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	County	N/A	N/A

## Early Short Term Work Program Update 2004-2008 Cont'd

<b>Economic Development</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Continue to develop and promote the County's Speculative Building.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	County	\$5,000.00	Grants/General Fund
Continue to support the Blakely-Early County Chamber of Commerce.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	County	\$20,000.00 per year	General Fund
Support the initiatives of Albany Technical College (Early County Campus).	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	County	N/A	N/A
Continue to support the Early County Development Authority.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	County	\$45,000.00 per year	General Fund
Support recreational and tourism activities focusing on the county's natural resources.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	County-City	N/A	N/A

<b>Housing</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Consider adopting state building codes, administrative procedures and begin enforcement.	2008	County	\$20,000.00	General Fund
Participate in activities of the Regional Housing Task Force to address local housing needs	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	County	N/A	N/A

## Early Short Term Work Program Update 2004-2008 Cont'd

<b>Land Use</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Review and update subdivision regulations on an as-needed basis.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	County	N/A	N/A
Update comprehensive plan.	2004	County	\$7,455.58	General Fund

<b>Natural and Historic Resources</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Continue to promote Best Management Practices of forestry and agricultural operations.	2004-2008	County	N/A	N/A
Work with the Department of ITT to develop better promotions of the Kolomoki State Park and historic sites in Early County.	2004-2008	County	N/A	N/A
Continue to administer flood plain management program	2004-2008	County	N/A	N/A
Continue to support the maintenance of the Coheele Creek Covered Bridge Program and the Coheele Bridge Ecological Park Project				
Continue to support the Blakely Better Hometown Program and downtown Blakely	2004-2008	County	N/A	General Fund

## Blakely Report of Accomplishments 1999-2003

<b>Community Facilities</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Purchase 3 Patrol Cars.	Not Accomplished	Consolidated police services with Early County.
Purchased 3 car cameras	Not Accomplished	Consolidated police services with Early County
Implemented enhanced 911 System	Not Accomplished	Consolidated police service with Early County
Continue to upgrade water/sewer lines	Underway	
Continue to install additional hydrants in commercial and industrial areas	Underway	
Make water extensions as required	Underway	
Construct new well.	Postponed	Budget Constraint
Construct new elevated storage tank.	Not Accomplished	Budget Constraint
Continue to upgrade turn out gear.	Completed	
Continue to upgrade communications system with computers for stations.	Completed	
Replace radios and pagers.	Completed	
Continue to eliminate cross connections between storm sewers and sanitary sewers	Underway	
Continue to rehabilitate sewer lines and manholes.	Underway	

## Blakely Report of Accomplishments 1999-2003 Cont'd

<b>Community Facilities</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Continue to extend replacement sewer lines and add lift station.	Underway	
Implement park improvements as needed.	Postponed	Budget Constraints
Assist in the development of a new county-wide park facility	Postponed	Budget Constraints
Develop new creation complex.	Postponed	Budget Constraints
Install traffic signal at Chaney Mill and MLK Streets	Postponed	Budget Constraints
Continue to implement street numbering system	Completed	
Develop plan to improve turning radius for Magnolia Street.	Underway	
Continue tree planting program along all major thorough-fares	Underway	
Install traffic signal at 62-E and the 27 By-Pass	Completed	
Continue paving priorities project LARP	Underway	
Swimming Pool Office; Major repairs	Completed	
Renovate City Hall/Fire Station: Enlarge City Clerk's office	Underway	
Construct new Senior Center	Completed	

<b>Economic Development</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Continue to support the Early County's Chamber of Commerce	Underway	
Continue to support the Blakely Downtown Authority	Underway	

## Blakely Report of Accomplishments 1999-2003 Cont'd

<b>Housing</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Continue work with Housing Task Force to develop a strategy in Blakely to more fully utilize housing assistance resources.	Underway	
Complete implement Housing Task Force recommendations	Underway	
Continue to educate public on housing codes	Underway	
Continue to enforce lines for housing code violations	Underway	
Continue to improve infrastructure in targeted neighborhoods as needed	Underway	
Continue to implement Housing Task Force recommendations	Completed	
Continue to improve infrastructure in targeted neighborhoods as needed	Completed	

