



Effingham County
2020-2040 Joint Comprehensive Plan



DRAFT

Effingham County & the cities of Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield 2020-2040 Joint Comprehensive Plan

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Table of Contents

1 Plan Overview	3
1.1 Purpose	4
1.2 Scope	5
1.3 Methodology	6
2 Needs and Opportunities	8
2.1 Public Input	9
2.2 Needs and Opportunities	10
3 Community Vision and Goals	14
3.1 Effingham County	16
3.2 Guyton	18
3.3 Rincon	20
3.4 Springfield	22
3.5 Quality Community Objectives	24
4 Land Use	26
4.1 Future Land Use	27
5 Housing	38
5.1 Housing Types	40
5.2 Occupancy	41
5.3 Housing Costs	42
5.4 Cost Burdened Housing	42
5.5 Condition of Housing	43
5.6 Jobs / Housing Balance	43
6 Transportation	45
6.1 Roads and Highways	50
6.2 Road Network Hierarchy	51
6.3 Alternative Modes of Transportation	52
7 Coastal Vulnerability and Resilience	53
7.1 Natural Hazards	58
7.2 Storm Surge and Development	58
7.3 Vegetation/Open Water Buffers	60
7.4 Vulnerable Populations	60
7.5 Income and Poverty Level	69
7.6 Means of Transportation	69
7.7 Housing Type	69

8 Economic Development82
 8.1 Economic Base84
 8.2 Unemployment Rate.....85
 8.3 Occupation85
 8.4 Class of Labor Force and Places of Employment86
 8.5 Workforce Development Issues87

9 Broadband.....88

10 Community Work Program 94
 10.1 Short Term Work Program.....95
 10.2 Report of Accomplishments112

Appendix 1: SWOT 130

Appendix 2: Effingham County CIE 134

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The State of Georgia has instituted minimum standards and procedures to provide a framework for the development, management, and implementation of local comprehensive plans. They reflect an important interest of the state: maintaining healthy and economically vibrant cities and counties that are vital to the state’s economic prosperity.

City and county comprehensive planning should be conducted in the context of Georgia’s strong and vibrant intergovernmental system that clearly recognizes the important role cities and counties play in fostering the state’s image as an attractive place to invest, conduct business, and raise families.

Comprehensive plans are fact-based and create an environment of predictability for business and industry, property owners, investors, and residents. Plans are important for many local government functions from emergency management to land use to economic development. Comprehensive plans are thorough in explaining relationships between issues, which enhances coordination across those issues.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan for Effingham County and the cities of Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield 2020-2040 contains goals, policies, and strategies to address challenges and leverage strengths. The plan also includes a five-year work program with specific steps to be taken to usher in economic development, combat blight, improve facilities, and provide access to the area’s most tangible resources. The work program identified partners to collaborate on those efforts. Some of the efforts included are ongoing in current programs, while others require new efforts and actions to bring them into reality. When viewed in its entirety, the plan provides direction for ensuring the viability of the county’s and cities’ futures.

As stated in the standards and procedures for local comprehensive planning, it is essential that local governments recognize that:

- Assets can be accentuated and improved
- Liabilities can be mitigated and changed over time
- Potential can be sought after and developed

Overview of Communities

Effingham County, spanning 483 square miles along the Georgia/South Carolina border just northwest of Savannah, is the fourth of Georgia's eight original counties. Europeans first settled in the area in 1734 after arriving from Germany. The county was largely abandoned after their community, named Ebenezer, was left destroyed following British occupation during the Revolutionary War and again after Sherman's March to the Sea during the Civil War. Jerusalem Lutheran Church, built in 1769, is the oldest church standing in Georgia. The site, added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1974, is located in the unincorporated area of the county where Ebenezer once was. After facing hard times through most of the 19th century, the South Bound Railroad came through Effingham County in the late 1800s, giving the county the boost it needed to kick start its economy and form the communities that remain today. Effingham County has a total population of 62,190, the 38th highest population out of 159 counties in Georgia. The county covers 483 square miles, 5.2 of which are water.

Effingham County contains three incorporated cities: Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield.

Guyton, situated 28 miles northwest of Savannah in western Effingham County, was founded in 1792, though it was called Whitesville at the time. The 3.22 square mile city sits on what was once a prime point along the Central of Georgia Railway between Macon and Savannah. Guyton was established in the in the early 1800s, and the city was officially incorporated in 1838. Guyton's 250-acre historic district was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1982.

Rincon is located in southeastern Effingham County. It was founded the 1750s and incorporated in 1927 after the railroads drew people west of Ebenezer. The city spans 8.861 square miles and is a short distance northwest of Savannah on Highway 21. Rincon experienced slow but steady growth through the mid-1900s, and growth increased beginning in the 1980s to make the city the commercial center of the county it serves as today.

Springfield was incorporated in 1838. The city spans 2.7 miles near the center of the county and has served as Effingham's county seat since its founding in 1799. Springfield claims the nickname "Heart of Effingham." Many historic buildings in Springfield were lost to fire by the 1960s, but some remain. The Effingham County Courthouse, built in 1908, and Effingham County Jail, built in 1935, are on the National Register of Historic Places.

Effingham County and the communities that lie within take pride in their history, their rural heritage, and the small town charm they continue to offer residents today.



I

PLAN OVERVIEW

- 1.1 Purpose
- 1.2 Scope
- 1.3 Methodology

PURPOSE

I.I



The Joint Comprehensive Plan for Effingham County and the cities of Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield is a living document that is updated and shaped by its leadership, staff, and citizens. It is a policy guide for making zoning and land use decisions as well as establishing practices for government officials and staff concerning the development of the communities. The Comprehensive Plan is a long-range plan to guide growth and influence the physical development of the county and the cities. The goals and policies within are designed to ensure the communities are prosperous, healthy, equitable, and resilient. The Comprehensive Plan is a five-year update as required by the “The Minimum Standards

and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning,” (Minimum Standards) adopted by Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The latest version of these standards can be found in O.C.G.A. Chapter 110-12-1, effective October 2018. In meeting these standards, this plan update enables the county and cities to maintain their Qualified Local Government (QLG) Status, making them eligible to receive certain types of state funding. This update reassesses where the county and cities are today and how they intend to develop. In accordance with the requirements of the Minimum Standards, the plan update presents a community vision, goals, and a work program designed to make the vision a reality.

SCOPE

I.2

In keeping with the Minimum Standards, this plan is presented in three components:

1 **COMMUNITY VISION** - which lays out the future vision and goals that the community wants to achieve in text and maps;

2 **NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES** - which provides a list of the various needs and opportunities that the community will address; and

3 **COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM** - which provides a 5-year Short Term Work Program designed to address the needs and opportunities. This program include activities, initiatives, programs, ordinances and administrative systems to be put into place or maintained to implement the plan.

In addition, the plan incorporates planning elements as defined by the DCA Minimum Standards that are important to shaping the future of Effingham County and the cities of Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield.

A Record of Accomplishments highlighting the success of the previous Short Term Work Program, a description of the public involvement process, and a report on how this plan is consistent with the Regional Water Plan and Environmental Planning Criteria are included in this report.



METHODOLOGY

I.3



The public outreach effort for this plan included an advertised public hearing hosted by the county and each city separately, followed by a series of three steering committee meetings hosted by each government to identify issues and set goals and a vision for the future of each community. Steering committee members were chosen by community leaders and included cross sections of elected officials, key staff, industry professionals, and members of the general public.

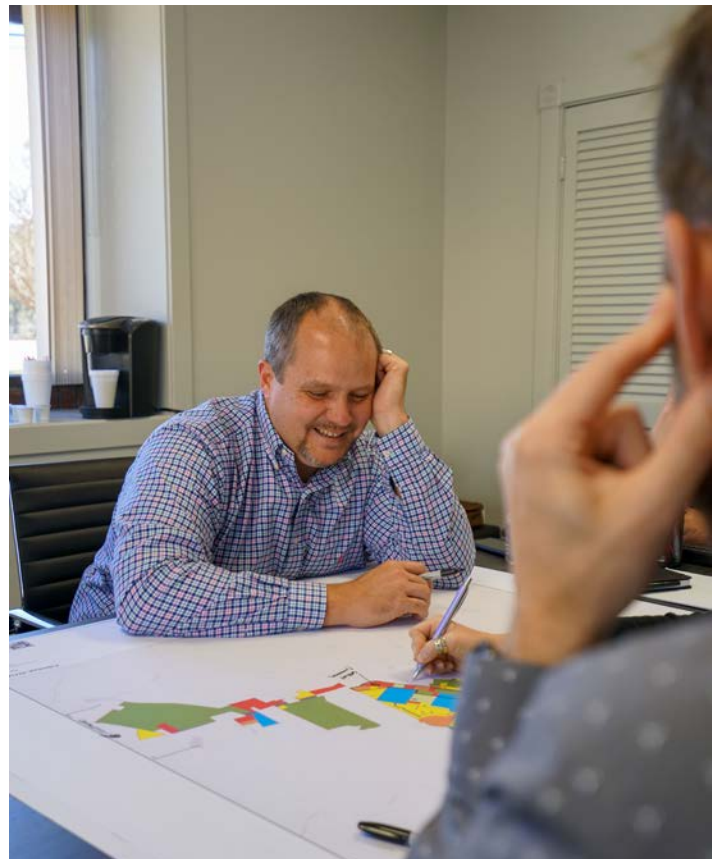
Goals of the Steering Committee

- Seek agreement on key issues.
- Help craft a common vision for the future.
- Provide guidance on action needed to achieve that vision.
- Affirm public input.



The process used to identify the goals, objectives, needs, and opportunities unique to the county and each city was based on indicators from the technical assessment and input collected as part of the citizen engagement process. Members of the public participated in this stage of the planning process by attending public meetings. The county and cities each held a series of three separate steering committee meetings, each of which had a specific focus. Stakeholders for each government set community goals at the first meeting, identified needs and opportunities using a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis at the second, and focused on land use at the third.

Public hearings were held as advertised for Effingham County on November 6, 2018 in the Commission Meeting Chambers at the Administrative Complex, in Guyton on November 13, 2018 in the council chambers, in Rincon on November 26, 2018 during the regular council meeting in the council chambers of the police department, and in Springfield on November 13, 2018 in the Springfield Council Room. These meetings briefed the community on the comprehensive planning process and invited public participation in developing the plan update.





County
Effingham
Georgia

Effingham County

NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES



TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:..... 2

NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES..... 9

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 110-12-1-.02 of the Georgia State Statutes requires local governments to evaluate their immediate needs and opportunities while addressing long-term goals. To understand Effingham County's needs and opportunities, public engagement sessions focused on asking questions and providing activities were used. The results have helped support the short-term goals identified by this chapter and the policy goals within the Future Land Use Element.

Effective public engagement and technical data analysis are paramount in identifying the needs and opportunities for a Comprehensive Plan. The public engagement plan, centered around professionally accepted planning and visioning practices, drives the goals within the plan. Stakeholder committee meetings, a public workshop, and a community engagement webpage with multiple interactive exercises were the cornerstones of the engagement plan.

The information provided was then analyzed and guided the description of needs and opportunities for the County.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Public participation is the most critical component of any comprehensive planning project. There must be ample and diverse opportunities for public engagement participation. This ensures that citizens and stakeholders are aware of the project, understand the planning process, and have an opportunity to comment on the community's vision, goals, objectives, and policies.

There were multiple public input opportunities held during the planning process. Two were focused on the stakeholders, including members of the County Commission, City officials, realtors, developers, residents, clergy, non-profit representatives, and design professionals. A workshop with strong online and in-person attendance was held for the general public's input. These forums were used to give citizens and other stakeholders the chance to offer feedback on the future of Effingham County. This included discussing the County's regulations, development environment, and anticipated changes.

During the first stakeholder's meeting, the following items were brought up by the participants:

- A need for low-income housing construction and the prevention of low-income family displacement
- Temporary Zoning or Conditional Uses
- More opportunities for administrative approvals
- Infrastructure sustainability
- Future wastewater needs to be coordinated through the Comprehensive Plan and ongoing master planning efforts
- Transportation connectivity between developments as the community grows
 - The need for increased roadways
 - Wayfinding to support tourism
 - There is a need to focus on smart growth and recognize the differences between Character Areas
- Consider tourism & development/economics as regional and leverage the location of Effingham
- A need for improved control of tax revenue payment collections
- Define community character
- Emphasis on preservation
- Industrial Development – The challenge is wanting job creation & growth while retaining character
- Limited options for local recreation activities, keeping people in a live, work & play environment

The first stakeholder meeting was followed up with a public workshop.

The public engaged in two activities. The first was a short group discussion on land uses, as described below:

- Whether buffer requirements should be according to use rather than zoning
- Whether the landscape area is equivalent to the required green space
- Transition between industrial, residential areas, and schools; how are the recent uses allowed between and around industrial complexes? Should the future land use map be adjusted to guide certain types of development toward more appropriate areas?
- The authority of the Industrial Authority versus the County's responsibility and limitations for zoning
- What are the effective methods of reducing industrial noise (distance buffer or vegetation)?

- Whether underground utilities are permitted in buffers
- Enforcing a freeze on growth in the County; the moratorium on multi-family housing
- Removing land use decision power from County Commissioners
- A review is needed of the brokerage agreement for the research tract (*Georgia Pacific Forest Research Tract, owned by ECIDA and being developed as Savannah Gateway Industrial Park*) regarding a warehousing versus manufacturing focus
- A need to prevent more warehouse construction due to a lack of net benefits, especially a lack of job opportunities, increases
- Undelivered promises of water (infrastructure?)
- Methods of wastewater treatment need to be updated
- Swampland and trees being cleared for housing development - this is perceived negatively
- A need for high-end jobs in manufacturing
- Land prices are increasing too quickly
- A need to attract kids to stay in Effingham County after they grow up
- School population sizes are growing too fast for the number of existing schools to keep up with

This was followed up with a voting activity. The public was provided with numerous boards relating to character, design, and the overall look and feel of development. The feedback from the meeting contributed to shaping the proposed changes to the land use districts and the understanding that additional attention was needed for the Character Areas.

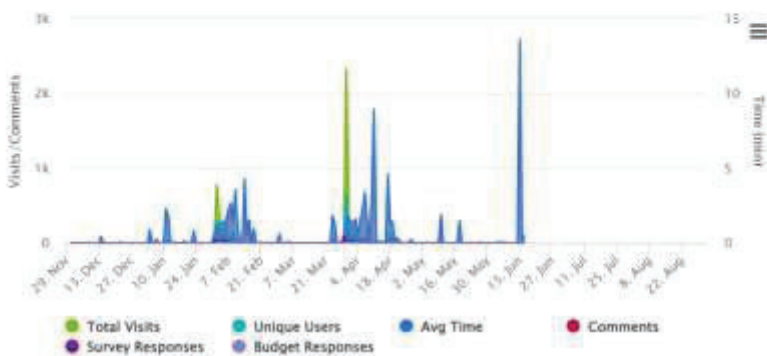
The second stakeholder meeting included a detailed evaluation of the proposed Character Areas to integrate the feedback received into the proposed Character Area and development Node map. The participants were instructed to answer specific questions about Character Area and Development Node characteristics. The results provided valuable and specific input to update the County's planning document assets.

In addition to the public meetings, an interactive website provided a platform for input throughout the project. The project website's public input activities included an interactive map and a survey. The survey explored the ideas and concerns regarding the future development of Effingham County. The map allowed respondents to mark specific points on the County's map and add comments. A total of 322 people responded to the survey, and the map received 161 unique comments – many comments received several votes in support or against the comment.

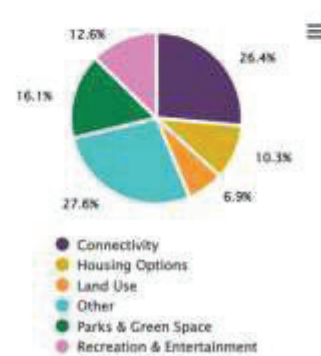
Stakeholder Engagement Summary



Stakeholder Engagement by Day

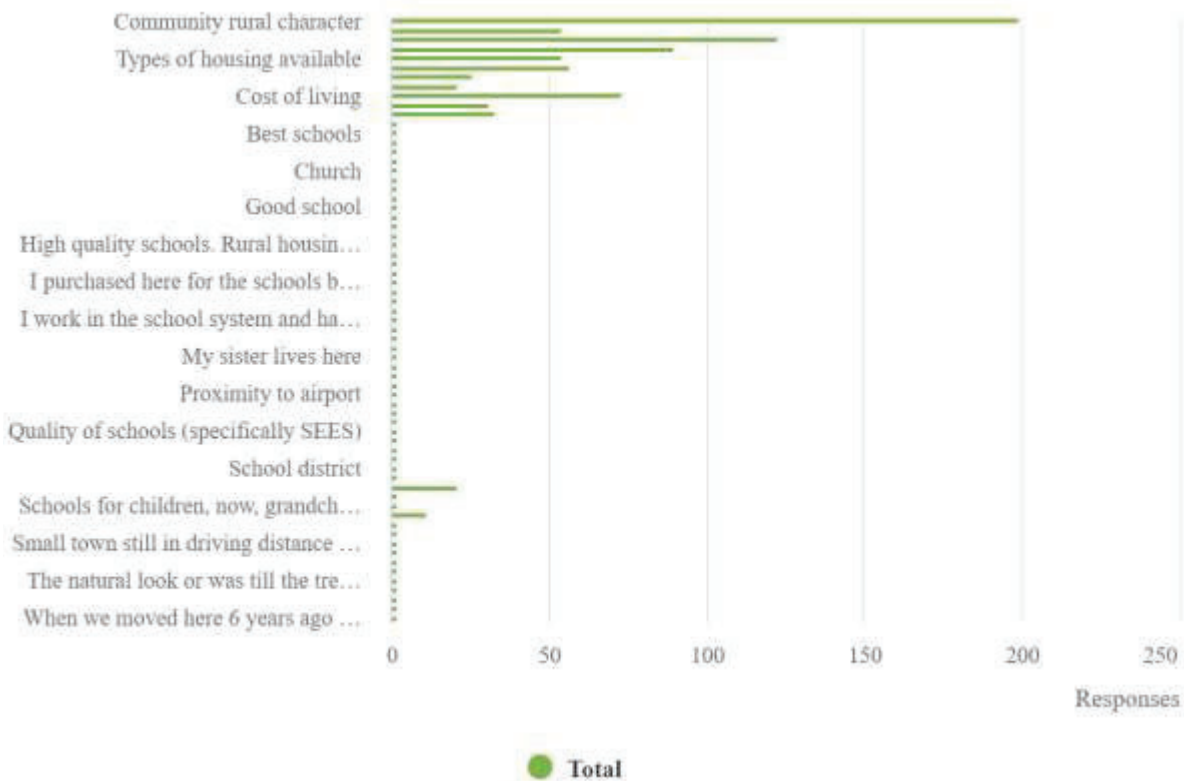
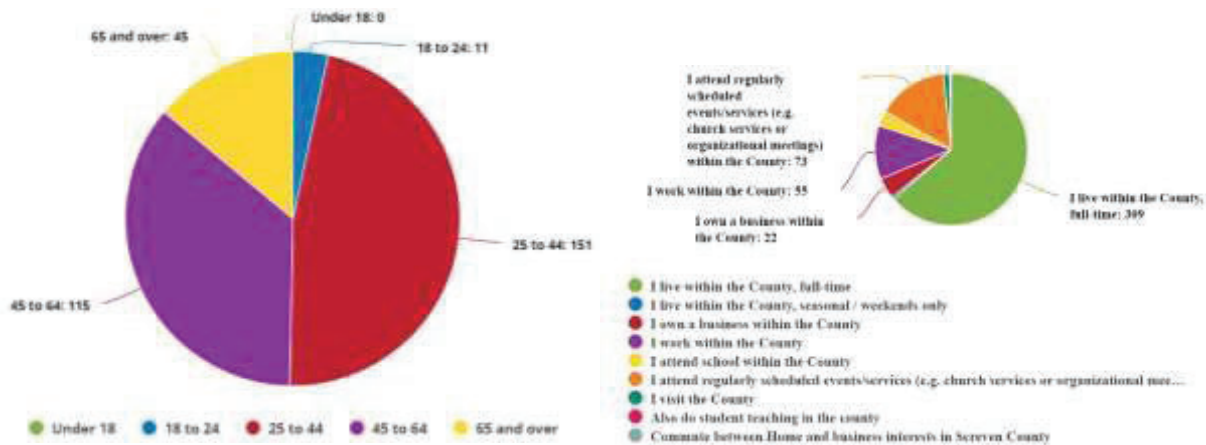


Comment Types



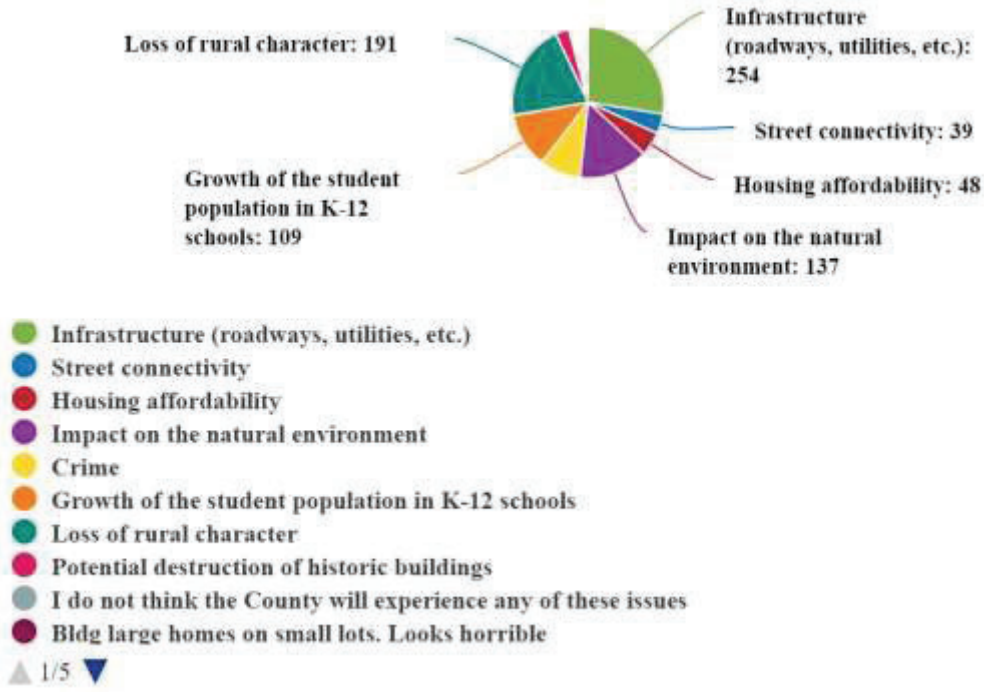
Respondent Demographics

Most survey respondents are residents, workers, and frequent visitors of Effingham County aged 25 to 44 and 45 to 64.



Future Concerns

In measuring the top Future Growth Concerns, the loss of the rural feeling, environmental impacts, growing K-12 school populations, infrastructure, and crime were the top five (5) concerns.



Housing

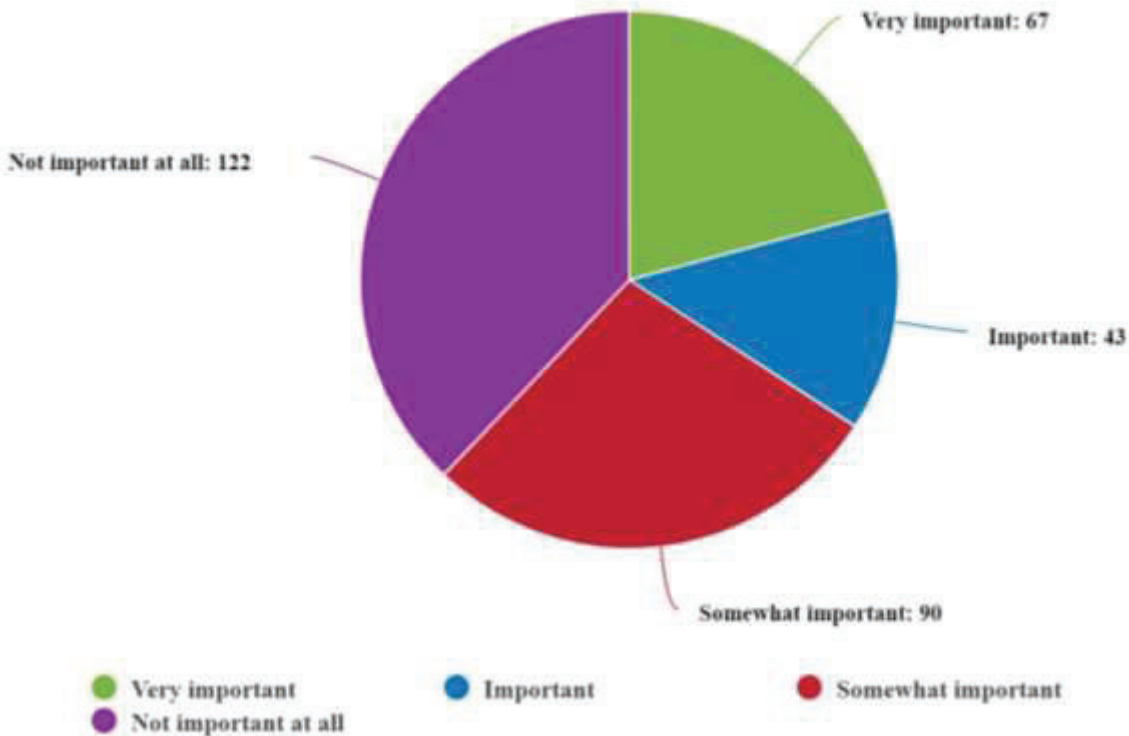
Even though the majority of survey respondents preferred single-family homes, nearly a quarter of respondents indicated that they were open to multi-family housing options such as townhomes, apartments, and condominiums. Based upon survey results, the location of multifamily housing development would be preferred in communities such as Springfield, Rincon, Guyton, Hodgeville, and southern parts of Effingham County near Chatham County. Housing affordability and workforce housing were marked at least "somewhat important" by more than half of the respondents.

Multifamily Housing – Locational Preferences

Q16. 12. Where in the County would you like to see multifamily housing (ie, duplexes, apartments, condos, etc)? If you can, specify communities, intersections, or roadway corridors.



Housing Affordability/Workforce Housing



Commercial Development

The community was also surveyed on the ideal Future Land Use Map locations where commercial development should be directed. As shown in the word cloud below, the three incorporated cities, Springfield, Rincon, and Guyton, were the most often suggested locations. Other guiding responses from the community included suggestions to locate along highway corridors.

Q15. 11. Where in the County would you like to see more increased commercial? If you can, specify communities, intersections, or roadway corridors.



INTERACTIVE MAP

The project website included an interactive map of Effingham County on which the public could comment on various locations within the County. Other visitors to the project website could vote up or down on each of the comments.

NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The process used to identify the Needs and Opportunities unique to the County was based on indicators from the technical assessment and input collected as part of the engagement process.

For the purpose of this chapter, a need is defined as something that is required or desired for a community's continued stability, and an opportunity is defined as a chance for progress or advancement. This was done using a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis. SWOT Analysis is a tool used to understand an organization's internal and external challenges and assets so that organizations may plan to benefit from their assets and overcome their challenges in the future. By completing this activity, stakeholders could collaborate and describe the unique situations their communities face. The items identified in each community's SWOT analysis can be found in the appendix of this document.

The needs and opportunities presented in this chapter represent consensus expressed by community members during the planning process's public involvement process, which included meetings, workshops, online engagement, focus groups, and interviews. These community concerns make up the Needs and Opportunities and set the direction for the Comprehensive Plan.

The public engagement process identified three areas of focus for the residents of Effingham County. These three topics represent shared ideas and concerns that came out of the survey, meetings, and listening to public input:

Environmental Stewardship

Preserving Rural Character

Balanced Growth

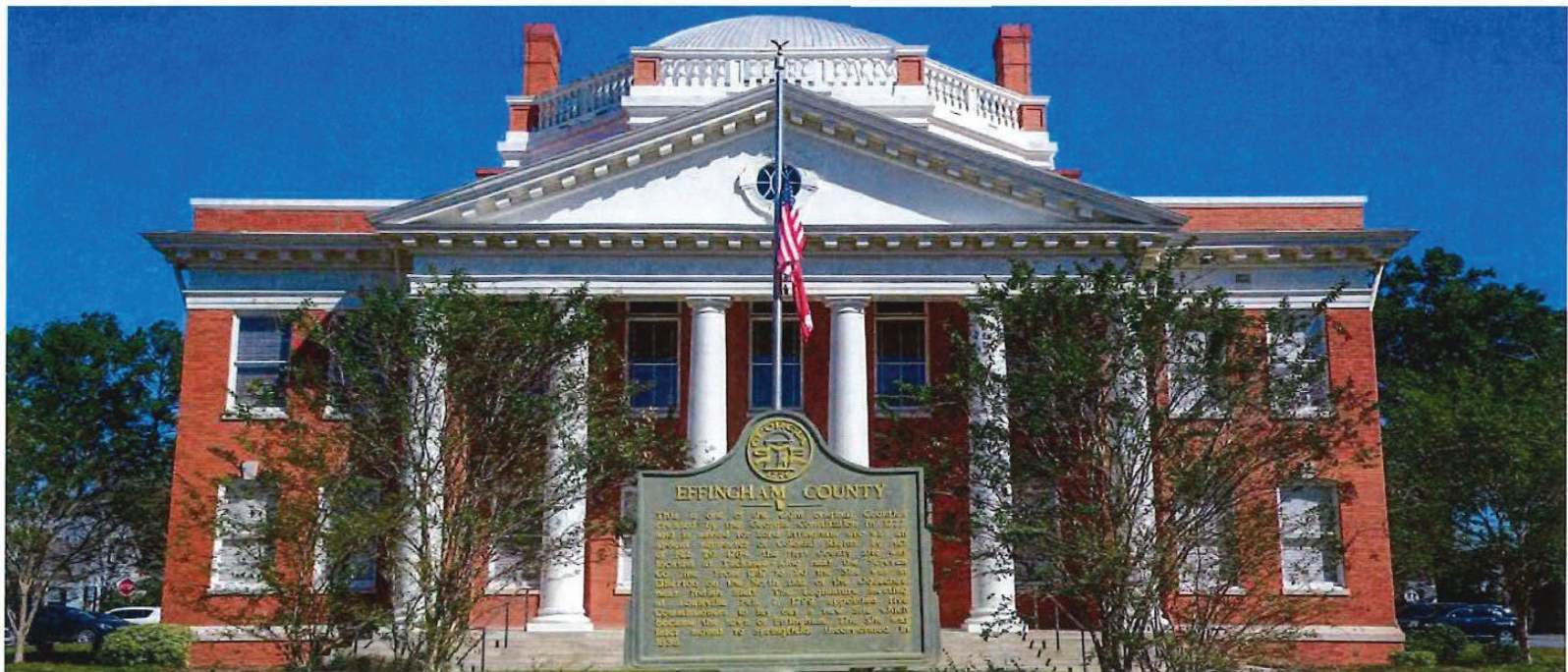
The following Needs & Opportunities relate to those themes.

Strengths: Rural lifestyle, availability of preferred housing options, schools, and cost of living

Weaknesses: Job creation, truck traffic, lack of recreational options, limited transportation connectivity

Opportunities: Interest in providing more housing-type options and mixed-use addresses the perception of a lack of character in developed areas.

