



GREENE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Existing Conditions & Trends Report

November 2022

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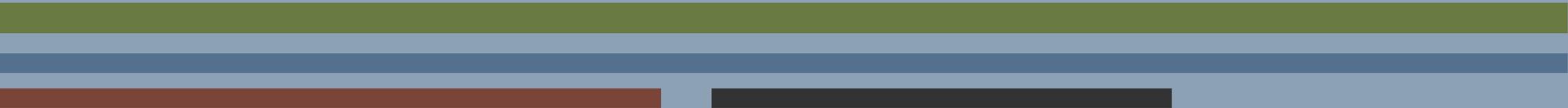
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1.0 Introduction

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What's Inside

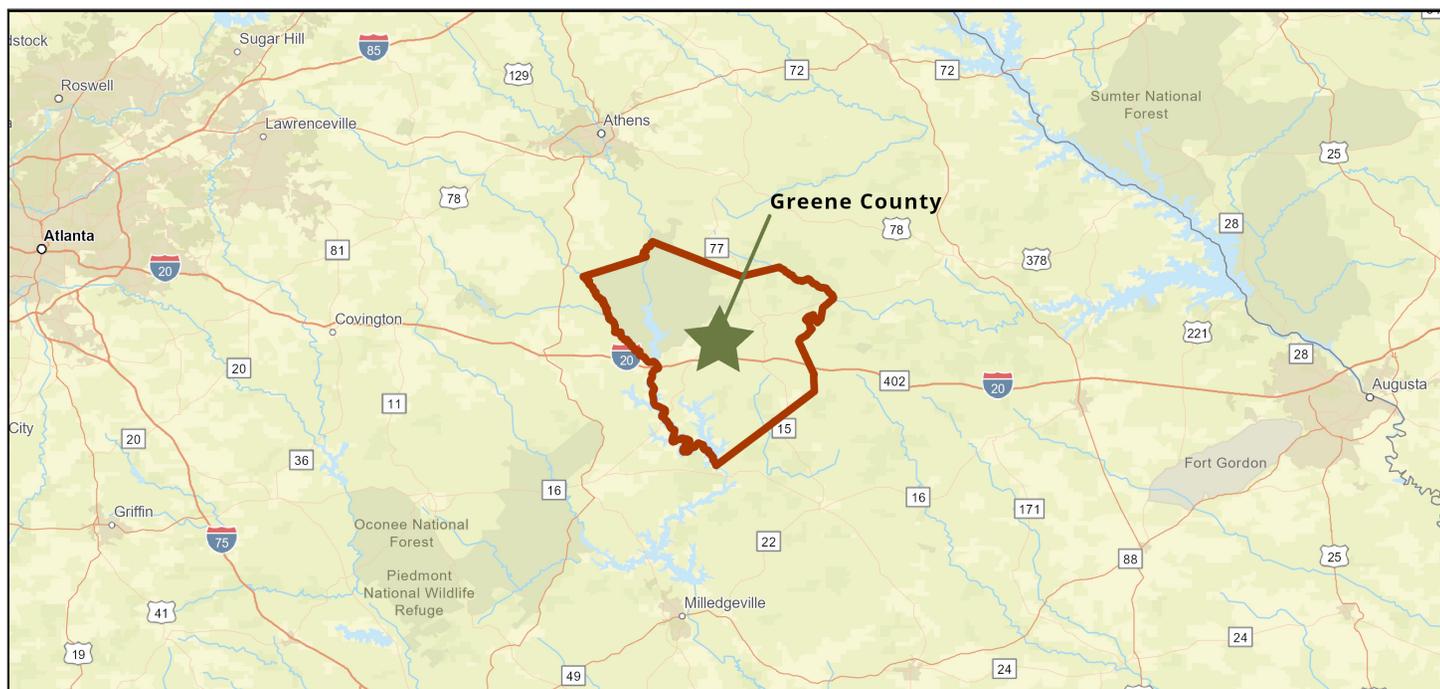
The Existing Conditions and Trends Report provides a high level assessment of Greene County in 2022. It is a snapshot of the people, places, environment, and trends that make Greene County unique. It establishes current status and trends that the County is experiencing as well as identifies potential opportunities and challenges. This document provides both a snapshot in time and a foundation from which to update vision and goals for future growth and development. It serves as an important building block for updating the Greene County Comprehensive Plan.

About Greene County

Greene County is located in Georgia, just outside of the Metropolitan Atlanta Area, halfway between Atlanta and Augusta, as reflected on Map 1. The county is located approximately 77 miles east of Atlanta, 39 miles south of Athens, and 79 miles west of Augusta.

There are five municipalities within the county: Greensboro, Union Point, Siloam, Woodville, and White Plains. Greene County, inclusive of its municipalities, has an estimated population of 19,536 (2021 U.S. Census estimate). Unincorporated Greene County population is estimated at 13,486.

Map 1. Regional Context



Source: ESRI

Comprehensive Plan 2018

Greene County is a part of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission, which includes the following 11 counties: Athens-Clarke, Bartow, Elbert, Greene, Jackson, Jasper, Madison, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, and Walton. Putnam, Taliaferro, Hancock, Oglethorpe, Oconee, and Morgan Counties border Greene County.

Natural features such as the Oconee National Forest and Lake Oconee encompass much of the western region. Interstate 20 (I-20) runs through the county connecting to Atlanta and Augusta, with two interchanges at State Route (SR) 44 and SR 77. SR 44 connects to I-20 and Greensboro, and leads to Eatonton. SR 77 connects to I-20 and runs through Union Point, Siloam, and White Plains, and travels in a north-south direction. The CSX Railroad runs through and operates in Greene County. The Greene County Regional Airport is located just northeast of the City of Greensboro.

Greene County's current Comprehensive Plan document, adopted in 2018, is the foundation upon which the 2023 five-year update is based. The planning document has served as the County's long-range vision and guide for future development since 2018.

The plan includes four substantive sections:

1. Needs and Opportunities
2. Vision
3. Land Use
4. Community (Short-Term) Work Program

The plan identifies the following **Needs and Opportunities**, amid other strengths/weaknesses: retain/attract young adults; fill void in affordable housing; continue to work with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to meet transportation needs; expand broadband access; and develop an economic development strategy.

The overall **Vision** centers upon the County's location along I-20 as an attractive location for small business and industry with a unique opportunity to provide affordable housing. The vision also speaks to improving county services while preserving natural and cultural resources.

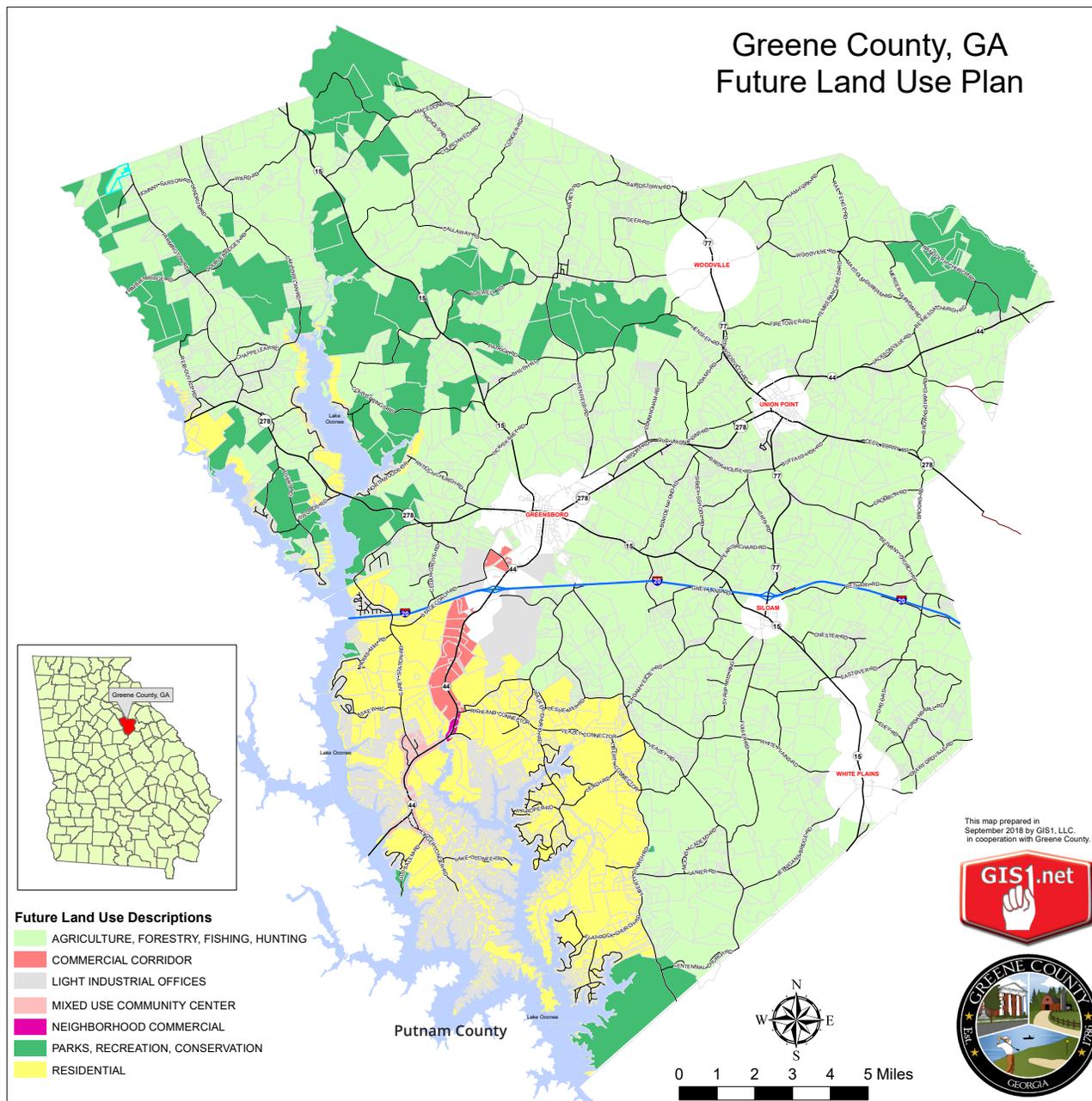
The **Future Land Use Plan**, captured on Map 2, is relatively broad and includes seven future land use designations that

are largely organized around predominant uses in different areas of the county. As development interest increases in Greene County, the County will likely benefit from a more nuanced Future Land Use Plan that provides greater distinction between areas of unique character, regardless of land use. The refined plan will also establish a vision for key corridors that are likely to be targeted investment areas in the future.

The **2018-2022 Short-Term Work Program** provided a list of activities that the community planned to address as immediate priorities. The County has accomplished multiple activities, with some highlights noted below:

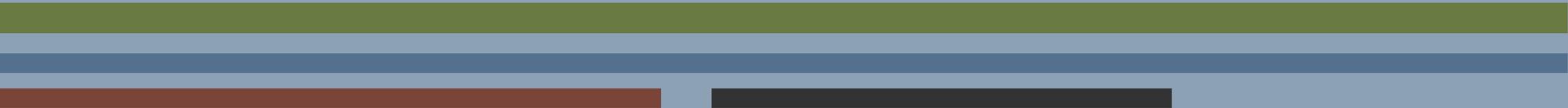
- The County continues to develop strategies to maximize outreach and diversity/inclusivity while serving the community.
- The Firefly Trail model mile has been constructed inside the city limits of Union Point and extends in front of the Greene County Primary School.
- The County regularly reviews and updates its Zoning Ordinance to ensure quality and intentional development.
- Reconstruction of the Old Eatonton Road Bridge was completed using local funding and opened in 2020.

Map 2. Future Land Use Map, 2018 Greene County Comprehensive Plan



Source: Greene County 2018 Comprehensive Plan

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2.0 Greene Community Today

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2.1 Our Population

According to the latest U.S. Census population estimates, the total population of Greene County in 2021 was 19,536. The majority of this number (69 percent, or 13,486) reside in the planning area of unincorporated Greene County. The highest population densities (persons per square mile) are found in the central part of the county around Greensboro and west of Union Point, as well as south of I-20 in the west/southwestern portion of the county and, in particular, the Lake Oconee area, as shown on Map 3.

Characteristics

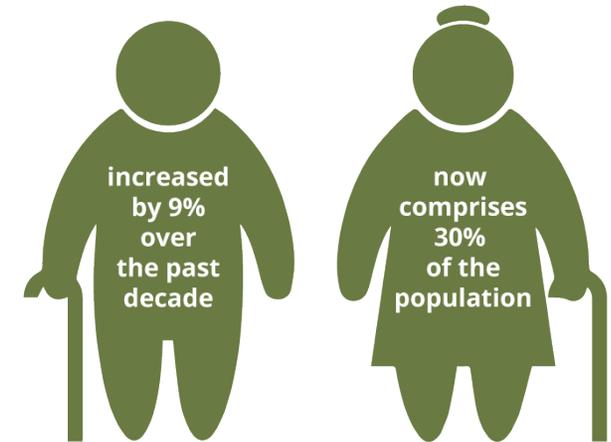
More detailed information about the County's population is available county-wide but not for the planning area of unincorporated Greene County. The below statistics speak to the characteristics of those living within Greene County municipalities and in the unincorporated area. Throughout this section, the adjacent counties of Putnam, Taliaferro, Hancock, Oglethorpe, Oconee, and Morgan are referenced to give context to the statistics of Greene County.