<b>Land Use</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Study the need for special design standards along By-Pass Corridor	Not Accomplished	Budget Constraints
Provide training opportunities for city zoning officials	Underway	
Update Zoning Ordinance Map	Completed	
Implement beatification program for city major streets	Completed	
Update Subdivision Regulations	Underway	
Amend Service Delivery Strategy as needed	Underway	
Update Comprehensive Plan	Underway	

## Blakely Report of Accomplishments 1999-2003 Cont'd

<b>Natural and Historic Resources</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Amend zoning ordinance to include provisions to process DRIs	Not Accomplished	Zoning Ordinance recently adopted; No additional requirements will be added to text of Zoning Ordinance at this time.
Adopt protection measures for water recharge (as required)	Completed	Adopted Part V ordinance 1999
Adopt wetland protection measures (as required)	Completed	Adopted Part V ordinance 1999

## Blakely Short Term Work Program Update 2004-2008

<b>Community Facilities</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Continue to implement street numbering.	2004- 2008	City	N/A	General Fund
Develop plan to improve turning radius for Magnolia Street.	2004, 2005, 2006	City	\$5,000.00	General Fund
Continue tree planting program along all major thoroughfares.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	\$20,000.00	General Fund
Continue paving priorities through LARP.	2004- 2008	City	N/A	N/A
Renovate city hall.	2004, 2005, 2006	City	\$1,000,000.00	General Fund/Grants
Continue to upgrade water/sewer lines	2004,2005,2006	City		General Fund/Grants
Install hydrants in commercial / Industrial areas	2004,2005,2006	City		General Fund
Water Extensions	2005,2006	City		General Fund/Grants
Eliminate cross connections between storm sewers and sanitary sewers	2004,2005,2006	City		General Fund/Grants/Loans
Rehabilitate sewer lines and manholes	2004,2005,2006	City		General Fund/Grants
Support programs and policies in the areas of transportation, healthcare, housing and recreation that compliment the needs of an elderly population	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	N/A	N/A

## Blakely Short Term Work Program Update 2004-2008 Cont'd

<b>Economic Development</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Continue to support the Blakely-Early County Chamber of Commerce	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City-County	N/A	General Fund
Continue to support County Development Authority	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City-County	N/A	General Fund
Support City Devt. Authority	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City-County	N/A	General Fund
Support recreational and tourism activities focusing on the county's natural resources.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City-County	N/A	N/A

<b>Housing</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Complete master plan for housing.	2004, 2005	City	N/A	N/A
Continue work with the Regional Housing Task Force to develop a strategy in Blakely to more fully utilize housing assistance resources.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	N/A	N/A
Continue to educate public on housing codes.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	N/A	N/A
Continue to enforce fines for housing codes.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	N/A	N/A
Continue to improve infrastructure in targeted neighborhoods as needed.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	\$20,000.00	General Fund

## Blakely Short Term Work Program Update 2004-2008 Cont'd

<b>Land Use</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Update Zoning Ordinance Map	2004- 2008	City	N/A	General Fund
Consider Adoption of Subdivision Regulations	2004- 2008	City	N/A	General Fund
Update Comprehensive Plan as needed	2004- 2008	City	N/A	General Fund
Amend Service Delivery Strategy as needed	2004- 2008	City-County	N/A	General Fund
Provide training opportunities for city planning and zoning officials	2004- 2008	City	N/A	General Fund

<b>Natural and Historic Resources</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
The Old Kelsler School on historic registry. (Old Haddock's Peanut Co.)	2004- 2008	City	N/A	N/A
Implement City Beautification Program	2004- 2008	City	\$15,000	General Fund/Grants