Threats: As the County continues to develop, housing affordability will be impacted, as infrastructure sustainability and limitations,



EFFINGHAM COUNTY

Economic Development

- Opportunity for an industrial base to create local jobs given the proximity to Port of Savannah and military bases
- Opportunity to capture more investment from the film industry
- Need for job creation to grow the county's economy beyond that of a bedroom community
- Need to strive for a diverse mix of industrial and commercial development
- Opportunity to develop a strategy to attract more retail and restaurants in the county
- Opportunity to diversify the tax base
- Need to attract businesses that offer a variety of employment opportunities with livable wages
- Need to coordinate with Effingham County Chamber of Commerce to promote economic development
 - Need more flexibility in agricultural areas, allowing small businesses
 - Opportunity to explore opportunities for eco-tourism
 - Need to create public events, parks, trails, and activity centers to add quality of life for county residents and attract future development

Development Patterns

- Need for expansion of roadway system and growth and improvement of local road network
- Opportunity to steer growth toward existing infrastructure
- Need to maintain community character and agricultural heritage in the face of rapid population growth and commercial and residential development
- Need to create an updated Future Land Use Map to guide development based on available and proposed infrastructure (transportation, water, & sewer, and stormwater)
- Need to define all land uses to encourage development where appropriate and preservation where it is not. This includes updating current uses to categories and definitions that fit current trends
- Need to revise zoning laws to allow for mixed-use developments, affordable housing, and sustainable land-use practices
- Opportunity to Involve residents in planning processes to ensure that development meets local needs and

preferences

- Need to define where higher density is allowed clearly
- Need to develop a more balanced growth strategy to include residential and commercial areas
- Opportunity to develop infrastructure and connectivity based on alternative transportation such as bicycling and walking.
- Need to coordinate better and use transportation planning
- Opportunity to encourage nodal development that concentrates on density oriented toward major intersections
- Need to implement mixed-use opportunities through zoning strategies such as overlay districts and support of higher density and intensity of uses in these areas
- Need to implement Character Districts with guidance on the types and styles of development

Community

- Need to develop a skilled local workforce
- Need to prepare for changes in population including an aging demographic and a trend towards a growing demographic of families. Services must be adjusted to provide for these growing demographics
- Opportunity to create more art and culture-focused events to meet a current shortage of local entertainment options
- Opportunity to build strong networks of residents and local organizations to foster collaboration and civic participation
- Need to expand access to technology and internet services to enhance educational and economic opportunities
- Need to Ensure residents have access to healthcare, education, and public safety services
- Need to Improve public transportation and walkability to connect residents with jobs, schools, and services
- Need to develop parks, recreational facilities, and public gathering spaces to enhance community engagement and well-being

Conservation

- Need for green infrastructure to provide resiliency in the face of natural disasters
- Need to prioritize protection and maintenance of wetlands, floodplains, and forest areas
- Need to avoid loss of wetlands to encroaching development
- Need to ensure clean and sustainable water sources through improved watershed management and pollution control
- Opportunity to raise awareness about conservation issues and encourage community involvement in conservation efforts
- Need to promote practices that enhance environmental stewardship while supporting local economies
- Opportunity to collaborate with conservation organizations to access expertise, funding, and resources for initiatives
- Need to protect natural resources, especially from new industrial development
- Opportunity to encourage more compact development to preserve open space
- Opportunity to Implement community gardens, renewable energy projects, and conservation efforts to promote environmental stewardship.
- Opportunities to coordinate with local farmers to have conversations around their industry. Support training programs to encourage the advancement and continuation of farming in the County
- Opportunity to design and fund surface water for commercial and industrial development

Livability

- Opportunity to promote a strong sense of community, high quality of life, and small-town atmosphere
- Opportunity to include more mixed uses in future development
- Opportunity to expand bicycle and pedestrian trails and paths
- Need to invest in infrastructure that improves the quality of life for residents (sidewalks, street lighting, parks, etc.)
- Need to encourage affordable housing where reasonable by permitting increased residential density and a greater variety of residential options
- Opportunity to Implement sustainable practices that improve livability, such as energy-efficient buildings

and waste-reduction programs

- Need to ensure access to transitional and living houses needed to serve the aging
- Need to ensure quality is not sacrificed for quantity by implementing standards and regulations for housing
- Need to increase housing stock to meet the demands of future population growth
- Need to include military impact on the housing market by incorporating more transient (rental) housing options
- Opportunities to develop an understanding of growth projections and how much new housing is needed
- Need to identify rural areas to remain agricultural/low-density residential
- Need for more parks and recreation opportunities
- Opportunity to keep track of trends and expand sports programs for the younger generation
- Opportunity to review zoning to ensure there are locations within the County that offer private investment that will allow residents to live, work, and play in Effingham County
- Need to preserve farmland and support farmers
- Need to create districts with mixed-use and design standards encouraging walkability. Require sidewalks for new construction. Maintain the county's transportation plan by focusing on promoting connectivity between sites. Prepare standards within the ordinances that discourage additional curb cuts to avoid a break in the flow of pedestrian access

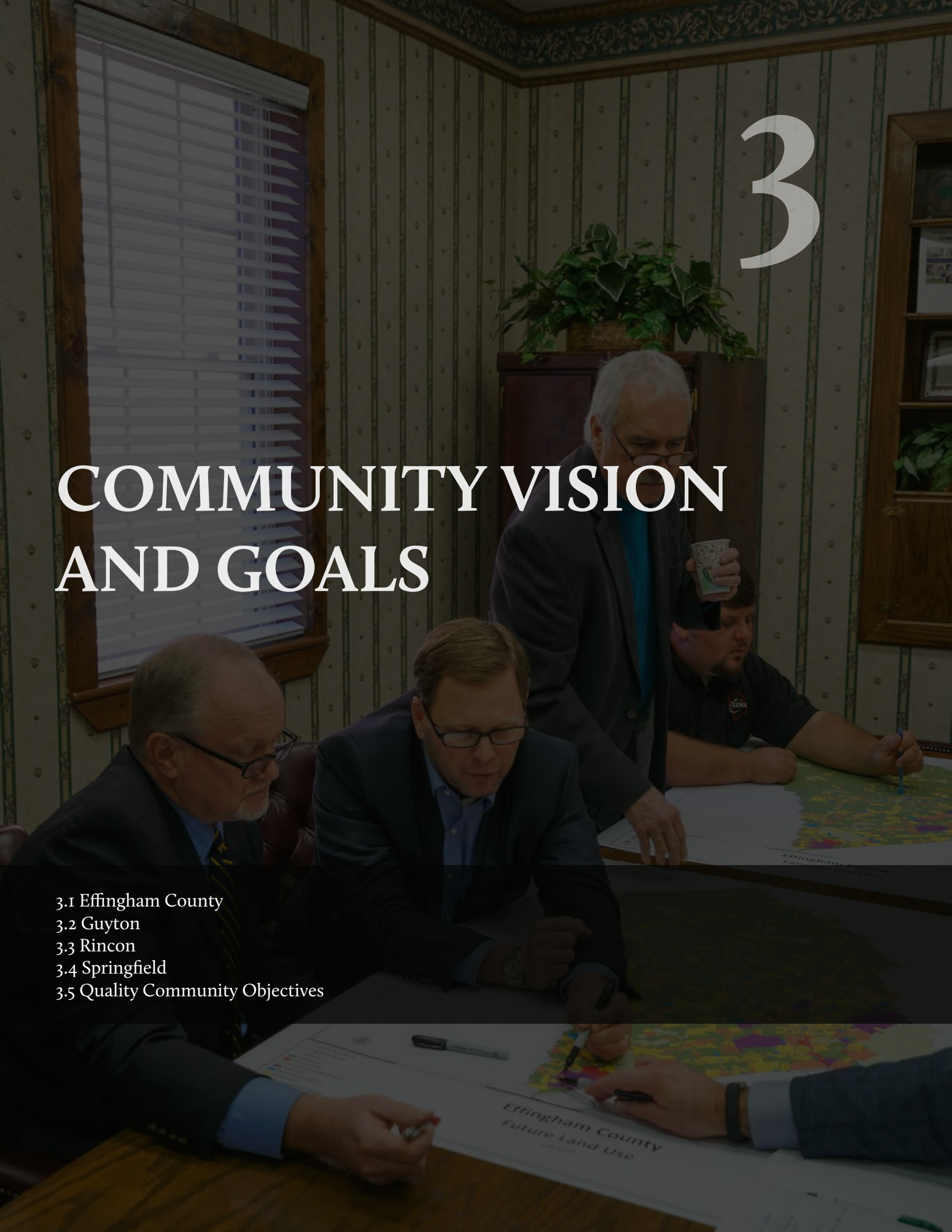
Governance

- Need stability in leadership and consistency of staff
- Need productive cooperation with municipal governments
- Opportunities to develop initiatives to educate residents about governance processes, encouraging greater civic participation and informed decision-making
- Need to periodically assess existing intergovernmental agreements and develop new agreements as appropriate
- Opportunities to share services and facilities with neighboring jurisdictions
- Opportunity to Invest in training for government staff to enhance skills in areas such as customer service, conflict resolution, and community engagement
- Opportunities to focus growth towards areas with existing and proposed infrastructure and preserve areas without these amenities. Work with the incorporated areas as well as GDOT to understand the needs as well as future expansion of these amenities

3

COMMUNITY VISION AND GOALS

- 3.1 Effingham County
- 3.2 Guyton
- 3.3 Rincon
- 3.4 Springfield
- 3.5 Quality Community Objectives



The purpose of this chapter is to lay out a road map of the future for Effingham County and the communities within. The vision statements, goals, and policies listed capture each community's values and priorities and how they intend to maintain those values and priorities in the future. This chapter was developed with consideration of public input, community Needs and Opportunities, and a desire to foster pride among residents for the communities they live in. Community leaders should consider the Community Vision and Goals when making decisions to ensure their impact is in accordance with the future their communities have envisioned.



EFFINGHAM COUNTY

3.1

Effingham County will be a place that people are excited to live, work, visit, invest, and raise a family. It will be a community that embraces spiritual and cultural diversity, encourages economic growth, promotes educational institutions, preserves its natural resources, and protects its cultural and agricultural heritage. From its Salzburger beginnings to its location between two beautiful rivers, Effingham County has the opportunity to share its unique historical and natural significance with future generations.

Community Goals and Policies

Economic Prosperity

- Promote the expansion of job opportunities, high quality industry and diversification of the employment base to help the county grow beyond a bedroom community and to establish itself as a place to do business.
- Pursue hospitality and entertainment based businesses to encourage tourists and visitors to invest and stay in the county.
- Implement and expand economic development plan to diversify the county economy and promote the recruitment of high-quality commercial and industrial business.

Resource Management

- Provide protection and preservation of natural resources by promoting the use of natural buffers, providing green corridors, creating greenway trails, preserving Ebenezer Creek, and cooperating with the Department of Natural Resources for minimum buffer standards for river corridors.
- Re-use the Atlas Sand property as a water resource and recreation area.
- Promote water conservation through the re-use of water lines/systems.

Land Use

- Provide a plan for tree preservation resulting in the preservation of green space, natural habitats, and improvement of stormwater retention.
- Encourage growth to locations where adequate infrastructure already exists and services can be readily provided.
- Support and expand the network of pedestrian and bicycle path connections to residential areas, public parks, natural features, surrounding communities and recreation facilities.
- Continue to develop and expand the centrally located regional sports complex and look for opportunities to expand other recreation facilities, especially in the southern end of the county.

Local Preparedness

- Support and implement the adopted County Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Develop a critical facility maintenance and protection plan including resiliency measures and actions.
- Promote efficient traffic management and safety measures before, during, and after an emergency.

Sense of Place

- Promote tourism by providing opportunity for arts, theater, live entertainment, festivals, museums, and history tours that will encourage residents and visitors to stay in the county for an extended period of time.
- Preserve historic sites including listings on the National Register of Historic Places and the Ebenezer community. Designate and protect scenic corridors for the appropriate level of development while retaining the qualities that make them unique.



Regional Cooperation

- In cooperation with the cities and adjacent counties, the county should create a transportation plan to address access within the county, and provide additional opportunity for access into the City of Savannah and the I-95 corridor.
- Continue to work on relationships with the cities for the benefit of the overall community and look for opportunity to consolidate services where beneficial.
- The county and cities should work together to develop a well-coordinated system for addresses, street names, subdivisions and mapping.

Housing

- Provide opportunity for housing diversification by supporting housing options for developmentally disabled, physically disabled, and elderly populations.
- Promote higher density growth rates in areas that have adequate infrastructure to accommodate it with access to existing commercial centers and public facilities.
- Promote the redevelopment of historical housing stock and the preservation of existing structures.

Education

- Ensure that every child is educated in a safe learning environment.
- Encourage funding for additional schools as the system continues to grow.
- Coordinate road improvements in front of schools to handle additional traffic and provide pedestrian safety.
- Find additional resources to increase per student expenditures to the state average.

Community Health

- Continue to support and look for opportunity to expand recycling services.
- Commit to providing and maintaining a safe, clean and healthy environment for animals through animal services and the animal shelter.

Transportation

- Look for alternatives to the automobile transportation by pursuing walking, bicycling, and public transit.
- Continue to design, support, and build roadways to ensure that new transportation facilities provide greater connectivity, better travel efficiency, and reduction of hazardous conditions.
- Extend bike and pedestrian networks wherever possible including greenways, trails and bike and multi-use paths.

Guyton is a historic railroad city that embraces its strong roots in tradition and heritage, small town quality of life, safe, pedestrian friendly streets, and active community participation. It is a city that is preparing to move forward with thoughtful growth, securing a legacy of tourism and economic development while maintaining a sense of community for future generations to enjoy.

Community Goals and Policies

Economic Prosperity

- Look for opportunities to expand the city boundaries and stimulate economic growth through annexation.
- Provide a clear vision for economic development, with efforts to help small local businesses flourish.
- Update the zoning ordinance to support the master plan for the city and use it as a tool to implement the community vision.

Resource Management

- Preserve the rich history of the city by preserving historic structures and the local culture as a historic railroad town in an effort to draw on heritage tourism.
- Continue to support and expand the local greenway with particular emphasis on the existing rail-to-trail path.

Efficient Land Use

- Look for opportunity to expand greenspace and parkland in the city, as well as preservation of open space and requirements for areas to be set aside for active recreation, expanding walking and biking trails, and connectivity through a trail network.
- Require land be set aside for active recreation in the city when new development occurs.
- Expand downtown by converting the old school gym into a civic/community center.

Local Preparedness

- Coordinate the maintenance and expansion of public facilities in order to avoid a decline in level of service for residents.
- Continue the success in getting a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to extend sewer services.
- Continue to provide excellent police and fire protection to its residents, which results in a low crime rate and a strong volunteer fire department.

Sense of Place

- Find opportunities to celebrate the city's character and heritage through community events such as the rummage sales in the railroad median, Bluegrass Festival, Christmas Parade, tree lighting ceremonies, dance classes, concerts, and faith based events.
- Find ways to promote existing assets and facilities in order to attract more local investment in the community.



Regional Cooperation

- Improve planning and communication efforts with adjacent communities and pursue opportunities for joint decision-making with regard to recreational services, public facilities, and other cultural amenities.
- Work with Effingham County and the City of Springfield on developing a greenway and interconnecting bike and pedestrian paths.

Housing

- Find ways to provide or support initiatives for affordable housing and housing for seniors.
- Partner with non-profit organizations like Habitat for Humanity and faith based groups.
- Support the redevelopment of blighted structures or streets.

Transportation

- Support multi-use trails to be linked with neighboring communities, the region, or the state.
- Promote initiatives such as US Bike Route 1, Highway 119 Georgia Bike Route and other alternative modes of transportation including the rural transit program.

Education

- Provide opportunities for citizen engagement by hosting community workshops, leadership programs and open forum discussions on how the city government works in an effort to increase public engagement, volunteerism, and service.

Community Health

- Support the initiatives provided by the hospital including telemedicine and local wellness checks.
- Look for opportunity to expand/transition fire services to provide EMT/paramedic/first responder medical services.

Rincon, known as the commercial center of Effingham County, desires to become a city that can balance economic prosperity while also protecting its natural resources and maintain its hometown appeal. As a city “just around the corner from everywhere you want to be,” Rincon will move forward by making strategic decisions that will result in a better place to live, work, and visit.

Community Goals and Policies

Economic Prosperity

- Rincon will welcome new commercial growth through annexation and by promoting development in locations that have adequate infrastructure.
- The city will promote the growth and development of commercial service centers that provide restaurants, lodging and cultural events to encourage residents and visitors to extend their time within the city.
- The city will develop a clear vision for the future and develop strategies for the best use of resources to promote economic development.

Resource Management

- Preserve the existing tree canopy and require the replanting of new trees when development occurs.
- Look for opportunity to acquire undeveloped land available for annexation into the city which could allow for more open space, greenspace, connectivity and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure.
- Develop multi-use trails on the railroad tracks that could provide recreational opportunities, as well as alternatives to vehicular transportation.

Efficient Land Use

- The city will continue to grow by looking for undeveloped land available for annexation that can accommodate growth.
- Promote patterns of development throughout the city that afford residents alternatives to getting to school, shopping, recreational centers and homes other than vehicular transportation.
- Provide opportunity to redevelop and reinvest in blighted areas.

Local Preparedness

- Continue to improve the water-sewer and storm infrastructure in the city.
- Work to educate, implement, and enforce regulations to prevent activities and uses that have a negative impact on the city’s infrastructure.
- Increase the presence of public safety as the population grows to promote safety of the citizens.

Sense of Place

- Look for opportunities to provide design guidelines, architectural standards and zoning overlays, which will create a sense of place and community character.
- Continue to expand spaces like “Freedom Park” and other gathering spots to host civic, cultural and entertainment activities.
- Define a downtown area and create a “town center” where residents could gather for shopping, dining, and other forms of entertainment and cultural activities.



Regional Cooperation

- Continue to build upon the positive momentum that is already occurring between the other cities and county.
- Look for ways to work collaboratively with service delivery strategies and other essential government functions.

Housing

- Promote housing opportunity for elderly residents, which will include retirement housing, assisted living and health care facilities.
- Continue to maintain diverse housing options, including workforce housing stock to meet the needs of the housing market.
- Strengthen and implement code enforcement within the city to protect the value and integrity of existing communities.

Transportation

- Work to promote public transportation provided by Coastal Regional Coaches, expand the network of sidewalks, bike trails, school safety zones and connectivity between developments.
- Look for opportunities to improve traffic flow traveling east and west from the city.
- Ensure that the city is a partner with the development of the Effingham Parkway project.

Education

- Keep the public better informed with current events, civic meetings and cultural opportunities by providing regular updates of community news.
- Update and expand the existing library, which is an essential tool for local education.
- Provide opportunity to place an incubator campus of Georgia Southern within the city.

Community Health

- Support the current health care facilities within the city and look for creative ways to provide services to those who may not have insurance or transportation.
- Partner with the state to provide a Health Department Annex within the city.

SPRINGFIELD

3.4

Springfield is a city that values its strong roots in tradition, character and heritage while also looking toward the future. Known as the “Heart of the County,” Springfield desires to balance its quiet residential nature, rural hometown appeal, connection with natural resources, and high quality of life while promoting economic development with balanced growth.

Community Goals and Policies

Economic Prosperity

- Make downtown a destination with social events, art, music, theater, festivals and other live entertainment.
- Balance preservation of historical sites while promoting growth of lodging opportunities, particularly with the conversion of historic Victorian structures into bed and breakfast businesses.
- Improve connectivity to Highway 21 by creating a gateway into the city that will drive traffic and business into the downtown district.

Resource Management

- Take steps to prevent the loss of community character and heritage by providing protection of historic and cultural resources, specifically structures in the historic district and Ebenezer Creek.
- Expand and improve greenspace and parkland by providing requirements for areas to be set aside for active and passive recreation when new development occurs.
- Adopt and implement historic district regulations and provide incentives for preservation and reuse of historic structures.

Land Use

- Direct growth to areas where adequate infrastructure exists that can accommodate the need.
- Require land to be preserved for passive recreation or improved as active recreation space when new development occurs.
- Focus on commercial corridor on Highway 21, gateway beautification, green corridors, expanded zoning standards that promote mixed use.

Local Preparedness

- Look for opportunity and funding to improve stormwater treatment and quality.
- Work to stay ahead of demand for water and sewer needs by being proactive with capacity.

Sense of Place

- Embrace traditional development patterns that create strong neighborhoods, walkable streets, and efficient delivery of services.
- Create a “town center” by promoting central downtown where most of the shops and businesses are occupied and operating creating a high quality of life with small-town feel.
- Implement master plan growth strategies for traffic lights, sidewalks, transportation, connectivity and the Springfield Ebenezer Greenway.



Regional Cooperation

- Coordinate with the County on Highway 21 for the promotion of the downtown corridor.
- Work with local jurisdictions to provide greenway connectivity into unincorporated County with Ebenezer Greenway, and possible pedestrian extension to Guyton.

Housing

- Support opportunities for affordable housing, multi-family housing, and housing for seniors.
- Look for opportunity to promote higher end housing, townhomes and mixed use development to attract younger investors.

Transportation

- Continue to expand multi-use trails, walkable streets, and connectivity to neighboring communities and commercial developments including the increased use of golf carts and other alternative modes of transportation.
- Promote and expand Ebenezer Bike Trail and Highway 119 Georgia Bike Route.
- Implement measures identified for in master plan for traffic lights, sidewalks and the Springfield Ebenezer Greenway.

Education

- Look for opportunity to provide professional and business development seminars and workshops to grow local business.

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

3.5

DCA's Vision: Every Georgia community offers a quality of life where people and businesses can grow and prosper. This section is used as a guide to determine which Quality Community Objectives that Effingham County and the cities of Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield will seek to accomplish with future planning efforts and developments.

1. Economic Prosperity

Encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries suitable for the community.

As noted during the comprehensive planning process, Effingham County and the cities within seek to attract suitable development to strengthen their tax bases. Other strategies related to economic prosperity include annexation by the cities, attracting industry, and creating jobs to move away from being primarily a bedroom community. There are also efforts to diversify the local economy by prioritizing tourism and attracting investment from the entertainment industry.

2. Resource Management

Promote efficient use of natural resources and identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas.

Effingham County and the cities of Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield promote the efficient use of natural resources within their jurisdictions. The county and the City of Springfield each have additional efforts to protect natural resources, specifically wetlands, floodplains, and wooded areas, from encroaching development.

3. Local Preparedness

Identify and put in place prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve.

The county and the cities have identified goals and priorities to shape future development. They have each expressed a desire to plan proactively for development rather than reacting to outcomes in the future. Strategies identified to accomplish this proactive planning include updating zoning codes, encouraging mixed uses, code enforcement, and re-purposing existing structures for appropriate use.

4. Efficient Land Use

Maximize use of existing infrastructure by encouraging redevelopment, designing new development to minimize the amount of land consumed, and carefully planning expansion of public infrastructure.

The county and the cities have identified target areas for development as well as redevelopment. The City of Guyton hopes to emphasize use of the downtown core, and Rincon and Springfield hope to develop strong cores of their own. This will allow central and compact uses to develop rather than furthering the consequences of sprawl. Other priorities identified in the comprehensive planning process to maximize land use include encouraging mixed use development, redeveloping and re-purposing existing structures rather than erecting new buildings, and promoting environmentally friendly alternative transportation opportunities.

5. Sense of Place

Protect and enhance the community's unique qualities that are important to defining the community's character.

The communities in Effingham County have long and rich histories. Several locations in the county, including Jerusalem Lutheran Church, the Effingham County Courthouse and Effingham County Jail in Springfield, and part of historic downtown Guyton are on the National Register of Historic Places. Each community prioritizes maintaining its small town charm and agricultural heritage by controlling development into appropriate areas and working to stop sprawl.



6. Regional Cooperation

Cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions to address shared needs by actively participating in regional organizations.

Effingham County and each of the cities aim to cooperate with one another productively to meet shared goals. The county and the cities of Guyton and Springfield aim to improve connectivity throughout the county by linking together existing trail networks. The communities hope to collaborate at a regional level to obtain grant funding and work jointly on transportation projects.

7. Housing Options

Promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and efficient housing in the community.

Effingham County and the cities of Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield seek to promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, and inclusive housing by encouraging development of a variety of housing types, sizes, costs, and densities through new development and through redevelopment efforts. They have also prioritized diverse options in new housing development.

8. Transportation Options

Address the transportation needs, challenges, and opportunities of all community residents.

The county and cities acknowledge that personal vehicles are the predominant method of travel in their communities. As such, they emphasize safe roads and have set goals to improve local road networks. Additionally, they are encouraging alternative methods of travel by developing trail networks and building sidewalks to make biking and walking safe and accessible.

9. Educational Opportunities

Make educational and training opportunities readily available to all community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, manage their finances, or pursue life ambitions.

The county and cities hope to partner with local community college and attract satellite campuses in an effort to provide training for an adequately skilled workforce. This goes hand in hand with their desire to attract jobs to the local community.

10. Community Health

Ensure community residents, regardless of age, ability, or income, have access to critical goods and services, safe and clean neighborhoods, and excellent work opportunities.

The World Health Organization defines a healthy city or community as “one that is safe with affordable housing and accessible transportation systems, work for all who want to work, a healthy and safe environment with a sustainable ecosystem, and offers access to healthcare services which focus on prevention and staying healthy.” The county and cities are actively working to create safe environments, a healthy environment, and the ability for its citizens to lead active and well-rounded lifestyles. They are also working to create strong economies, which are vital to community health.



County
Effingham
Georgia

Effingham County

LAND USE PLAN



PURPOSE & SCOPE

The Future Land Use chapter is intended to designate future land use patterns that will best accommodate the projected population and development while minimizing adverse impacts on natural resources and maintaining essential public facilities and services. Effingham County set out a goal of updating its Future Land Use Element to be reflective of the current conditions and development demands. The County has been seeing significant growth in many sectors including residential and industrial. It has strong rural roots and wishes to celebrate this, while understanding that development is coming and now is the time to shape the future of the County. Population change, economic development, housing, the transportation system, natural and historic resources all impact land use. The purpose of the update to the Future Land Use Element is to provide an updated Future Land Use Map with corresponding Goals, Objectives, and Policies, as well as development of Character Areas and a narrative describing the areas. This will serve as a road map for the community's future. The Character Areas identify the character vision for all of Effingham County, while the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) provides direction for zoning decisions based on specific land use categories. Together, the FLUM and Character Areas are intended to guide the character and direction of land use decisions in the county. The County engaged the public through multiple avenues including public workshops, stakeholders groups, and a website that was highly visited by the public during the process. The Future Land Use Element update is intended to spark dialogue from the community members and reach eventual consensus on the vision. This element includes a Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and a Character Areas which work together to create a cohesive county-wide guide for future growth and development. This land use information, recommendations, and strategies contained in this element are intended to provide guidance for the location and intensity of land to support the County.

The chapter consists of an inventory and analysis of existing land use data and patterns, the projection of future land needs, as well as the

existing and future land use maps. The Future Land Use Map and associated policies will guide development in a 20-year planning horizon. Land development regulations and other tools will be used to implement the plan.

LAND USE

Land use Goals, Objectives, and Policies represent guiding principles to shape development patterns



The purpose of Minimum Standards is to provide a framework for the development, management, and implementation of local comprehensive plans at the local, regional, and state government level. They reflect an important state interest: healthy and economically vibrant cities and counties are vital to the state's economic prosperity.



for managing growth while protecting sensitive ecological and environmental areas. This element will provide a summary of land use patterns and development trends for the County, with supporting density maximums, Character Area descriptions, and Development Node guidelines.

STATE REQUIREMENTS

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs' "Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning," as amended in 2013,

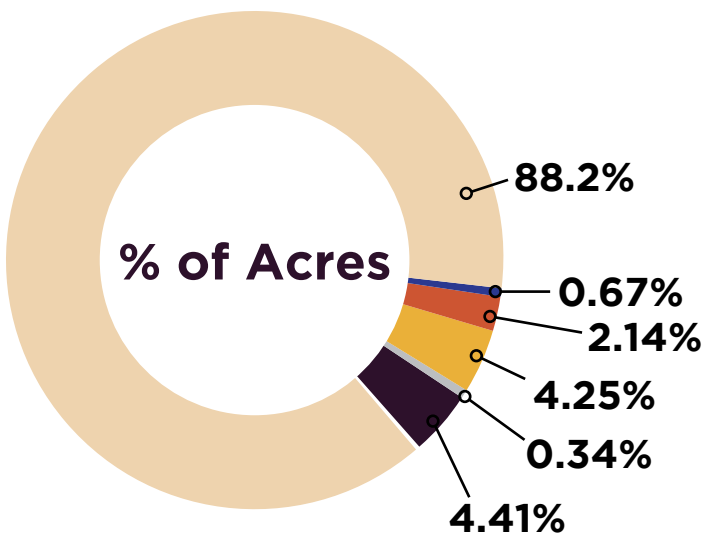
and the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 sets out certain requirements for communities in Georgia. It is essential that the plan and any amendments be compliant with these rules.

The County’s full Comprehensive Plan is not being evaluated as part of this exercise. Therefore, the evaluation of the Minimum Standards requirements in the Statutes will be focused on the Future Land Use Element. Per the Georgia Statutes, the Land Use Element, where required, must include at least one of the two components listed on the following page:

(a) Character Areas and Defining Narrative.

Identify and map the boundaries of existing or potential character areas covering the entire community, including existing community sub-areas, districts, or neighborhoods. A Character Area is a specific geographic area located within the community that has unique or special characteristics to be preserved or enhanced; has potential to evolve into a unique area; or, requires special attention due to unique development issues.

(b) Future Land Use Map and Narrative.



Prepare a Future Land Use Map that uses conventional categories or classifications to depict the location (typically parcel by parcel) of specific future land uses. If this option is chosen, prepare the Future Land Use Map using either of the land use classification schemes described below and include a narrative that explains how to interpret the map and each land use category.

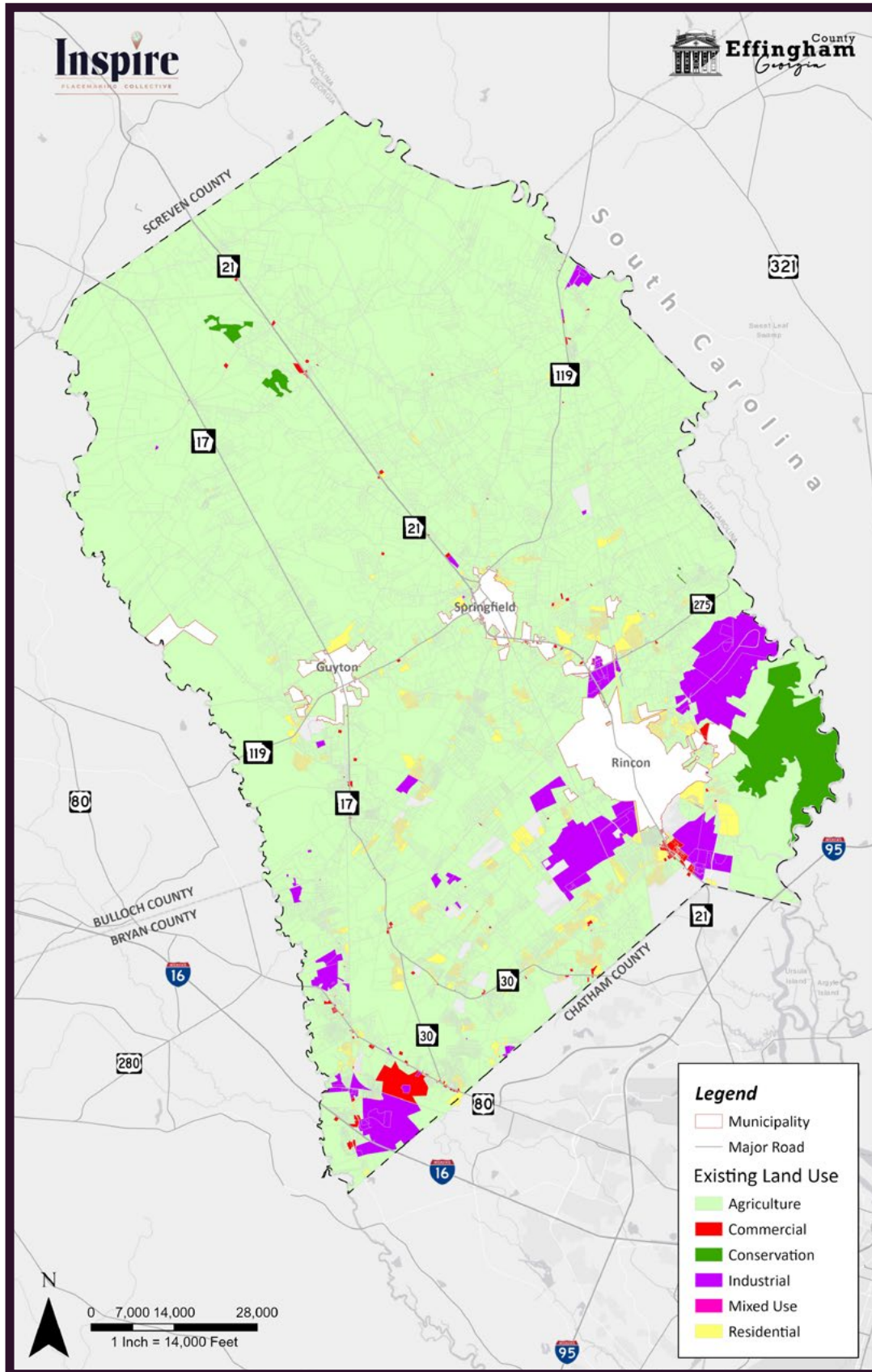
The existing Comprehensive Plan has a Future Land Use Map and Narrative and therefore meets the State Statutes. However, the County found that it would benefit from the inclusion of a Character Area and Defining Narrative, which will help steer development to desired locations and provide guiding principles for the look and feel of development within the Character Areas.