Age

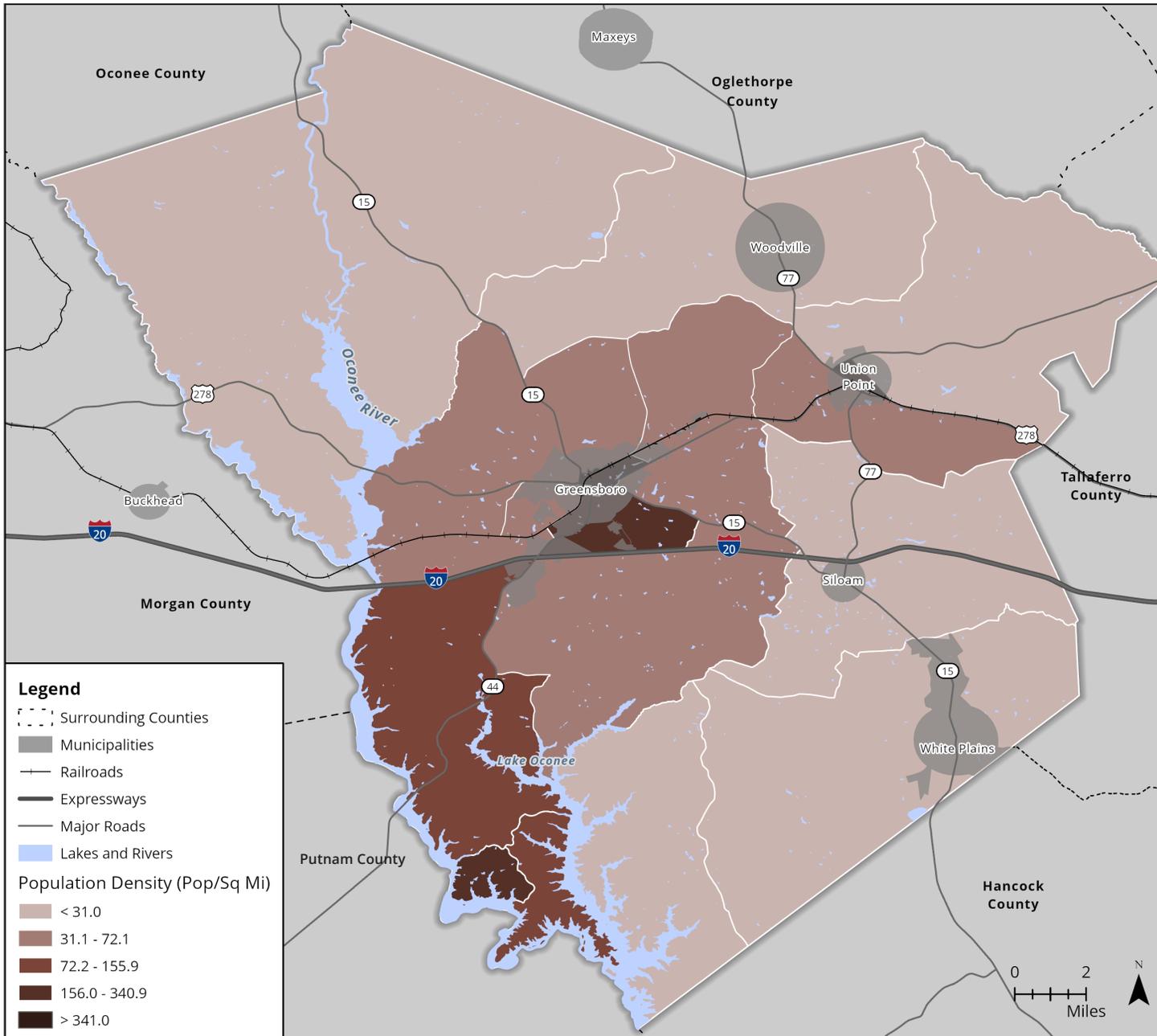
The 2020 U.S. Census Bureau (Census) data indicates the county-wide population is trending older and with fewer children. In particular, the percentage of the 2020 population that is 65 years and older is 30 percent, which is a 9 percent increase from the 2010 population and is higher than all adjacent counties as well as the State of Georgia (15 percent). Conversely, the percentage of children (under 18 years) has decreased over the past decade, from 21 percent in 2010 to 18 percent today. Greene County has a lower percentage of children when compared to Morgan, Oconee, and Oglethorpe Counties, as well as Georgia. Putnam, Taliaferro, and Hancock Counties, have a similar percentage of children as Greene County.

The percentage of adults between 20 and 60 is fairly evenly distributed among each 10-year age bracket, ranging from 8 percent of the population being younger adults (20 to 30 years) to 12 percent being between 50 and 60 years of age.

The 65+ Population



Map 3. Population Density, Greene County



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census, Census Block Groups Redistricting Database

Diversity

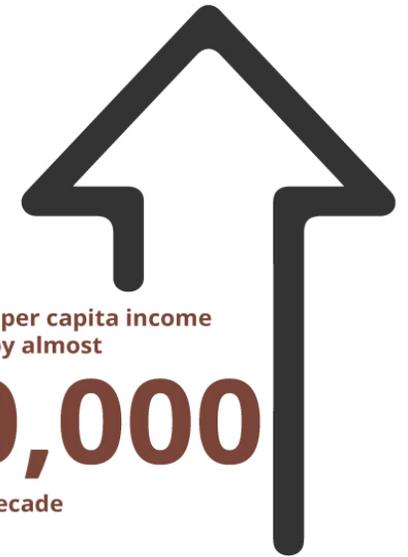
According to Census data, the County is becoming less diverse. A majority of Greene County residents are White (65 percent), and 32 percent are African American; whereas in 2010, the figures were 57 percent and 38 percent, respectively. Relative to the region, however, Greene County has a larger minority population, with the exception of Taliaferro and Hancock Counties. In addition, the percentage of Hispanic or Latino residents (7 percent) is slightly higher than rates in surrounding counties and relative to 2010 Census data for the county (6 percent).

Education

The level of educational attainment with respect to persons having at least graduated high school (87 percent of the population age 25+) is consistent with the region and state, with the exception of Oconee County having a higher number of residents with at least a high school diploma (95 percent). The percentage of the population that is 25+ years with at least a bachelor's degree is 31 percent, which is higher than the region, again with Oconee County (51 percent) being the exception. Census data shows a significant increase in educational attainment from 2010 in terms of the percentage of 25+ population being a high school graduate or higher (75 percent) and having a bachelor's degree or higher (19 percent).

Income

Census data for income shows the county-wide median household income (\$57,880) is less than that of the state (\$61,224) and Morgan and Putnam Counties, although it has increased by almost \$8,000 from 2010 when adjusted for inflation. Per capita income has increased by almost \$10,000 over the past decade and is estimated to currently be \$42,339, a figure that is higher than that of the state and surrounding counties except for Oconee County (\$49,099). The poverty rate (15 percent) is slightly higher than that for the state (14 percent) and is higher than rates for Morgan, Oconee, and Oglethorpe Counties; however, it has decreased from 18 percent in 2010.



87%

of the 25+ population has a high school degree

Growth

Since 2000, the population in unincorporated Greene County has increasingly become a larger percentage of the county-wide population. As shown in Table 1, the estimated 2021 population of the unincorporated County is 69 percent of the county-wide population, up from 59 percent in 2000. This is due primarily to people moving into the unincorporated areas of the county, but the smallest cities (Siloam, White Plains, and Woodville) have also lost population over the past two decades.

Table 1 also shows the extent of growth in population since 2000 and further illustrates the fact that new residents are increasingly locating in areas outside of the cities. The bar chart also shows that county-wide growth is attributed largely to increases in population in unincorporated areas, while the cities altogether have experienced nominal growth. In 2000, 2010, and 2021, the total population in all cities combined was 5,874, 5,890 and 6,050, respectively, although Greensboro – like that of unincorporated Greene County – continues to grow and with more significant gains in the last 10 years than the decade before.

Table 1. Population by Jurisdiction: 2000, 2010 and 2021

Jurisdiction	2000		2010		2021	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
Greene County (including cities)	14,389		15,977		19,536	
Greensboro	3,205	22%	3,375	21%	3,649	19%
Siloam	344	2%	282	2%	196	1%
Union Point	1,640	11%	1,624	10%	1,677	9%
White Plains	283	2%	287	2%	252	1%
Woodville	402	3%	322	2%	276	1%
Unincorporated Greene Co.	8,515	59%	10,087	63%	13,486	69%

Sources: For 2000 to 2010: *Intercensal Estimates 2000-2010, U.S. Bureau of the Census*. For 2021: *Census Annual Estimates Program re-certified to 2020 Census, U.S. Bureau of the Census*.

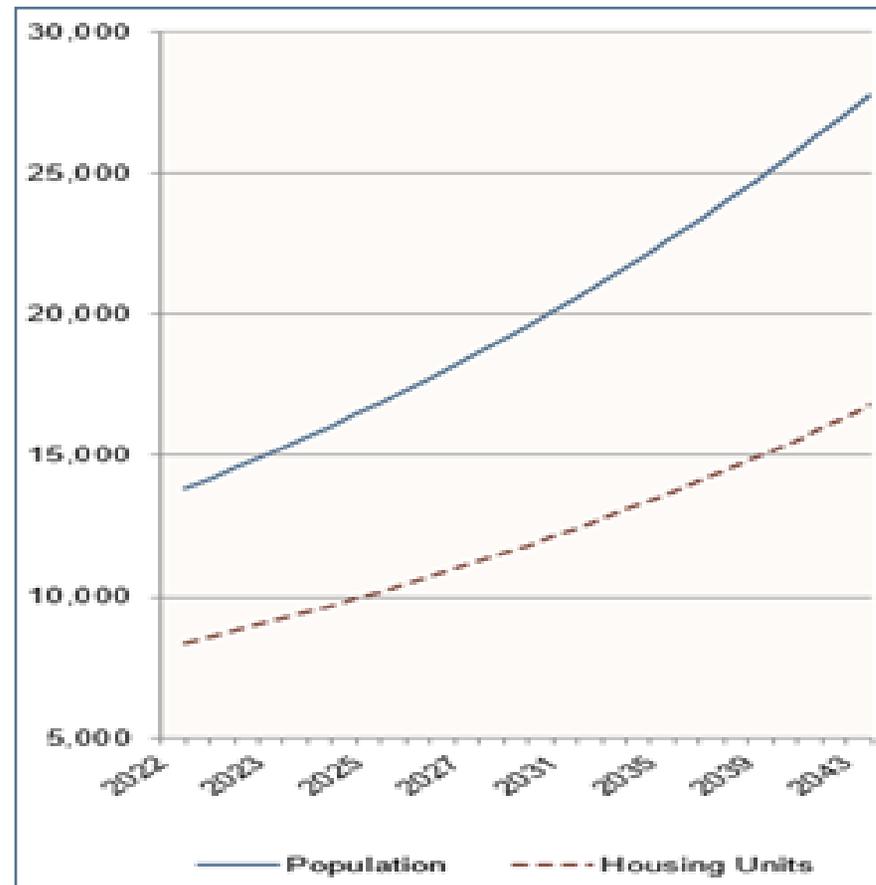
The US Census Bureau estimates the population in Greene County and its cities for each year between decennial censuses (2000, 2010 and 2020), as well as for the years after the last published census. The latest population estimate is for the year 2021, which is 'as of July 1, 2022'. All estimates are 'as of July 1', whereas the decennial censuses are 'as of April 1'. Accordingly, estimates typically vary slightly from the decennial figures since the Bureau considers current data such as births, deaths, Federal tax returns, Medicare enrollment, and immigration in estimating what the population count would be in July 1 of a given year as opposed to April 1. These updated figures, in addition to the latest population estimate available (2021), are used in this plan to project population growth over the next 20 years.

Population Forecasts

Relative to surrounding counties, Greene County experienced the second highest increase in population between 2010 and 2020, at 18.3 percent according to the U.S. Census. Oconee County experienced the greatest change at 27.4 percent, and Morgan County's percentage was 12.5 percent, which was slightly higher than 10.6 percent for the state as a whole. Putnam County had a smaller increase at 3.9 percent, and Oglethorpe, Taliaferro, and Hancock Counties all lost population in the last decade.

Forecasts indicate continued growth ahead for Greene County as people continue to move into the county. Based on historical growth trends between 2010 and 2021 and current development, the planning area (unincorporated county) is anticipated to see upwards of a 50 percent increase in population over the next 20 years, with 27,785 residents projected compared to an estimated 13,826 in 2022. This denotes doubling of the population in the unincorporated area.

Figure 1. Population Projections, Unincorporated Greene County



2.2 Our Housing

Consistent with population trends described above and as shown in the chart, **the number of housing units in unincorporated Greene County is projected to increase by 50 percent over the next two decades, from an estimated 8,431 dwellings in 2022 to 16,782 future housing units.**

HOUSING FORECASTS

Future population numbers for the growth trend projection are converted into the number of households (which equates to the number of occupied housing units) expected in future years by dividing the projected population for each year by the average household size for Greene County (based on Census data). The number of households each year is then expanded to the total number of housing units by adding in vacant units. This calculation utilizes a multiplier based on the average housing units per household per the 2020 Census.

Housing Mix

Based on 2020 Census data, 76 percent of current housing units in the county are located in the unincorporated area and are predominantly detached single-family dwellings. Specifically, 80 percent of these single-family dwellings are of conventional construction and 13 percent are manufactured homes. These dwelling types and ratios are generally consistent with those found in each of the cities in the county, with the exception of Greensboro, where over one-third of the housing stock is multi-family (includes duplexes and apartments).

Recent Housing Trends

A review of County building permit data for the past five years shows residential construction in the unincorporated area has remained fairly constant, with the typical number of permits issued each year for single-family dwellings in the mid-200s, with 2022 permitting tracking similarly as of August 2022. This time frame includes a spike of 414 in 2021, which is comparable to the number of permits issued in Oconee County (418) for the same year, according to U.S. Census Bureau's Building Permits Survey. Morgan and Putnam Counties had lower but similar numbers in 2021, at 224 and 276 permits, respectively.

The vast majority of permits issued by the County for new single-family home builds in the unincorporated area have been for conventional residential construction (95

percent), with the remaining permits issued for manufactured homes. Based on Census data, 'new' construction (2010 to present) accounts for about 15 percent of the housing stock in the planning area, as opposed to a significantly higher percentage of homes (24.2 percent) built in the decade before the Great Recession. An even larger percentage (27.1 percent) was built between 1990 and 1999. The majority of existing housing (61 percent) in the planning area was built before 1990.

Occupancy Characteristics

Based on 2020 Census data, the 2020 occupancy rate in the unincorporated area was estimated at 67 percent, which is significantly lower than that of the local municipalities, which range between 82 percent and 91 percent. A review of data at the Census tract level shows the southern portion of the county (which includes lakefront communities) having the lowest occupancy rates. Of the occupied housing units, 86 percent are owner-occupied in the planning area. This is comparable with the rates in White Plains and Woodville, whereas the percentage of renter-occupied units are significantly higher in Greensboro (49 percent), Union Point (37 percent) and Siloam (33 percent). Countywide, the owner-occupancy rate is 77 percent (and 23 percent renter-occupancy rate), which is lower than Oconee County (83 percent), but generally comparable with the other adjacent counties.

Housing Costs

The majority of all homes (25 percent) sold in the county within the past year had sales prices greater than \$1 million, according to Zillow records. The next largest category (19 percent) were homes that sold for less than \$400,000. These homes included a range of sales costs, from less than \$100,000 (20% of the <\$400K category cited above) to the largest share (38 percent) being between \$300,000 and \$399,000. They tended to be located in or near Greensboro and Union Point, in particular those houses that sold for less than \$200,000. Thirty percent of all home sales were in the \$400,000 to \$599,999 range, and the remaining 26 percent was distributed among homes that sold at prices between \$600,000 and \$1,000,000.

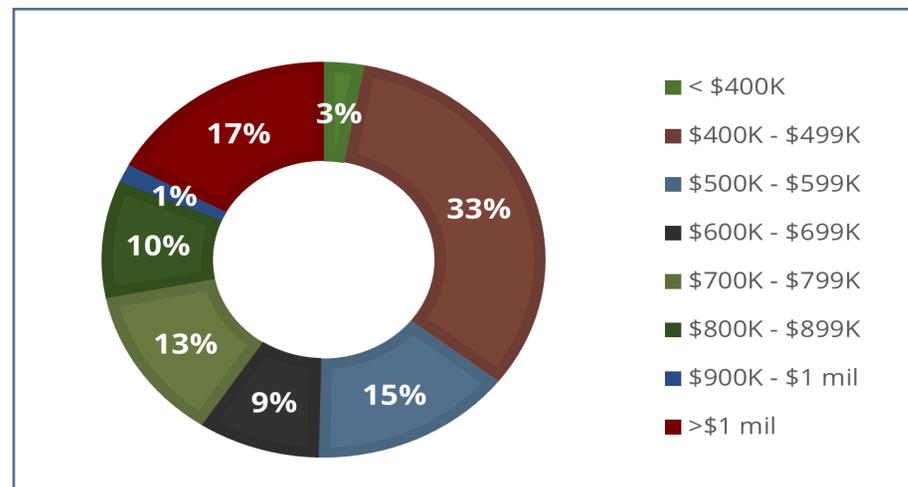
As shown in Figure 2, the availability of new homes (constructed in 2021 or 2022) at a lower price point is significantly less than the overall number of homes that have come on the market within the past 12 months (as of September 2022). Just 3 percent of new homes sold for less than \$400,000, with the lowest sales price being \$375,034. A little over a third (36 percent) of new homes sold for less than \$500,000, with the majority (64 percent) of new homes selling for more than this figure.