<b>General Planning</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Adopt standard Building Codes and Administrative procedures.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	N/A	General Fund
Employ Code Enforcement Officer	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	\$10,000	General Fund
Implement substandard Housing Rehabilitation Program	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	\$400,000	General Fund/ Grants

## Damascus Town: Report of Accomplishments 1999-2003

<b>Community Facilities</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Pave "New Street" and "Chesire Street"	Not Accomplished	Budget Constraints
Pave Bull Street	Not Accomplished	Budget Constraints
Provide assistance to Volunteer Fire Department	Completed	
Upgrade water lines and hydrants	Completed	
Extend water Lines	Completed	
Work with county on county-wide master recreation plan	Completed	
Convert land for new park facility (old landfill)	Completed	
Develop: Basketball Court	Underway	
Picnic area /playground	Underway	
Soft Ball field	Underway	

<b>Economic Development</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Continue to support the Early County Chamber of Commerce	Completed	
Continue to support the Early County Chamber of Commerce	Completed	

<b>Housing</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Adopt Standard Building Codes and Administrative procedures	Not Accomplished	Budget Constraints
Employ Code Enforcement Officer	Not Accomplished	Budget Constraints
Implement substandard Housing Rehabilitation Program	Not Accomplished	Budget Constraints
Implement Dilapidated Housing Program	Completed	
work with the Housing Task Force to promote Housing Assistance Programs	Not Accomplished	Budget Constraints

## Damascus Town: Report of Accomplishments 1999-2003 Cont'd

<b>Land Use</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Update Zoning Ordinance/Map	Underway	
Consider Adoption of Subdivision Regulations	Completed	
Update Comprehensive Plan	Completed	
Amend Service Delivery Strategy as needed	Underway	

<b>Natural and Historic Resources</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Consider adoption of wellhead protection ordinance	Completed	
Work with county building and development office to permit Social and Sedimentation permits	Not Accomplished	Budget Constraints
Adopt Wetland Protection Regulation (as required)	Completed	
Adopt Ground Water Protection Measures (as required)	Completed	

## Damascus Town: Short Term Work Program Update 2004-2008

<b>Community Facilities</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Complete building of softball field.	2004, 2005	City	\$50,000.00	SPLOST
Monitor aspects of old landfill conversion.	2004, 2005	City	\$5,000.00	General Fund
Apply for a police grant.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	N/A	City
Hire additional police officers.	2004, 2005, 2006	City	\$26,000.00	General Fund
Pave Chesire Street.	2004, 2005	City	\$100,000.00	City
Repair fire building and purchase new fire truck.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	\$150,000.00	Grants/Loans
Continue to upgrade fire hydrants and water lines.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	\$300,000.00	City
Develop basketball court.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007	City	\$25,000.00	Grants, General Fund
Resurface Sammon Street.	2005, 2006	City	\$10,000-\$50,000	LARP Funds
Resurface Bull Street.	2007, 2008	City	\$15,000.00	LARP Funds
Resurface Kestler Street.	2008, 2009	City	\$15,000.00	LARP Funds
Implement sidewalk/street light improvement program.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	\$30,000.00	Grants/General Fund
Apply for CDBG for back up well.	2005, 2006	City	N/A	N/A
Picnic area and Playground	2004,2005	City	\$16,800	General Fund/ Grants

## Damascus Town: Short Term Work Program Update 2004-2008 Cont'd

<b>Economic Development</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Implement City Beautification Program.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	N/A	N/A
Continue to support the Blakely-Early County Chamber of Commerce.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	N/A	N/A
Continue to support the Development Authority of Early County.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	N/A	N/A

<b>Housing</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Support the zoning board.	2004, 2005, 2006	City	N/A	N/A
Adopt Standard Building Codes and Administrative Procedures.	2004, 2005	City	N/A	N/A
Employ code enforcement officer.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007	City	\$20,000.00	General Fund

<b>Land Use</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Update Zoning Ordinance Map.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	N/A	N/A
Adopt updated comprehensive plan.	2004	City	N/A	N/A
Amend Service Delivery Strategy as needed.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	N/A	N/A