EXISTING LAND USES

To better guide and direct future land uses (FLU) within the County, it is necessary to understand the present land use patterns. Table 1 depicts the existing land use and development patterns by parcel in the County. This information is based upon Department of Revenue (DOR) tax codes as interpreted by the State. The existing land use (ELU) inventory serves as the basic framework for the FLU designations.

Current Land Use Category	Sum of Acres
AGRICULTURE	259,553.27
COMMERCIAL	1,959.97
CONSERVATION	6,296.12
INDUSTRIAL	12,506.58
MIXED USE	989.89
RESIDENTIAL	12,988.43
Total	294,294.26

Figure 1. EXISTING LAND USE MAP



Source: Effingham County 2022

Development Trends

Like much of coastal Georgia, Effingham County is seeing significant growth. Residential projects, commercial development, and industrial activity as an offshoot from the Georgia Port have all come into the County with force. Residents are drawn to a more rural, affordable option with good access to industry and employment is a draw, as well as its beautiful natural resources. Residential housing at increased densities as well as warehouse logistics operations are creating some of the challenges that the County is currently facing.

Effingham County has long-time, strong ties to agriculture. The County has long been considered rural with shifting to more urban land uses towards the southern end of the County. During the public engagement process, community members have voiced their concerns over losing the rural nature of the County through further development of unincorporated areas. Residents believe that this development is stripping the County of its rural heritage while increasing the burden on local infrastructure, particularly on the road network.

Over the last five years, Effingham County has been seeing requests for denser single-family detached housing units. The County wants to maintain the stability within its neighborhoods as well as providing housing options for its residents. However, design and maintenance concerns have affected multifamily housing, including townhouses. In an effort to continue supporting a variety of housing options, the County adopted regulations addressing concerns over the common areas and density.

FUTURE LAND USE

This section describes the Future Land Use (FLU) designations and their locations throughout the County. The FLU designations and Future Land Use Map (FLUM) are conceptual and intended to guide future land use decisions. The FLUM is based upon public input and reflects how community members want the County to look in the future and how County leadership can facilitate this vision. FLU designations are developed in context of the Plan's goals and policies. The location of FLU designations throughout the County is depicted on the Future Land Use Map.



FUTURE LAND USE AREAS



AGRICULTURE: PERMITTED ZONING: AGRICULTURAL RESIDENTIAL, FLOOD HAZARD, CONSERVATION PRESERVATION, AND MIXED USE

This category is for land dedicated to retaining the rural character throughout the county including fields, lots, pastures, farm-steads, specialty farms, livestock production, agriculture, or commercial timber. Protection of natural resources should be at the planning forefront for development in these areas. This category is also for land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers, or similar uses. This area does allow for low density residential development that is compatible with nearby agricultural uses. Mixed use housing types such as stick built or manufactured homes are permitted in these areas. Rural areas are characterized by low intensity development, larger lots, low pedestrian orientation and access, with a sizable amount of open space, and with a high degree of separation and deep setbacks.



CONSERVATION/RECREATION: PERMITTED ZONING: CONSERVATION PRESERVATION, MIXED USE, AND AGRICULTURAL RESIDENTIAL

This category is dedicated to lands in open or cultivated state, including woodlands, farmlands, active or passive recreational uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreational centers, or similar uses. By preserving natural areas and promoting sustainable land management practices, conservation land use contributes to the protection of valuable resources and the long-term sustainability for the county. Some land is undeveloped, natural lands with significant features including floodplains, wetlands, watersheds, and other environmentally sensitive areas not suitable for development.



COMMERCIAL: PERMITTED ZONING: COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL, AGRICULTURAL, RESIDENTIAL, AND MIXED USE DISTRICTS

This category is for land dedicated to non-industrial business uses. Uses are categorized by neighborhood commercial, General commercial, and Highway Commercial. Neighborhood Commercial provides locations for small-scale stores and serving residential areas. General Commercial provides locations for large, county-wide and regional businesses that tend to generate higher traffic volumes. The Highway Commercial are more intensive uses such as wholesale operations and automotive sales and service. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building.



INDUSTRIAL: PERMITTED ZONING: INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS AND MIXED USE

This category is for land dedicated to manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, mining or mineral extraction activities, or other similar uses. Light and Heavy industrial uses are permitted in these areas. Heavy industrial is generally defined as manufacturing uses, large scale warehouses, concrete facilities, or any other process that could produce high levels of noise, dust, smoke, odors, or other emissions. Light industrial includes, but is not limited to, warehousing and distribution, trucking, and small scale assembly and manufacturing. Development in this category requires supportive infrastructure and access to major transportation thoroughfares. It is important for industrial areas to comply with environmental regulations, implement

FUTURE LAND USE AREAS

sustainable practices, and mitigate their environmental footprint to minimize the adverse effects of commercial and industrial land uses on surrounding property and public thoroughfares; to act as a filtration zone for storm water; to make the environment more visually attractive; and to preserve the undisturbed vegetative buffers in the county.



TRANSITIONAL: PERMITTED ZONING: COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL, AND MIXED USE

Areas that buffer between commercial, Industrial, and less intense residential areas that allow for development opportunities. Future development will allow for mixed use and adaptive use opportunities. This area is designed to allow for transition from residential uses to compatible nonresidential developments. Transitional areas are often exhibit characteristics of neighboring zones and may undergo changes in land use, density, or character over time. A blend of residential, commercial, or industrial uses that bridge the gap between adjacent zones.



PUBLIC/INSTITUTIONAL: PERMITTED ZONING: COMMERCIAL, AGRICULTURAL, INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS AND MIXED USE

This category includes certain state, federal or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, etc. These areas are essential for supporting the functioning of a society and providing access to important services and resources. These areas are designed to be inclusive and accessible to all members of the community, regardless of background or socioeconomic status.



AGRICULTURAL/RESIDENTIAL: PERMITTED ZONING: AGRICULTURAL RESIDENTIAL, RESIDENTIAL, AND MIXED USE

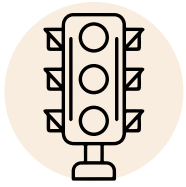
The predominant use of land within the residential category is for single-family and multi-family dwelling units organized into general categories of net densities. Higher development densities are allowed based on the availability of supportive infrastructure. Residential zoning ensures that land is used appropriately for housing, taking into account factors like density, building types, and neighborhood character. Each zone serves a specific purpose and regulates the allowable uses within it. There are a variety of corresponding residential zonings which distinguish lot widths, minimum acreage, housing types, and open or green space requirements. Residential areas are neighborhoods characterized by mix of housing types, including single-family homes, apartment buildings, townhouses, and other residential dwellings. Residential areas may vary in density and design from detached homes to mixed- use developments.



UTILITIES: PERMITTED ZONING: COMMERCIAL , INDUSTRIAL , AGRICULTURAL RESIDENTIAL, RESIDENTIAL, FLOOD HAZARD, MIXED USE, AND CONSERVATION PRESERVATION DISTRICTS

This category is for land dedicated to utilities uses. It can accommodate public and private utilities including, but not limited to, power lines, water and wastewater facilities, and electrical substations. Infrastructural areas refer to locations where various types of infrastructure are concentrated or located. Infrastructure refers to the fundamental facilities and systems necessary for the functioning of the county such as transportation, communication, water supply, utilities, and public services. Areas include wastewater treatment facilities, telecommunication towers, and solar farms.

FUTURE LAND USE AREAS



TRANSPORTATION: PERMITTED ZONING: AGRICULTURAL, AND INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS

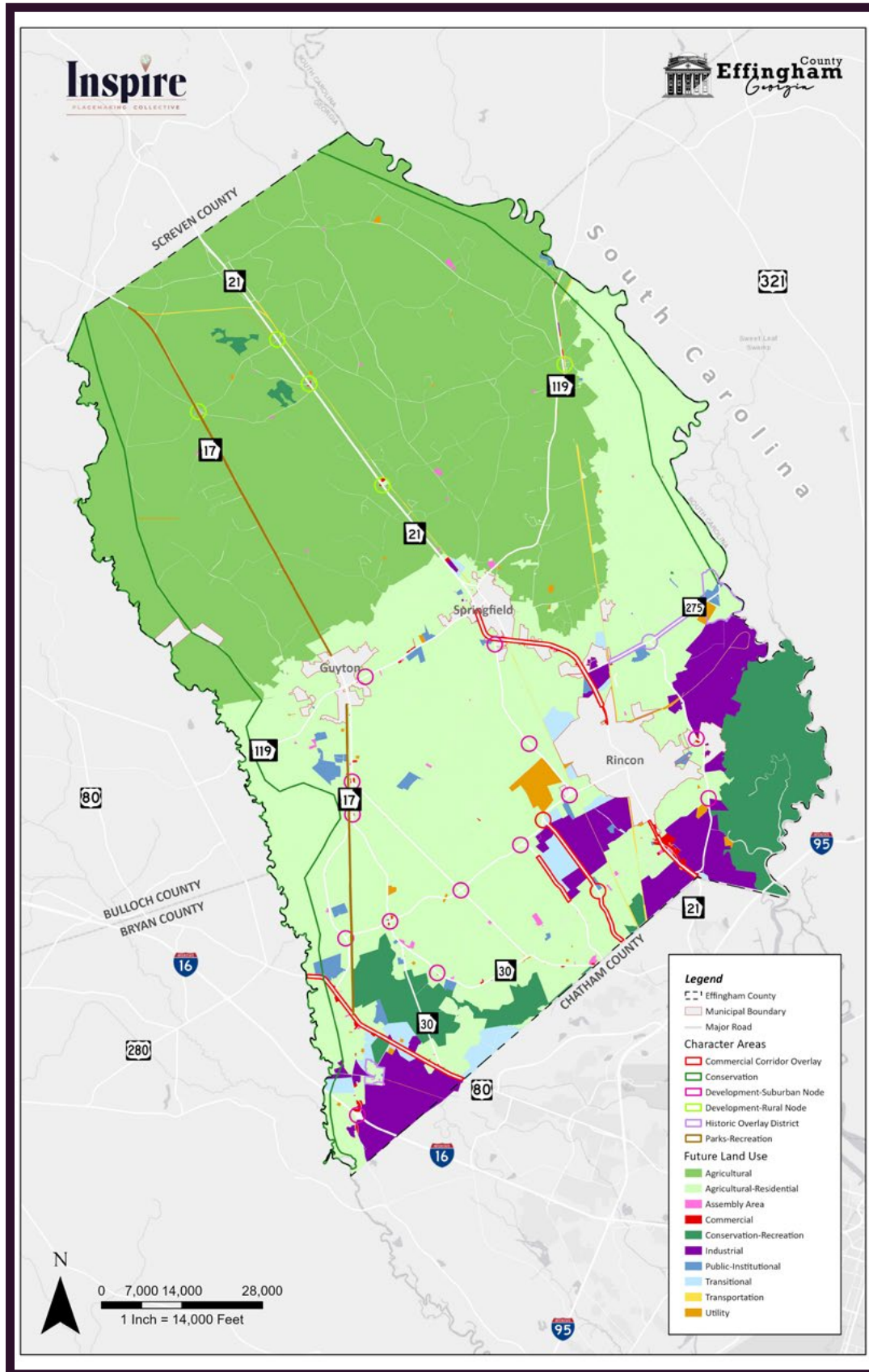
This Category is for land dedicated to transportation. It can accommodate transportation infrastructure and services to support efficient and sustainable transportation systems. This concept focuses on the relationship between land use patterns and transportation networks, aiming to create well-connected, accessible, and pedestrian-friendly communities. Key aspects include transit-oriented development, mixed use developments, and designing streets and roadways to accommodate all modes of transportation.



ASSEMBLY AREA: PERMITTED ZONING: AGRICULTURAL, COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL, AND MIXED USE

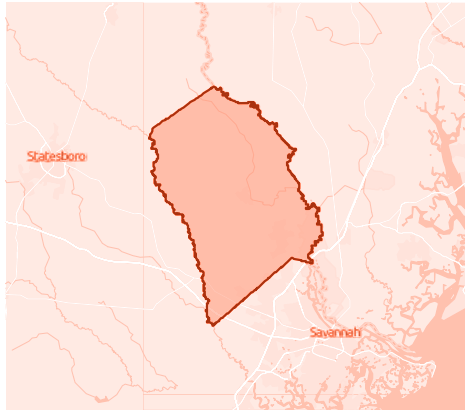
This Category is for land dedicated to structures or places where people gather for civic, social, burial grounds, or worship and religious gatherings.

Figure 2. FUTURE LAND USE MAP



Source: Effingham County 2022

POPULATION TRENDS



Population Trends and Key Indicators

Effingham County, GA
Area: 482.93 square miles

71,979	25,778	2.78	37.5	\$96,657	\$269,329	101	139	51
Population	Households	Avg Size Household	Median Age	Median Household Income	Median Home Value	Wealth Index	Housing Affordability	Diversity Index

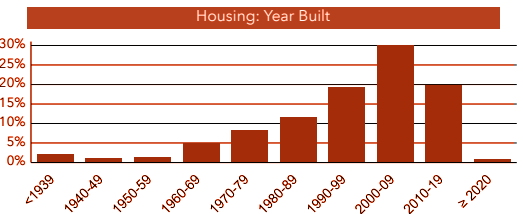
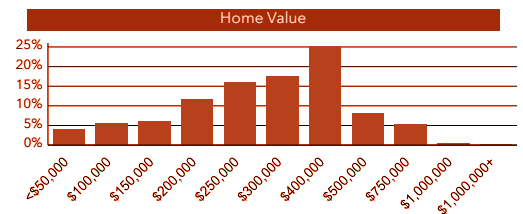
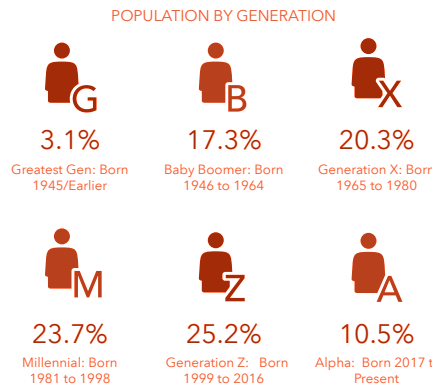
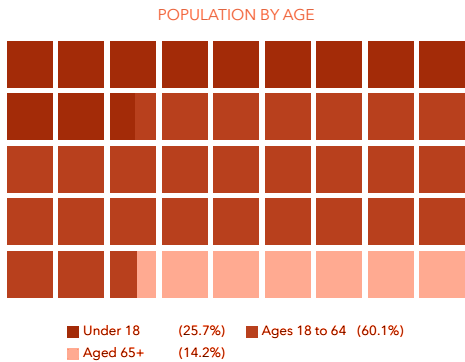
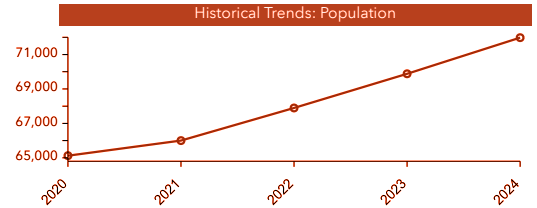
MORTGAGE INDICATORS

\$14,600

Avg Spent on Mortgage & Basics

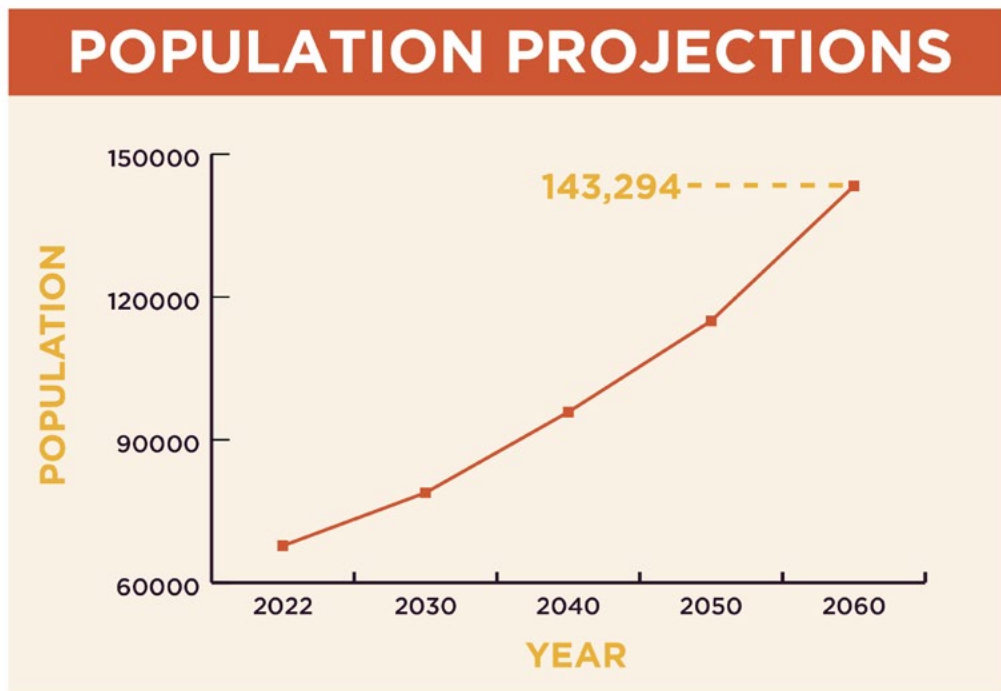
17.4%

Percent of Income for Mortgage



Source: This infographic contains data provided by Esri (2024, 2029), Esri-U.S. BLS (2024), ACS (2018-2022). © 2024 Esri

Source: This infographic contains data provided by Esri (2024, 2029), Esri-U.S. BLS (2024), ACS (2018-2022).



Source: Georgia's Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, 2023

CHARACTER AREAS

In connection with the future land use categories, the County has also organized segments into Character Areas, which provide another opportunity to create a desired brand or character for areas in the community. By regulating character, the County may enhance corridors, drive development to specific locations, protect sensitive environments, and strengthen economic opportunities where appropriate using context-sensitive development strategies.

The Character Areas are not intended to represent or guide future zoning; however, it should be considered in tandem with the FLUM when policymakers consider land development inquiries or requests. The character areas seek to capture the growth and diversity of Effingham County. Character areas are places that may contain a variety of different land uses, but share defining characteristics, such as development intensity or available resources. Identifying community character across Effingham County is an important step in making compatible future land use decisions.

Commercial Corridor Overlay



Goshen Park, Rincon, GA

DESCRIPTION:

The commercial corridor area is characterized by highly trafficked commercial development along streets and highways. The purpose is to establish standards for the design of sites, buildings, structures, plantings, signs, street hardware, and other such improvements that are visible to the public and affect the physical development of land within specific designated transportation corridors. Design should be pedestrian-oriented with walkable connections. Commercial corridors play a vital role in the local economy by providing goods and services to residents, creating job opportunities, and contributing to the vibrancy and vitality of the community. These standards are intended to promote high-quality creative development that will combine

imagination, innovation, and variety in the appearance of buildings and sites in the overlay zone. These standards are further intended to preserve and enhance property values and promote public health, safety, and welfare by providing consistent and coordinated treatment of the property encompassed by the selected transportation corridors. This area is subject to overlay node development standards.

LOCATION:

The commercial corridor is situated along US Highway 80, from Chatham County Line to Bryan County Line, US Highway 21, from Chatham County Line to City of Rincon Line, US Highway 21, from the City of Rincon Line to the City of Springfield Line, Hodgeville Road, and Effingham Parkway

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- Consider implementation of a complete street system in order to prioritize safe multi-modal access along corridor.
- Develop standards for appropriate signage, landscaping, and other beautification efforts.
- Modify regulatory structure to encourage infill development and redevelopment of underutilized strip centers.

Conservation



Savannah River

DESCRIPTION:

Environmentally Sensitive Areas refers to the management and protection of natural areas and resources to preserve habitats and species, protect ecosystems, and maintain environmental quality. Areas of open space that follow natural and manmade linear features for recreation and conservation purposes that link ecological, cultural, and recreational amenities. Conservation land use may involve activities such as wildlife conservation, sustainable agriculture, and protection of water resources. These lands are characterized by low-impact development and recreation. Some of these areas represent 100-year floodplains along river and stream corridor and identified wetlands.

LOCATION:

Effingham County has two Environmentally Sensitive Areas: along the entire western edge of the County and in the easternmost corner of the County adjacent to the Savannah River and its surrounding wetlands.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- Develop buffer standards to prevent development in environmentally sensitive areas.
- Utilize land for public parks or open space.
- Partner with Effingham County Chamber of Commerce to promote low-impact tourism and recreation.
- Develop zoning regulations that promote low-density and low-impact residential and commercial activities.
- Promote use of conservation easements.
- Partner with Ogeechee Riverkeepers, Savannah Riverkeepers, and other appropriate agencies to promote conservation efforts.

Historic Overlay District



Effingham Historical Society and Museum,
Springfield, GA

DESCRIPTION:

Areas in the county that contain historic features, landmarks, and civic or cultural uses of historic interest. The purpose of the historic village overlay district is to protect the residential character of the historic community while offering relief from the burden of nonconforming lot sizes. All new development and changes to existing development would be subject to the overlay district regulations. Existing nonconforming structures may be expanded as long as the expansion does not create further nonconformity.

LOCATION:

These areas are in Downtown Springfield, Meldrim, Clio, Pineora, Ebenezer, and areas throughout the county.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- The vision is to maintain the historic integrity of the district, including the architectural exterior features.
- Protect historic properties from demolition and encourage rehabilitation with appropriate incentives.
- New development in the area should be of scale and architectural design to fit well into the historic fabric of that area.
- Pedestrian access and open space should be provided to enhance citizen enjoyment of the area.

Development: Suburban Node



Shoppes of Silverwood, Rincon, GA

DESCRIPTION:

Areas designated for concentrated growth, development, and investment. It serves as a focal point for economic activity, infrastructure development, and urban expansion. Nodes are strategically chosen based on factors such as accessibility, connectivity, availability of services, and potential for sustainable growth to create vibrant and resilient communities. This area is subject to overlay node development standards.

- **Suburban nodes** are areas that are developed with significant economic, social, or environmental impact. These nodes often serve major commercial and industrial districts or places that attract large numbers of people and generate significant economic activity. High-

impact nodes may require extensive infrastructure development and higher levels of resource use compared to low-impact nodes.

LOCATION:

The Southern half of the county.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- Consider implementation of complete street system in order to prioritize safe multi-modal access in area.
- Develop zoning regulations that encourage mixed use development. Appropriate uses for nodes in the southern half of the county include smaller scale retail including gas stations and convenience stores, as well as multifamily residences.
- Develop standards for appropriate signage, landscaping, and other beautification efforts.

Development: Rural Node



Clio, GA

DESCRIPTION:

Areas designated for concentrated growth, development, and investment. It serves as a focal point for economic activity, infrastructure development, and urban expansion. Nodes are strategically chosen based on factors such as accessibility, connectivity, availability of services, and potential for sustainable growth to create vibrant and resilient communities. This area is subject to overlay node development standards.

- **Rural nodes** are areas developed with a focus on minimizing environmental and social impacts. They typically incorporate sustainable design principles, green infrastructure, and preserving natural resources.

LOCATION:

The Northern half of the county.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- Consider implementation of complete street system in order to prioritize safe multi-modal access in area.
- Develop zoning regulations that encourage mixed use development.
- Develop standards for appropriate signage, landscaping, and other beautification efforts.

Parks/Recreation Area



Clarence E. Morgan Complex

DESCRIPTION:

This area is for land dedicated to active or passive recreational and conservation uses. These areas include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, national forest, golf courses, and recreation centers. These areas provide opportunities for residents and visitors to engage in a variety of activities, and connect with nature.

LOCATION:

Areas throughout county and municipalities.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- Protect significant natural resources such as pristine wetland and upland habitat areas to preserve natural habitat.
- Maintain the parks and recreation master plan to address service delivery, deficiencies, recommended improvements and potential funding sources and update.
- Promote the areas suitable for passive-use tourism and recreational destinations.
- Incorporate natural areas and unique ecological features into the park system.
- Incorporate linear parks and trail systems.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation is the most critical component of any comprehensive planning project. There must be ample and diverse opportunities for public engagement participation. This is to ensure that citizens and stakeholders are aware of the project, understand the planning process, and have an opportunity to comment on the community’s vision, goals, objectives, and policies.

There were multiple public input opportunities held during the planning process. Two sessions were focused on the stakeholders, which included members of the County Commission, City officials, realtors, developers, residents, clergy, non-profit representatives, and design professionals. A workshop was held for the general public’s input, which had strong online and in-person attendance. These forums were used to provide citizens and other stakeholders with the chance to offer input on the future of Effingham County. This included discussion on the County’s regulations, development environment, and anticipated changes. A dedicated website for the project was also active, the comments are available in the attached appendix as well summary reports from the public engagement sessions.





Environmental Stewardship



Rural Character



Balanced Growth

The public engagement process identified three areas of focus for the residents of Effingham County. These three topics represent shared ideas and concerns that came out of the survey, meetings, and listening to public input. They are considered the Guiding Principles of the Land Use Plan: key ideas held in common by citizens that participated in the process. The following goals and policies of the Plan have been tagged to identify which Guiding Principle they address.

FUTURE LAND USE

Goals and Associated Policies

Guiding Principles

FLU GOAL 1: MANAGE ONGOING UPDATES TO THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP AND FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT.

Policy 1.1. The following Future Land Use categories are hereby established:

Agricultural: This category is for land dedicated to farming (fields, lots, pastures, farm-steads, specialty farms, livestock production, etc.), agriculture, or commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting. This category is also for land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers, or similar uses.

Commercial: This category is for land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service, and entertainment facilities, organized into general categories of intensities. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building. Communities may elect to separate office uses from other commercial uses, such as retail, service, or entertainment facilities.

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



FUTURE LAND USE

Goals and Associated Policies

Guiding Principles

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

Mixed-Use: This category is applied at the discretion of the community. If used, mixed land categories must be clearly defined, including the types of land uses allowed, the percentage distribution among the mix of uses or other objective measure of the combination), and the allowable density of the use.

Public/Institutional: This category includes certain state, federal or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc.

Residential: The predominant use of land within the residential category is for single-family and multi-family dwelling units organized into general categories of net densities. This land use is protected from encroachment of industrial or other uses capable of adversely affecting the residential character.

Transportation: This category is for land dedicated to transportation uses. It can accommodate transportation infrastructure.

Utilities: This category is for land dedicated to utilities uses. It can accommodate public and private utilities including, but not limited to, power lines, water and wastewater facilities, and electrical substations.



FLU GOAL 2: PROMOTE COHESIVE, THOUGHTFULLY ORGANIZED, AND COMPLEMENTARY DEVELOPMENT.

Policy 2.1 Maintain subdivision regulations and zoning to require retention of natural cover and minimize land disturbance during construction.



FUTURE LAND USE

Goals and Associated Policies	Guiding Principles
<p>Policy 2.2 Development types and characteristics shall be consistent within land use category areas, yet maintain sensitivity to local development patterns and character in the local community or Character Area, if applicable.</p>	
<p>Policy 2.3 Organize complimentary land uses to create transitions between different land uses. This policy is especially intended for separating industrial development away from residential uses by introducing other complimentary uses physically in between the industrial uses and residential uses.</p>	
<p>Policy 2.4 Recognize the development in the municipalities and consider the impact large development projects may have on the County. Update the projections in the comprehensive plan regularly as a result of these projects.</p>	
<p>FLU GOAL 3: PRESERVE THE RURAL, SMALL-TOWN, AND NATURAL CHARACTER OF THE COUNTY.</p>	
<p>Policy 3.1 Farmland should be preserved both for open space and to conserve prime agricultural production areas.</p>	
<p>Policy 3.2 Provide a land use pattern that protects farmland and directs growth to areas of existing or proposed infrastructure</p>	
<p>Policy 3.3 Encourage and support training programs for small and beginning farmers.</p>	
<p>Policy 3.4 To encourage and promote agriculture and local food production and their related businesses as a valued element of the Effingham County economy through supportive land use and economic development policy, programs, and practice.</p>	
<p>Policy 3.5 Prohibit land use activities that are not compatible within agriculturally designated areas.</p>	

FUTURE LAND USE

Goals and Associated Policies

Guiding Principles

Policy 3.6 Develop and adopt a program or procedure to identify prime agricultural land.



FLU GOAL 4: PROTECT NATURAL, CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES, AND OPEN SPACE OF EFFINGHAM COUNTY.

Policy 4.1 Maintain performance standards for site development that preserve and protect green space and natural resources.



Policy 4.2 Preserve trees through the adoption of programs that mitigate the removal and endangerment of native trees.



Policy 4.3 Promote the development and use of green infrastructure.



Policy 4.4 Support development of agritourism.



Policy 4.5 When considering development applications, the County should evaluate water quality impacts carefully and support design that is sensitive to the unique nature and landscape of Effingham County.
















Policy 4.6 Maintain pollution prevention best management practices via the municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4) program to prevent pollutants from being washed into the MS4 system.



Policy 4.7 Provide educational resources regarding lawn pesticides to businesses and residents.



FUTURE LAND USE






Goals and Associated Policies	Guiding Principles
<p>Policy 4.8 Develop and adopt a program or procedure to identify prime agricultural land.</p>	 
<p>Policy 4.9 Assess the potential disturbance of historic resources during the development review process.</p>	 
<p>Policy 4.10 Establish guidelines for preserving knowledge of historic assets, which may include but is not limited to: requires that developments contain a landmark tribute to the historic site (i.e., interpretive signs, plaques, memorial site, naming of development, etc.).</p>	 
<p>FLU GOAL 5: MANAGE FLOODPLAIN CONDITIONS AND PROTECT AGAINST FLOODING THREATS.</p>	
<p>Policy 5.1 Adopted flood plain regulations should be maintained and enforced to continue participation in the National Flood Insurance Program that allows county residents opportunity to purchase flood insurance.</p>	
<p>Policy 5.2 Restrict activity that may cause erosion or negatively impact the flow of flood waters.</p>	
<p>Policy 5.3 Restrict uses that endanger safety and welfare with regard to floodplains.</p>	 
<p>Policy 5.4 Maintain compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the Community Rating System (CRS), and other regulatory programs that address floodplain management.</p>	
<p>Policy 5.5 Implement the goals of the CRS, including the following: 1. Reduce flood damage to insurable property; 2. Strengthen and support the insurance aspects of the NFIP; and 3. Encourage a comprehensive approach to floodplain management.</p>	 

FUTURE LAND USE

Goals and Associated Policies

Guiding Principles

FLU GOAL 6: IMPLEMENT COMPLETE STREETS PRINCIPLES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY, WHERE APPROPRIATE.