Within the past 6 months, the average sales price of a new home in Greene County was \$975,795. Actual sales prices reported by Zillow ranged from a high of \$4.75 million for a 6,536 square foot, 7-bedroom house to a 3-bedroom, 2,054 square foot house for \$391,900. Almost all of the recent home sales are located in the southwest portion of the county around Lake Oconee.

According to Census data, the median value of owner-occupied housing units in the county was estimated to be \$241,300 in 2020. This is less than the \$304,400 for Oconee County, but higher than all other

counties in the region. Greene County's median gross rent (rent plus utilities) for a 1-bedroom apartment, however, is lowest in the region (except for Taliaferro County). According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the current median gross rent for a 1-bedroom is \$672, which is \$100 - \$300 less than that of surrounding counties. Multi-family rental opportunities are primarily located in Greensboro and Union Point, and each city has a public housing authority that can provide assistance with affordable housing programs.

Figure 2. New Housing Costs



Source: Zillow (home sales between September 2021 and September 2022)

2.3 Our Jobs

The majority of jobs (91 percent) in the county are in the private sector. Goods producing jobs (agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, and construction) make up 23 percent of these jobs, and the remaining 77 percent of private sector jobs are service producing. The largest numbers of jobs are in the following categories, presented from highest to lowest: accommodation and food services, construction, and health care and social assistance. These are followed closely by retail trade and administrative and waste management services. Jobs classified as state and local government have the next highest number and comprise the majority of public sector jobs in the county.

The Georgia Department of Labor data indicates the unemployment rate for 2021 was 3.2 percent for Greene County and the nation (5.3 percent), which was comparable to Morgan County and less than that of the state (3.9 percent) as well as Putnam (4 percent) and Taliaferro (5 percent) Counties. Oconee County (2.9 percent) and Oglethorpe County (2.9 percent) had lower rates of unemployment.

Based on the latest Census estimates for commuting patterns (which pre-date the 2020 global pandemic and increasing work-from-home trends), 37 percent of jobs are held by County residents, meaning the majority (63 percent) are filled by employees who commute to Greene County from the

surrounding area (primarily Putnam, Morgan, and Athens-Clarke Counties). Sixty-seven percent of Greene County residents primarily commute to these same three counties. The illustrative graphic shows inflow and outflow of jobs, as well as the number of local residents that both live and work in the county. It should be noted that the arrows do not indicate the directionality of worker flow between home and employment locations.

Figure 3. Inflow and Outflow of Jobs, Greene County



* Note: The arrows do not represent the directionality of worker flow between home and employment locations.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap, 2019.

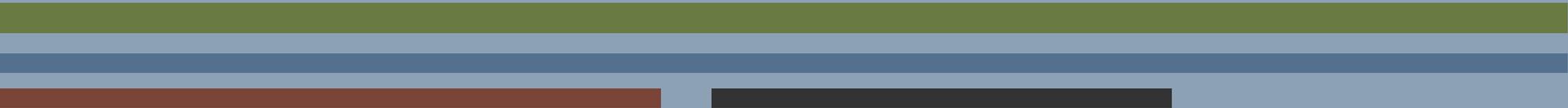
Jobs Forecasts

Looking ahead, the number of service producing jobs is forecasted to grow by 50 percent over the next 20 years, according to Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. data. The largest growth is anticipated in the following sectors: administrative and waste management (81 percent growth), finance and insurance (74 percent), and real estate / rental and leasing (70 percent). Goods producing jobs are forecasted to grow by 8 percent, although farm employment (-20 percent) and manufacturing (-24 percent) may experience losses. Government jobs (federal, state and local government) show a slight loss (-2.5 percent) by 2043, as well. Overall, forecasts show that all new jobs will have increased the current number by 42 percent.

JOBS FORECASTS

Employment figures for the county are based on forecasts published by Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. in their latest (2021) Georgia Profile for Greene County. Woods & Poole is a nationally recognized resource for employment data at the county level. Importantly, Woods & Poole counts jobs, which captures people holding two or more jobs, self-employed sole proprietors and part-time workers, and vacant jobs. This gives a more complete picture than Census Bureau data (which counts the number of employed people) of the employment vitality and economic base of a community.

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3.0 Planning Context

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3.1 Introduction

The following section provides context for thinking about the County's future land use and growth and development. A variety of factors will impact the County's propensity and ability to change. Those include the natural environment as well as existing and planned infrastructure and the current landscape for economic development.

Topics Covered:

- Natural Resources
- Water and Wastewater Infrastructure
- Historic, Cultural, and Recreational Resources
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Broadband

3.2 Natural Resources

Overview

Greene County's natural resources are some of its most defining features. **Lake Oconee** has and will continue to be the most important driver of community growth. The lake is found in the southwest portion of the county, along the border with Putnam County. At 19,000 acres, Lake Oconee is the second largest lake in Georgia. It is a popular destination for recreational uses, such as fishing, boating, and camping. The Greene County side of the lake is mostly within the Reynolds Lake Oconee master-planned community. Large residences and golf courses are prevalent within this community. These homes are primarily owner-occupied with limited opportunities for short-term rentals, per County ordinances. The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee is the premier location for vacationers to enjoy the lake. Georgia Power also owns two public access beaches on the lake, one at Old Salem Park and one at Parks Ferry Public Recreation Area.

The Oconee River is another important natural feature that flows into Lake Oconee. It is a 220-mile river that originates much farther north in Hall County. It is one of the state's designated "Protected Rivers," so land use regulations are in place in accordance with state policy. These protections help to maintain valuable ecosystems and habitats.

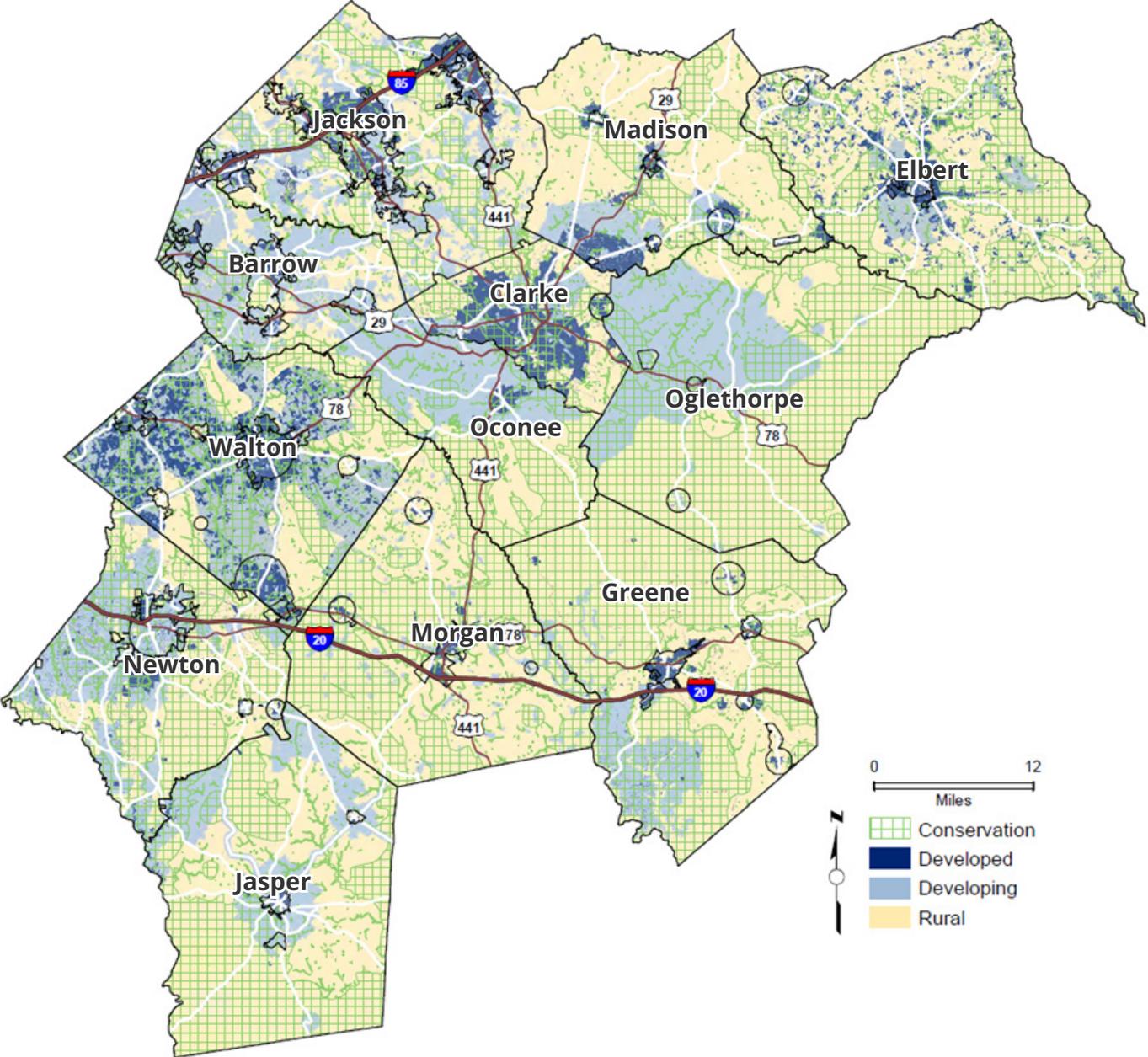
The Oconee National Forest covers a significant portion of the north area of the county (approximately 27,000 acres). Greene County has more National Forest acreage

than 93 percent of Georgia Counties (*Lake Oconee Breeze*). In addition to federally protected lands, some tracts of land are held in permanent conservation easements by private entities. State and federal policies restrict the ways in which protected forest lands can be used. For instance, sometimes conservation land is not allowed to be accessible to the public. Specific policies vary by the conservation agreements and management plans in place.

The forest serves a huge economic function. Greene County is the sixth largest producer of soft wood veneer logs in Georgia, at 1.1 million cubic feet annually (*Lake Oconee Breeze*). Camping and hunting are also additional revenue generators. Two Wildlife Management Areas (Redlands WMA and the Oconee WMA) offer hunting, archery, and other activities.

As shown in Map 4, the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission, in its 2018 Regional Development Plan, demarcated areas across the region that are of regional importance for conservation. A majority of Greene County is included in the area defined as environmentally sensitive. The Southeastern Ecological Framework, the source behind the "conservation area" geographic boundaries, is a peer-reviewed research project supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This research posits that fragmentation of the natural landscape should be avoided in order to protect the functioning of the ecosystem.

Map 4. Regionally Important Resources for Conservation, Northeast Georgia



Source: NEGRC, PGS Division 7/19/2018, using DNR Digital Environmental Atlas of Georgia, NWI, Southeastern Ecological Framework, NEGRC Regionally Important Resources Plan.

Part V Environmental Planning Regulations

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources Environmental Protection Division sets rules for Environmental Planning Criteria, as mandated in Part V of the Georgia Planning Act. Map 5 illustrates the location of the Part V Resources that are identified in Greene County.

The County's Water Supply Watershed District standards are consistent with Part V Environmental Criteria. In accordance with state planning regulations, the County's ordinance provides differing policies based on the presence of large and small water supply watersheds. These water supply watersheds and the relevant water supply permit-holders are listed below.

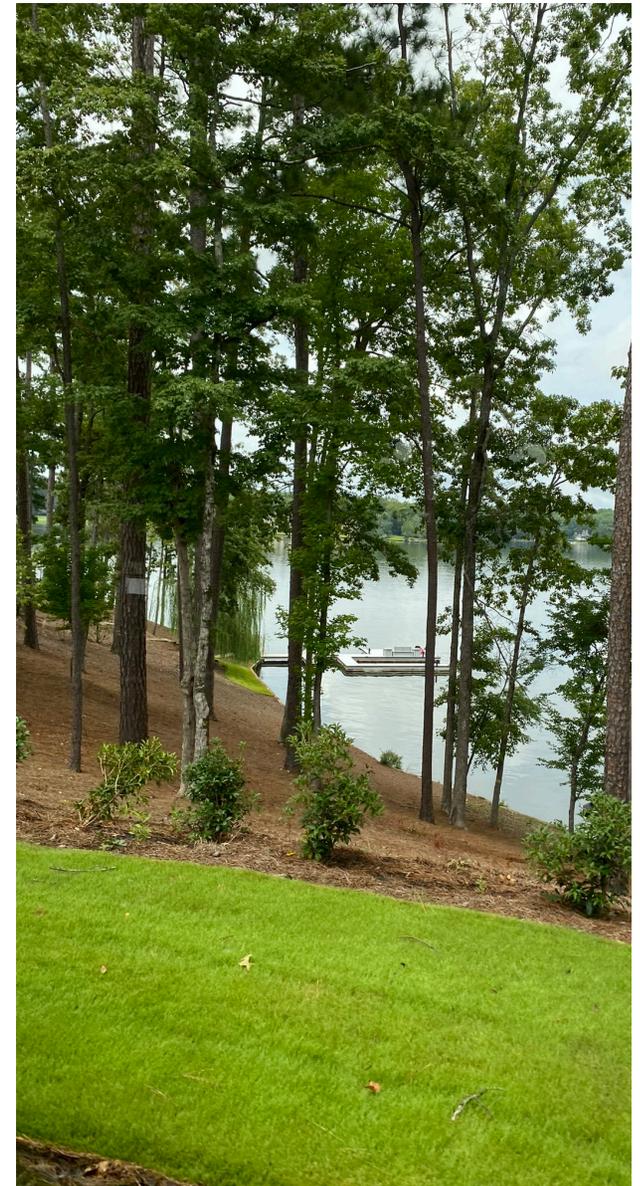
Large Water Supply Watersheds

- Lake Oconee – Greensboro water supply intake
- Lake Sinclair – Sparta water supply intake