## City of Jakin: Report of Accomplishments 1999-2003

<b>Community Facilities</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Recreation: Purchase playground equipment.	Completed	
Streets and Roads: Purchase Christmas Decorations.	Completed	
Resurface Rogers Avenue	Completed	
Resurface Old Bainbridge Avenue	Completed	
Work with Railroad on cleaning ditches.	Underway	
Pave Rivers Drive.	Completed	
Water and Sewer: Extend water lines to newly annexed areas.	Completed	
Upgrade water system and run water lines to Rivers Drive.	Completed	
Governmental Facilities: Purchase Computer Equipment for Municipal Governmental Operations.	Completed	

<b>Economic Development</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Continue to support the Early County Chamber of Commerce.	Underway	

<b>Housing</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Provide information to residents on available Housing rehabilitation programs (504, Home, etc.)	Underway	

**City of Jakin: Report of Accomplishments 1999-2003 Cont'd**

<b>Land Use</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Update zoning ordinance map.	Underway	
Update Comprehensive Plan.	Underway	
Consider adoption of subdivision regulations.	Not Accomplished	Not applicable to the City of Jakin.
Amend Service Delivery Strategy as needed.	Underway	

<b>Natural and Historic Resources</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Continue to work with the County building and development office to administer Soil and Sedimentation permits and 404 permitting referral ( Army Corp of Engineers)	Underway	

## City of Jakin Short Term Work Program 2004-2008

<b>Community Facilities</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Work with railroad on cleaning ditches.	2004-2008	City	\$5,000	General Fund/ D.O.T.
Increase opportunities to recycle aluminum cans, glass, paper, newspaper, etc.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	N/A	General Fund
Build a new city hall.	2004-2008	City	\$60,000	Grants, Donations, General Fund
Build an exercise track at the community park.	2004-2008	City	\$1,000	General Fund
Complete new water system.	2004-2008	City	\$238,000.00	GEFA loan, Grants
Make improvements to downtown: streetscaping and additional lighting.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	\$5,000	Grants, General Fund
Run water to residents at the end of the city limits on the south side.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	City	\$60,000	Grants, General Fund
Pave South Pearl Street.	2004-201	City	\$50,000	Grants, General Fund
Update Consolidated Solid Waste Management Plan.	2004	City, RDC	\$75.00	General Fund
Work with County to establish a police sub-station in Jakin	2006, 2007, 2008	City, County	\$20,000	General Funds

<b>Economic Development</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Continue to support the Early County Chamber of Commerce.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	N/A	N/A
Increase participation in Early County Development Authority.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	N/A	N/A

## City of Jakin Short Term Work Program 2004-2008 Cont'd

<b>Housing</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Provide information to residents on housing rehabilitation programs (504, Home, etc).	2004-2008	City	N/A	N/A
Encourage volunteers to help clean up vacant, abandoned city lots.	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	N/A	N/A
Tear down desolate, abandoned homes.	2004-2008	City	\$10,000	GF, Grants

<b>Land Use</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Update Zoning Ordinance Map.	2004-2008	City, RDC	N/A	N/A
Update Comprehensive Plan.	2004	City, RDC	\$200.00	General Fund
Amend Service Delivery Strategy.	2004-2008	City, RDC	N/A	N/A

<b>Natural and Historic Resources</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Continue to work with the County building and develop of- fice on 404 permitting referral	2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008	City	N/A	General Fund
Seek funding to complete the rehabilitation of the Bank of Jakin building for use as City Hall and a community meeting facility.	2004-2008	City	N/A	GF, Grants, donations



# Appendix

Early County & the Cities of Blakely, Damascus and Jakin



## APPENDIX

### **Housing Assistance Tools and Programs**

The majority of resources available for affordable housing in Georgia is federally funded and delivered by state governments, local governments, public housing authorities, and community-based nonprofit organizations. Funding for local program may be made available through one of the following federal or state programs listed below:

#### **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)**

**HOME Investment Partnership** provides resources to state and local governments to strengthen public-private partnerships to provide more affordable housing.