<p>Policy 6.1 Design for all users, including users of different forms of transportation or forms of ability.</p>	
<p>Policy 6.2 Coordinate complete streets improvements with the County's transportation planning.</p>	
<p>Policy 6.3 Design for lower speed in the areas with increased residential/mixed use areas, such as certain character areas with higher levels of pedestrian and bicycle activity.</p>	
<p>Policy 6.4 Support and expand the pedestrian and bicycle network connectivity to residential areas, parks/recreation, natural resources, and surrounding communities.</p>	
<p>Policy 6.5 Address the design of Character Areas to implement Complete Streets principles into the Character Area implementation measures.</p>	

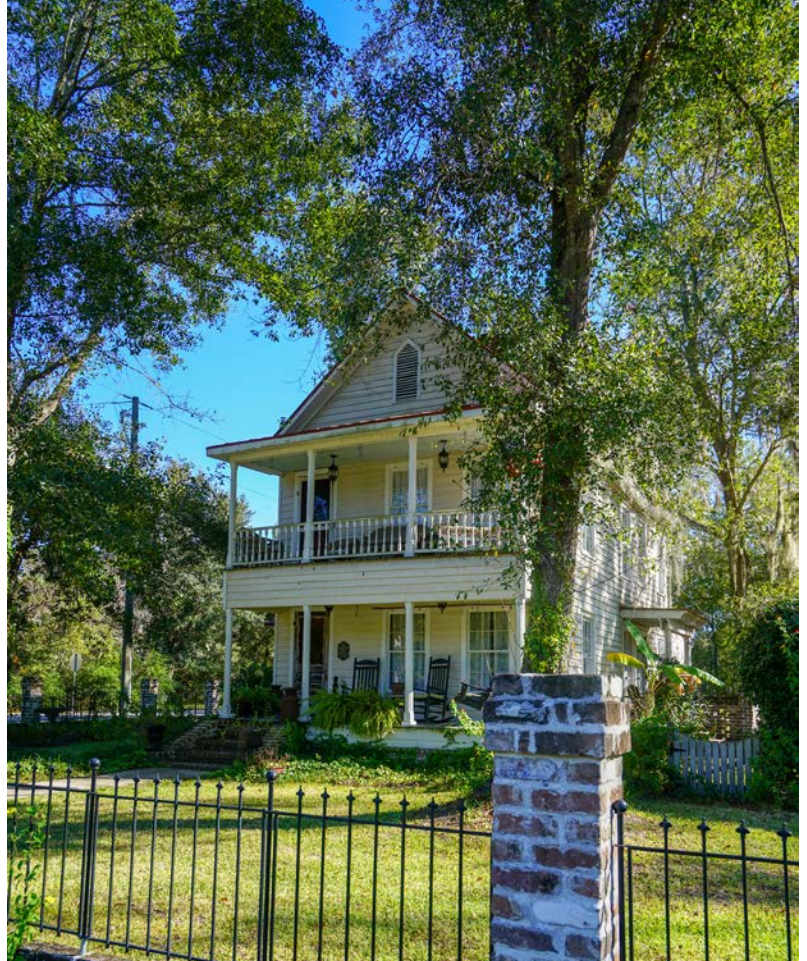
5

HOUSING

- 5.1 Housing Types
- 5.2 Occupancy
- 5.3 Housing Costs
- 5.4 Cost Burdened Housing
- 5.5 Condition of Housing
- 5.6 Job Housing Balance

The Housing chapter provides an overview of the housing supply in Effingham County and the cities of Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield. It includes a breakdown of housing types, ages and conditions, occupancy data, ownership and renter data, and housing information as it relates to demographics and income levels.

A thorough understanding of the current housing supply and how it compares to demand is important to ensure residents of Effingham County and the communities within have acceptable and affordable housing options. Local governments influence what type of housing developments take place in their community through regulation, and they may take that opportunity to require new housing developments to reflect the needs of citizens. New housing development should seek to fill any gaps in housing demand rather than provide housing in market sectors that are already sufficient. Rincon and Springfield each listed a lack of diverse housing options as a concern in the Needs and Opportunities section of the plan. However, the county lists diversity of housing as a strength, exemplifying the unique challenges and situations the separate communities face.



HOUSING TYPES

5.1



The majority of the occupied homes in Effingham County, including Rincon, Springfield, and Guyton are detached single units. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate, or 15,314 of the 21,508, total housing units in Effingham County are single family detached homes. This is 72% of total housing units in the county.

Behind single family detached units, mobile homes are the most common housing unit. The Census Bureau differentiates mobile homes, which comprise 20.6% of housing units in Effingham County, from single family homes. In Effingham County and the cities of Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield, 6.6% of housing units are multi family. This percentage consists of any properties accommodating more than two housing units.

Housing Types

Category	Effingham County	
	Total	Percent of Total
Total	21,508	100%
Single Family		
Single Family Detached	15,314	71.2%
Single Family Attached	289	1.3%
Subtotal	15,603	72.5%
Multi Family		
2 Units	212	1.0%
3 or 4 Units	244	1.1%
5 to 9 Units	477	2.2%
10 to 19 Units	298	1.4%
20 or More Units	192	0.9%
Subtotal	1,423	6.6%
Mobile Home	4,435	20.6%
Boat, RV, Van, etc.	47	0.2%

U.S. Census Bureau

OCCUPANCY

5.2

Occupancy

76.7% of housing units in Effingham County were owner-occupied in the period from 2013-2017. This is higher than the owner-occupancy rate for the State of Georgia, which was 63% over the same period.

Age of Occupied Housing

39.7% of occupied housing units in Effingham County were constructed during or after the turn of the 21st century. Another large portion, 38.1%, were built between 1980 and 1999. The remaining 22.1% were built prior to 1980.

Year Structure Was Built	Estimate	Percent
Total Housing Units	21,508	100%
Built 2014 or later	630	2.9%
Built 2010 to 2013	887	4.1%
Built 2000 to 2009	7,041	32.7%
Built 1990 to 1999	5,668	26.4%
Built 1980 to 1989	2,527	11.7%
Built 1970 to 1979	1,976	9.2%
Built 1960 to 1969	1,025	4.8%
Built 1950 to 1959	644	3.0%
Built 1940 to 1949	375	1.7%
Built 1939 or earlier	735	3.4%

U.S. Census Bureau



HOUSING COSTS

5.3

Effingham County's median housing value in 2017 was \$155,500. This is just below the median value of owner-occupied housing units for the State of Georgia from 2013-2017, which was \$158,400. 2017 rent in Effingham County was slightly higher than the state level over the same period; rent was \$957 for Effingham County in 2017 and \$927 for the state from 2013-2017.

Category	Median Home Values for Effingham County		
	2007	2017	Change
Median Value	\$128,300	\$155,500	21%
Median Rent	\$736	\$957	30%

U.S. Census Bureau

COST BURDENED HOUSING

5.4

From 2007 to 2017, the median housing value in Effingham County increased by 21%. The median rent increased 30% over the same period. Cost burdened housing, defined as housing with a mortgage taking over 35% of household income, is 18% for the county. This is less than the 28% of housing that is cost burdened at the regional level. The housing cost burden for renter occupied housing is 37% for the county, significantly less than the 45% cost burdened rent level for the region.

Location	Cost-Burdened Housing: Housing Units with a Mortgage				
	Total Units	Monthly Costs 30%-34%	Percent of Total	Monthly Costs 35%+	2015-2016 Changes by percentage
Effingham County	10,634	632	6.0%	1,903	17.9%
Coastal Region	96,323	7,663	8.0	26,772	28.0%

U.S. Census Bureau

Location	Cost-Burdened Housing: Housing Units Paying Rent				
	Total Units	Monthly Costs 30%-34%	Percent of Total	Monthly Costs 35%+	2015-2016 Changes by percentage
Effingham County	4,154	493	12.0%	1,529	37.20
Coastal Region	89,132	8,257	9.0%	39,808	45%

U.S. Census Bureau

CONDITION OF HOUSING

5.5

Good housing conditions are essential for people’s health and affect childhood development. The U.S. Census Bureau measures housing conditions by identifying housing units without complete kitchen facilities and plumbing facilities.

In 2010, 0.1% of housing units in Effingham County lacked complete plumbing facilities, the same percentage as in 2017. At the city level, 0% of housing units in the cities of Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield lacked complete plumbing facilities in 2010. However, 1.5% of houses in Springfield and 0.7% of houses in Guyton lacked complete plumbing by 2017.

1.3% of units lacked complete kitchen facilities in Effingham County in 2010, and 0% lacked kitchen facilities within the cities of Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield. In 2017, 2% of units in Effingham County were without complete kitchen facilities, as were 6.7% of units in Springfield. Guyton and Rincon continued to have 100% of housing units with complete kitchen facilities.

The state average for housing units in 2010 that lacked complete plumbing facilities decreased from 0.5% in 2010 to 0.3% in 2017. The average for housing units at the state level that lacked complete kitchen units increased from 3% to 3.1% over the same period. In general, there was a higher increase of housing units without complete kitchen and plumbing facilities in Effingham County than at the state level.

Category	Effingham County Condition of Housing	
	2010	2017
Housing units lack complete kitchen facilities	1.3%	2.0%
Housing units lack complete plumbing facilities	0.1%	0.1%

U.S. Census Bureau

JOB HOUSING BALANCE

5.6

A job to housing ratio in the range of 0.75 to 1.5 is considered beneficial for reducing vehicle miles traveled. The job to housing ratio indicates whether an area has enough housing for employees to live near employment and sufficient jobs in residential areas. An imbalance in jobs and housing creates longer commute times, more single driver commutes, and loss of job opportunities for workers without vehicles.

A balanced community generally has a jobs-housing ratio of 1.25 to 1.75. From 2010 to 2017, Effingham County and its three cities had a job housing balance that improved from a 1.2 ratio to a 1.3 ratio. As stated earlier, this ratio is crucial in that it allows residents to be in close proximity to employment areas. Effingham County’s ratio of 1.3 in 2017 fits the description for a balanced community.

Category	Effingham County Job Housing Balance	
	2010	2017
Job to Housing Ratio	1.3	1.3

U.S. Census Bureau



Purpose Built Communities

Purpose Built Communities is a non-profit consulting firm that works side by side with local leaders to plan and implement a revitalization effort tailored specifically to Effingham County and the cities of Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield. The goal is to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty by helping local leaders transform struggling neighborhoods, and bringing together the vital components necessary for holistic community revitalization: high quality mixed-income housing, an effective cradle-to-college education pipeline, and comprehensive community wellness resources.



Community Development Block Grant

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is a flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. The CDBG program works to ensure decent affordable housing, to provide services to the most vulnerable in our communities, and to create jobs through the expansion and retention of businesses.

Over a 1, 2, or 3-year period, as selected by the grantee, not less than 70 percent of CDBG funds must be used for activities that benefit low- and moderate-income persons. In addition, each activity must meet one of the following objectives for the program: benefit low- and moderate-income persons, prevention or elimination of slums or blight, or address community development needs having a particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community for which other funding is not available.



DCA Georgia initiative for Community Housing (GICH) Program

GICH is a three-year program designed to help communities improve their quality of life and economic vitality through the development of locally-driven housing and revitalization strategies. This is accomplished through technical assistance, training, and ultimately producing a community housing plan with objectives and goals.



U.S Department of Agriculture Rural Development

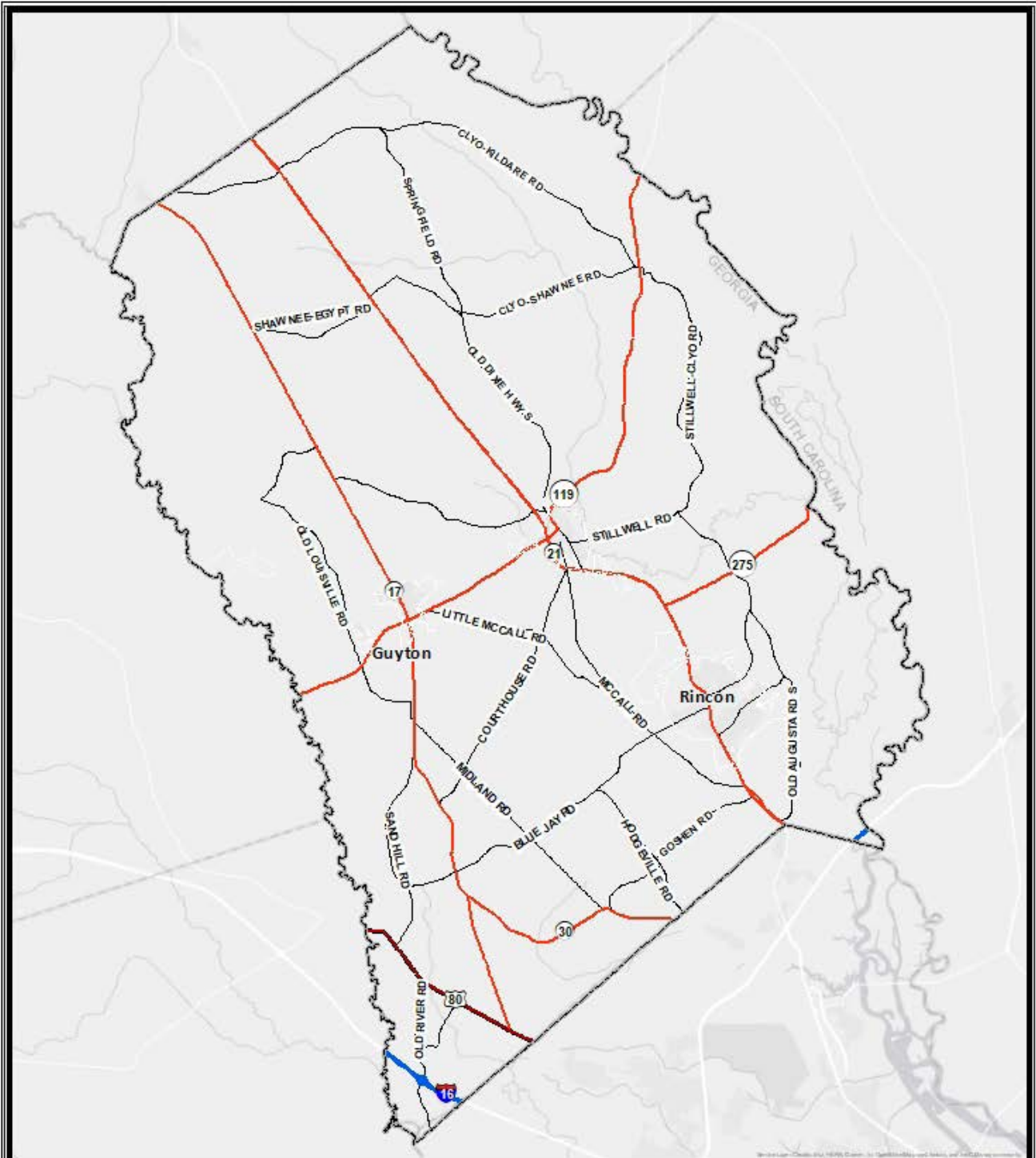
Low interest, fixed-rate Homeownership loans are provided to qualified persons directly by USDA Rural Development. Financing is also offered at fixed-rates and terms through a loan from a private financial institution and guaranteed by USDA Rural Development for qualified persons. Neither one of these home loan programs require a down payment.

6

TRANSPORTATION

- 6.1 Roads and Highways
- 6.2 Road Network Hierarchy
- 6.3 Alternative Modes of Transportation

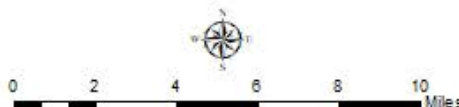




- Effingham County
- Interstate
- US Highways
- State Routes
- Collector

Transportation
Effingham County

Published: 7/25/2019
1 in = 4 miles



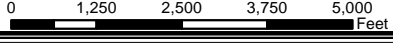
Map created by GIS and Planning Department, Effingham County, Georgia. Data provided by the Georgia Department of Transportation, Georgia Department of Transportation, and the Georgia Department of Transportation. The information on this map is for informational purposes only and does not constitute a guarantee, warranty, or endorsement of any product or service by the Georgia Department of Transportation. The information on this map is for informational purposes only and does not constitute a guarantee, warranty, or endorsement of any product or service by the Georgia Department of Transportation.



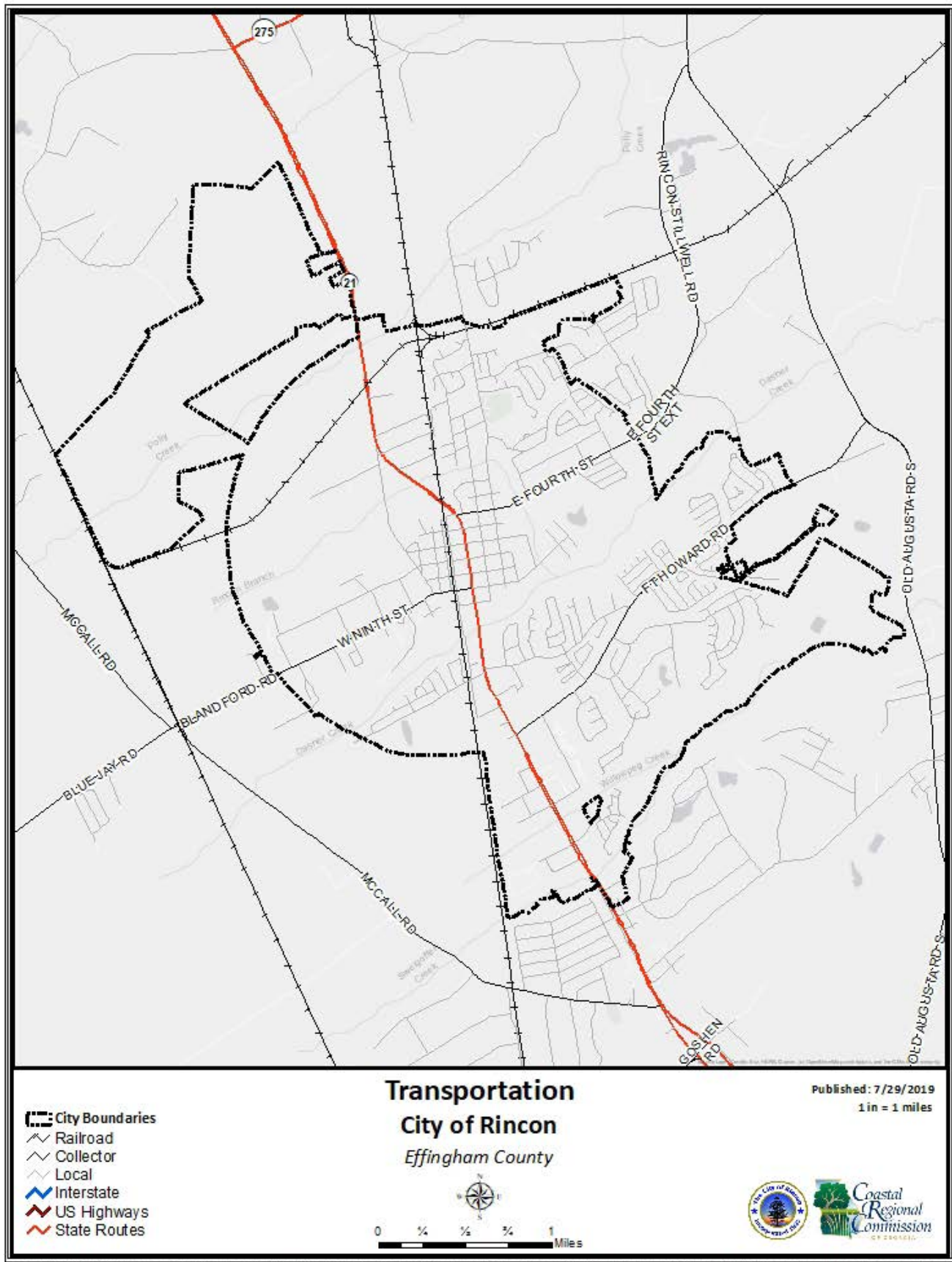
Transportation City of Guyton Effingham County

Published: 7/29/2019
1 in = 2,500 feet

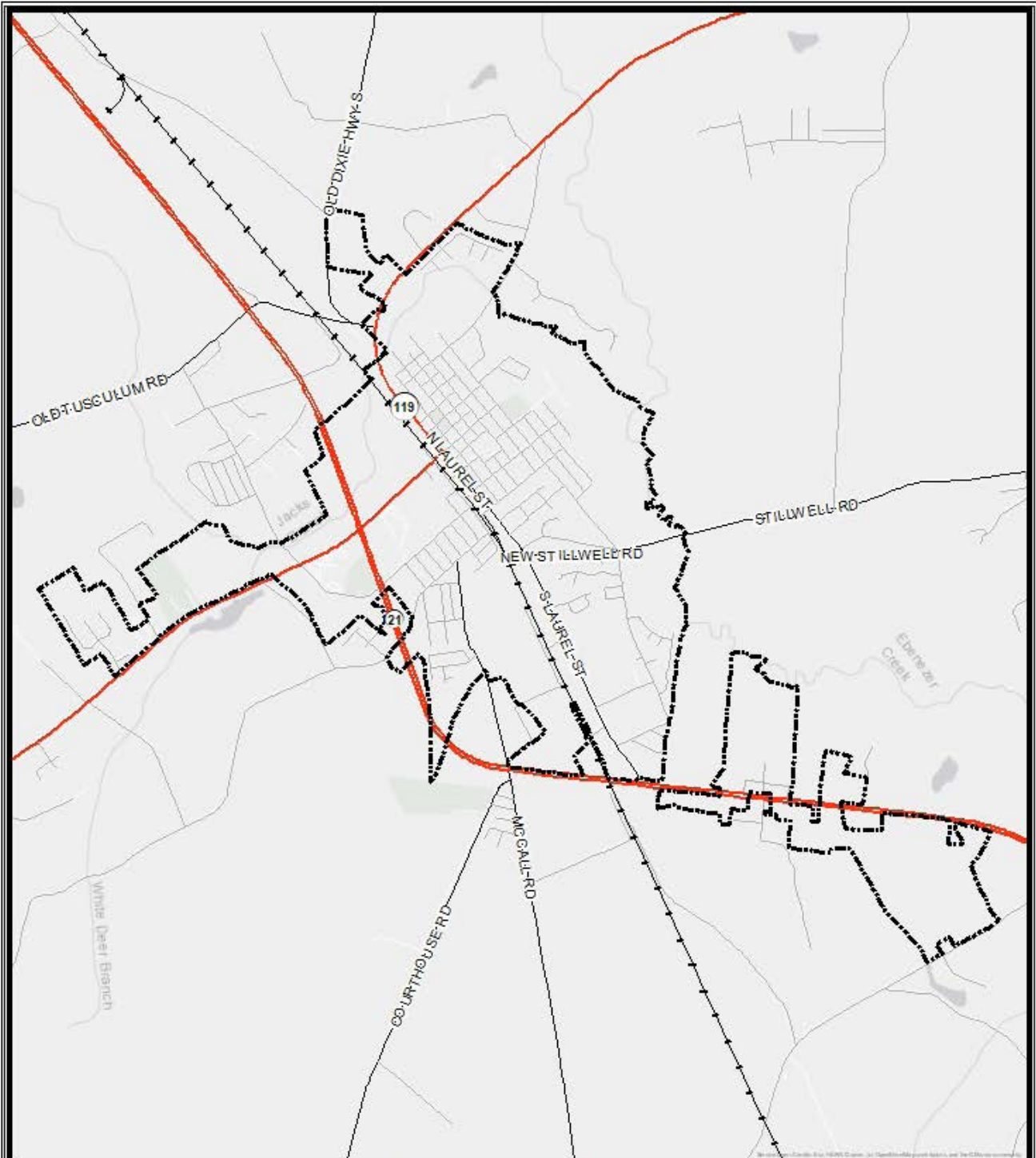
- Effingham County
- City Boundaries
- Interstate
- US Highways
- State Routes



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- City Boundaries
- Railroad
- Collector
- Local
- Interstate
- US Highways
- State Routes

Transportation
City of Springfield
Effingham County

Published: 7/29/2019
 1 in = 1 miles



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ROADS & HIGHWAYS

6.I

Transportation networks are central to a community’s growth and wellbeing. In Effingham County, where travel is largely car dependent, residents rely on the road network to travel within the county and to and from surrounding areas. Industries also rely on the road network for economic activity in addition to their use of alternative transportation methods including rail, air, and shipping. Each of these shapes the growth and sustenance of Effingham County and the communities within.

Roads and Highways

Interstates 16 and 95 cross through Effingham County, as do U.S. Route 80 and State Routes 17, 21, 21 Spur, 26, 30, 119, 275, 404 (I-16), and 405 (I-95). Local roads make up the remaining road transportation network.

Means of Transportation
The U. S. Census reports on whether households have access to a personal vehicle. This is an important indicator of the percentage of the population that has reliable transportation should they need to evacuate their homes in the event of a storm or other natural disaster. In Effingham County, 2.5 percent of households are without a personal vehicle. This percentage is 3.8 percent in Rincon, 7.8 percent in Springfield, and 3.1 percent in Guyton.



ROAD NETWORK HIERARCHY

6.2

Freeways

Limited access roads, freeways or motorways, including most toll roads are at the top of the hierarchy. These roads provide largely uninterrupted travel, often using partial or full access control, and are designed for high speeds. Interstates 16 and 95 are limited access freeways that pass through Effingham County. Interstate 16 runs east/west across the southern tip of the county, and Interstate 95 runs north/south to cross the Georgia/South Carolina state line in the eastern part of the county.

Arterials

Major through roads that are expected to carry large volumes of traffic are designated as arterials. These are often divided into major and minor arterials, and rural and urban arterials. Examples of arterials in Effingham County include State Route 21 and US Route 80. State Route 21 runs northwest/southeast through the county, crossing through Springfield and Rincon. US Route 80 runs north of Interstate 16 through the southern portion of the county.

Collectors

Next in the hierarchy are collector roads, which collect traffic from local roads, and distribute it to arterials. Traffic using a collector is usually going to or coming from somewhere nearby. HWY 17/GA-30 running northwest/southeast through Guyton, GA-119 running northeast/southwest through Springfield, and GA 275 running east/west between the state line and State Route 21 are examples of collector roads in Effingham County.

Local Roads

These roads are at the bottom of the hierarchy, have the lowest speed limit, and carry low volumes of traffic. In some areas, these roads may be unpaved.

Bridges

Effingham County has four major bridges, each of which lay on the county's borders. Two of those bridges are part of I-95, one crossing the Savannah River at the Georgia/South Carolina State line and one crossing Knoxboro Creek at the Effingham County/Chatham County line. There is also a bridge crossing the Ogeechee River on I-16 at the Effingham County/Bulloch County line. Like I-95, State Route 119 has a bridge crossing over from Effingham County to South Carolina.

Intersections

Effingham County uses both traditional traffic signals and traffic circles to manage intersection traffic throughout the county.

Signage

The Georgia Department of Transportation has identified a need to invest in signage at community access points including, specifically US Bike Route 1.

ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION 6.3

Car dependence is common in Effingham County. Public Transportation is available through Coastal Regional Coaches, a transit system operated by the Coastal Regional Commission. Coastal Regional Coaches offers rides for a fare of \$3 one-way within the county and for a fare based on number of counties traveled throughout the rest of the region.

Railroads, Trucking, Port Facilities, and Airports

Effingham County is located in close proximity to Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport as well as the Port of Savannah and Norfolk Southern and CSX rail lines. These options, along with Interstates 16 and 95, make Effingham County a desirable location for industry.

Pedestrian & Bicycle Paths

Effingham County, Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield have each expressed a desire to improve and expand on existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and multi-use greenways. In addition on existing projects by each individual government, Effingham County and the City of Springfield are home to a portion of US Bike Route 1, a route that will connect Florida to Maine upon its completion. Guyton desires to expand existing trails including the Rail-to-Trail project. Rincon desires to create a similar trail using decommissioned rail lines. Springfield plans to expand Ebenezer Bike Trail and the Highway 119 portion of US Bike Route 1. Additionally, they hope to provide greenway connectivity with Guyton and other parts of the county through intergovernmental coordination.

Parking

Effingham County has not indicated concerns regarding insufficient parking infrastructure, nor have the cities of Guyton or Springfield. Rincon indicated a lack of connectivity in parking lots as a weakness in the SWOT analysis.

Transportation and Land Use Connection

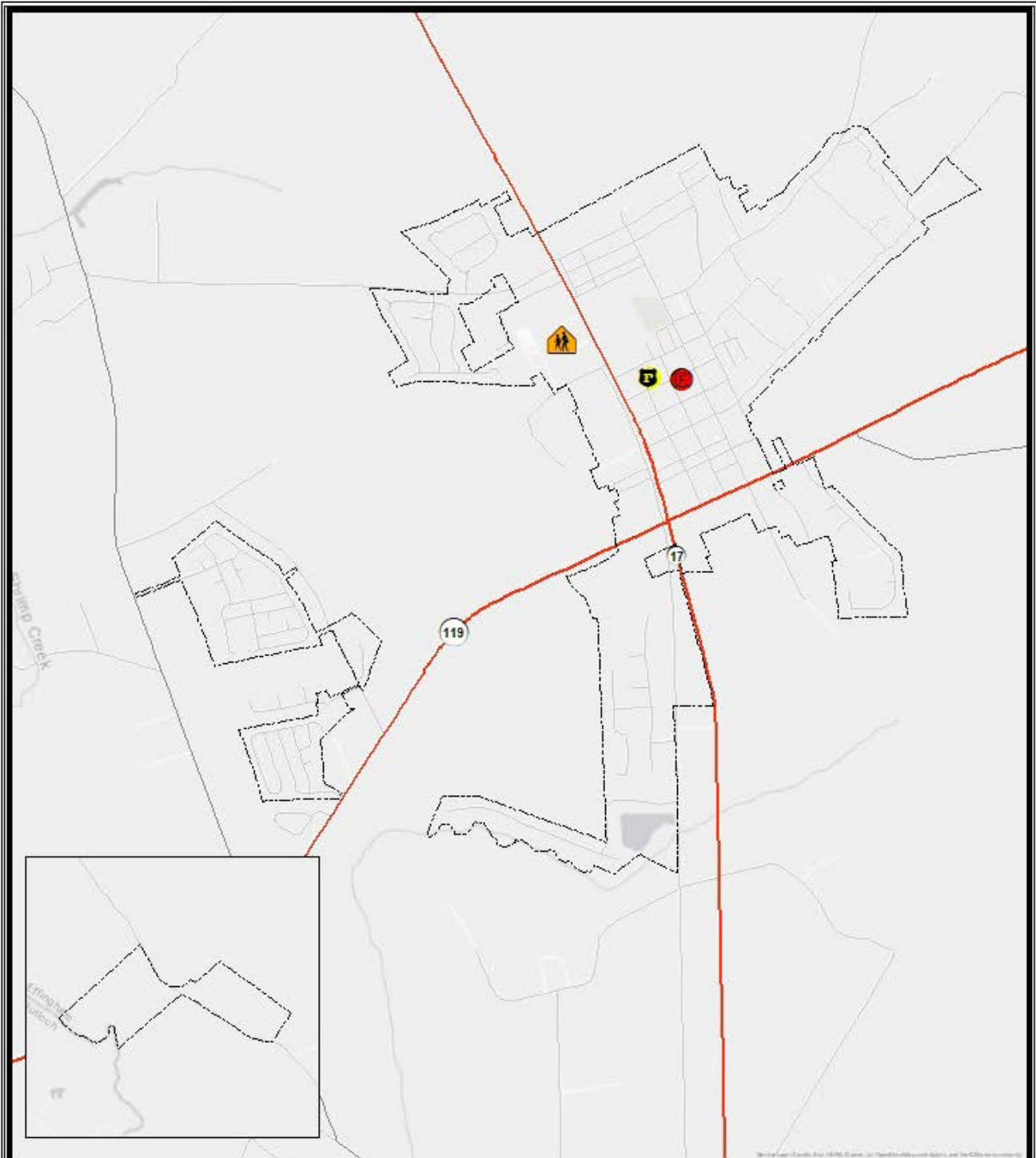
Improving the connectivity of pedestrian and bicycle networks and creating greenways within the county will create new opportunities for outdoor recreation and public uses.