Small Water Supply Watersheds

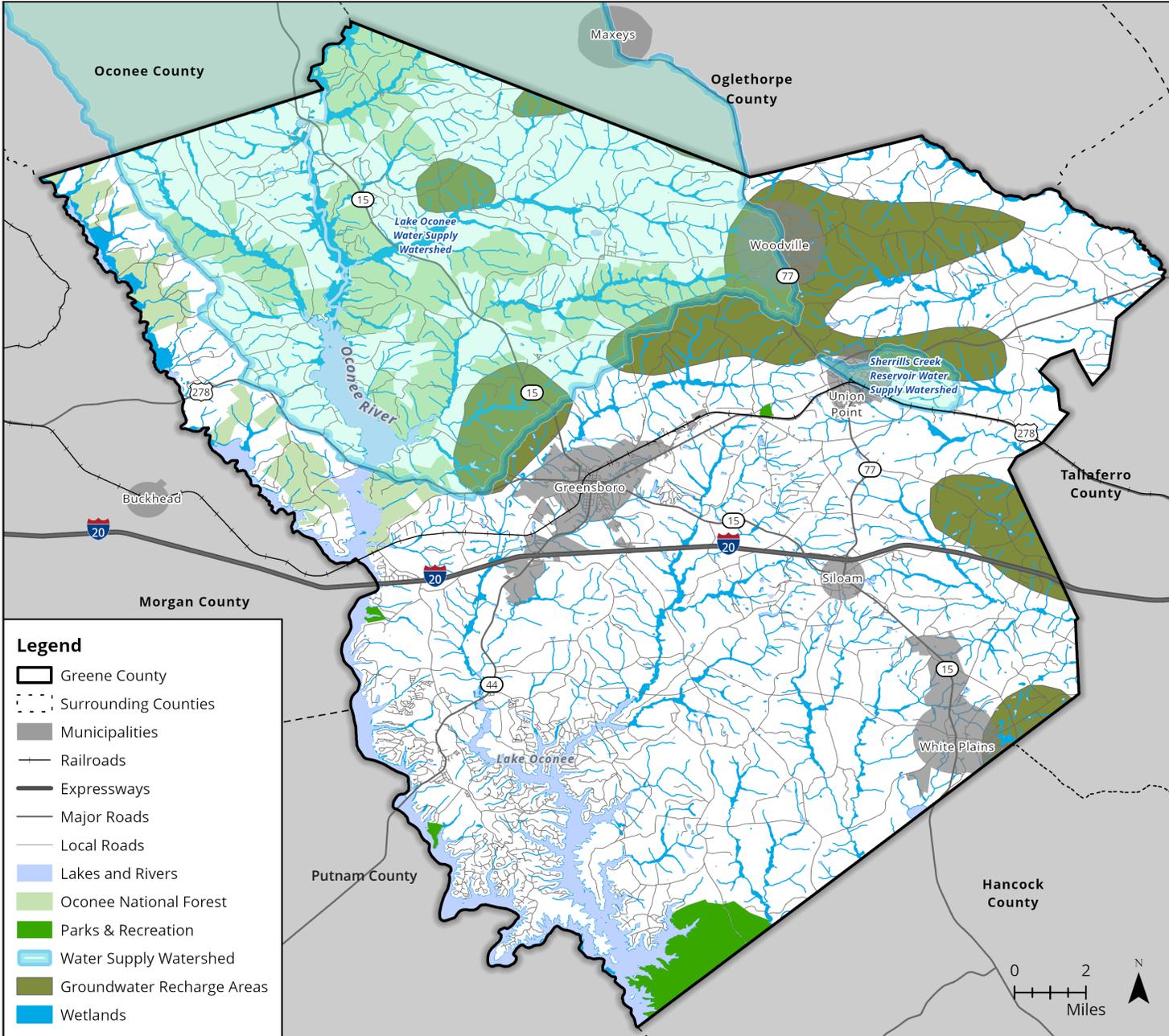
- Sherills Creek Reservoir - Union Point water supply intake

Greene County has appropriate overlay zoning to regulate development around wetlands and groundwater recharge areas. The County's "Aquifer Recharge District" covers the areas where groundwater recharge is considered significant by the Georgia Pollution Susceptibility Map, Hydrologic Atlas 20. Greene County's "Wetlands District" covers all wetland areas as delineated by the most current U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetland Inventory Maps. As discussed in the prior section, Greene County has a "Protected River District" around the Oconee River that meets state requirements.



Trees along banks of Lake Oconee in residential area

Map 5. Part V Environmental Features Located in Greene County



Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory, Georgia GIS Clearinghouse

3.3 Water and Sewer Infrastructure

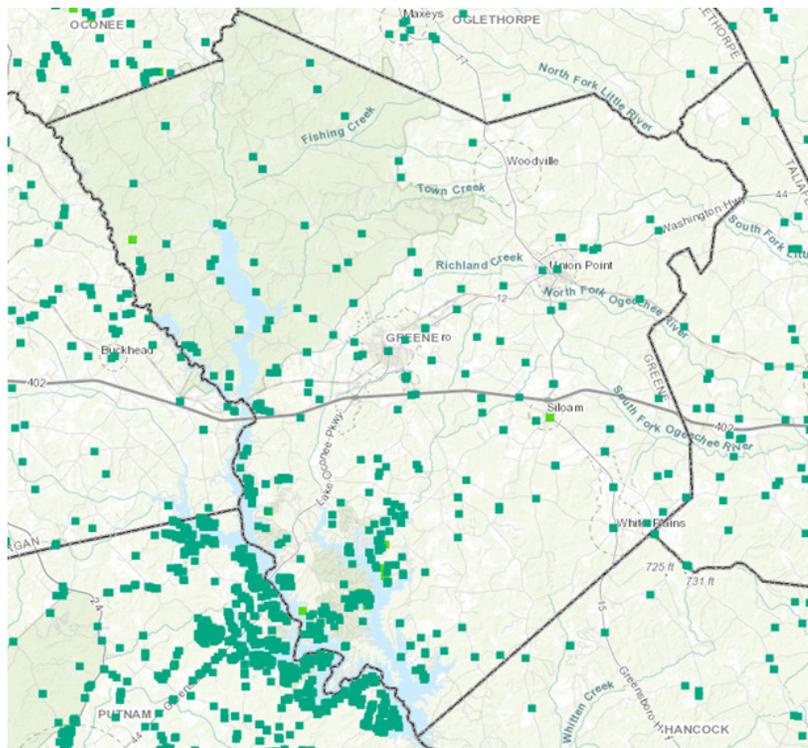
The water and sewer systems throughout Greene County are distributed and have disparate providers. This section details the ways in which water and sewer services are conducted in different parts of the county.

Piedmont Water, a private company, is the service provider for water treatment and distribution in some parts of unincorporated Greene County. In the more rural areas of the county, some residents have private household wells.

Septic tanks are the primary type of wastewater treatment systems found throughout the county. A statewide online database called WELSTROM has started to map septic tanks that have been recorded with the Georgia Department of Public Health. Map 6 shows the locations of known septic tanks around Greene County. The cities have a policy to annex any new parcels where they have extended their sewer services.

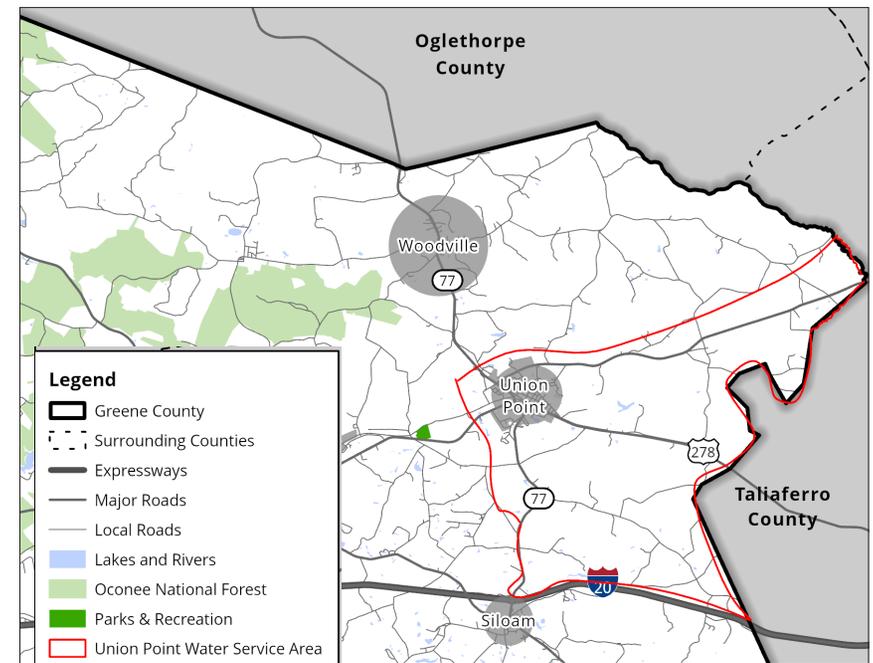
The incorporated cities within Greene County have their own municipal water utilities. The three smaller cities—Woodville, Siloam, and White Plains—only have public water, whereas Greensboro and Union Point provide both water and sewer service. Greensboro and Union Point also have in common that they source their water supply from surface water, while the smaller systems obtain their supplies from groundwater wells. The Union Point water service area extends beyond its municipal boundaries; Map 7 shows an approximate boundary for its service area.

Map 6. Known Septic Tanks in Greene County



Source: Well and Septic Tank Referencing and Online Mapping (WELSTROM), Georgia Department of Public Health

Map 7. Union Point Water Service Area (approximate boundary)



Source: Greene County Service Delivery Strategy

In October 2019, Piedmont Water began construction on the first private surface water treatment plant in Georgia. The impetus for this project was to improve the quality of drinking water. Compared to groundwater, surface water supplies are less prone to water quality issues such as calcium and mineral buildup and discoloration. Piedmont Water previously operated 28 groundwater wells, and with this plant coming online, it will now be able to source water completely from Lake Oconee. The plant has a treatment capacity of two million gallons per day, and it was designed such that it can be expanded to produce five million gallons per day. This new water treatment plant became operable in June 2022. It services the Reynolds, Oconee Landing, and Del Webb communities, along with the commercial corridor from Carey Station Road to Lake Oconee Village commercial district.

Regional Water Planning

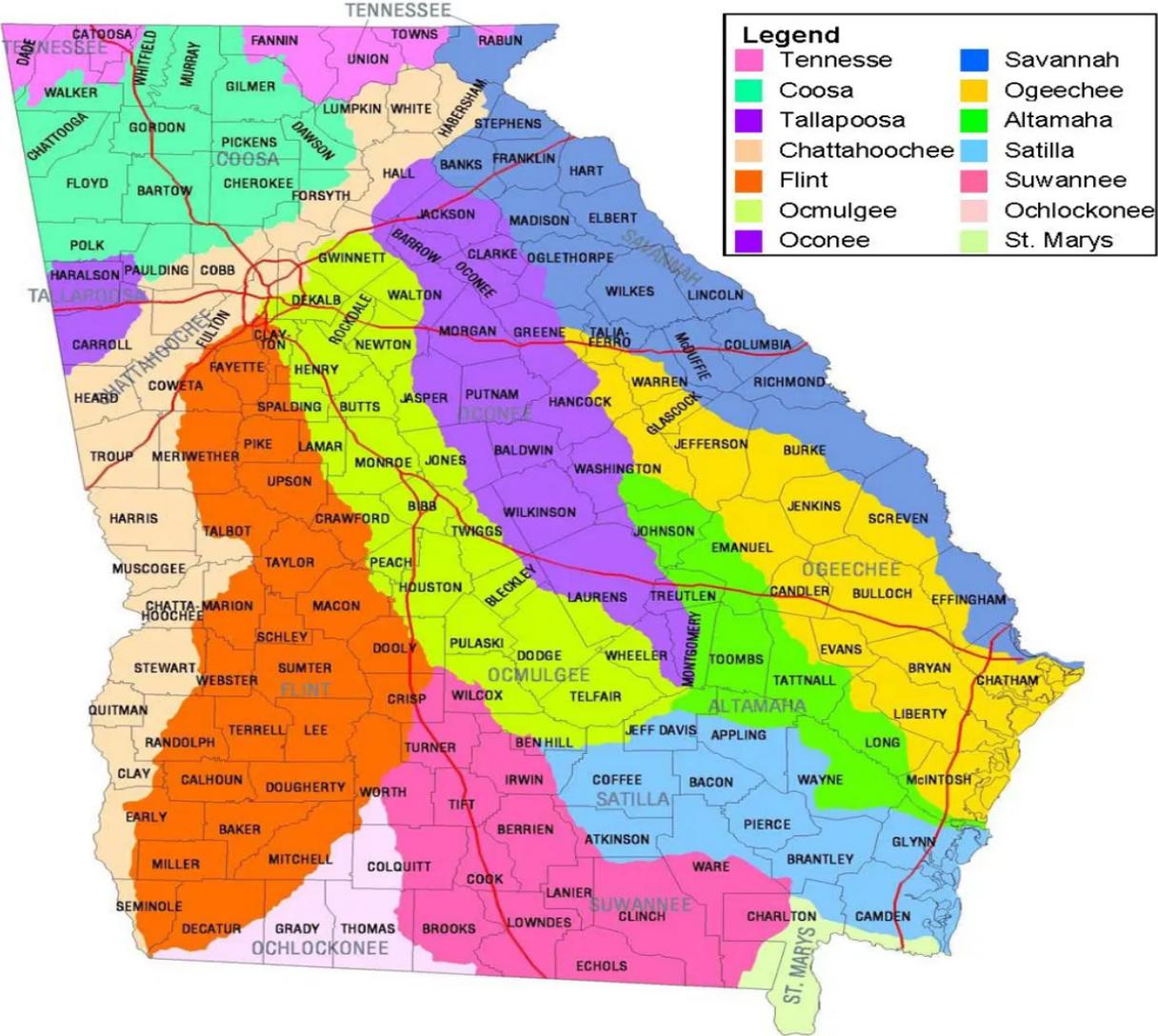
Greene County is part of the Upper Oconee Regional Water Planning District. Key planning issues in this district include:

- Efficient and conservative use of the water by all sectors, including municipal, industrial, and agricultural users
- Potential future gaps in water supply availability, particularly for surface water systems
- Water quality of Lake Oconee, Lake Sinclair, and the Oconee River

The Regional Water Plan does not anticipate groundwater supply gaps through 2050, but there is a potential for surface water supply shortages due to a number of factors such as land use change and pollution susceptibility. Along with the regional water plan, the Georgia Comprehensive Statewide Water Management Plan and Water Stewardship Act of 2010 provide foundational steps that water utilities and local governments should take to encourage water efficiency by different sectors, particularly the agricultural sector. A “Water Waste” ordinance, which focuses on limiting excessive use of water for irrigation or other purposes, is an effective tool employed in other communities which Greene County may consider.

The majority of Greene County is within the Upper Oconee River Basin, but some parts of the county on the eastern side fall within other river basins, as shown in Map 8. This means that the drainage patterns will vary, as rainfall in these parts of the county will be drained by different watersheds. The U.S. EPA’s “Surf My Watershed” website provides a wealth of information about specific water bodies and their designated uses. Within Greene County, this EPA tool highlights that the Town Creek and Richland Creek streams are on the Georgia Environmental Protection Division’s 303(d) list for impairments. In addition to permitted wastewater discharges near these water bodies, nonpoint source pollution is also a concern.

Map 8. Georgia River Basins Map



Source: Georgia Environmental Protection Division, Geologic Survey Branch

3.4 Historic, Cultural, and Recreational Resources

Greene County enjoys a bevy of historic, cultural, and recreational resources, as detailed in this section.