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** provides resources to state and local governments to improve the living conditions and economic opportunities of low and moderate income households.

**Low-Rent Public Housing Programs** provides a subsidy of capital costs and those operating costs of publicly-owned housing in excess of 30% of tenant income.

**Section 8 Voucher Program** – Tenant Based Rental Assistance provides rent subsidies on behalf of low-income families to participating landlords who agree to maintain the rental properties to the required Housing Quality Standards.

**Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly** provides funding to expand the supply of housing **with supportive services for the elderly persons.**

**Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities** provides grants to nonprofit organizations to develop and construct or rehabilitate rental housing with supportive services for very low-income persons with disabilities.

**Rural Housing and Economic Development Program** provides grants to build capacity at the state and local level for rural housing and economic development and to support implementation of innovative activities in rural areas.

## GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS (DCA)

**Home Buyer** offers fixed, low-interest rate mortgage loans to qualified home buyers.

**OwnHome** provides assistance to qualified homebuyers to help cover the down payment, closing costs, and prepaid items associated with the purchase of a home.

**Home Rental Housing Loan** and **Home Community Housing Development Organizations CHDO Loan** offer loans with very low-interest rates and flexible repayment terms.

**Permanent Supportive Housing Program** uses HOME funds for low interest construction and permanent mortgage financing for the construction of rental housing.

**Rural Rental Housing Development Fund** uses HOME funds to provide loans and grants to rural public housing authorities for construction.

**Pre-Development Loans** are available to CHDO's to cover the soft cost associated with planning for a rental development.

**Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP)** provides grants to local governments to fund any eligible housing activity for new construction, rehabilitation, or acquisition for low and moderate income households.

**Federal Housing Tax Credit** is 10-year federal tax incentive program to attract private investment for the development of affordable rental housing.

**Georgia Housing Tax Credit** is a dollar-for-dollar match for the federal tax credit for qualified housing projects.

**Empowerment Zones or Enterprise Communities (EZ/EC)** are designated by HUD or USDA. A designated community is provided funding to implement approved plans for the creation of affordable housing opportunities.

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE – RURAL HOUSING SERVICE (USDA-RHS)

**Section 502 Direct Loan** offers loans to low to moderate individuals or families for the purchase of a home.

**Section 502 Guaranteed Rural Housing Loan** provides a guarantee for loans made by private lenders.

**Section 504 Home Improvement and Repair Loan and Grant programs** offers loans and grants for renovations and to make home accessible for people with disabilities.

**Section 514 Farm Labor Housing** makes low-interest loan and grants available too public and nonprofit entities (or farmers) for the construction of farm labor housing.

**Section 515 Rural Rental Housing Loan** provides direct loans to developers of affordable rural multi-family housing.

**Section 521 Rental Assistance** provides rent subsidies to low-income families, elderly, and disabled residents of multi-family housing complexes.

**Section 523 and 524 Rural Housing Site Loans** offers loans for the purchase and development of affordable housing sites in rural areas for low-and moderate income families.

**Section 533 Housing Preservation Grants** makes grant to nonprofits and local governments to renovate existing low-income multi-family rental units.

**Section 538 Rural Rental Housing Guaranteed Loan Program** funds the construction of multi-family housing for low income families. USDA-RD guarantees up to 90% of the amount of the loan.

**Rural Community Development Initiative** provides funds to develop the capacity of private, nonprofit community-based housing and development organizations to undertake projects to improve housing and community facilities in rural areas.

## **PRIVATE FINANCING**

### **Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB)**

Affordable Housing Program provides grants to member institutions engaged in lending for long-term low and moderate income owner and rental housing activities

First Time Home Buyer Program provides grants through member institutions for down payment and closing costs assistance programs to low and moderate individuals and families interested in becoming first-time home buyers.

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Credits

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