7

COASTAL VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE

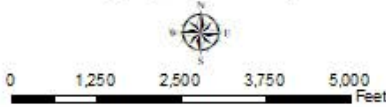
- 7.1 Natural Hazards
- 7.2 Storm Surge and Development
- 7.3 Vegetation / Open Water Buffers
- 7.4 Vulnerable Populations
- 7.5 Income and Poverty Level
- 7.6 Means of Transportation
- 7.7 Housing Type



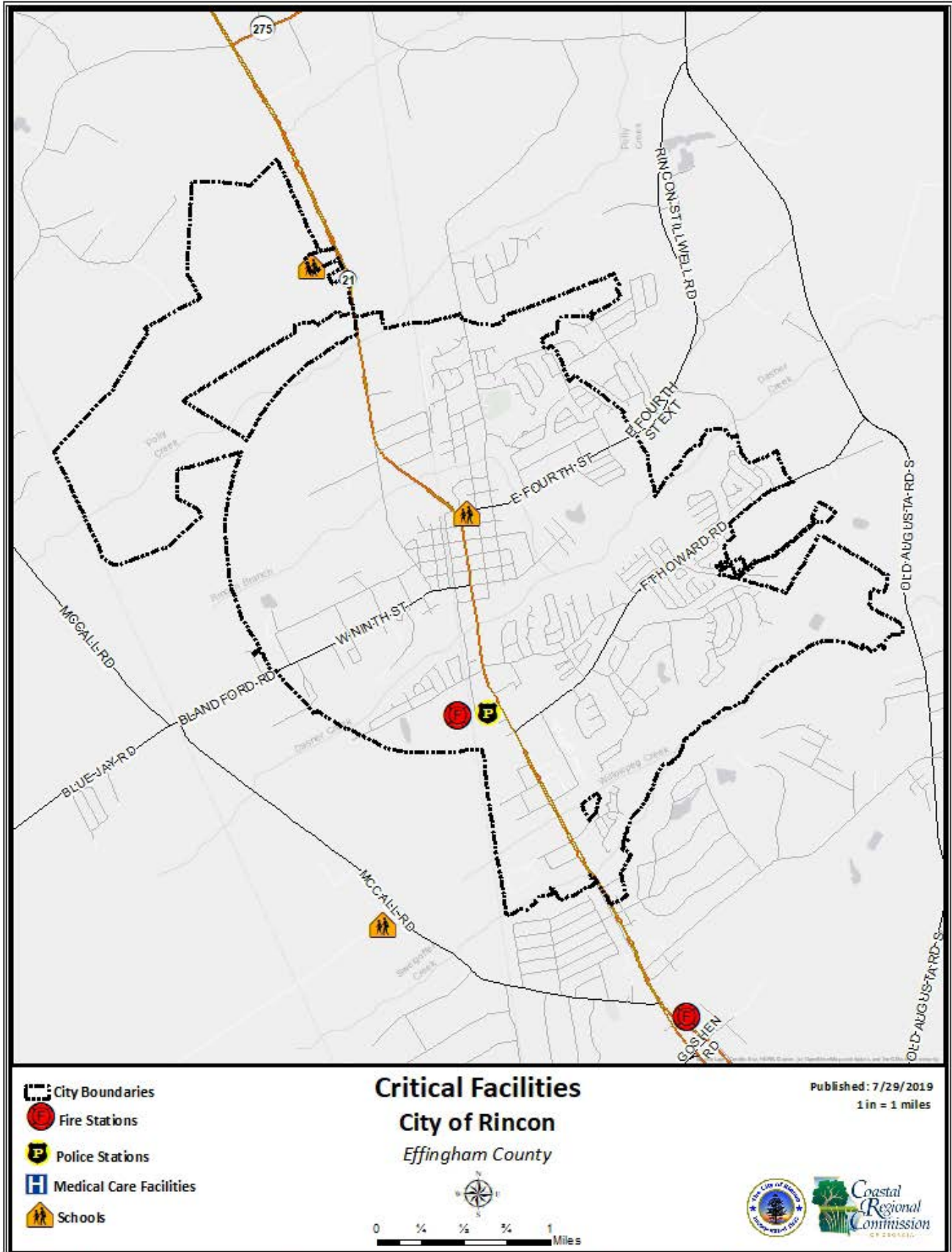
- Effingham County
- City Boundaries
- Fire Stations
- Police Stations
- Schools

Critical Facilities
City of Guyton
 Effingham County

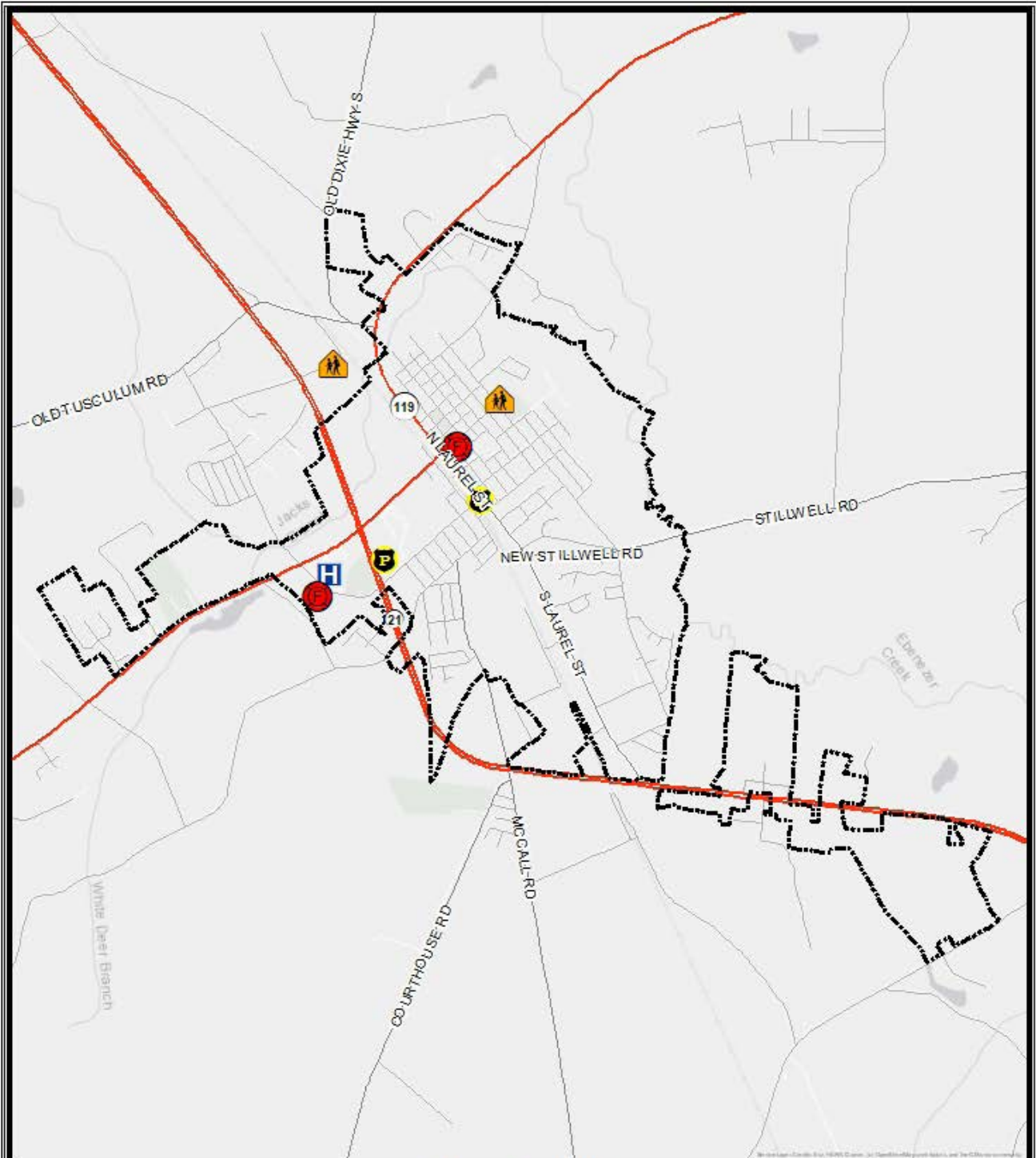
Published: 7/25/2019
 1 in = 2,500 feet



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- City Boundaries
- Fire Stations
- Police Stations
- Medical Care Facilities
- Schools

Critical Facilities
City of Springfield
 Effingham County

Published: 7/29/2019
 1 in = 1 miles



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Coastal Vulnerability and Resilience

Resilient communities minimize any disaster’s disruption to everyday life and their local economies. Resilient communities are not only prepared to help prevent or minimize the loss or damage to life, property, and the environment, but they also have the ability to quickly return citizens to work, reopen businesses, and restore other essential services needed for a full and timely economic recovery.

NATURAL HAZARDS

7.1

Portions of Effingham County are located within low laying coastal plains and are susceptible to flooding from rivers and canals. Effingham County and the cities of Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield are also at risk of flooding from hurricanes.

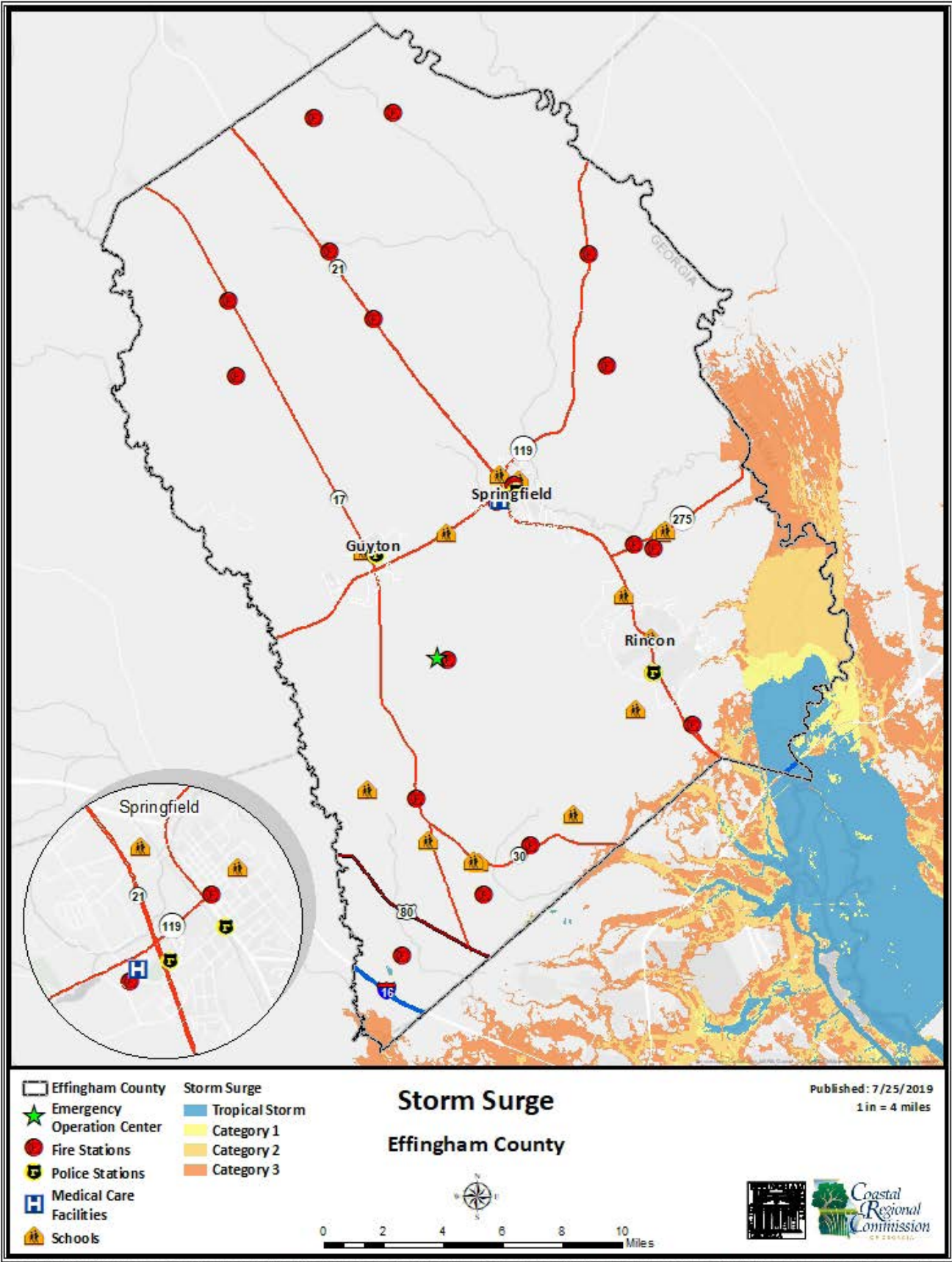
STORM SURGE AND DEVELOPMENT

7.2

In Effingham County, 0.51% of development is within storm surge 1, 2.29% is within storm surge 2, and 1.51% is within storm surge 3.

In Rincon, 0.51% of development is within storm surge 2 and 0.82% is within storm surge 3.

Guyton and Springfield have no development within a storm surge.



VEGETATION/OPEN WATER BUFFERS

7.3

Riparian buffers can be given a value based on their presence and allowance from open water and wetlands towards the built and developed environment. Three categories of consideration include: 100, 150, and 200-foot riparian buffers. A 100-foot riparian buffer is the recommended minimum based on literature reviews by the scientific community. As reported by the U.S. Agriculture and U.S. Environmental Protection agency in 1997, there are specific riparian widths that are associated with specific objectives. The recommended buffer width for flood control should be up 200 feet. This buffer width provides flood and sediment control as well as wildlife habitat.

Buffers narrower than 35 feet can provide some limited benefits but may require long-term maintenance since their ability to trap sediments is reduced.

VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

7.4

A key factor in examining resiliency is quantifying vulnerable populations. These populations include those residents who live in vulnerable areas, the 100-year and 500-year flood plains, but also those who may have difficulty in heeding evacuation orders due to age, income, and mobility.

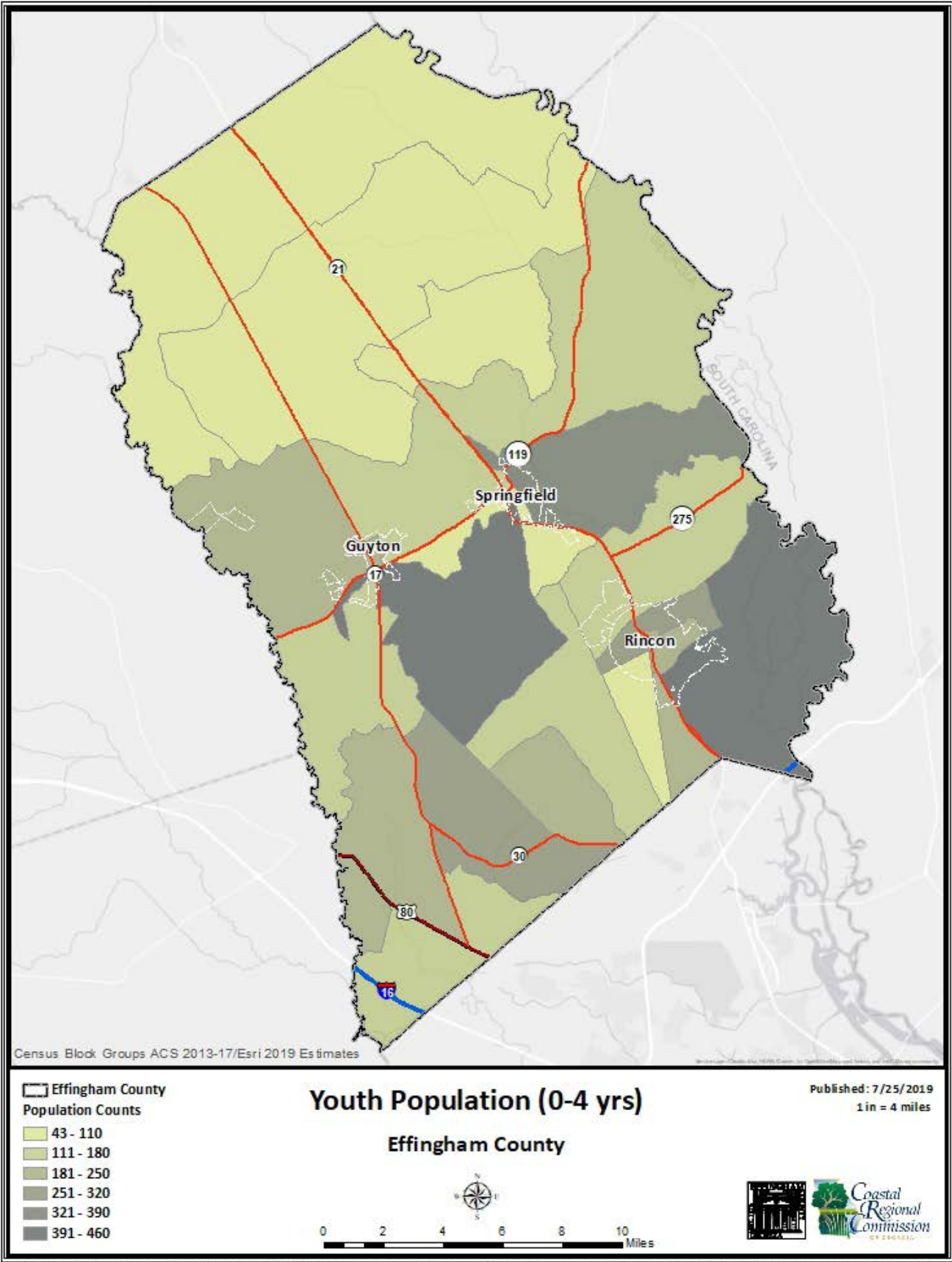
The most vulnerable populations include children less than five years old, the elderly and frail elderly, persons living in poverty, and persons without reliable transportation that live in communities with limited public transportation. For elderly, we have identified the percentage of the population 65 and older. There is no specific age cohort for frail elderly, but the literature defines frailty in people 65 and older that called for the diagnosis when three or more of the following five criteria were present:

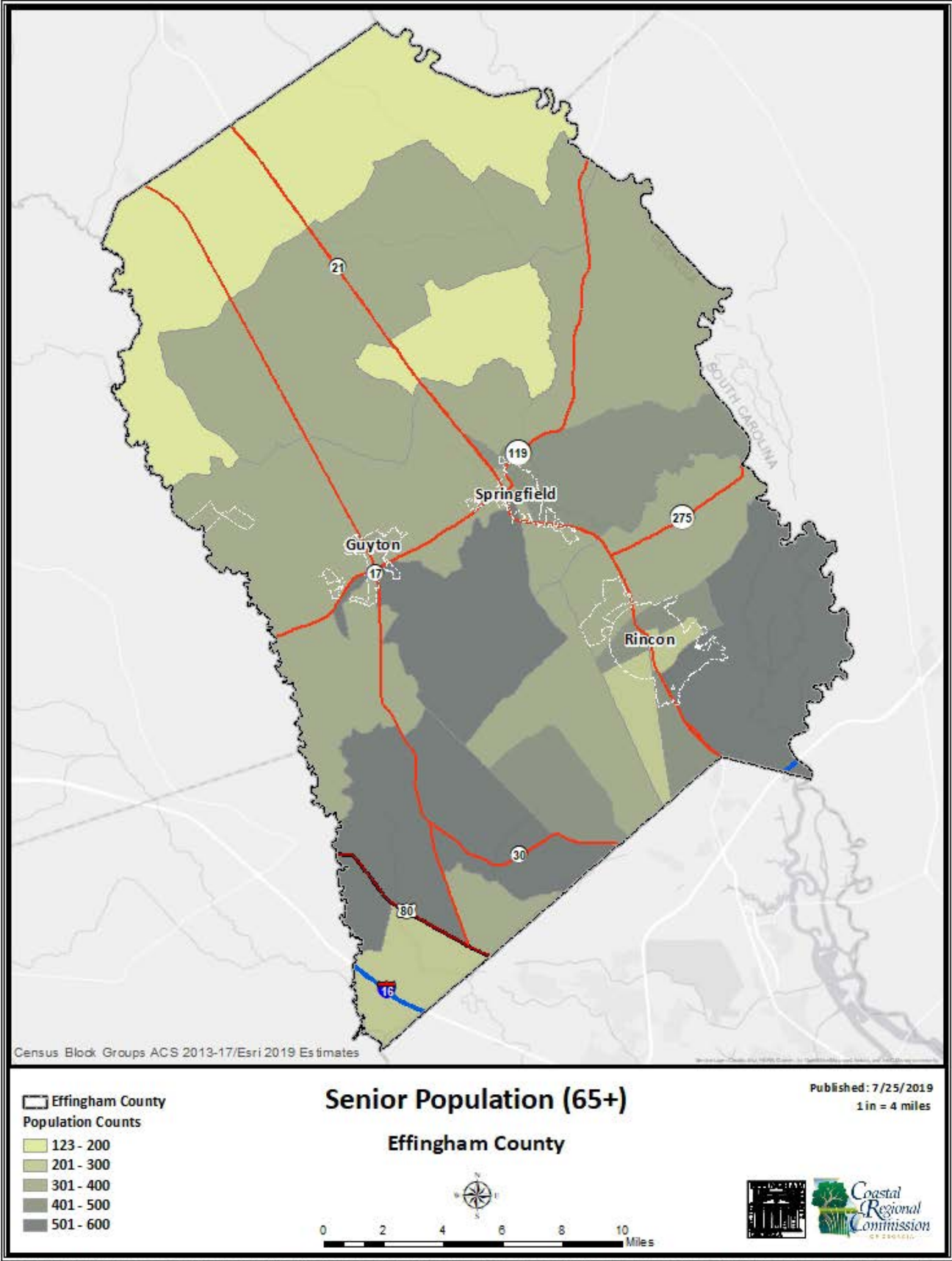
- Unintentional weight loss of 10 pounds or more in the past year
- Self-reported exhaustion
- Weakness as measured by grip strength, slow walking speed and low physical activity.
- The frail elderly are individuals, over 65 years of age, dependent on others for activities of daily living.

In Effingham County, the population of children under age 5 decreased by 1.2 percent from 2000 to 2017, During the same period, the number of children under age 5 decreased by 1.2% in Rincon and increased by 0.4% in Guyton and 1.4% in Springfield.

In Effingham County, the population of persons 65 or older increased 3% from 2000 to 2010. During that period, the number of persons aged 65 or older decreased in Guyton by 2.9%, Rincon by 0.7%, and Springfield by 0.1%.

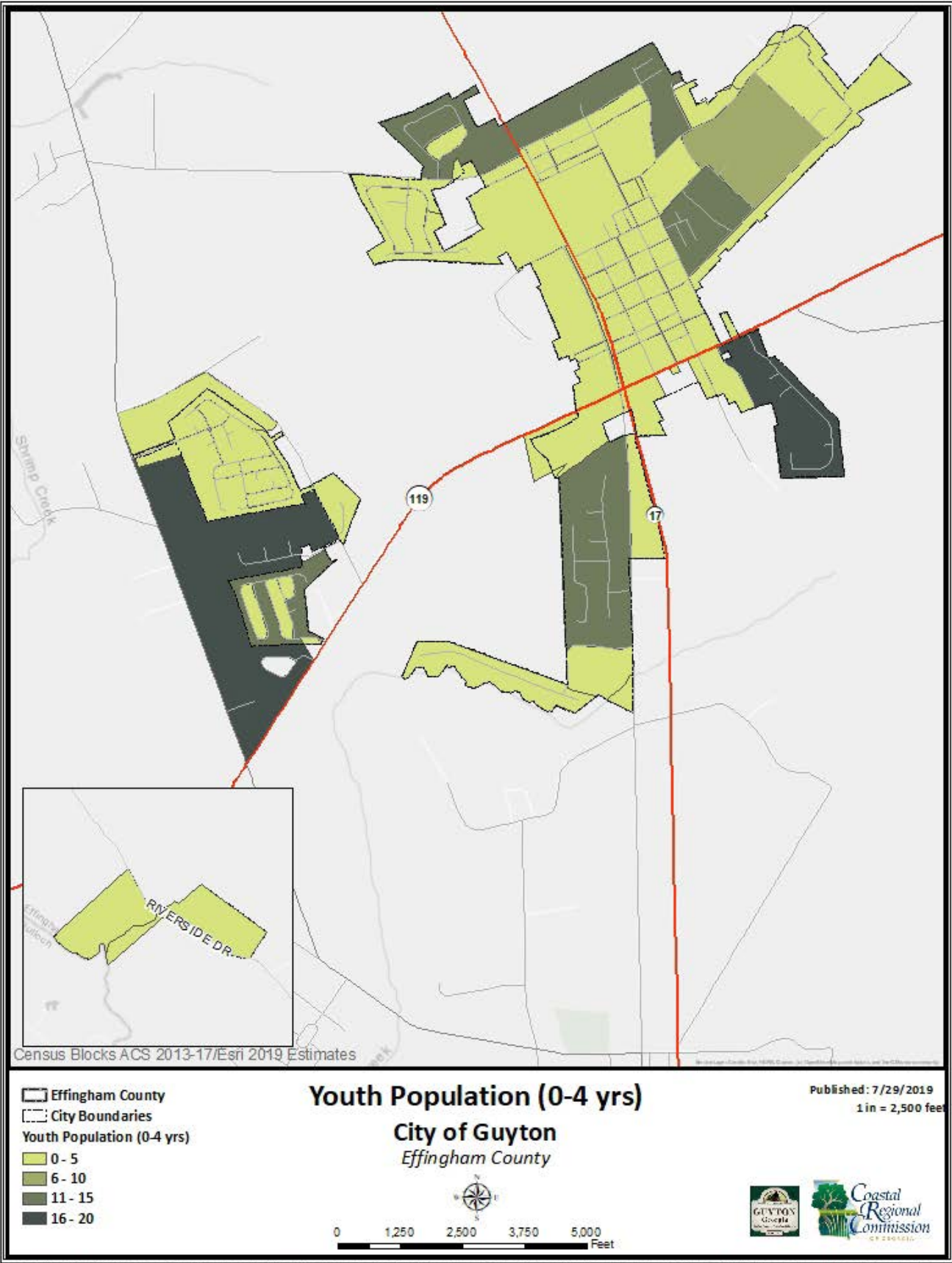
The most vulnerable populations include children less than five years old, the elderly and frail elderly, persons living in poverty, and persons without reliable transportation that live in communities with limited public transportation.