National Register Properties

The U.S. National Park Service maintains the official list of buildings, sites, structures, and districts on the National Register of Historic Places. To be eligible for listing in the National Register, a property or majority of properties in a district must be 50 years old or older; retain historic integrity in location or design; and meet at least one of the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. The Georgia Historic Preservation Division, housed in the Department of Community Affairs, administers the National Register of Historic Places program in Georgia.

According to listings as of September 2022, there are 24 locations in Greene County on the National Register of Historic Places. Of these, twelve are in Greensboro, three are in Siloam, two are in Union Point, one is in Woodville, and six are in unincorporated Greene County. The six Historic Places in the unincorporated county are listed below, and Map 9 shows the locations.

- Early Hill Plantation
- Brown Bryson Farm
- Penfield Historic District
- Jefferson Hall
- Peter W. Printup Plantation
- Bethesda Baptist Church and Cemetery

These properties and the historic district provide a glimpse into the history of Greene County. The plantations show what life was like on prosperous cotton farms in the Civil War era. Churches with Greek revival architecture and Victorian homes are unique and worthy of preservation. The Penfield Historic District was once the home of the Mercer Institute, which later relocated to Macon and became Mercer University. Remnants of the town and the college campus can still be seen today. The Old Mercer Chapel continues to be an active religious facility.

Cultural Resources

The Oconee Performing Arts Society (OPAS), located on Carey Station Road, is a nonprofit organization that presents a variety of arts experiences, such as concert series. OPAS also provides arts programming for children, such as chorus, jazz, and other classes.

ATLAS Ministry is another active nonprofit organization that provides youth programming and community events. One of their most impactful programs is the Early Learners Program, which is dedicated to helping young children with preparing for Kindergarten. ATLAS also has a mission

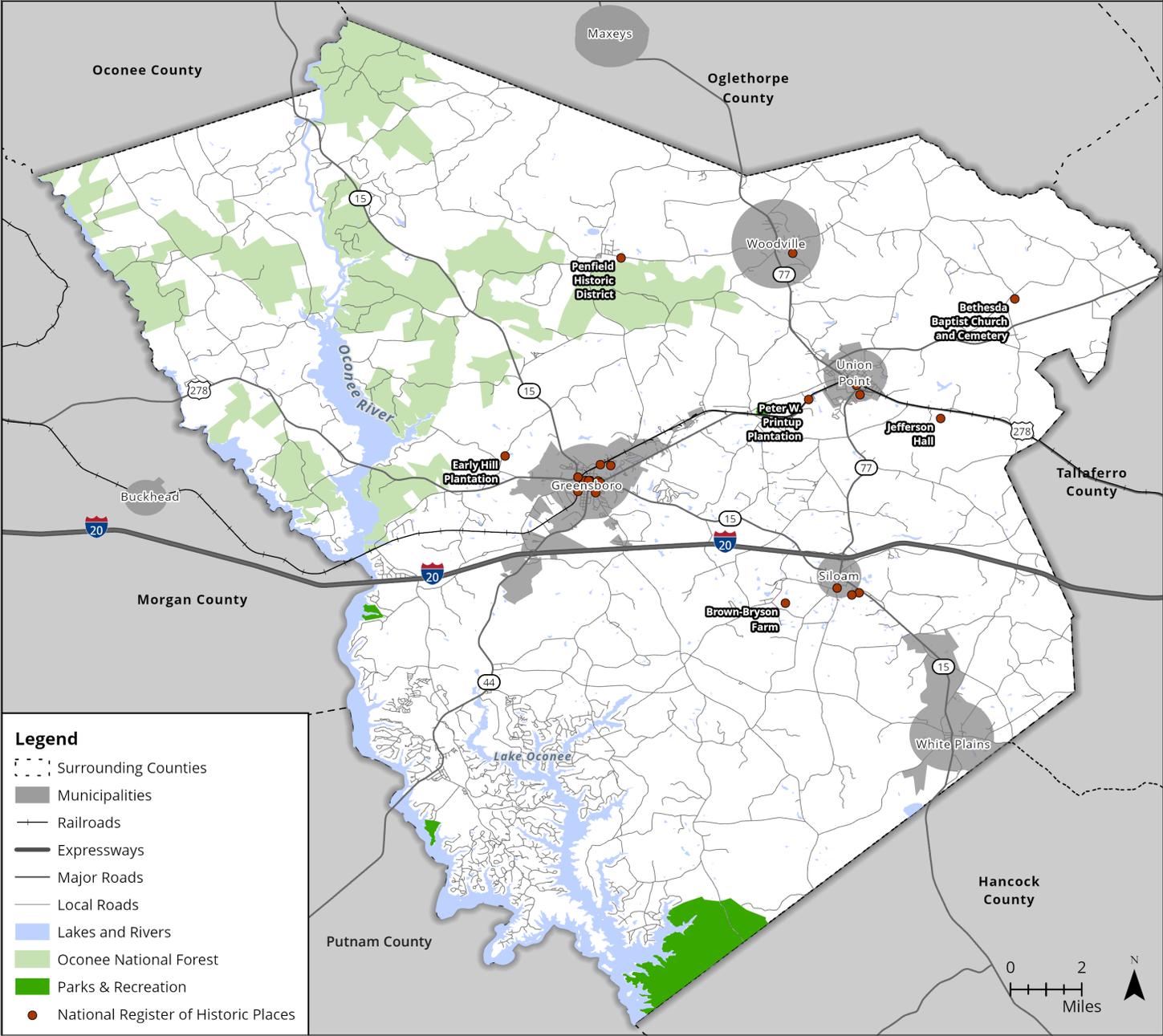
to make their programs accessible to the Hispanic community. They have a Language Specialist on staff to provide outreach and support to children and parents who do not speak English as their primary language.

Recreational Facilities

Greene County has an intergovernmental agreement with each local municipality to fund a special service district for recreational purposes. This arrangement allows the county to operate and maintain the Greene County Recreational Complex, located west of Union Point off US 278. The Recreational Complex offers a number of youth sports programs, such as basketball, football, softball, soccer, and cheerleading. The only other parks in the county are the Georgia Power-owned recreation areas on the lake, referenced in “3.2 Natural Resources” and any parks owned and managed by municipalities.

The Pete Nance Boys and Girls Club recently completed construction of a new clubhouse at Martin Luther King Drive in Greensboro. This space provides learning activities and study space for students from throughout the Greene County school district.

Map 9. Properties on the National Register of Historic Places, Greene County



Source: National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, September 2022

3.5 Transportation System

Greene County's federal and state highway transportation network provides direct connections to nearby communities and easy access to some of Georgia's major municipalities, including Atlanta, Athens, and Augusta. Most notably, Interstate 20 (I-20) traverses the county in an east-west direction with two interchanges at SR 44 and SR 77. Other important roadways include US 278 and SR 15. The Greene County Regional Airport provides regional services, supporting county business needs as well as travel needs of some County residents. Additional mobility options are available for pedestrians, cyclists, and those without access to a car.



Greene County Regional Airport

Roadways

Network

SR 44 connects I-20 to Greensboro, the Greene County seat, upon which it merges with US 278 before separating and continuing eastward north of Union Point. South of Greensboro, SR 44 moves southwest, serving as a major transportation route for businesses and residences in the southwestern quadrant of Greene County, eventually leading to Eatonton in Putnam County.

SR 77 travels north-south connecting I-20 with three of Greene County's municipalities: Union Point, Siloam, and White Plains.

US 278 travels through the county in an east-west direction, cutting through Greensboro and Union Point. The County has 40 railroad crossings. CSX Railroad also operates and runs through Greene County and is connected to Georgia's freight rail system that is operated by Norfolk Southern.

SR 15 traverses in a north-south direction, connecting Greene County to Athens/Clarke County to the north and the cities Siloam and White Plains, located in southeast Greene County.

Roadway Capacity

The County does not experience the traffic congestion typically seen in more developed counties but anticipates increased traffic volume due to the demand in residential and commercial development, particularly along SR 44 south of I-20. The intersection of SR 44 (Lake Oconee Parkway) and Linger Longer Road has seen a steady increase of average daily trips. From 2010 to 2019, the average daily trips count has increased from 12,300 daily trips to 16,700 daily trips. 68 percent of these daily trips are made by passenger cars. Traffic on SR 44 just south of I-20 has nearly doubled on average daily trips, from 6,840 daily trips in 2014 to 11,900 daily trips in 2020. (Georgia Department of Transportation's 2021 Traffic Analysis and Data Application).

Rail

The CSX Railroad runs through and operates in Greene County and is connected to Georgia's extensive rail system. The rail line enters Greene County heading westward out of Taliaferro County, running adjacent along US 278 and SR 44, passing through Union Point, north of the airport, and curbing around the northwest corner of downtown Greensboro before exiting the county by crossing Lake Oconee just north of I-20.

Regional Airport

In addition to its road network, Greene County operates a regional airport, located on US 278, approximately three miles northeast of downtown Greensboro. The airport has one runway that is 5,500 ft long. In 2005, the airport opened its terminal building, which includes car rental services, a pilots lounge, and Internet access. The airport supports recreational travel, aerial agricultural operations, flight training, emergency medical evacuation, and patient transfers. Recently, it has been experiencing an influx of recreational travel, and the current hangar supply has a waiting list. With Federal Aviation Administration funding, the County plans to expand its runway ramp and add more hangars to support current demand. The airport sees approximately 3,964 visitors annually. Its top five destinations are Atlanta, GA, Birmingham, AL, Brunswick, GA, Savannah, GA, and Washington D.C.

Other Transportation

Greene also has an on-demand transit system and some bicycle, pedestrian, and multi-use trail facilities.

The rural transit system is operated by Georgia Rural Transit and is part of the Section 5311 Rural Transportation Program, which is contracted by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). Georgia Rural Transit operates five passenger buses and provides improved

accessibility to community amenities, particularly for the county's senior and disabled population.

Bike and pedestrian facilities are largely located in the County's southwest quadrant and within or around the Reynolds development. Reynolds-Lake Oconee, alone, has approximately 21 miles of walking trails (*Reynolds-Lake Oconee website*). The Firefly Trail, discussed under transportation improvement projects, will provide a boost to bike/pedestrian facilities in northeast Greene County. Due to the rural nature of much of the county, most other pedestrian facilities are either incorporated as a part of private commercial and master planned developments.

Improvement Projects

The Firefly Trail is a planned 39-mile bike and pedestrian trail along SR 77 that will extend from Athens to Union Point, connecting Athens-Clarke, Oglethorpe, and Greene Counties. The historic rail line, known as the Athens Branch of the Georgia Railroad, branched off the still-active Augusta-to-Atlanta line in Union Point and passed through the towns of Woodville, Maxeys, Stephens, Crawford, Arnoldsville, and Winterville on its way to Athens.

The Firefly Trail model mile has been constructed inside the city limits of Union Point, extending from downtown to in front of the Greene County Primary School. Greene County, Union Point, and Woodville have collaborated to extend the Firefly Trail

from its current end point all the way to the County line. Almost five miles of the ten-foot wide concrete trail will be built. Future projects on the trail include replacing Woodville sidewalk segments with a ten-foot wide trail and extending the bridge in Union Point to downtown storefronts.

SR 44 is undergoing a road widening project, completed by the GDOT, with the construction time frame anticipated for 2025.

Reconstruction of the Old Eatonton Road Bridge, located in central Greene County, was recently completed. The reconstructed bridge restores connection to key areas that are well-positioned for future development.

Regular road maintenance is another key component of the County's transportation improvement projects.

The County also recently passed a Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST) and will be identifying specific projects to implement with the funding in late 2022.



Firefly Trail in front of Greene County Primary School

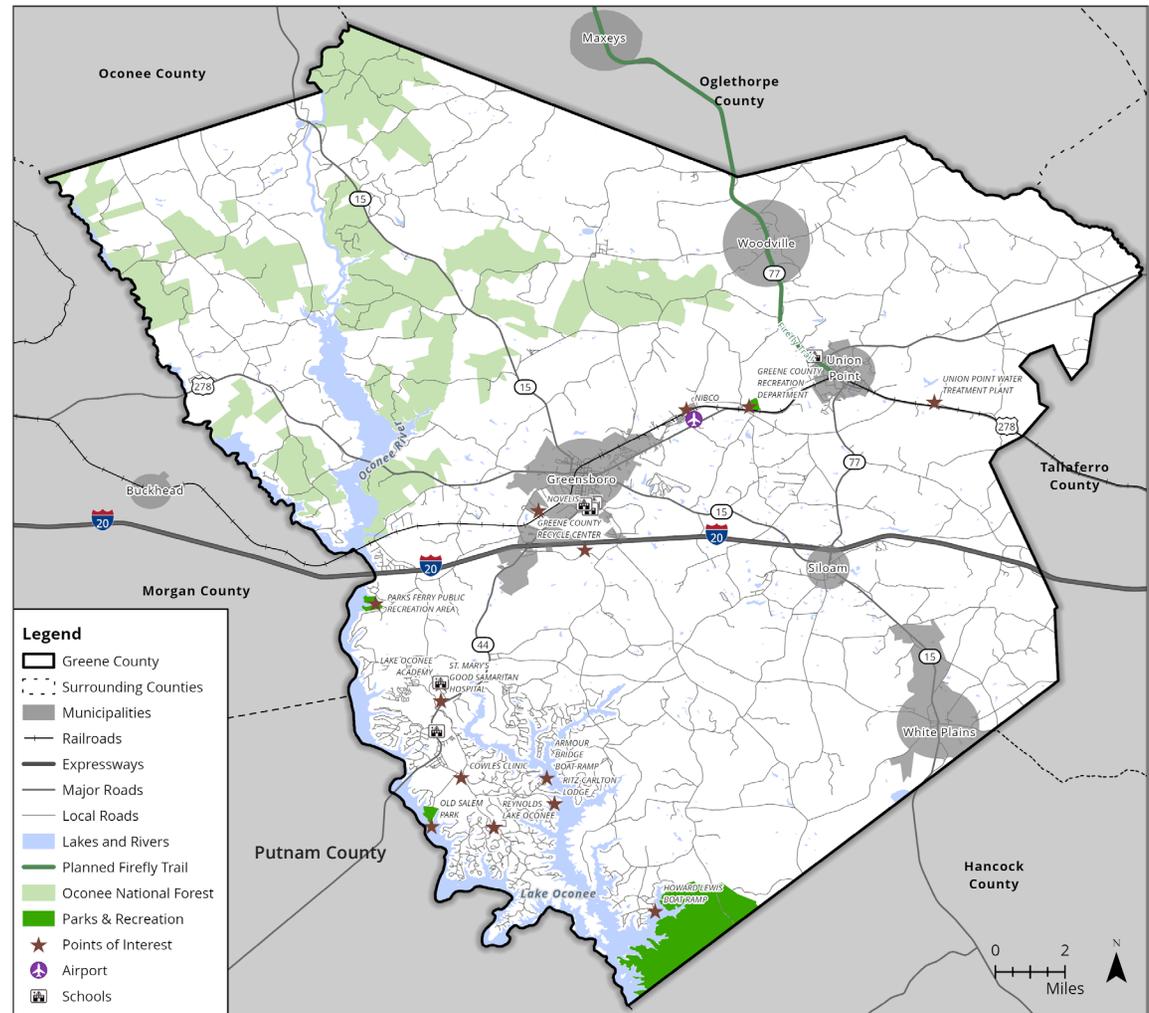
Related Transportation Plans

The Greene County Multi-Modal Transportation Plan was adopted in August 2007, which provided extensive data on its existing transportation facilities and recommendations for improvement. The following Goals and Objectives were established to guide the transportation decision-making process for Greene County:

- Maintain distinctive rural and suburban areas in the County
- Maintain Infrastructure ahead of needs
- Coordinate and balance land use and transportation decisions
- Maintain an efficient transportation system through access management
- Enhance the quality of life in downtown areas through transportation investment

During its community input process, the plan identified a multitude of suggested improvements such as widening lanes, passing lanes, improving intersections, and railroad crossing improvements.

Map 10. Major Roads and Key Destinations



Source: Greene County

3.6 Economic Development

This section provides an overview of Greene County's economic development landscape, which includes development and growth statistics, labor force conditions, top industries that reside in the county, and the economic impact of COVID-19. The County works closely with the Greene County Development Authority on economic development and development incentives. While the Development Authority does not have a strategic plan document, the County was a part of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission's Economic Recovery and Resilience Plan, which analyzed the economic impact of COVID-19 on the County and includes recommendations for recovery.

Economic Centers

Greene County has three principal areas of commercial/retail activities: the Lake Oconee area, the Greensboro area (I-20, Exit 130), and the Union Point/Siloam areas (including I-20, Exit 138).

The Greene County Industrial Park (GCIP) is a 200-acre industrial park located at the corner of South Main Street (SR 44) and Stewart Parkway within the City of Greensboro, 2 miles from Exit 130 on I-20. The GCIP is operated and owned by the County. The park is served with electricity, natural gas, water, sewer and Internet/communication services. The GCIP is the home of seven manufacturers, distributors and fulfillment centers which employ over 250 employees, according to the Greene County Economic Development webpage.

Greene County Development Authority

The Greene County Development Authority, a State of Georgia constitutionally authorized Authority created in 1963 and amended in 1986, consists of six members: two appointed by the Board of Commissioners of Greene County, two members by the mayor and council of the City of Greensboro, and two members appointed by the mayor and council of the City of Union Point.

The mission of the Greene County Development Authority is:

- To grow economic activity
- Enrich quality of life
- Support smart economic development opportunities
- Progressively market our logistics, financial, educational, and lifestyle resources to attract businesses which contribute to the creation of quality jobs/increased tax base
- Enhance sustainability and better our Greene County community

Local Incentives

The Greene County Development Authority offers and recommends incentive proposals based on an evaluation of the economic impact of development projects:

- Expedited Plan Review and Permitting: Greene County, Greensboro, and Union Point offer expedited plan reviews for land disturbance and building permits for economic development projects.
- Property Tax Exemptions: Georgia grants local communities the authority to provide a reduction or exemption on property taxes if approved by votes in a local referendum.
- Project Financing: The Development Authority can provide long-term, low-interest rate financing for construction or manufacturing facility improvements through Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRB) or Industrial Development Bonds (IDBs).
- Property Tax Incentives: Property tax incentives such as tax abatements or deferments are offered on a case-by-case basis.

Partnerships

Greene County is active in multiple partnerships to monitor and collaborate on economic development:

- Greene County Economic Development Department
- Greene County Chamber of Commerce
- Georgia Power
- Rayle EMC
- Tri-County Gas Service
- Northeast Georgia Regional Commission
- Greene County Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Greene County Airport Advisory Committee
- Athens Technical College
- Lake Country Board of Realtors Association

Top Industries

In the 2021 Fiscal Year, the Daniel Corporation, known as Reynolds-Lake Oconee, was the top employer of Greene County, accounting for 10.8 percent of total jobs (766 employees). Other top employers include the Greene County Board of Education, The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee, the Greene County Board of Commissioners, Nibco, Publix Supermarket, Good Samaritan Hospital, a2b Fulfillment, Novelis, and Quail International (Greene County 2021 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report).

According to the Greene County Labor Area Profile (Georgia Department of Labor, May 2022), the County houses approximately 518 industries, summarized below:

1. Private Sector: 484
2. Service Provider (utilities, professional/technical services, retail trade, etc): 354
3. Goods-Producing: 87
4. Government: 34
5. Unclassified: 43

Labor Force Participation

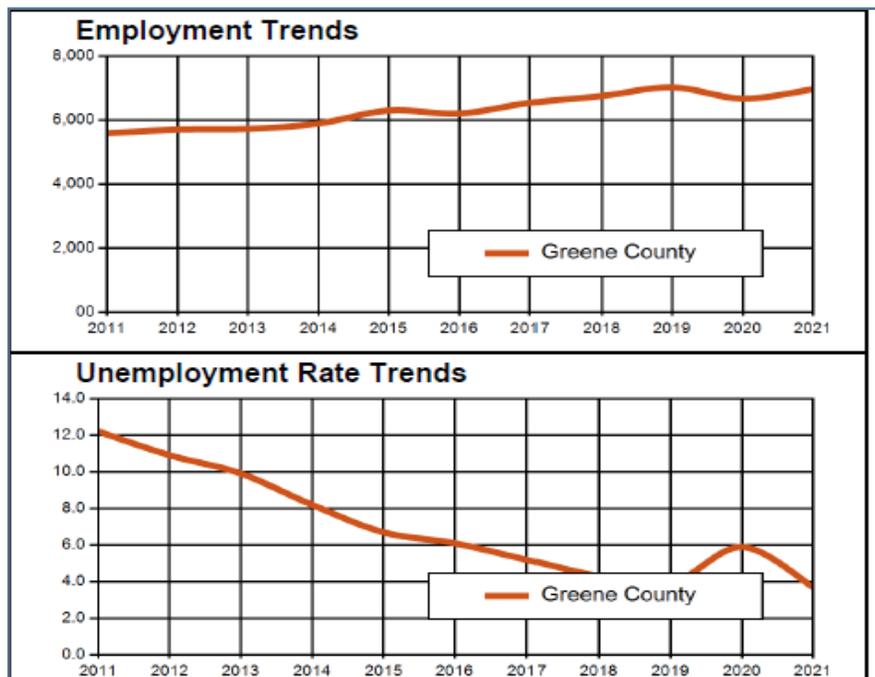
According to the 2022 Georgia Power Community Profile (which pulls data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics), the County has 7,231 people actively in the labor force, with a 3.7 percent unemployment rate. The unemployment rate has decreased from 12 percent in 2011 to 3.2 percent in 2021 as demonstrated in Figure 4.

Approximately 32.2 percent of the labor force has obtained their highest level of education as a High School Graduate/General Educational Development (GED), 18.7 percent attended some college, 14.1 percent attended some high school, and 12.9 percent have a degree from a 4-year college, and 9.8 percent have completed post-graduate studies.

Over half of the current labor force (50.5 percent) is employed in management/financial, professional, and sales industries, while 22.7 percent are employed in services, and 26.8 percent are employed in farming, construction, and production (*Georgia Power Community Profile*).

Workforce development is integral to the mission of the Greene County Development Authority. As macroeconomic changes influence the types of jobs available in the county and the region, it is important to develop the skills of the local workforce to match the employment demand. Athens Technical College, located in the City of Greensboro, is a key partner for workforce development activities.

Figure 4. Employment Trends



Source: Georgia Department of Labor, Greene County Area Labor Profile, May 2022

COVID-19 Response

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission released its Economic Recovery and Resilience Plan in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The report documents the economic impacts of the pandemic using the Chmura Vulnerability Score. The County had a score of 103, which is much higher than the score for the state overall, which was 85. The County experienced a 2.7 percent decrease in taxable retail activity. The plan identifies the following action items related to economic development:

- Improve and expand broadband access in the region
- Build public, private, and non-profit partnerships to foster a skilled and dedicated workforce
- Promote and cultivation of authentic communities
- Maintain competitiveness at state, national, and global levels

3.7 Broadband

Internet access is crucial for the livelihood of residents, businesses, and essential workers in rural areas.

The 2022 Georgia Broadband Availability Map shows that much of Greene County is unserved by broadband internet. Of Greene County's total population, 8,181 people have broadband access, while 4,248 (or 34 percent of the total population) are unserved. Map 11 shows the geographic distribution of broadband access in the county. The following areas are well-served:

- Lake Oconee area
- Greensboro
- Woodville
- Union Point
- Along I-20 near the border with Taliaferro County

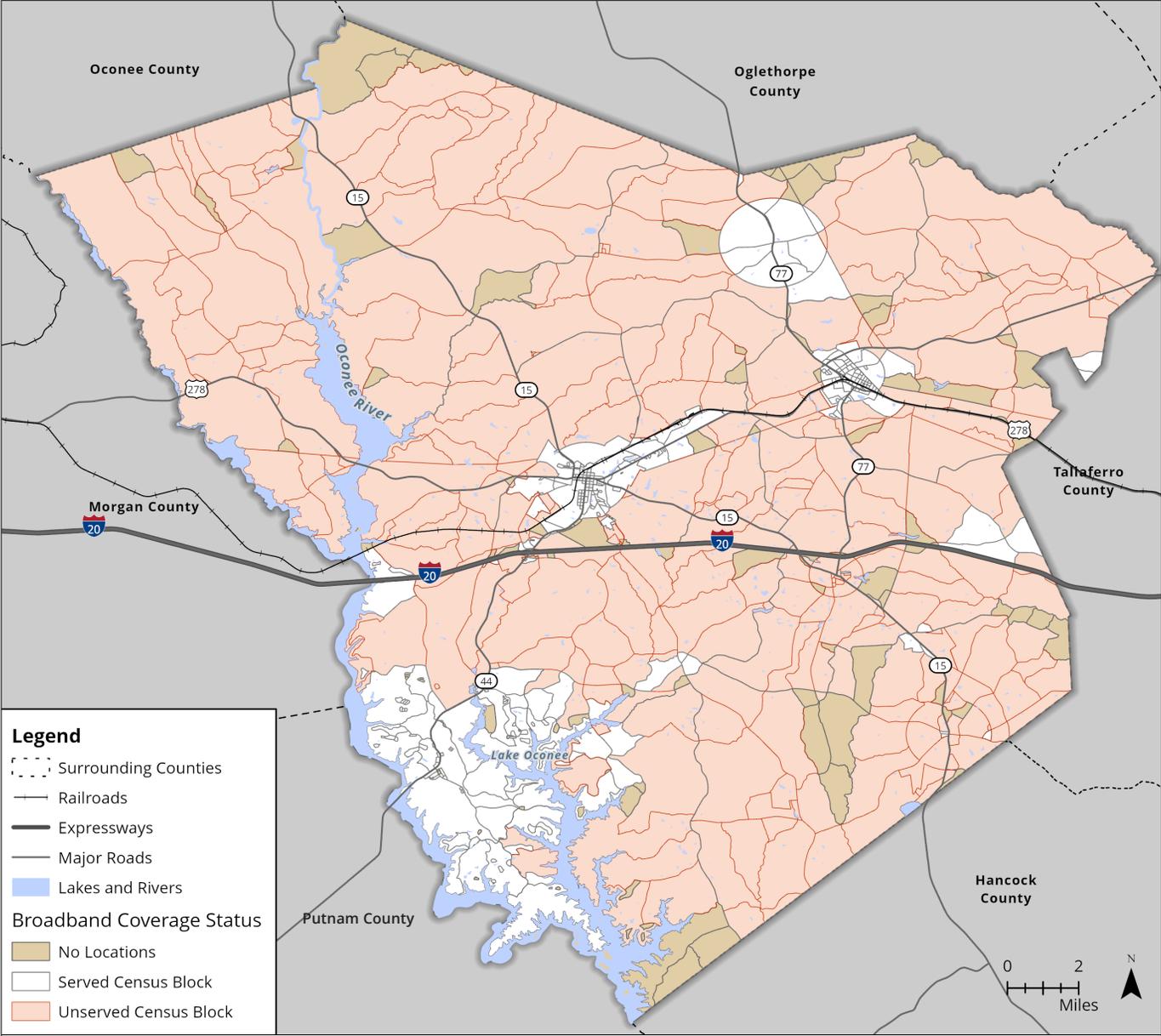
Broadband access is a consistent issue within the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission, where Greene County is located. According to the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission's Economic Recovery and Resilience Plan, over half of the counties located within the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission report that at least one fourth of their population does not have broadband access, including: Jasper (63 percent), Elbert (26 percent), Madison (32 percent), Morgan (58 percent), and Oglethorpe (48 percent).

In 2018, Georgia launched its Broadband Ready program, which established a framework for future government funding for broadband infrastructure. Another state program for broadband is the Broadband Ready Site Designation Program, through which the local government works with the Georgia Department of Economic

Development to promote facilities and developments as local community assets to encourage economic development and attract technology industries. Greene County and the Greene County Development Authority should collaborate on achieving these designations in order to make Greene County more business friendly.

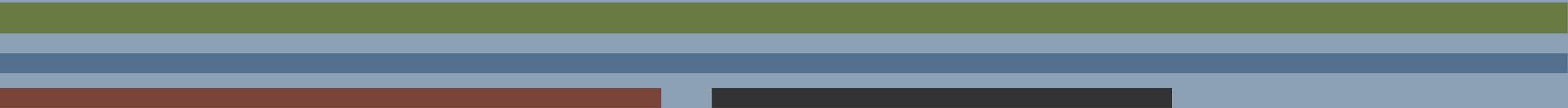
In 2021, Greene County submitted an application to the American Rescue Plan Act's (ARPA) Coronavirus Capital Project Funds program but did not score high enough to receive funding. In August 2022, the state of Georgia announced a new round of federal funding, anticipated at \$240 million, to expand broadband throughout the state. Greene County can take steps now, such as adopting the Broadband Ready model ordinance, to position itself to be more competitive for funding selections.

Map 11. Broadband Coverage, Greene County



Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs, 2022 Georgia Broadband Availability Data. Statistics are based on a fixed, terrestrial broadband definition of 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up. "Served" Census Blocks are those where broadband service is available to more than 80% of the locations in a Census Block. The coverage percentages correspond to the number of served locations within the Census Block compared to the overall number of locations (homes and businesses) in the Census Block.

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4.0 Land Use Policy & Patterns



4.1 Introduction

This section provides a snapshot of current land use conditions and trends in Greene County. It begins with a review of Greene County zoning districts, which dictate requirements and limitations for developing within each district. Zoning plays a key role in implementing the vision depicted in the Comprehensive Plan and the Future Land Use Map. A high-level depiction of current land uses and development trends follows, providing a backdrop for planning where future land use change and development are expected and/or desired to go. Review of zoning and location of zoning districts in combination with current land uses provides insight on future development that is likely and potential gaps in zoning and or land use policy that may be needed to accommodate desired growth.

4.2 Zoning

The Greene County Zoning Ordinance contains a variety of zoning districts that support agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use development. Zoning is an important tool for achieving the community's vision for future development. This section provides an overview of existing zoning districts and how they are currently distributed throughout the county.

Table 2 on page 46 summarizes the County's zoning districts by type and primary allowed uses. Map 12 on page 47 shows the distribution of zoning districts across the county.