Census Block Groups ACS 2013-17/Esri 2019 Estimates

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Census Blocks ACS 2013-17/Esri 2019 Estimates

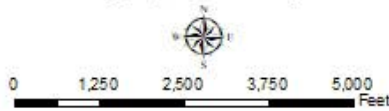
Senior Population (65+)

Published: 7/29/2019

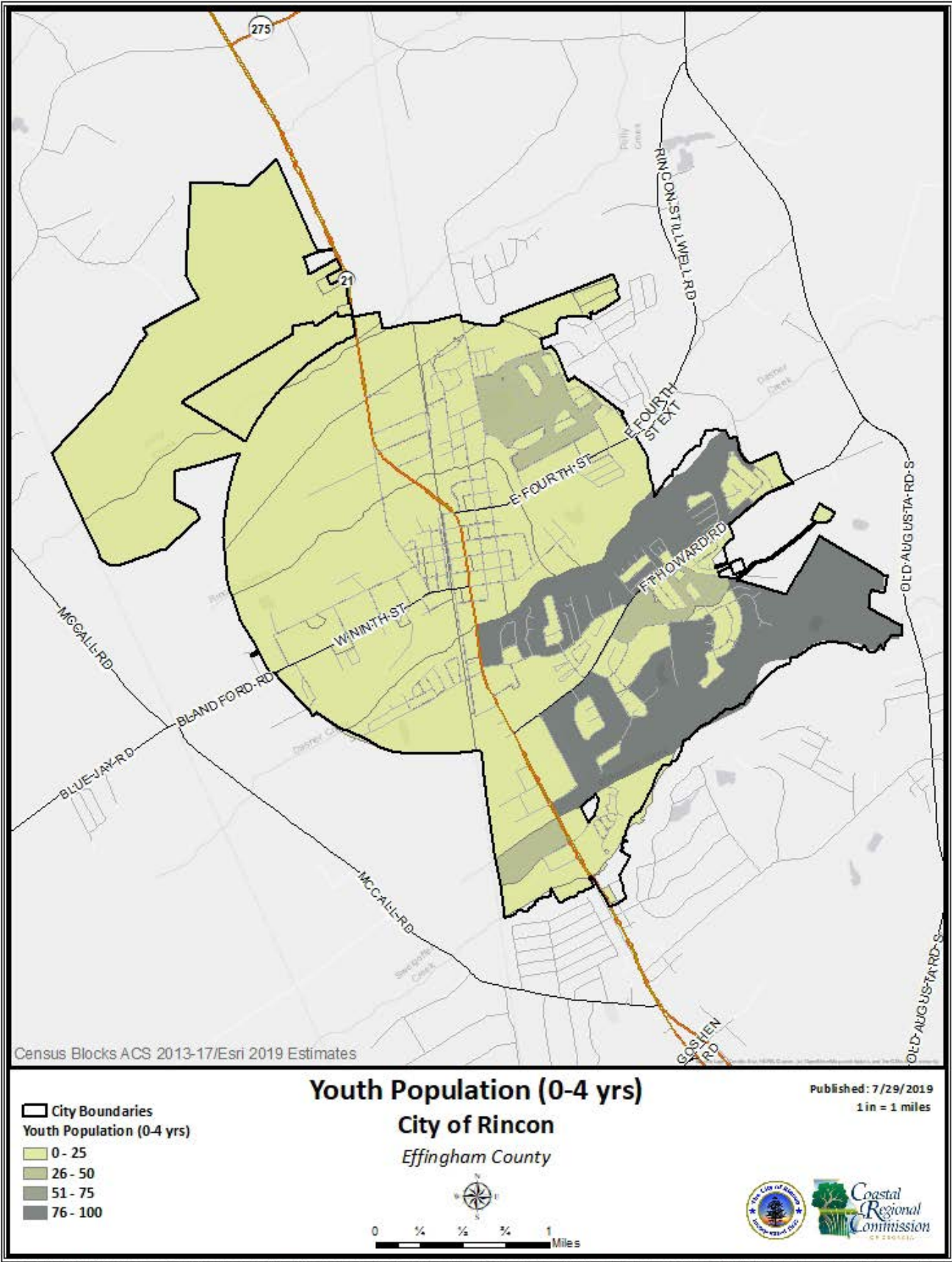
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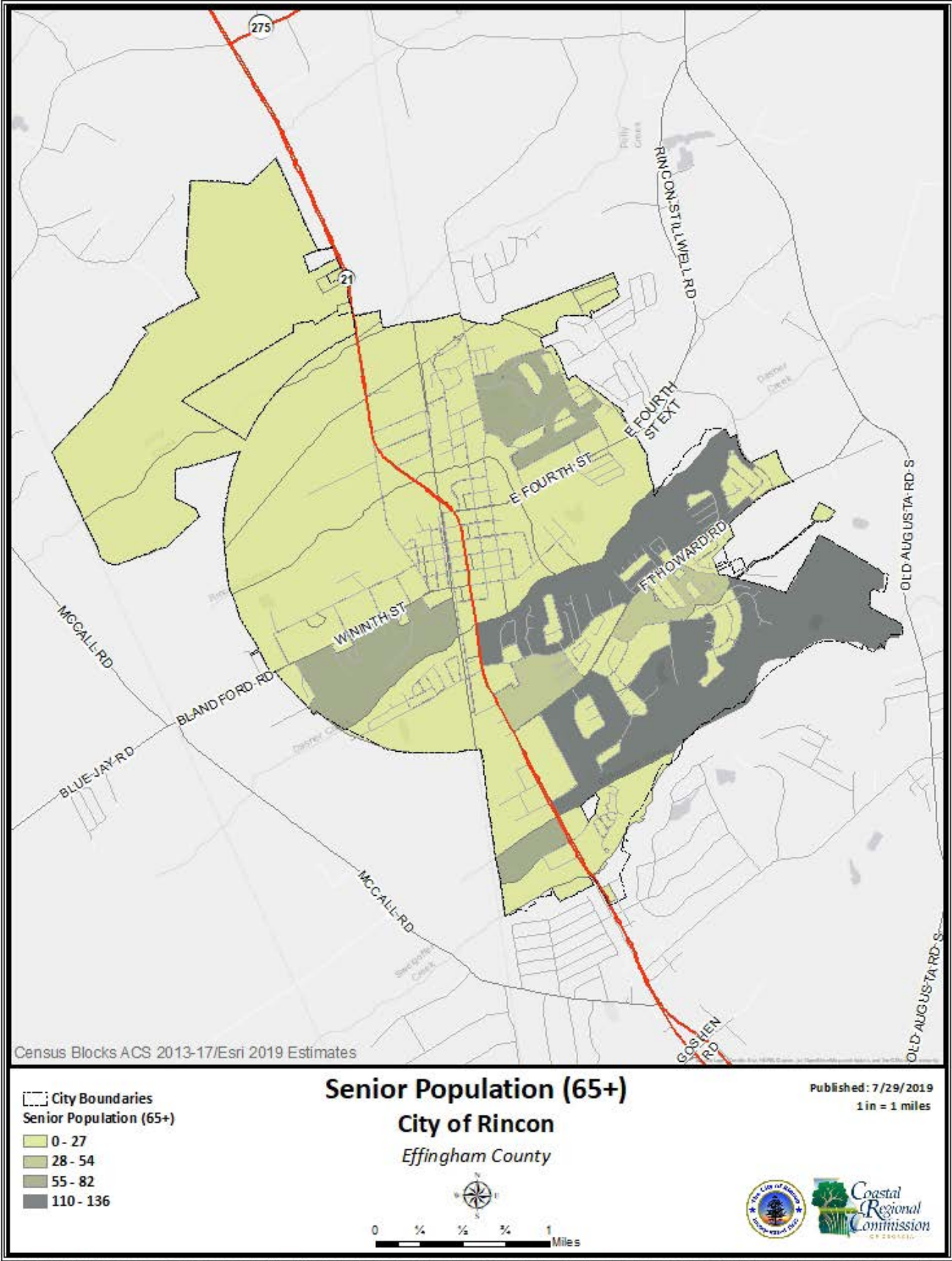
City of Guyton
 Effingham County

- Effingham County
- City Boundaries
- Senior Population (65+)
 - 0 - 10
 - 11 - 20
 - 21 - 32



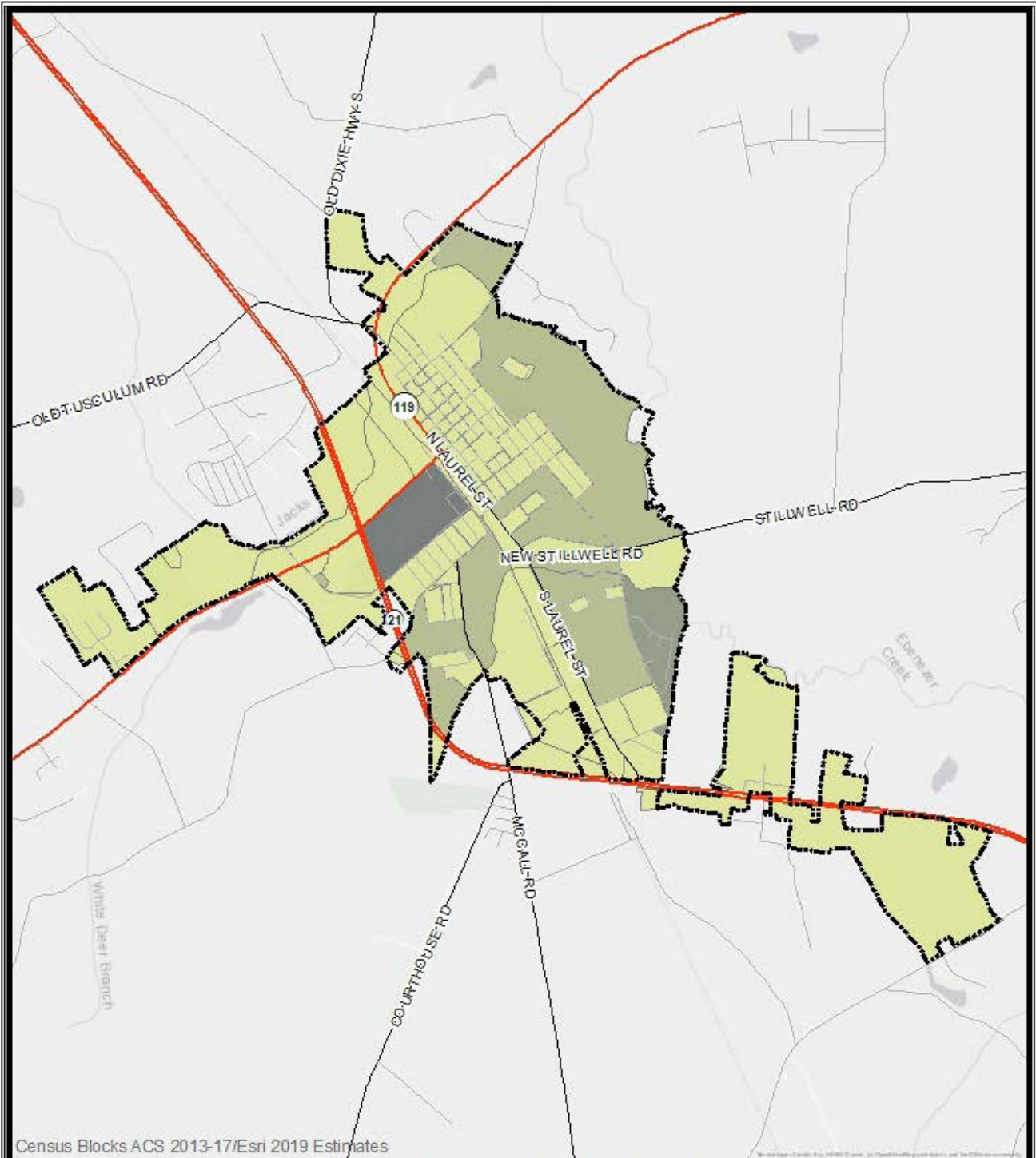
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Census Blocks ACS 2013-17/Esri 2019 Estimates

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Census Blocks ACS 2013-17/Esri 2019 Estimates

Youth Population (0-4 yrs)
City of Springfield
Effingham County

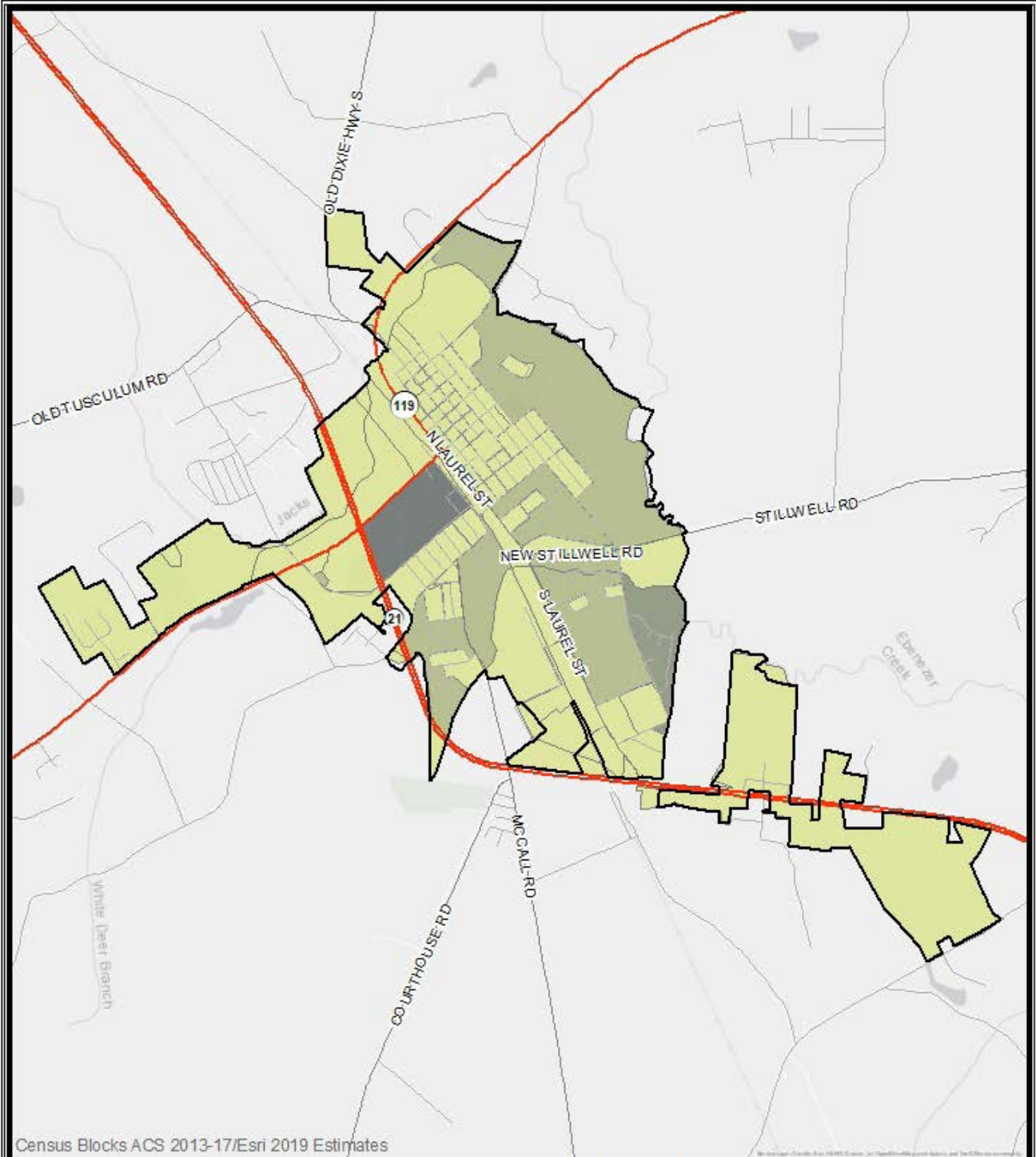
Published: 7/30/2019
 1 in = 1 miles

City Boundaries

Youth Population (0-4 yrs)

- 0 - 9
- 10 - 32
- 33 - 68
- 69 - 136

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Census Blocks ACS 2013-17/Esri 2019 Estimates

- City Boundaries
- Senior Population (65 +)**
- 0 - 9
- 10 - 32
- 33 - 68
- 69 - 136

Senior Population (65+)
City of Springfield
Effingham County

Published: 7/29/2019
 1 in = 1 miles



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INCOME AND POVERTY LEVEL

7.5

Income directly relates to a family’s ability to have reliable transportation, which in turn directly relates to a family’s ability to evacuate their homes in the event of an evacuation order. Income also impinges upon a family’s ability to secure temporary lodging (hotels or motels) beyond publicly provided shelter, or to obtain replacement housing should they lose their homes due to a storm event or natural disaster. The U.S. Census Bureau defines families as below the poverty level if they make less than 80% of the median household income for that area. The table below shows poverty levels for Effingham County and the cities of Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield using U.S. Census Bureau data from 2017.

Location	Median Income	80% of Household Income	% of Families Falling below Poverty Level
Effingham County	\$64,279	\$51,423	7%
Guyton	\$56,442	\$45,153	8.4%
Rincon	\$56,019	\$44,815	11.4%
Springfield	\$43,750	\$35,000	16.1%

MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION

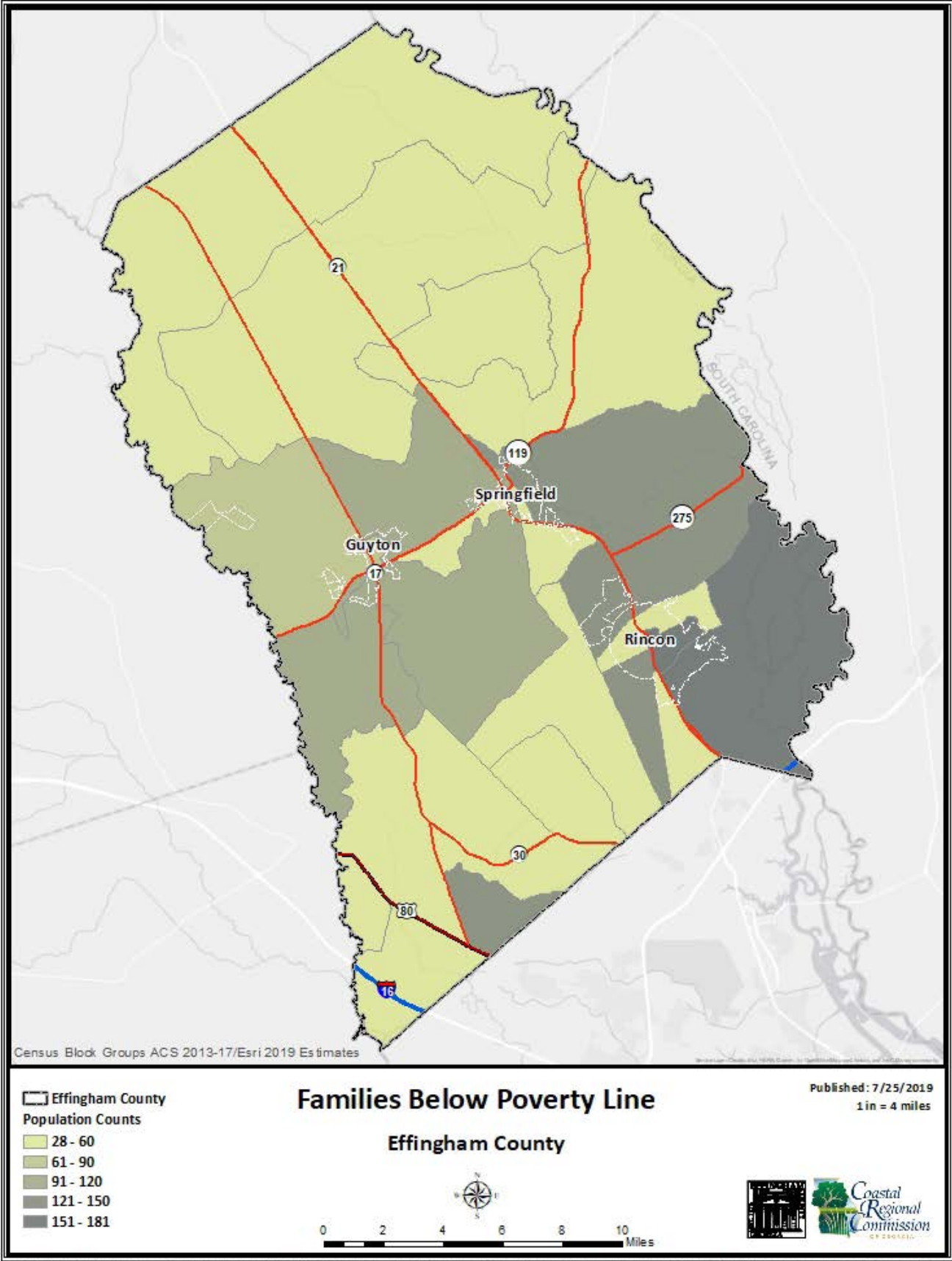
7.6

The U. S. Census reports on whether households have access to a personal vehicle. This is an important indicator of the percentage of the population that has reliable transportation should they need to evacuate their homes in the event of a storm or other natural disaster. In Effingham County, 2.5% of households are without a personal vehicle. This percentage is 3.8% in Rincon, 7.8% in Springfield, and 3.1% in Guyton.

HOUSING TYPE

7.7

Mobile homes have been identified as a particularly vulnerable type of housing during storm events due to their susceptibility to damage caused by high winds and flying debris. In Effingham County, 20.6% of families lived in mobile homes in 2017. Mobile homes are the second most common type of housing in the county, falling behind only single family detached units.





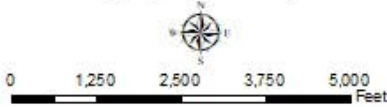
Census Blocks ACS 2013-17/Esri 2019 Estimates

Families Below Poverty Line

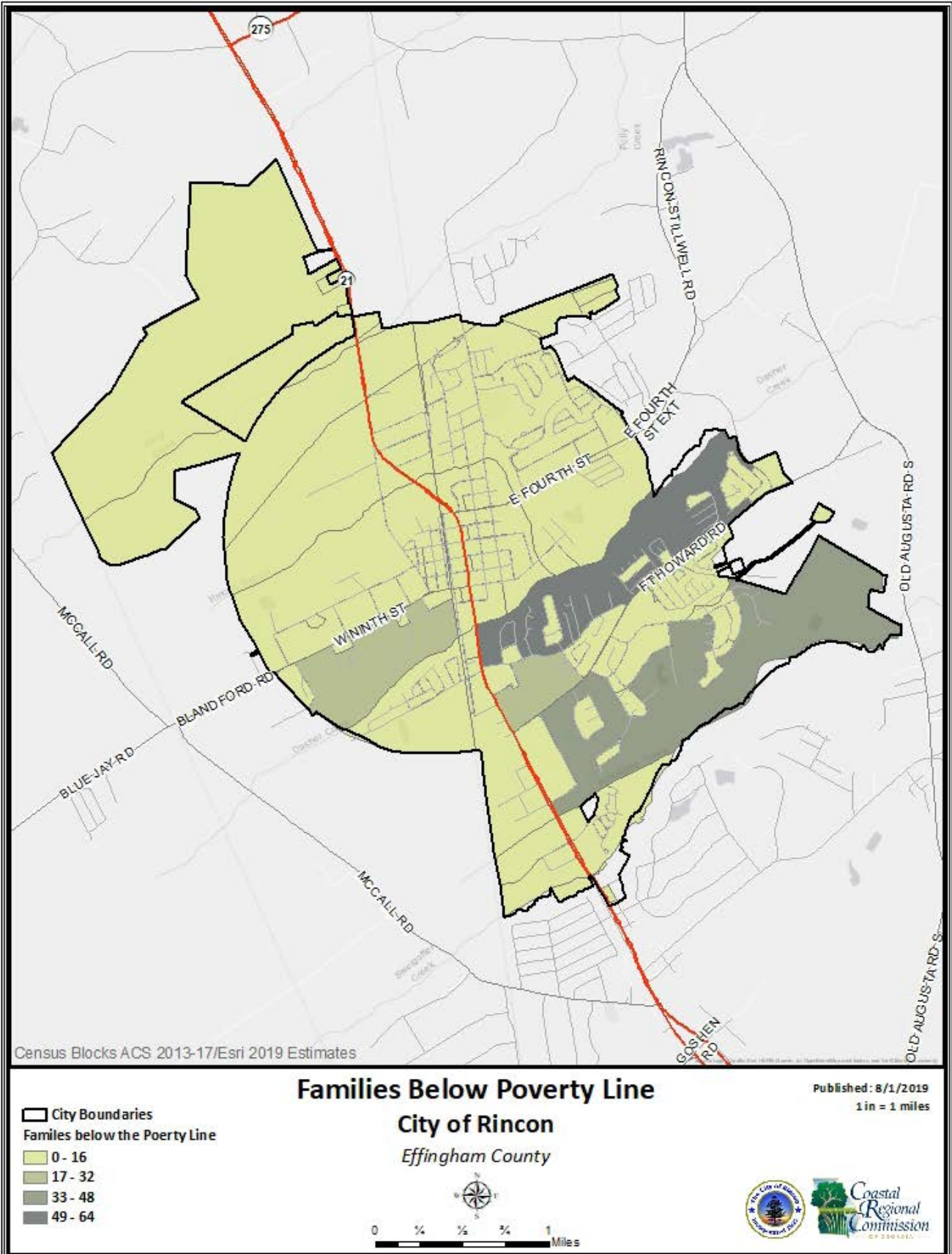
Published: 7/29/2019
 1 in = 2,500 feet

City of Guyton
 Effingham County

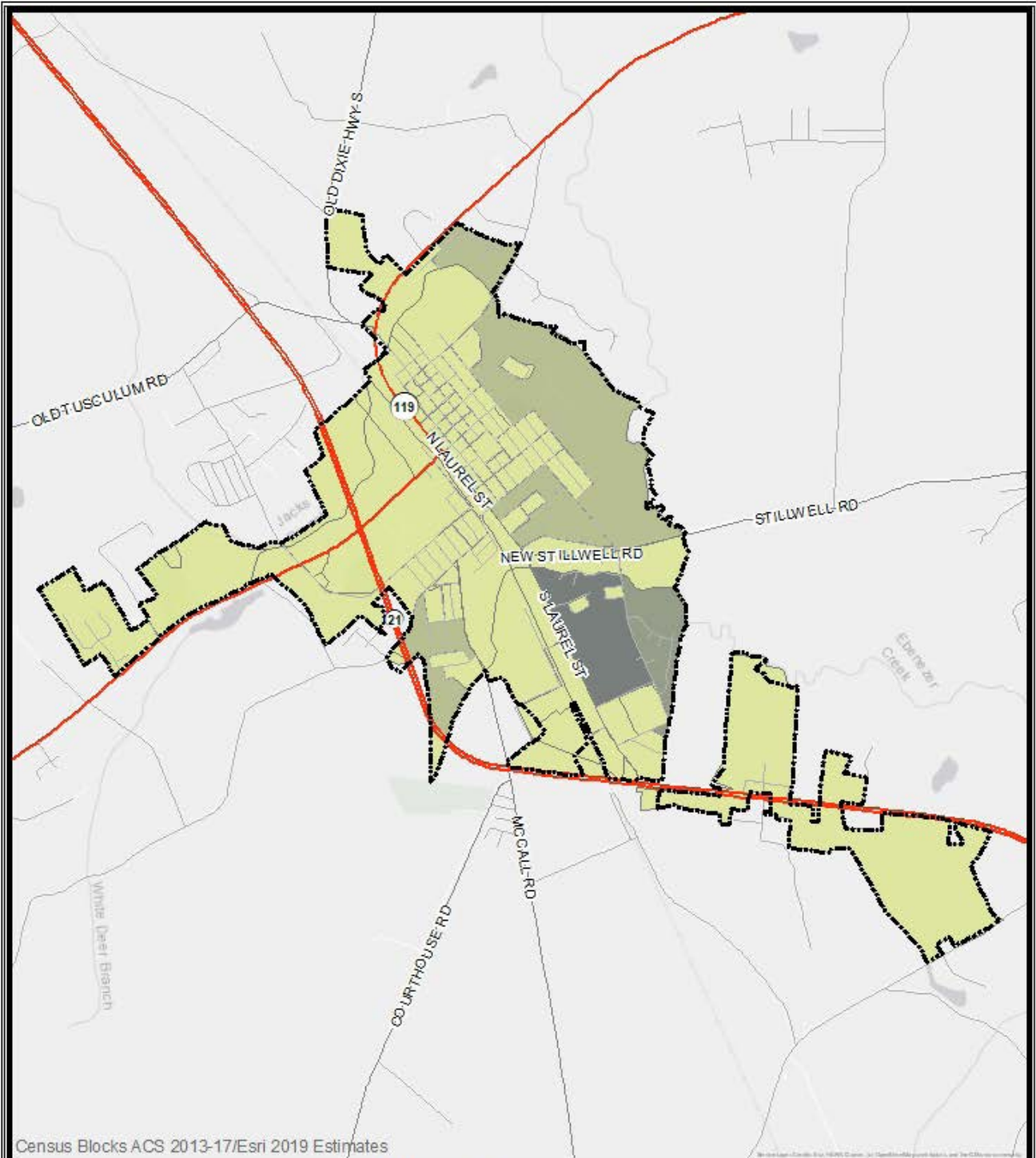
- Effingham County
- City Boundaries
- Families below the Poverty Line**
- 0 - 3
- 4 - 6
- 7 - 9



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Census Blocks ACS 2013-17/Esri 2019 Estimates

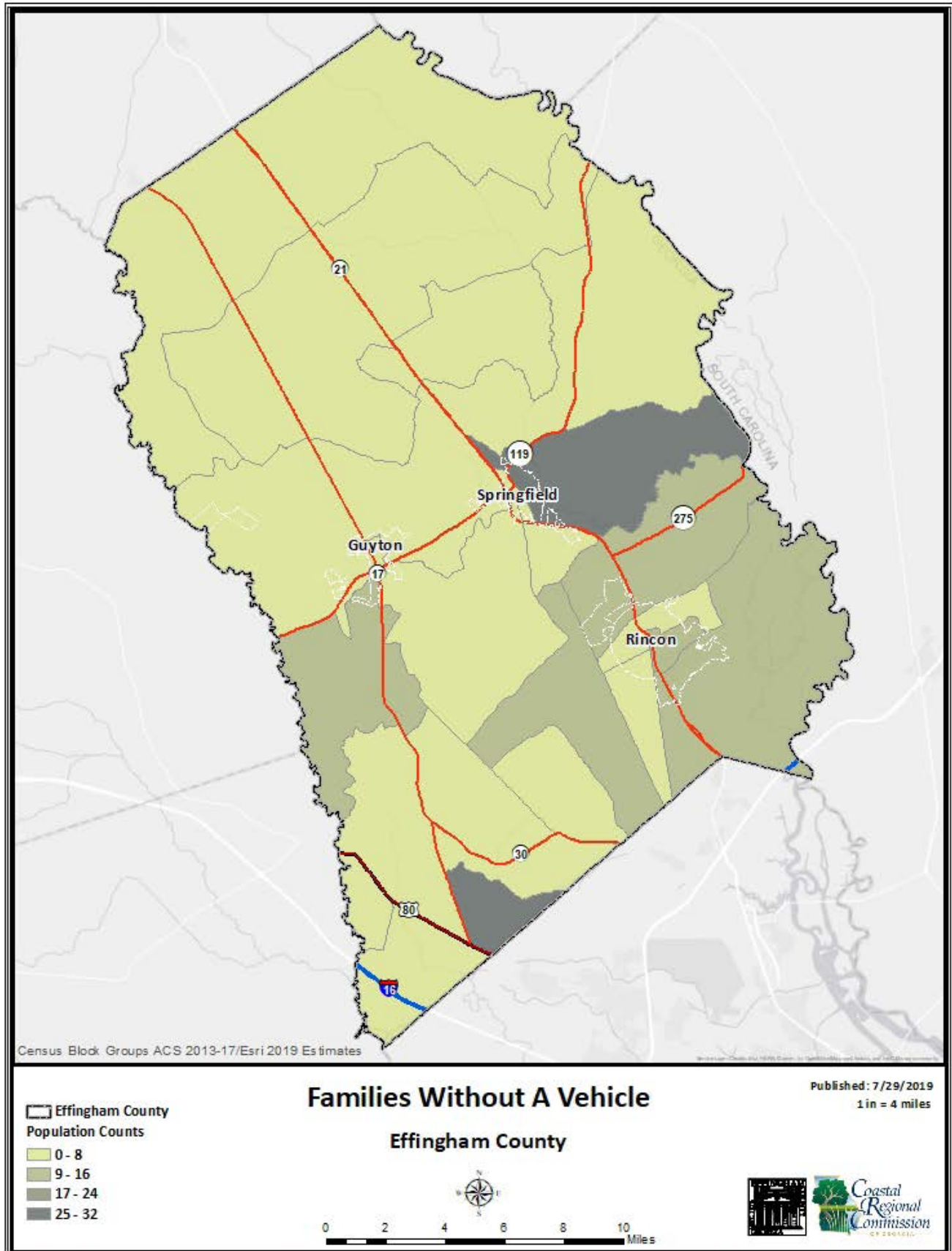
Families Below Poverty Line
City of Springfield
 Effingham County

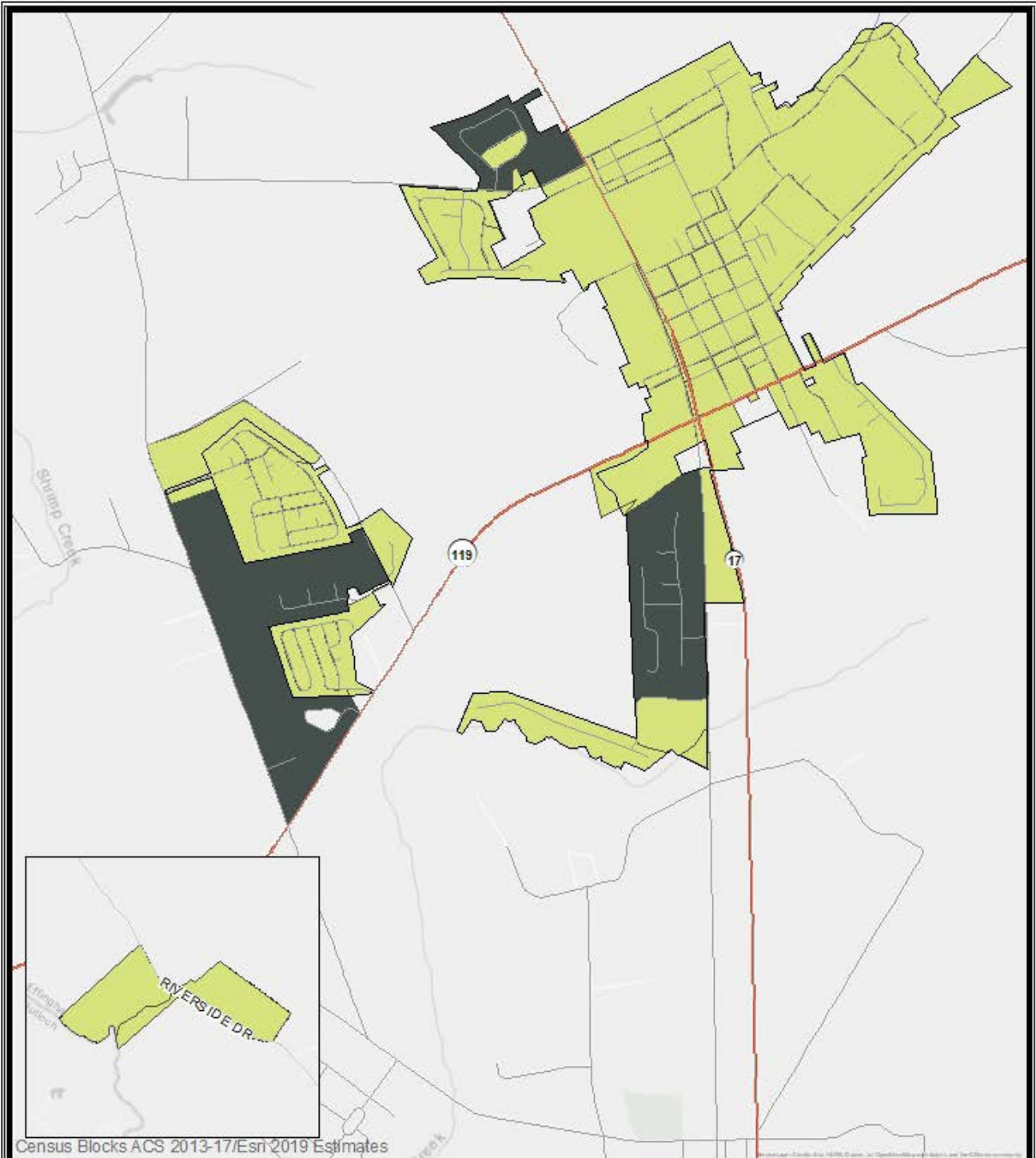
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 1 in = 1 miles

- City Boundaries
- Families below the Poverty Line**
- 0 - 3
- 4 - 6
- 7 - 9
- 10 - 12



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Census Blocks ACS 2013-17/Esri 2019 Estimates

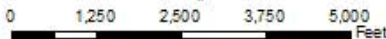
Families Without A Vehicle

Published: 7/29/2019

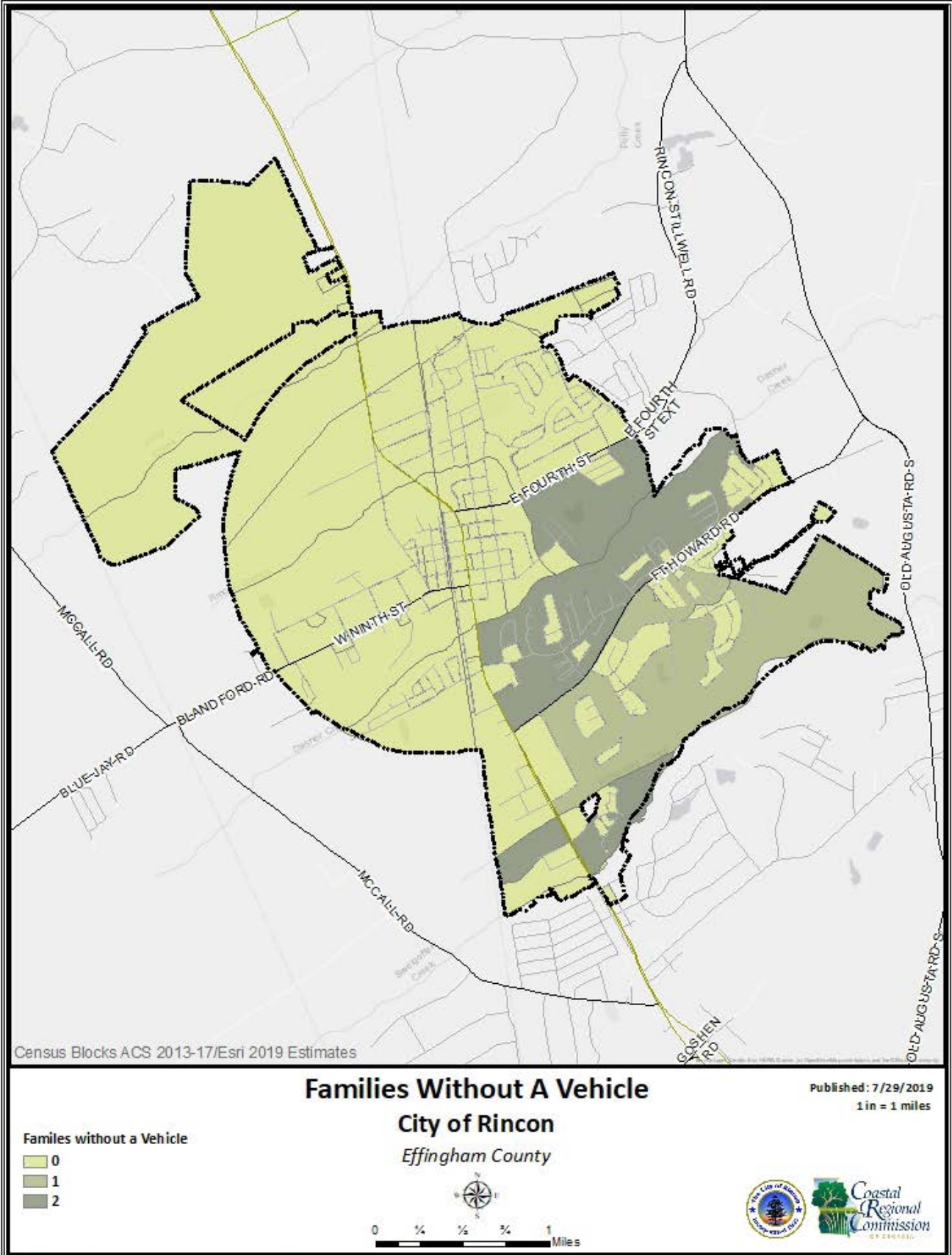
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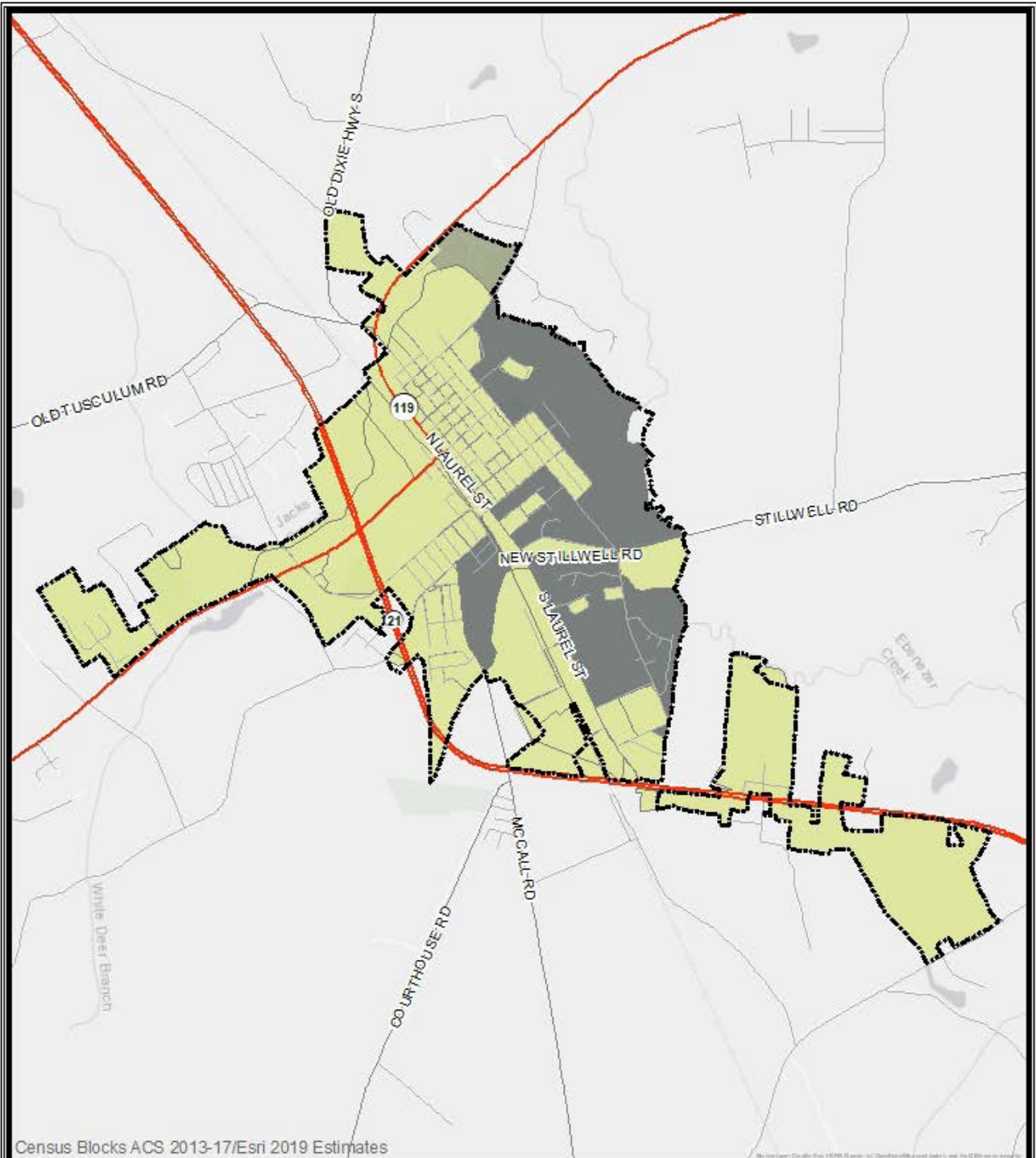
- Effingham County
- City Boundaries
- Families without a Vehicle**
- 0 - 1
- 2

City of Guyton
 Effingham County



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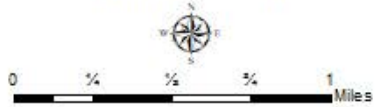
Families Without A Vehicle

City of Springfield

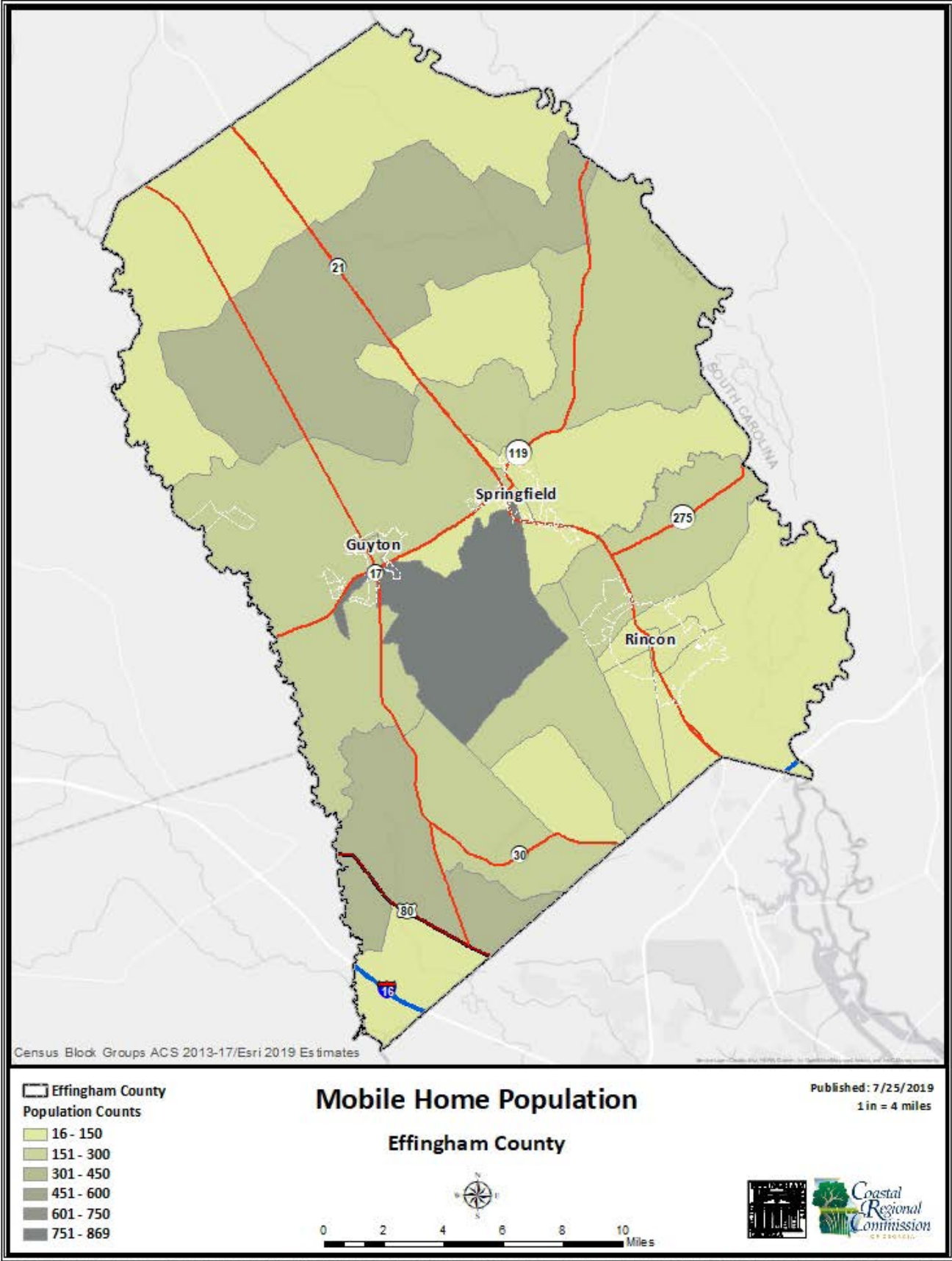
Effingham County

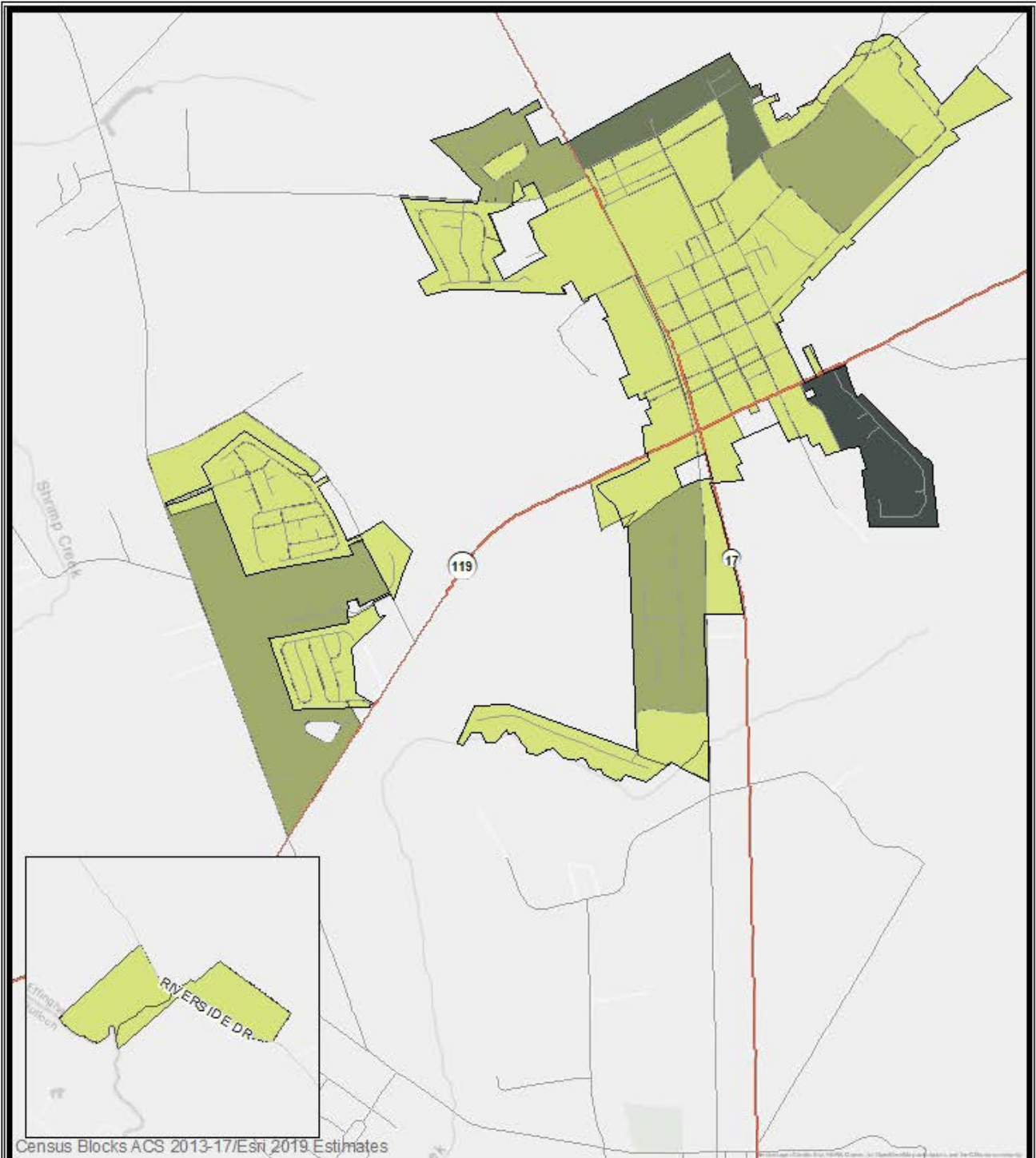
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- City Boundaries
- Families without a Vehicle**
- 0
- 1 - 2
- 3 - 4



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Census Blocks ACS 2013-17/Esri 2019 Estimates

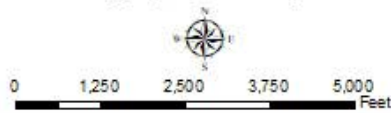
- Effingham County
- City Boundaries
- Population Counts**
- 0 - 10
- 11 - 20
- 21 - 30
- 31 - 42

Mobile Home Population

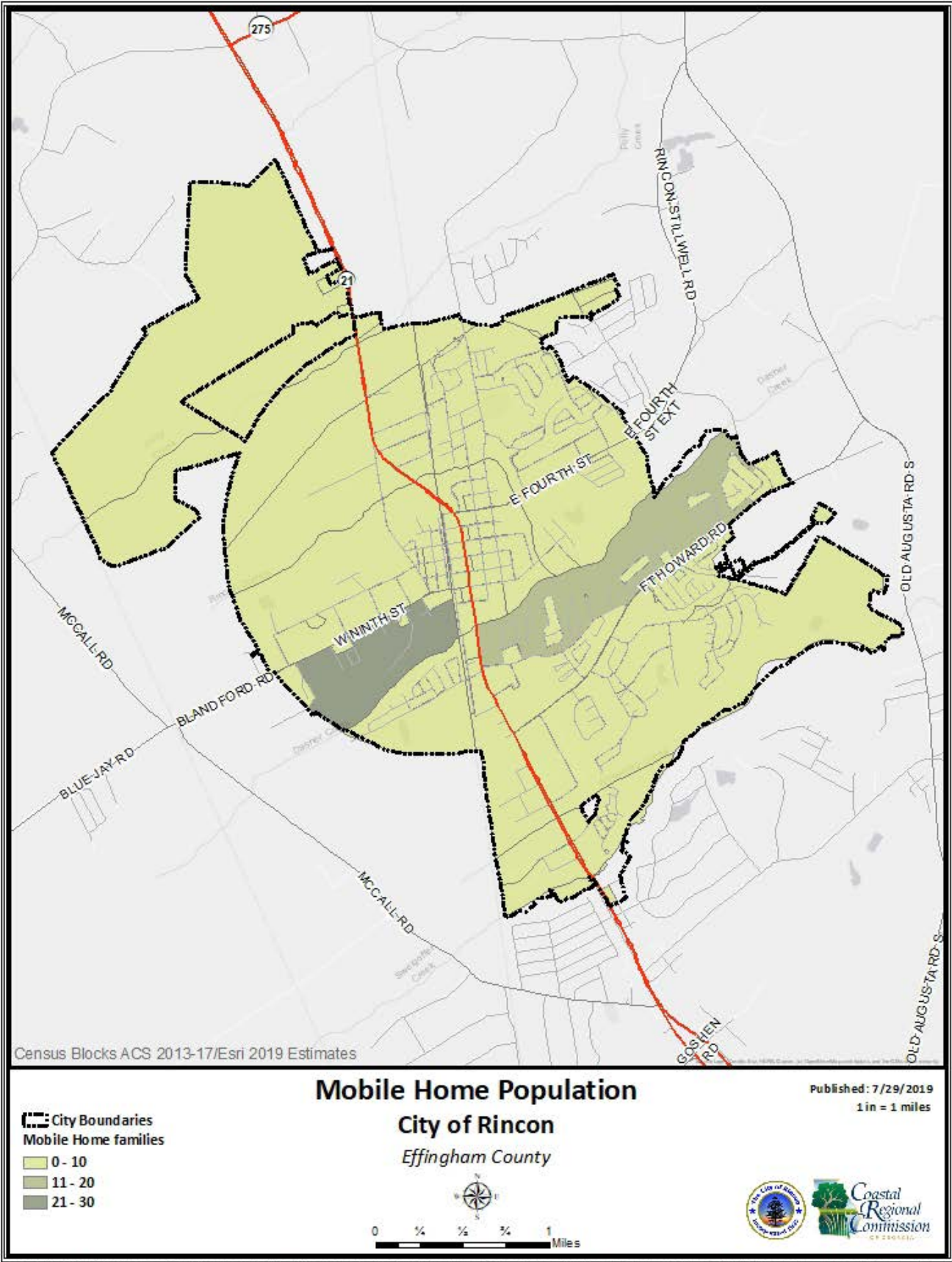
City of Guyton

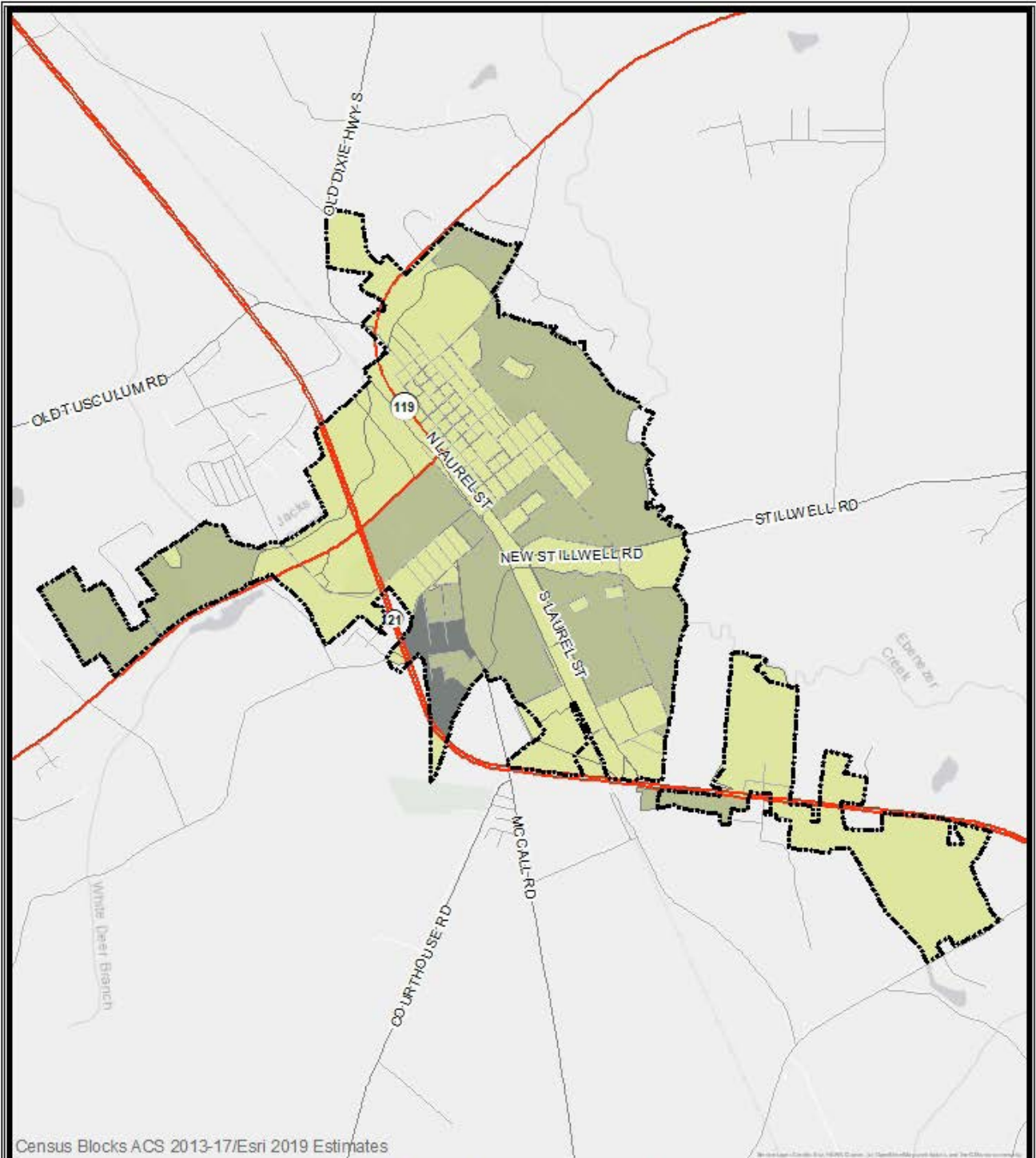
Effingham County

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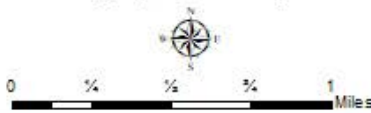


Census Blocks ACS 2013-17/Esri 2019 Estimates

- City Boundaries
- Mobile Home Population**
- 0 - 2
- 3 - 8
- 9 - 21
- 22 - 42

Mobile Home Population
City of Springfield
Effingham County

Published: 7/29/2019
 1 in = 1 miles



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8

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- 8.1 Economic Base
- 8.2 Unemployment Rate
- 8.3 Occupation
- 8.4 Class of Labor Force and Places of Employment
- 8.5 Workforce Development Issues

Economic Development is a vital part of creating and maintaining flourishing communities. Industry and jobs bring in money through tax revenue and exports, without which communities struggle to provide services and public goods to meet residents' needs. A strong economy also allows governments to go beyond providing basic services into improving the quality of life of its residents.

Industry gives residents the opportunity to maximize their skillsets with desirable jobs close to home and prevents residents from taking their talents to surrounding communities. Keeping workers in their home communities increases investment and time spent there, further benefiting those communities. Conversely, a lack of skilled positions detracts skilled workers from staying in or moving to a community. Effingham County indicated lack of a skilled workforce as a threat to the community during a steering committee meeting. This is an important consideration for Effingham County and the three cities within, especially considering the proximity to Savannah, which attracts many commuters from surrounding areas.

A diverse economy strengthens communities and can be a source of protection from economic downturns and changes in industry. Communities that focus on a single industry as the heart of the economy risk damaged economies should that industry fail or leave. As of 2017, Effingham County's workforce totaled 26,906 total employees. Manufacturing employs 17.5% of those employees, the most of all industry types in the county. Major manufacturing employers in the county include Edwards Interiors Aerospace Georgia Transformer, Georgia Pacific, Omega Steel, Inc., Power Rail, Sampco of Georgia, Silver Lake systems & Design, Inc., and Spatial Engineering. Other industry types employing significant portions of the workforce in Effingham County are government employment, transportation and warehousing, utilities, retail trade, and construction.

Effingham County and the cities of Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield must prioritize economic development and workforce growth and retention to ensure their communities prosper in the future.

Policies in support of economic development

In order to promote a thriving economy, Effingham County has set goals in their Community Vision to expand and diversify job opportunities and become a desirable place to do business as opposed to serving as a bedroom community for Savannah. To diversify industry, the county intends to focus on hospitality and entertainment, both of which are growing industries in the state.

Guyton hopes to expand business opportunities by increasing the physical size of the city through annexation. Rincon also plans to invite economic growth and expansion through annexation and infrastructure improvements. Springfield plans to focus on growing their hospitality and tourism industries to stimulate their local economy.





ECONOMIC BASE

8.1

The table provides the percentages of Effingham County workforce employed in each industry type from 2000 to 2017.

Industry Type	Effingham County		
	2000	2010	2017
Total Employed (16 years and over Civilian Labor Force)	17,380	23,094	26,906
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	12.0%	11.2%	9.2%
Construction	20.9%	17.4%	17.5%
Manufacturing	2.5%	3.1%	3.2%
Wholesale trade	2.5%	3.1%	3.2%
Retail trade	12.4%	10.7%	9.5%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	8.0%	9.5%	11.5%
Information	1.2%	0.5%	1.3%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	3.9%	5.2%	3.9%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	4.8%	7.5%	5.7%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	16.7%	17.9%	18.0%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	5.1%	7.7%	8.3%
Other services, except public administration	6.1%	4.4%	5.6%
Public administration	5.2%	4.3%	5.6%

U.S. Census Bureau

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

8.2

The economic recession of 2008 resulted in a 2010 unemployment rate of at 9.96% in Effingham County. In 2017, Effingham County's unemployment rate decreased to 4.1%, which was lower than the state of Georgia unemployment rate (4.7%) and equal to the United States unemployment rate (4.4%).

16 Years and Older Unemployment Rate			
	2000	2010	2017
Effingham County	3.2%	9.6%	4.1%
Georgia	3.4%	10.6%	4.3%
U.S.	3.9%	9.3%	4.1%

Bureau of Labor Statistics

OCCUPATION

8.3

The US Census reports five primary occupation types and the trends of total employed in each occupation for Effingham County for the years 2000, 2010, and 2017 are listed below:

Occupation Type	2000	2010	2017
Management, Business, Science, and Arts	25.5%	27.3%	21.0%
Services	13.5%	13.4%	13.7%
Sales and Office	24.4%	25.3%	21.0%
Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance	18.2%	15.5%	14.6%
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving	18.3%	18.5%	18.6%

U.S. Census Bureau



CLASS OF LABOR FORCE AND PLACES OF EMPLOYMENT

8.4

The class of workers in the labor force includes 80.9% percent private and salary workers, 15.6%government workers, 3.4% percent self-employed workers, and 0.1% unpaid family workers.

80.9%
PRIVATE WAGE AND SALARY

Class of Labor Force	Effingham County
Total Employed	29,906
Private Wage and Salary Workers	80.9%
Government Workers	15.6%
Self-Employed Workers	3.4%
Unpaid Family Workers	0.1%
Private not-for-Profit wage and salary	2.0%

U.S. Census Bureau

In 2015, 17,878, or 81%, of Effingham County’s 22,060 working class residents worked outside of the county. 4,482 working class residents worked within the county.

81.0%
WORK OUTSIDE COUNTY

Location of Workforce	2015
Living in Effingham County and Employed Elsewhere	81%
Living and Employed in Effingham County	19%

U.S. Census Bureau

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

8.5

The workforce development issues as identified in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy document for the Coastal Region, which threaten quality economic development in the region include the following:

- High poverty rate;
- Low rates of educational attainment;
- Inferior skill levels for high-wage; and
- A poor level of occupational “soft skills.”

These factors present the risk of disinvestment and also pose difficulty in recruiting new firms to the area.



Coastal Workforce

One of the primary roles of the Coastal Workforce is to provide leadership and coordination of economic development and workforce programs.

Coastal Workforce coordinates and participates in partnerships that align with business, such as organized labor, community organizations, economic development practices, and education that enhances the economic viability. Coastal Workforce also coordinates with government agencies, such as human services, education systems (e.g., public school systems, community colleges, and universities), unions, and industry and trade associations.

Coastal Workforce is charged with ensuring that its job centers are business/customer focused and outcome-based, with the placement of job seekers who meet businesses' hiring needs being a high priority. Because Coastal Workforce maintain effective workforce development systems, it enables many quality connections, matching employers' specific needs with those seeking gainful employment. All centers concentrate on the existing and emerging economic conditions and in-demand target industries.



Department of Community Affairs Economic Development

DCA offers a variety of economic development incentives and tools designed to help promote growth and job creation throughout the state.



U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development

USDA provides economic opportunity through financial assistance programs for a variety of rural applications, including funding to develop essential community facilities, projects that will create and retain employment in rural areas, and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas.

A close-up photograph of a person's hand working on a network patch panel. The hand is holding a thin, light-colored fiber optic cable, which is being inserted into a port on the panel. The panel is white and has several ports, some of which are already occupied by other cables. A prominent green connector is visible in the center of the panel. The background is dark and out of focus, showing more of the network infrastructure. The overall scene is dimly lit, with the hand and the panel being the primary focus.