Agricultural

The majority of Greene County is zoned **A1 Agricultural District** (Intensity Farming). The A1 district is intended to accommodate a range of agricultural uses and maintain a rural character of open space including farmland and large lot residential uses. Detached single-family dwellings, including manufactured homes, are allowed on lots having a minimum size of 10 acres in major subdivisions (generally, defined as more than 3 lots) and 1.5 acres elsewhere. Agricultural-oriented retail uses are also allowed, such as farmers markets and feed and seed stores, as well as other limited commercial uses that serve local residences and farms (e.g., gas stations and day care centers) or that are appropriate for large, outdoor gatherings (e.g., special events including festivals and fairs).

The **A2 Agricultural-Residential District** also allows agricultural uses, but they are limited to smaller-scale activities intended for personal use that exclude commercial animal production or operations. Detached single-family uses, including manufactured homes, require a minimum lot size of 1.5 acres. A2 zoned properties are primarily located adjacent to, and in between, the Cities of Greensboro, Siloam, and Union Point and also along the SR77 corridor between Union Point and Woodville.

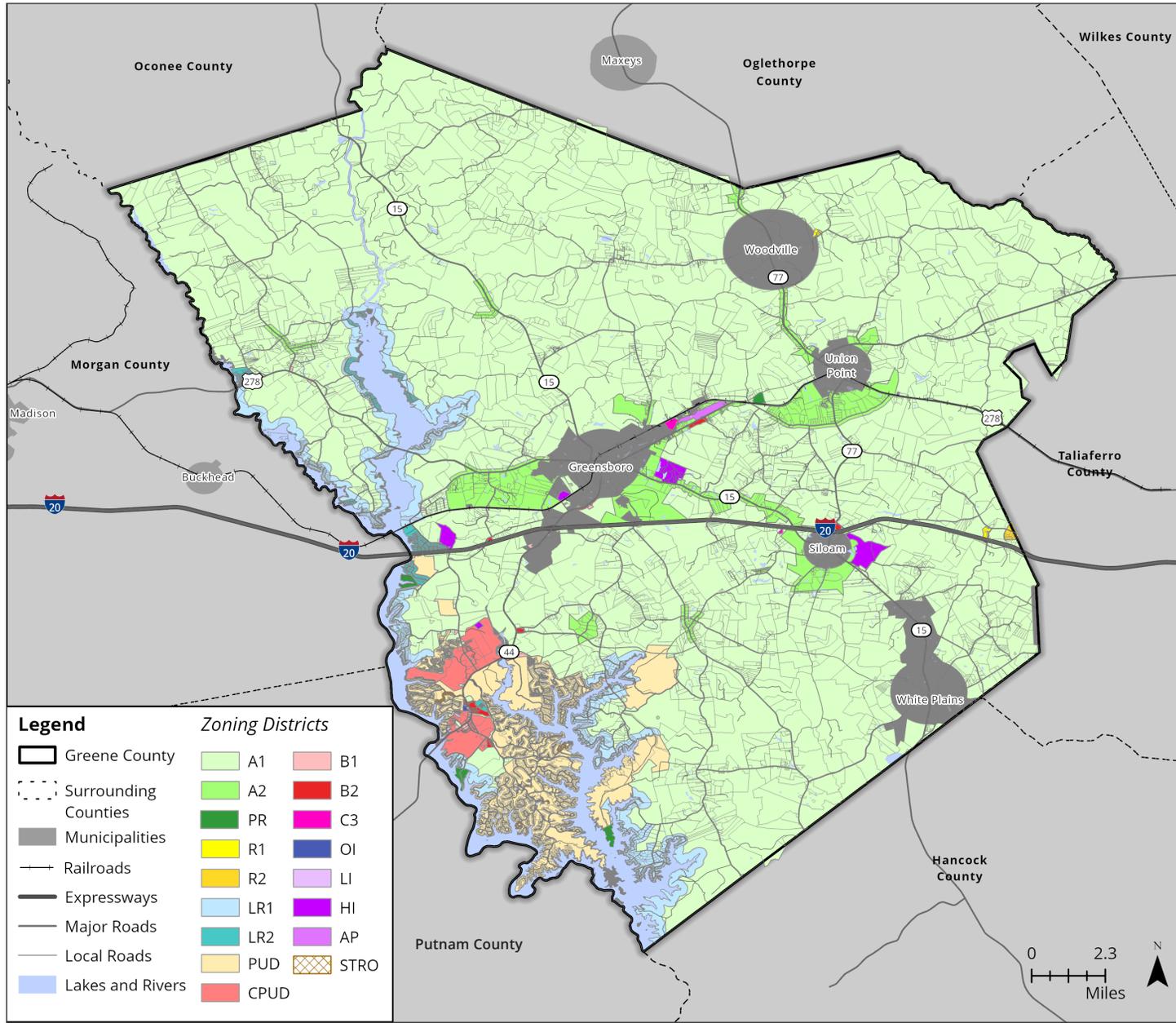
Limited farming activities and keeping of horses for personal use are also allowed in the PUD Planned Unit Development District (see below for more information on PUDs) in the form of a "homestead farm", which is a single-family lot of at least three acres in size.

Table 2. Zoning Districts, Greene County

Zoning Districts	Primary Allowed Uses
Agricultural Districts	
A1 Agricultural (Intensive Farming)	Agricultural and single-family dwellings
A2 Agricultural Residential	
Residential Districts	
R1 Low-Density Residential	Single-family dwellings
R2 Medium-Density Residential	Single-family dwellings, duplexes
R3 Multi-Family Residential	Single-family dwellings, duplexes, townhomes, condominiums, apartments, manufactured home parks, boarding houses
LR1 Lakeshore Single-Family Residential/ Recreation	Single-family dwellings
LR2 Lakeshore Multi-Family Residential/ Recreation	Single-family dwellings, duplexes, townhomes, condominiums
Master Planned Development Districts	
PUD Planned Unit Development	Single-family dwellings, duplexes, townhomes, condominiums, apartments
CPUD Commercial Planned Unit Development	Residential, retail and office uses
Commercial Districts	
B1 Neighborhood Convenience Commercial	Neighborhood-oriented retail and services
B2 General Commercial Highway Oriented	Community-wide retail and services
C3 Heavy Commercial	Larger-scale commercial uses requiring outdoor storage areas
OI Office-Institutional	Office, medical, institutional (educational, religious, civic), residential care facilities
LC Lakeshore Commercial	Dining, hotels, marinas, waterway-oriented retail
Industrial Districts	
LI Light Industrial	Limited manufacturing, repair, assembly or processing plants; industrial parks
H-I Heavy Industrial	Warehousing, storage, heavy industry (likely to produce emissions, odors, dust, smoke, gas, noise, vibration or traffic)
Special or Overlay Districts	
AP Airport Corridor District	Greene County Regional Airport
LP Lakeshore Park District	Forestry, passive recreation uses, tent camping
STRO Short-Term Rental Overlay District	Dwelling units (single-family home, duplex or single unit in a multi-family dwelling) rented as overnight lodging for up to 30 consecutive nights

Source: Greene County Code of Ordinances, Municode. October 2022.

Map 12. Zoning, Greene County



Source: Greene County Department of Building and Zoning (August 2022)

*Note: PR-Public Recreation is a residual designation that is no longer in the Zoning Ordinance.

Residential

Residential zoning districts for conventionally built single-family uses are classified as **low-density (R1)** and **medium density (R2)**, although both districts share the same minimum lot area requirements. These range from about one-third of an acre to 1.5 acres, depending on availability of water and sewer infrastructure. The R2 District allows smaller lot widths and building setbacks as well as manufactured homes on individual lots and duplexes. The **R3 Multi-Family Residential District** allows higher density residential uses, including detached single-family homes on lots smaller than those allowed in R1 and R2, as well as duplexes, townhomes, apartments, manufactured home parks, and boarding houses.

With the exception of a cluster of R1 zoned properties adjacent to the City of Woodville and some R1 and R2 zoned properties near the eastern County border and I-20 interchange, there are no other properties zoned as one of the three standard residential classifications in the county. Numerous residential lakefront properties are zoned **LR1 Lakeshore Single-Family Residential/Recreation District** or **LR2 Lakeshore Multi-Family Residential/Recreation District**. These classifications generally mirror the use and lot size requirements of the R1 and R3 districts but also allow boat docks. The LR2 district does not allow apartments. In addition, these properties are not part of master planned residential communities.

Master Planned Development Commercial and Industrial

The **PUD - Planned Unit Development District** accommodates large-scale residential developments (minimum 50 acre project size) intended to present varied dwelling types, ample open space, and local-serving recreation and public uses in a unified design. Minimum open space requirements relate to the density of a project, with more open space required the higher the density, which is capped at four dwelling units per acre. PUD zoned districts are found south of I-20 in close proximity to Lake Oconee and are primarily represented by the Reynolds Lake Oconee developments. Within these PUD areas are located four clusters of lakefront condominium units that are also designated as Short-Term Rental Overlay Districts, which allows for and regulates short-term rentals.

The **CPUD - Commercial Planned Unit Development District** accommodates both residential and commercial uses in master-planned mixed use developments, including **Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND)** developments, on a minimum project area of 50 acres. A TND is compact village-style development that includes a variety of housing types and pedestrian-accessible public spaces and shops. CPUD zoned properties are located in the southwest part of the county with access off SR44 and in close proximity to established and developing lake-oriented residential communities.

Commercial uses in the county can also be supported by several commercial zoning districts that allow for a range in type and intensity of uses. These include the **B1 Neighborhood Convenience Commercial District**, the **B2 - General Commercial Highway Oriented District**, the **C3 Heavy Commercial District** (which allows uses that require large areas for outdoor storage and sales, as opposed to the B1 and B2 districts), and the **OI - Office-Institutional District**. The **LC - Lakeshore Commercial District** allows for commercial uses oriented to waterways, including marinas, restaurants, specialty shops, and hotels. Commercial zoning districts currently have limited application in the County and are dispersed along some road corridors such as US 278. The greatest concentration includes mostly B1 and B2 zoned properties located off of SR 44 adjacent to the PUD and CPUD zoned areas around Reynolds.

Industrial zoning classifications include the **LI - Light Industrial District** and the **H-I Heavy Industrial District**. There are few industrial zoned properties in unincorporated Greene County, all of which are zoned H-I and are in close proximity to I-20.

4.3 Current Land Use

Specialized Districts

Specialized districts are the **AP - Airport Corridor District** and the **LP - Lakeshore Park District**. The AP District restricts the height of structures and trees in the vicinity of the Greene County Regional Airport, and the LP District is used to designate public parks and recreation areas.

The section depicts the current land uses throughout Greene County. It is important to compare current land uses and the current Future Land Use Map from the 2018 Comprehensive Plan to identify potential areas for re-designation to ensure future developments align with the 2022 Comprehensive Plan's vision and goals. Greene County is primarily comprised of rural land and agricultural uses; however, it has experienced an increased demand for residential and commercial development over the last several years, particularly in the southwestern quadrant of the county, near the I-20 interchange and around Lake Oconee.

Currently, the County does not maintain up-to-date records for existing land uses. This section provides an overview of current land uses based on Google Earth (year 2022) aerial imagery review as well as a County tour completed in August 2022.

Agricultural and Recreation

The north and east portions of Greene County are characterized by large, rural lots with agricultural uses such as farming and production. These areas are used for hunting, farming, and camping. The northwest portion of the County features campgrounds, and conservation sites used for hunting. Agricultural farms are located sporadically along SR 77 from I-20 to Woodville.

The Greene County Recreation Department is located off of Old Union Point Road and SR 44 and is the only recreational facility in the county. However, a new planned tournament field complex is poised to be a part of a future growth activity center on Meadow Crest Rd.

The northeast portion of the county features a large recreation site, the Durham Off-Road Resort, a 6,000-acre facility near Union Point providing dirt tracks for recreational vehicles. The site has 14 tracks and 150 miles of trails, along with RV sites, cabins, camping areas and a retail shop (*Durham Off-Road Resort Official Website*). Some events have gathered more than 7,000 riders to the site.

Oconee National Forest

The Oconee National Forest contains 867,000 acres of forest and 850 miles of trails. The forest encompasses much of the northwest portion of the county, with several popular campgrounds for campers desiring proximity to Lake Oconee. Scull Shoals Experimental Forest is located within the forest and features popular walking trails. There are several designated areas for hunting and fishing, such as Dyar's Pasture and Fishing Creek Farms.

Residential

Subdivisions with single-family detached homes are the primary form of residential development throughout the county. In recent years, several subdivision projects have been constructed near Lake Oconee that feature estate-style homes. One example is the Del Webb development, which is a 55+ senior community located directly north of Lake Oconee and Reynolds Lake Oconee on Carey Station Road. The estate-style subdivisions typically offer various amenities such as golf courses, open green space, and trails.

Outside of the estate-style developments, single-family residences tend to be smaller, with large setbacks. Manufactured homes are found in some areas on the lake where they were previously permitted; the LR-1 zoning district no longer permits manufactured homes.

Commercial

The majority of commercial and retail uses in the county are located along SR 44, or Lake Oconee Parkway, south of Greensboro. Notable stores and restaurants are located at Meadow Crest Road, including such businesses as Tru by Hilton, Home Depot, and Chick-fil-a. Further south along SR 44, the Lake Oconee Village is home to several commercial uses including a Publix and some restaurants, such as Amici Lake Oconee and PJ's Coffee. Other notable commercial uses are located within municipalities.

The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee, is the most notable commercial use in the County, accounting for many of the County's jobs and the bulk of its hotel/motel revenue. The hotel is a major destination and is located on a road off Lake Oconee Trail which connects to the Publix shopping center via Linger Longer Road.

Office

Clusters of specialty medical offices are located along SR 44 near St. Mary's Good Samaritan Hospital and within the City of Greensboro. Assisted care facilities are also located near these medical office clusters. The Cowles Clinic on Linger Longer Road is another significant medical complex in Greene County. Currently, there is a low supply of primary care doctor offices, pediatric offices, and urgent care facilities in the county. Residents typically travel outside of Greene County for primary care doctors, pediatricians, and emergency care.

Professional offices, such as contractors, law offices, and leasing companies are also located along the SR 44 corridor near the Publix Supermarket Center and down to Linger Longer Road.

Industrial

The Greene County Industrial Park, located within the City of Greensboro, is owned and operated by the Greene County Development Authority. There are currently some industrial businesses in Union Point. A textile mill previously served as a major

employer in Union Point but is no longer in business. In Siloam, a quarry is operational.

Institutional

Several of Greene County's institutional uses, which include government facilities, schools, hospitals, and religious buildings, are concentrated along Carey Station Road, south of the City of Greensboro. St. Mary's Good Samaritan Hospital, a 25-bed acute care critical access hospital which offers general surgery and 24-hr emergency medical department, is located on Carey Station Road, near the Del Webb Development. Greene County Fire Station 9 is located one mile north of St. Mary's Good Samaritan Hospital on Carey Station Road.

The County operates five staffed Emergency Services Facilities. Three stations (11, 12, and 13) include a staffed ambulance crew for emergency medical services and a staffed fire engine crew for fire protection services. The two additional stations (9 and 10) include staffed engine crews for fire protection services. The Greene County Government offices, Sheriff's Office, and Health Department are located within a mile of the Greensboro Historic Downtown District, along the intersection of SR 44 and US 278.

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4.4 Development Trends

Lake Oconee Academy is located on Carey Station Road. It is a kindergarten to twelfth grade, blue-ribbon designated charter school, with high demand for students to attend as younger families move into Greene County. The Greene County Primary School is located on SR 77 in Union Point, and the Greene County High School and Carson Middle School are located adjacent to each other on South Main Street in Greensboro.

Religious buildings such as churches are located around the center of Greene County, near the City of Greensboro, and along the nearby U.S. highways, State highways, and arterial roads.



Residential Trends

As noted in Section 2, housing development has been relatively steady over the last five years, between 2017 and 2022, with the number of single-family residential approvals typically hovering in the 230 to 260 per year range. There was a large spike in 2021, with 414 single-family residential permits issued. As of August 2022, 250 single-family residential permits have been issued this year, as shown in Table 3. The county anticipates fast housing growth to continue given the current seller's market and other external influences.

Commercial Trends

Commercial growth in recent years has been concentrated near SR 44 (Lake Oconee Parkway). The most recent approved major retail development was a Dunkin Donuts, which will be located west of SR 44 on Salem Walk Drive. Lake Oconee Village, located at SR 44 and Linger Longer Road, is a major hub of commercial activity. The Publix that anchors the shopping center completed a major expansion in 2017. Further south along SR 44, the upcoming Airabella mixed-use development has commercial components, including 125 hotel rooms, 45,000 square feet of loft/office, 101,500 square feet of retail, and a 45,000-square foot grocery store. One other area that has been attracting commercial and industrial investment is around Union Point. For instance, a logistics company called American Remanufacturing Company moved its operations to the Universal Rundle Building on Industrial Boulevard in 2020.

Table 3. County Building Permits, 2017 - 2022

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
Single-Family Residence	232	258	244	236	414	250	1,634
Manufactured Home	8	4	12	17	32	7	80
Commercial	10	7	6	10	6	5	44
Residential Remodel/ Addition	115	128	145	218	225	129	960
Commercial Remodel/ Addition	0	2	13	14	27	10	66
Total Permits by Year	2,082	1,611	1,266	1,661	2,281	1,400	10,301

Source: Greene County Department of Building and Zoning

Major Recent Developments

Many of the County's major recent developments are concentrated at SR 44 and Carey Station Road (on the northern side of Lake Oconee). A couple of large developments were also recently completed in the northeast area of the county, along US 278 near the county border with Morgan County. Table 4 and Map 13 detail the major recent and upcoming developments.

Per the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, "Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs) are large-scale developments that are likely to have regional effects beyond the local government jurisdiction in which they are located." The Georgia Planning Act of 1989 requires that such developments go through a distinct review process. Prior to 2022, the last DRI in Greene County was filed in 2008. In 2022 alone, Greene County has filed five DRIs, and the County is anticipating at least one additional DRI to be filed by the end of 2022. One of these DRIs was withdrawn after the original application was approved. The uptick in DRIs demonstrates increasing interest in Greene County investment.

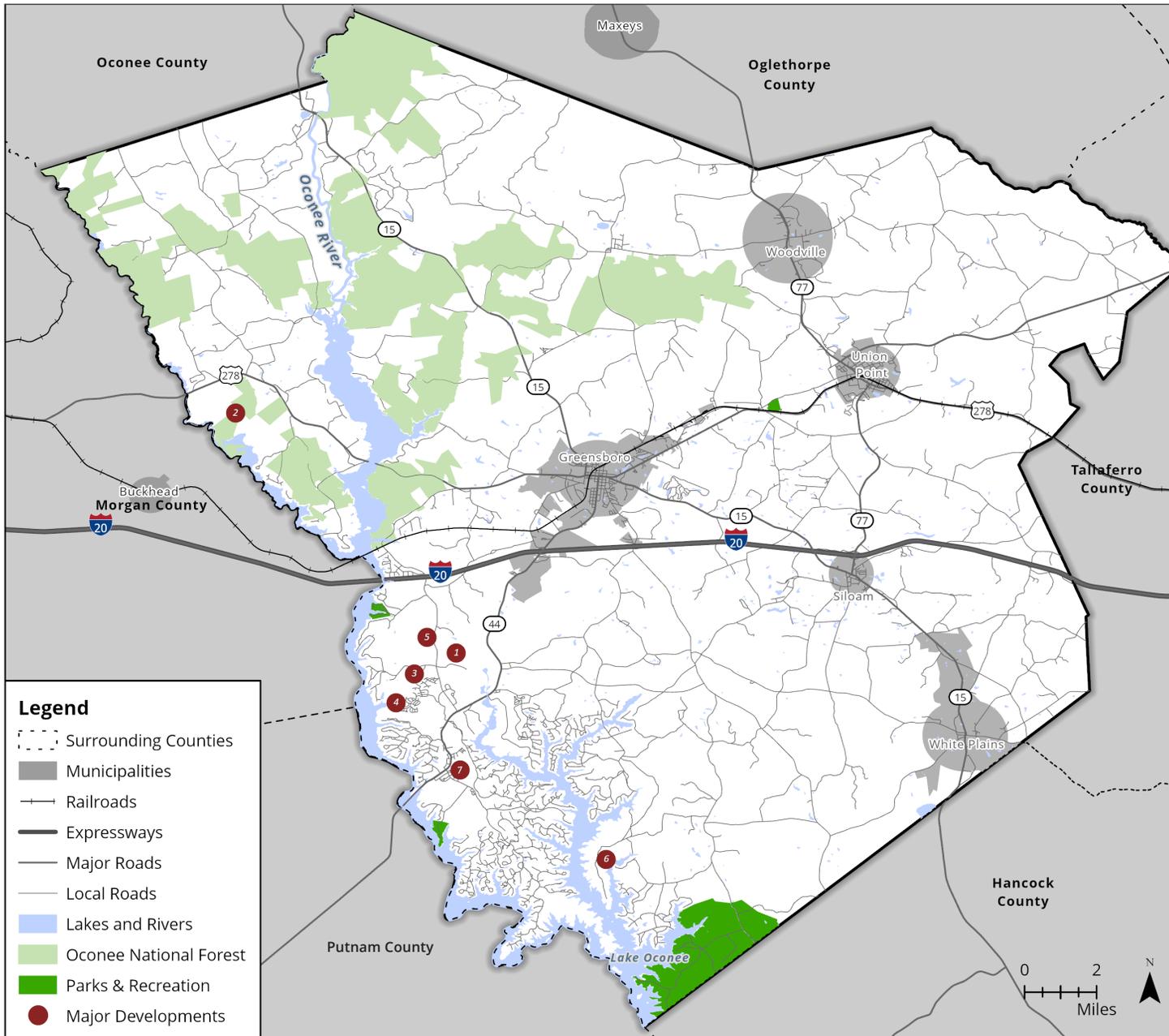
Large developments are typically negotiated through the County's PUD-Planned Unit Development or CPUD-Commercial Planned Unit Development zoning districts, as discussed under zoning. These development mechanisms are effective for bringing high-quality designed subdivisions and mixed-use centers. Most of the recent major

Table 4. Major Recent or Upcoming Developments in Greene County

Map ID	Name	Description	Project Size (acres)	Housing Units	DRI Status	DRI Approval Date	Estimated Completion Date
1	Dyer Tract	Housing Development - Large	79	222	Yes	8/1/22	2026
2	TBD (name unknown)	Housing Development - Large	500	350	Not yet filed		
3	Del Webb Lake Oconee Extension	Housing Development - Large	50.5	122	Yes	7/29/22	2027
4	Sunset Bluff	Housing Development - Small	75	65	No		
5	Carey Station	Housing Development - Large	137	342	Yes	4/22/22	2023
6	The Homesteads	Housing Development - Large	1,300	86	No		
7	Airabella	Mixed-Use Development (single-family, apartments, hotel)	137	132 single-family, 85 townhomes, 470 apartments	Yes		2023 (Phase 1) 2026 (Phase 2)

Source: Greene County Department of Building and Zoning, Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Developments of Regional Impact Reports

Map 13. Major or Recent Upcoming Developments in Greene County



Source: Greene County Department of Building and Zoning, Northeast Regional Commission Developments of Regional Impact Reports

developments were planned through the PUD mechanism, except for the Airabella upcoming development, which is an approved C-PUD. Other than the presence of commercial uses, C-PUDs also have differing requirements than PUDs with respect to the open space provisions.

Other Development Trends

Several recent developments were built to cater to the active adult (55+) and senior (65+) populations. Del Webb is one such community that is age restricted to 55 and older. This community is one of many resort-style neighborhoods in the vicinity of Lake Oconee. It offers boat ramps, tennis courts, and many other amenities. The Reynolds Lake Oconee PUD is also expanding and attracting people from all over the country to its lakefront and golf course-adjacent properties.

The Lake Oconee Village area, which is part of the overall Reynolds Lake Oconee master plan, is a mixed-use center with a variety of retail options, as well as live-work buildings which feature ground-floor office with second floors devoted to living space for those who work in the buildings. This area will likely continue to grow and offer unique experiences and gathering places. Just south of Lake Oconee Village, the County and a developer have identified a future land area called “Harbor Town” that has the potential for unique development. As of the date of this report, the specific components of Harbor Town have not been planned.

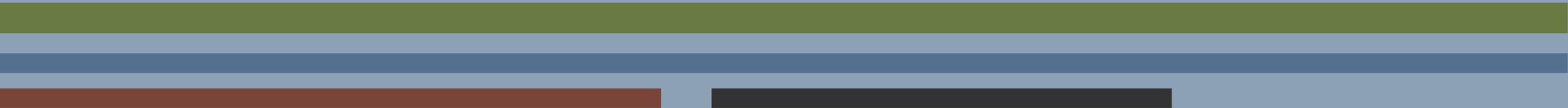
A future growth activity center is planned near Home Depot on Meadow Crest Road. The Greene County Board of Education has announced plans to construct a new elementary school on Meadow Crest Road that will initially house pre-k through third grade but later expand to include fourth and fifth grade students as well. Residential development that includes single-family detached homes and likely some multi-family facilities will likely extend from the new school that will serve as an anchor for growth.

Just north of I-20 on the north-west portion of the county is likely to attract residential development. As noted in the table and on the map on the previous pages, an upcoming DRI with 350 units is expected to develop in this area. Another development called Sun Lake, which was an approved DRI, was also planned for this area, but the developer withdrew the application.

Ongoing investment in the Firefly Trail may also spur growth and development near Woodville and Union Point.

There is also expressed interest in industrial growth near Siloam, particularly in close proximity to the I-20 interchange.

The comprehensive planning update process will be one avenue through which the County will begin to explore visioning ideas with community members.



5.0 Key Trends & Takeaways

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Key Trends and Takeaways

This section provides a summary of the existing conditions review. Trends over the last few years are informative for what is to come in Greene County. As County stakeholders and the public participate in visioning activities throughout this planning process, it will be important to have a similar foundation of data and facts from which to form opinions. The following key trends and takeaways will drive conversations around desirable and undesirable growth patterns. These topics will help the County to identify short-term priorities and actions to address those priorities in the next five years.

Trends

- Greene County's population is aging, with the 65 and up population comprising 30 percent of the total population.
- The number of children has declined over the last decade. The youth population share is smaller in Greene County than it is in surrounding counties.
- Relative to the region, Greene County has a larger minority population, with the exception of Taliaferro and Hancock Counties. In addition, the percentage of Hispanic or Latino residents (7 percent) is slightly higher than rates in surrounding counties.
- The per capita income in Greene County has increased by almost \$10,000 over the past decade.
- There has been a significant increase in educational attainment from 2010. The percentage of the 25-years or older population with a high school degree increased from 75 percent to 87 percent.
- Population growth over past two decades has become more concentrated in the unincorporated county and the City of Greensboro.
- Single-family housing is the dominant housing type in the county.
- The housing occupancy rate is much lower in the unincorporated county compared to the incorporated municipalities, a reflection of Greene County as a location for second homes near and around Lake Oconee. Greene County's occupancy rate is 67 percent, while the local municipalities' occupancy rates range from 82 percent to 91 percent.
- The availability of new homes (constructed in 2021 or 2022) at a lower price point is significantly less than the overall number of homes that have come on the market within the past 12 months (as of September 2022). Just 3 percent of new homes sold for less than \$400,000.
- Several large-scale housing developments have been approved, constituting almost 2,000 new construction housing units in the next few years. Much of this development is in proximity to SR 44 and Carey Station Road.

Key Takeaways

- The unincorporated County's population is anticipated to double within the next 20 years. The County needs to accommodate over 8,000 new housing units in the next 20 years.
- The majority of unincorporated Greene County's housing stock (61 percent) was built before 1990. The County may consider a program to assist residents with upgrades such as weatherization and water-efficient plumbing. Rehabilitation and/or replacement of housing units must be considered when planning for the total number of needed housing units through 2043.
- The majority of jobs in the county are filled by people who do not live in the County (63 percent). The workforce commutes primarily from Putnam County, Morgan County, and Athens-Clarke County. Local residents in Greene are also commuting outwards, primarily to these same three counties.
- Many of the County's major corridors are zoned agricultural. As population and housing continues to increase, there is likely to be an increasing desire to change zoning on some of these key corridors to a higher intensity use.
- Projections show a 42 percent increase in jobs within Greene County over the next 20 years. Service producing jobs are forecasted to grow by 50 percent, while goods producing jobs are only forecasted to grow by 8 percent. Specifically, farm employment and manufacturing are expected to experience losses.
- To facilitate future growth, the County will need to work closely with Union Point, Greensboro, or private water/sewer providers to facilitate water infrastructure to support that growth.
- Broadband expansion is essential to support residential and commercial growth as well as to enhance the quality of life of current county residents. Over 4,000 people (approximately 34 percent of Greene's total population) are not served by broadband.
- The Upper Oconee Regional Water Plan does not anticipate groundwater supply gaps through 2050, but there is a potential for surface water supply shortages due to a number of factors, such as land use change and pollution susceptibility. A "Water Waste" ordinance, which focus on limiting excessive use of water for irrigation or other purposes, is an effective tool employed in other communities which Greene County may consider.
- The Town Creek and Richland Creek streams are on the Georgia Environmental Protection Division's 303(d) list for impairments. In addition to permitted wastewater discharges near these water bodies, nonpoint source pollution is also a concern. Greene County may seek policy interventions to limit possible sources of nonpoint source pollution.

Looking Ahead

Greene County's future development relies on the seeds planted today. As more jobs and housing are projected over the next 20 years, it is crucial to determine the appropriate places in the community to accommodate new forms of residential, commercial, and industrial uses. The Reynolds/Lake Oconee area will continue to be a driver of growth, but other parts of the county will likely see development pressure as well. The Firefly Trail, which will run from Union Point through Woodville and continue north to Athens, will induce demand for bicycle-friendly amenities and tourism-related uses. As revitalization and new development occurs, the county will need to work closely with municipal partners to ensure that it maintains its high-quality services.

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