9

BROADBAND

The Broadband Services Element is a descriptive snapshot of the areas of the community served by broadband technology. The deployment of broadband technologies has become a major selling point for communities that offer high speed connectivity and a detriment to economic development for areas lacking that infrastructure. The Joint Comprehensive Plan for Effingham County and the cities of Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield includes this element to outline a strategy for attracting an increased level of broadband deployment by the private sector and to preemptively meet anticipated changes to the State Minimum Standards and Procedures for Comprehensive Planning. On May 7, 2018, Gov. Nathan Deal signed into law Senate Bill 402, the “Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Act.” This legislation outlines a multi-agency strategy to provide for planning, incentives, and deployment of broadband services to unserved areas throughout the state. One provision of the ACE Act requires the incorporation of a Broadband Services Element in the local comprehensive plan of each local government in the state. This new legal requirement necessitates amendments to the minimum standards that DCA uses to implement the statute. The new requirements to address broadband went into effect on Oct. 1, 2018. Specifically, each local government must include in its local comprehensive plan an action plan for the promotion of the deployment of broadband services by broadband service providers into under-served areas within its jurisdiction.

The House Rural Development Council was created by House Resolution 389 during the 2017 Legislative Session of the Georgia General Assembly. The two-year charge for the Council was to address issues that have caused economic lags occurring in rural areas of Georgia with focus upon education, healthcare, infrastructure, and utilities. The Council reported recommendations to the General Assembly before its expiration on December 31, 2018 for future legislative development. The work and research of the House Rural Development Council is significant to the interest of Effingham County and the cities of Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield due to their rural nature.

The Council found that a lack of broadband connectivity, particularly in rural Georgia, has influence population loss. It is reported that 16% of Georgians have no access to broadband services. Expanding broadband statewide is considered vital for attracting and retaining people in rural parts of Georgia, especially for communities that are losing population.





Broadband infrastructure build-out is also important to education, health care, and general business growth. It has become a key policy initiative for the State of Georgia.

The Council proposed modernizing the state and local tax structure to expand the ability of rural utilities to provide broadband services. The combined effect of infrastructure abilities and increased tax revenue would create opportunity for broadband deployment to underserved areas. Specific recommendations were as follows:

Eliminate:

- Franchise fees of 5% on cable television revenues.
- Franchise fees of 3% on landline phones.
- Sales tax of at least 7% on landline phones.
- Sales tax of at least 7% on cell phones.
- Sales tax of at least 7% on broadband equipment.

Replace with:

- 4% state and local tax on telecommunications and cable services.
- 4% state tax on direct broadcast satellite services.
- 4% state and local tax on digital goods and services.

Expansion of Providers:

- Introduce legislation to remove barriers to allow electric cooperatives to deliver broadband services.
- Introduce legislation to remove barriers to allow rural telephone cooperatives to deliver broadband services.

The Council also issued recommendations to ensure both rural and urban areas are prepared for future 5G cellphone technology. The Council found the need for a streamlines application and permitting process for attaching or “collocating” small cell technology on power-line poles or other infrastructure in the right-of-way. Small cells, which are wireless antennas, will help increase telecommunication companies’ network capacities and speeds. These technologies are essential to present and future technologies such as smart cars and smart cities. Therefore, the Council proposed a streamlines application and permitting process that will:

- Place a cap on costs and fees.
- Describe the timelines that local governments have to review and approve or deny a small cell application.
- Define small cell height and size requirements.
- Give historic district and underground power-line protections for local governments.

Assessment of Under-served Areas in Effingham County

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) defines broadband as data transmission technologies that are always on and capable of simultaneously transporting multiple signals and traffic types between the Internet and users. In January 2015, the FCC upgraded the definition of broadband speeds for downloading content from 4 Mbps (Mega-bytes per second) to 25 Mbps and for uploading content from the previous rate of 1 Mbps to a new standard of 3 Mbps. The FCC notes that with the revised standard, 13% of households nationwide do not have access to broadband. It is important to note that there are no known formal public studies performed specifically for Effingham County or the cities of Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield on broadband services.



As it relates to Internet service, the State of Georgia is the 21st most connected state in the U.S. with 224 Internet providers. Almost 92% of consumers in Georgia have access to a wired connection with true broadband speeds faster than 25 Mbps, while 88% of Georgians have access to 100 Mbps or faster broadband. The average Internet download speed in Georgia is 42.70 Mbps.



As a means of visual display of unserved or under-served areas of broadband within Georgia, the state has formulated a map that displays served, unserved, and under-served locations.

A link to this information can be found here:
<https://broadband.georgia.gov/maps/unserved-georgia-county>

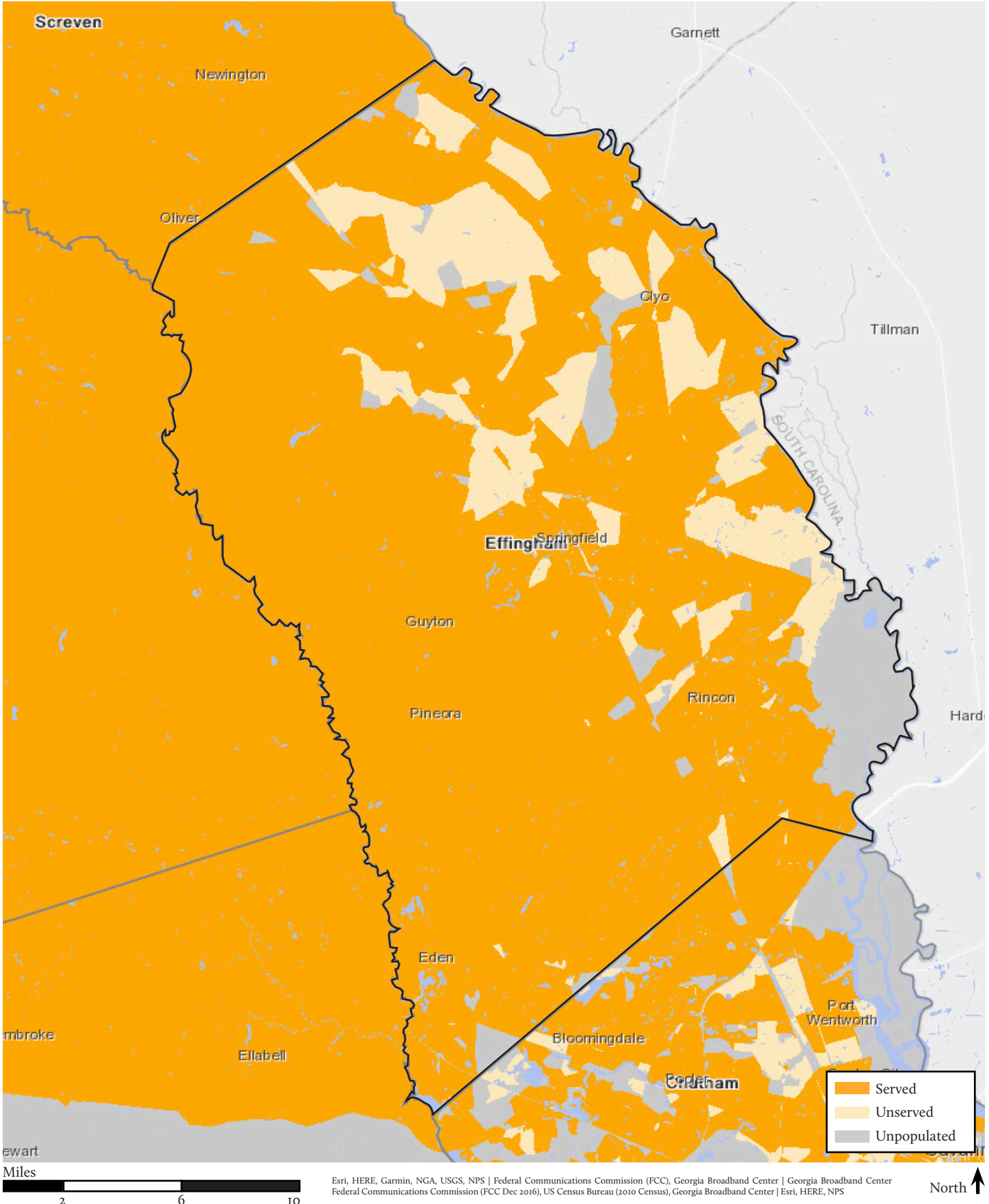
According to data obtained from the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), the statistics for Effingham County are as follows:

Effingham County

Percent Unserved Locations: 6%
Unserved Households: 1,117
Unserved Businesses: 40
Unserved Population: 2,758
Total Households: 19,884
Total Businesses: 358
Total Population: 52,250



Unserved Broadband in Georgia by County (Effingham County)



Esri, HERE, Garmin, NGA, USGS, NPS | Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Georgia Broadband Center | Georgia Broadband Center
Federal Communications Commission (FCC Dec 2016), US Census Bureau (2010 Census), Georgia Broadband Center | Esri, HERE, NPS



As with innovations such as electricity and telephone services in the past, broadband is becoming a vital service to residents and industry throughout the U.S. in the 21st Century. However, the availability of high speed technology has developed in disparity across the nation and the State of Georgia, largely due to population densities and cost-return on infrastructure investments. It is the goal of Effingham County and the cities of Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield to determine the broadband infrastructure shortfall within the county and seek ways to improve its current position. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) currently defines broadband as a minimum of 25 Mbps download speed and 3 Mbps upload speed. This definition has changed twice since 1996 due to technology advancements. Broadband delivery methods include, but are not limited to, digital subscriber lines, cable modems, fiber, wireless, broadband over power lines, and satellites.

Effingham County and the cities of Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield desire to be fully served by broadband capability through broadband deployment with service areas reaching the minimum speeds to be considered “Broadband Service.”

Effingham County and the cities of Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield have chosen a multi-faceted approach and strategy to improve the availability of broadband and broadband deployment. The following items are possible action steps the community can consider implementing to increase economic, educational, and social opportunities for citizens and businesses through the deployment of universal broadband and other communication technologies.

- Develop and maintain an inventory of Community Anchor Institutions (schools, library, medical and healthcare providers, public safety entities, and higher education facilities) within the community to determine areas of greatest broadband need.
- Develop or otherwise enact a model ordinance which determines a contact person for any broadband projects within the community, outlines a streamlined permit process for broadband projects, keeps broadband project permit fees reasonable, and ensures equal treatment for applicants applying for use of jurisdictional rights-of-way.
- Apply to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for certification as a “Broadband Ready Community” or similar certification by the State of Georgia.
- Partner with state agencies (Georgia Technology Authority, Department of Community Affairs, and Department of Economic Development) and area local governments to promote broadband deployment in the community, region, and state.
- Identify broadband deployment projects eligible for One Georgia Authority funding and/or other state and federal grant or loan opportunities such as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).



County
Effingham
Georgia

Effingham County

Community Work Program



SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM

The Short-Term Work Program (STWP) identifies specific implementation actions the county and city governments intend to take during the first five-year time frame of the planning period. This includes ordinances, administrative systems, community improvements or investments, and financing arrangements or other programs/initiatives to be put in place to implement the Community Agenda. For each action, the STWP outlines the following information:

- Brief description
- Time frame for undertaking the activity
- Responsible party for implementing the activity
- Estimated cost
- Funding source



Brief Description	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Economic Development				
Promote community through all available media.	2025-2029	CC; EDA; County	Staff time	Local funds
Support a cooperative effort to implement and continually develop a comprehensive economic development plan.	2025-2029	CC; EDA; County	Staff time	EDA
Review property tax policies.	2025-2029	County	Staff time	General Fund
Assess the possibilities of generating revenue through user fees for each service provided by the county.	2025-2029	County	Staff time	General Fund
Community Facilities - Drainage, Water, Sewer				
Review government record storage facilities and upgrade as necessary.	2025-2029	County	\$5,000	General Fund
Implement road and drainage improvement program.	2025-2029	County	TBD	General Fund
Evaluate need for lift station and force main upgrade.	2025-2029	County	TBD	General Fund
Evaluate need for Meldrim Well system.	2025-2029	County	Staff time	General Fund
Well repairs	2025-2029	County	\$80,000	Water & Sewer
Sewer collections system repairs	2025-2029	County	\$250,000	Water & Sewer
Water distribution system repairs	2025-2029	County	\$70,000	Water & Sewer
Hodgeville Force Main to WWTP	2025-2029	County	\$6,800,000	ARPA
Hodgeville Lift Statio Repairs	2025-2029	County	\$500,000	SPLOST
Lift Station Repairs	2025-2029	County	\$175,000	SPLOST
Blue Jay Sewer Expansion Midland to Hwy17	2025-2029	County, Private Developer	\$7,000,000	SPLOST
Blue Jay Sewer Improvements Blue Jay Elementary School to Staffordshire	2025-2029	County	TBD	TBD
Blue Jay to Ogeechee River Reuse Extension	2025-2029	County	TBD	TBD
Staffordshire Drainage Improvements	2025-2029	County, Private Developer	TBD	TBD
WWTP Expansion	2025-2029	County	\$45,000,000	SPLOST/STATE ARPA
Lab equipment washer	2025-2029	County	\$15,000	WWTP
Influent sampler refrigerator	2025-2029	County	\$10,000	WWTP
Pumps, motors, actuators	2025-2029	County	\$75,000	WWTP
Utility vehicle, Gator-type, used	2025-2029	County	\$11,000	WWTP
Oglethorpe Power Reuse	2025-2029	County	TBD	TBD
Goshen Road Emergency Well Renovation	2025-2029	County	TBD	TBD
Sewer Extension - Feasibility Study City of Springfield/Effingham County	2025-2029	County, Springfield	\$500,000	SPLOST
Westwood Heights Drainage	2025-2029	County	\$1,166,000	SPLOST

Effingham County
Joint Comprehensive Plan

Park West upgrades or regional station	2025-2029	County, Private Developer	\$2,000,000	SPLOST
Tropical Storm Debby Repairs	2025-2029	County	TBD	TBD
Savannah Riverside FEMA Floodplain Study	2025-2029	County	TBD	TBD
Housing				
Conduct a comprehensive review of Zoning Ordinance. Consider reclassification of residential zones.	2025-2029	County	Staff time	General Fund
Public Safety - Sheriff				
Review public safety needs; create and expand programs and facilities as necessary.	2025-2029	County	Staff time	General Fund; FEMA
Sheriff's Office storage building	2025-2029	County	\$100,000	SPLOST - 2021
Sheriffs training bldg & Magistrate Court complex	2025-2029	County	\$7,700,000	SPLOST
Leased vehicles.	2025-2029	County	\$1,355,128/year	General Fund
Public Safety – EMS / Fire				
EMS –Ambulance (5)	2025-2029	County	\$1,300,000	Gen Fund / SPLOST
Ambulance remounts, 2 remounts	2025-2029		\$360,000	SPLOST
EMS – Vehicle Bays with Storage (5)	2025-2029	County	\$130,000 / year	General Fund
EMS-Cardiac monitors (5)	2025-2029	County	\$40,000 / ea.	General Fund
Remodel EMS Site #2 & Site #4	2025-2029	County	\$32,000	General Fund
Rincon EMS Station	2025-2029	County	\$400,000	SPLOST
EMS Laptop & computer upgrades	2025-2029	County	\$43,000	General Fund
EMS Power Load systems & kits, 5	2025-2029	County	\$144,700	General Fund
Emergency operations center and Effingham EMA office	2025-2029	County	\$1,831,000	SPLOST - 2021 Bond
Ebenezer & Blandford stations rehab	2025-2029	County	\$400,000	Fire Fund
Hose/nozzle/equipment annual replacement	2025-2029	County	\$40,000	Fire Fund
Hazardous materials equipment/special equipment annual replacements	2025-2029	County	\$13,500	Fire Fund
Clyo Fire Station repair/rehab	2025-2029	County	\$150,000	Fire Fund
Fire-Tanker.	2025-2029	County	\$124,000	Fire Fund / SPLOST
Fire-Hydraulic Rescue Equipment (JAWS).	2025-2029	County	\$65,000	Fire Fund / SPLOST
Fire-Turnout gear sets (40)	2025-2029	County	\$190,000	Fire Fund / SPLOST
Recreation / Parks Landscape				
CEM Recreation Complex, Hwy 21, phases II & III.	2025-2029	County	\$10,000,000	SPLOST
Atlas Mine Site Reclamation; additional land purchase, as needed.	2025-2029	County	\$2,800,000	SPLOST

Review /revise ordinances, as necessary, to ensure recreation areas accommodate community needs, e.g., dog park	2025-2029	County	Staff time	General Fund
Abercorn Landing - Road/Boat Landing Improvements	2025-2029	County	TBD	TBD
Pineora Park Improvements	2025-2029	County	\$500,000	SPLOST
Baker Park Improvements	2025-2029	County	\$2,500,000	SPLOST
Clyo Park Improvements	2025-2029	County	\$750,000	SPLOST
Meldrim Community Park Improvements	2025-2029	County	\$250,000	SPLOST
Sandhill Park	2025-2029	County	\$200,000	SPLOST
Hwy 119 park improvements	2025-2029	County	\$250,000	SPLOST
Lights at recreation Hwy 119 complex	2025-2029	County	\$300,000	SPLOST
Park accessories - trash cans, picnic tables, etc	2025-2029	County	\$15,000	Special Tax
Zero-turn mowers, 2 replacements	2025-2029	County	\$22,000	Special Tax
Lightning protection warning system, Sandhill Park	2025-2029	County	\$25,000	SPLOST
Reddick Field repairs - home plate circle, batter area, catcher area, turf	2025-2029	County	\$28,000	Special Tax
Pressure washer trailer	2025-2029	County	\$32,000	Special Tax
Vehicles, 2 new additional for new crew leader positions	2025-2029	County	\$90,000	Special Tax
Tommy Long Landing bathrooms rebuild	2025-2029	County	\$300,000	Splost
Facilities Maintenance				
Energy Efficiency Upgrades (HVAC, LED lighting)	2025-2029	County	\$100,000	General Fund
Judicial Complex Re-Key	2025-2029	County	\$30,000	General Fund
Administrative complex and parking lot expansion	2025-2029	County	\$3,317,000	SPLOST - 2021 Bond
E911 dispatch flooring replacement	2025-2029	County	\$15,000	E911
EMS site #1 flooring replacement	2025-2029	County	\$20,000	General Fund
Facility Fence Repairs	2025-2029	County	\$75,000	Water & Sewer
Furniture replacement, multiple buildings	2025-2029	County	\$575,000	General Fund
Generator replacement, south communications tower	2025-2029	County	\$50,000	General Fund
Central School renovations	2025-2029	County	\$1,000,000	SPLOST - 2021
Renovate space for social services	2025-2029	County	\$1,500,000	SPLOST - 2021 Bond
Renovate space for Juvenile Court and Victim Witness services	2025-2029	County	\$1,300,000	SPLOST - 2021
Expand judicial parking	2025-2029	County	\$543,718	SPLOST - 2021 Bond
Renovate space for Juvenile Justice services	2025-2029	County	\$170,782	SPLOST - 2021

Effingham County
Joint Comprehensive Plan

Historic courthouse audio and video upgrades	2025-2029	County	\$200,000	SPLOST - 2021
Safety, security, and technology upgrades for county-wide services	2025-2029	County	\$990,000	SPLOST - 2021 Bond
Animal Shelter				
Expand and renovate animal shelter	2025-2029	County	\$1,500,000	SPLOST
Kennel replacements	2025-2029	County	TBD	General Fund
UGA Extension Office				
Vehicle, 1 new additional SUV	2025-2029	County	\$40,000	General Fund
Vehicle, 1 replacement van, 15 passenger	2025-2029	County	\$40,000	General Fund
Renovate space for UGA Extension Office and 4-H	2025-2029	County	\$1,500,000	SPLOST
Elections				
ImageCast X Kits - Dominion Voting	2025-2029	County	\$87,515	General Fund
Renovate space for elections and registration offices and storage	2025-2029	County	\$1,499,215	Splost
E911				
E911 technology and infrastructure upgrades	2025-2029	County	\$200,000	SPLOST
Coroner				
Morgue trailer, 20-24 body capacity with hoist, generator,& wifi monitoring	2025-2029	County	\$100,000	SPLOST
IT				
Windows 11 Laptop Refresh	2025-2029	County	\$70,000	General Fund
Windows 11 PC Refresh	2025-2029	County	\$50,000	General Fund
Monitor Refresh	2025-2029	County	\$40,000	General Fund
Newtwork Switch Replacement	2025-2029	County	\$115,000	General Fund
Server Infrastructure and Storage Upgrades	2025-2029	County	\$110,000	General Fund
2025 PC UPS Refresh	2025-2029	County	\$11,000	General Fund
2025 Rack UPS Refresh	2025-2029	County	\$20,000	General Fund
Safety, security, technology upgrades countywide	2025-2029	County	\$1,000,000	SPLOST
Intergovernmental Coordination				
Explore the feasibility of consolidating land use regulation and enforcement programs.	2025-2029	County, cities	Staff time	General Fund
Public Works – Roads and Bridges				
Equipment trailer	2025-2029	County, cities	\$14,000	Special Tax District
Wood chipper	2025-2029	County, cities	\$40,000	Special Tax District
Bridge & cross drain repairs/replacements	2025-2029	County, cities	\$200,000	SPLOST - 2017
Vehicles, 2 to replace existing vehicles. 1 reg duty & 1 heavy duty	2025-2029	County, cities	\$130,000	Special Tax District

Self-propelled brush cutting machine	2025-2029	County, cities	\$300,000	Special Tax District
Dump truck	2025-2029	County, cities	\$190,000	Special Tax District
Ash Road Repairs Option 1	2025-2029	County, cities	1,008,000	SPLOST - 2021
Create Transportation Master Plan.	2025-2029	County	TBD	SPLOST
Safe Streets 4 All (SS4A) project	2025-2029	County	\$250,000	SPLOST
Public Works master plan & construction	2025-2029	County	\$3,000,000	SPLOST
Effingham Parkway.	2025-2029	County	\$67,000,000	SPLOST/GDOT/FED
Resurfacing-non ash roads, annually.	2025-2029	County	LMIG-\$922,036 County \$276,610	LMIG; SPLOST
Complete surface treatment for all ash roads.	2025-2029	County	\$1,000,000/year	SPLOST; General Fund
Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan	2025-2029		TBD	TBD
Gateway Parkway Extension from Effingham Parkway to Hodgeville Rd	2025-2029		\$300,000	TSPLOST
Old River Road Corridor Study	2025-2029		TBD	TBD
Hwy 80 Improvements - Chatham County (Corridor Study)	2025-2029		TBD	TBD
Blue Jay Rd Corridor Study	2025-2029		TBD	TBD
I-6B SR30 at Midland Road Roundabout	2025-2029		TBD	TBD
Hodgeville Resurfacing & 2 T intersections (Scuffletown & Forest Haven)	2025-2029		TBD	TBD
I-4B & I-8B Kolic Helmey & Goshen Roundabouts on Hodgeville	2025-2029		TBD	TBD
I-7B Blue Jay & Hodgeville Roundabout	2025-2029		TBD	TBD
LMIG 2024	2025-2029	County	\$1,705,000	SPLOST/GDOT
TSPLOST 2020 Roads - District 1	2025-2029	County	\$2,542,110	TSPLOST
TSPLOST 2020 Roads - District 2	2025-2029	County	\$18,206,374	TSPLOST
TSPLOST 2020 Roads - District 3	2025-2029	County	\$7,544,974	TSPLOST
TSPLOST 2020 Roads - District 4	2025-2029	County	\$2,899,150	TSPLOST
TSPLOST 2020 Roads - District 5	2025-2029	County	\$1,683,100	TSPLOST
TSPLOST 2023 Roads - District 1	2025-2029	County	\$19,375,000	TSPLOST
TSPLOST 2023 Roads - District 2	2025-2029	County	\$17,904,000	TSPLOST
TSPLOST 2023 Roads - District 3	2025-2029	County	\$17,730,000	TSPLOST
TSPLOST 2023 Roads - District 4	2025-2029	County	\$18,229,000	TSPLOST
TSPLOST 2023 Roads - District 5	2025-2029	County	\$17,254,000	TSPLOST

Development Patterns

Effingham County
Joint Comprehensive Plan

Review and update Comprehensive Growth Management Plan.	2025-2029	County	Staff time	General Fund
Conduct comprehensive review of zoning ordinance and land use regulations.	2025-2029	County	Staff time	General Fund
Coordinate zoning districts with plans for water & sewer services in the unincorporated areas.	2025-2029	County	Staff time	General Fund
Natural, Cultural & Historic Resources				
Seek funding to establish monuments and markers at historic sites throughout the County.	2025-2029	County; Historic Effingham	Staff itme	General fund; Historic Effingham Society
Adopt local preservation ordinance to protect Ebenezer and historic sites along Savannah River.	2025-2029	County	Staff time	General fund
Increase public awareness of wetland and flood zone sensitivity; FEMA Community Rating System program.	2025-2029	County	Staff time	General fund
Develop Historical and Ecological Heritage Tourism Programs.	2025-2029	CC	Staff time	Private fund
Take proactive measures to protect valued historic and natural resources through local inventories, assessments, and ordinances.	2025-2029	County	Staff time	General fund

REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

III

The Report of Accomplishments updates progress on activities listed in the previous version of the Short Term Work Plan. All items included in the 2020 Short Term Work Program are included.

112



Brief Description	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Status
Economic Development					
Promote community through all available media.	2020-2024	CC; EDA; County	Staff time	Local funds	Ongoing
Support a cooperative effort to implement and continually develop a comprehensive economic development plan.	2020-2024	CC; EDA; County	Staff time	General Fund	Ongoing
Review property tax policies.	2020-2024	County	Staff time	General Fund	Ongoing
Assess the possibilities of generating revenue through user fees for each service provided by the county.	2020-2024	County	Staff time	General Fund	Ongoing
Community Facilities - Drainage, Water, Sewer					
Review government record storage facilities and upgrade as necessary.	2020	County	\$5,000	General Fund	Ongoing
Draft plan for county-wide drainage network and improvement program.	2020-2024	County	TBD	General Fund	Complete
Implement road and drainage improvement program.	2020-2024	County	TBD	General Fund	Ongoing
Complete lift station pump upgrades.	2020	County	\$798,204	W&S Bond funded	Complete
Evaluate need for new spray field; planning & engineering.	2020-2024	County	\$500,000	W&S Bond funded	Complete
Evaluate need for lift station and force main upgrade.	2020-2024	County	Staff time	General Fund	Ongoing
Evaluate need for Meldrim Well system.	2020-2024	County	Staff time	General Fund	Postponed
Complete water line loop from Greystone to Midland Road; and Emerald Plantation to Marlow Elementary; engineering & construction. Loop B	2020	County	\$3.1 million	W&S Bond funded	Complete
Complete county line Booster Station and tower upgrades; engineering & construction.	2020	County	\$1.49 million	W&S Bond funded	Complete
WWTP repairs.	2020-2024	County	\$306,843	W&S Bond funded	Complete
Housing					
Conduct a comprehensive review of Zoning Ordinance. Consider reclassification of residential zones.	2020-2024	County	Staff time	General Fund	Ongoing

Public Safety - Sheriff					
Review public safety needs; create and expand programs and facilities as necessary.	2020-2024	County	Staff time	General Fund; FEMA	Ongoing
New vehicles	2020-2021	County	\$308,711/year	SPLOST	Ongoing
Public Safety – EMS / Fire					
EMS –Ambulance	2020-2024	County	\$150,000 / year	SPLOST	Ongoing
EMS – Vehicle Bays with Storage (5)	2020-2024	County	\$130,000 / Year	General Fund	Complete
EMS-Cardiac monitors (5)	2020-2021	County	\$40,000 / ea.	General Fund	Complete
Fire-F350 Service body truck.	2021	County	\$62,000	Fire Fund / SPLOST	Complete
Fire-F150 service trucks.	2020-2021	County	\$124,000	Fire Fund / SPLOST	Complete
Fire-Tanker.	2021	County	\$124,000	Fire Fund / SPLOST	Ongoing
Fire-ISO equipment.	2021	County	\$17,500	Fire Fund / SPLOST	Complete
Fire-Pumps/engines (3)	2020-2023	County	\$2.458 million	Fire Fund / SPLOST	Complete
Fire-Faulkville Station Driveway.	2021	County	\$30,000	Fire Fund / SPLOST	Complete
Fire-Hydraulic Rescue Equipment (JAWS).	2021	County	\$30,000	Fire Fund / SPLOST	Complete
Fire-Training Center. Burn Building Update.	2021	County	\$50,000	Fire Fund / SPLOST	Ongoing
Fire-Rescue equipment for rescue trailer.	2021	County	\$15,000	Fire Fund / SPLOST	Complete
Fire-Rescue TRT Protective equipment sets.	2021	County	\$15,000	Fire Fund / SPLOST	Complete
Fire-Turnout gear sets (35)	2021	County	\$550,000	Fire Fund / SPLOST	Complete
Fire-Ardmore-Oakey new station construction.	2020	County	\$125,000	Fire Fund	Complete
Fire-South Effingham Fire Station	2020	County	\$550,000	Fire Fund	Complete
Fire- Guyton Area Fire Station	2020	County	\$550,000	Fire Fund	Complete
Intergovernmental Coordination					
Explore the feasibility of consolidating land use regulation and enforcement programs.	2020-2024	County, cities	Staff time	General Fund	Ongoing
Recreation					
New Gym at CEM Recreation Complex on Hwy 21, phase I.	2021-2024	County	\$4.2 million	SPLOST	Complete

CEM Recreation Complex, Hwy 21, phases II & III.	2021-2024	County	\$10 million	SPLOST	Ongoing
Gym at Central Learning.	2020	County	\$65,000	SPLOST	Complete
Sand Hill Playground.	2020	County	\$37,000	SPLOST	Complete
Sand Hill Batting Cages.	2020	County	\$25,000	SPLOST	Complete
[Sand Hill] Soccer Goals.	2020	County	\$7,000	SPLOST	Complete
[Sand Hill] 6 Pitching Machines.	2020	County	\$10,000	SPLOST	Complete
McCall Rd. Batting Cages.	2020	County	\$25,000	SPLOST	Complete
Evaluate Atlas Mine Site for reservoir; Planning.	2020	County	\$500,000	SPLOST	Canceled
Atlas Mine Site Reclamation; additional land purchase, as needed.	2020-2024	County	\$2,800,000	SPLOST	Ongoing
Review /revise ordinances, as necessary, to ensure recreation areas accommodate community needs, e.g., dog park	2020-2024	County	Staff time	General Fund	Ongoing
Public Works – Roads and Bridges					
Create Transportation Master Plan.	2020-2024	County	\$100,000	General Fund	Complete
Effingham Parkway.	2020-2024	County	\$67 million	SPLOST/GDOT/FED	Ongoing
Old River Road & I16 interchange.	2020	GDOT	TBD	GDOT	Complete
Resurfacing-non ash roads, annually.	2020-2024	County	LMIG- \$922,036/year County \$276,610/year	LMIG; SPLOST	Ongoing
McCall & Blue Jay Intersection.	2020	County	\$391,730	SPLOST	Complete
Quick response rt hand lanes.	2020	County	\$300,000	SPLOST	Complete
Repair storm-damaged roads [Herbert Kessler].	2020	County	\$800,000	SPLOST	Complete
Complete surface treatment for all ash roads.	2020-2024	County	\$1,000,000/year	SPLOST; General Fund	Ongoing
Drainage improvements & bridge deficiency repairs.	2020	County	\$750,000	SPLOST	Complete
Patch truck; pick-ups (2).	2020-2024	County	\$230,000	SPLOST	Complete
Fleet maintenance extra bays.	2020-2024	County	\$85,000	SPLOST	Complete
Development Patterns					

Review and update Comprehensive Growth Management Plan.	2020-2024	County	Staff time	General Fund	Ongoing
Conduct comprehensive review of zoning ordinance and land use regulations.	2020-2024	County	Staff time	General Fund	Ongoing
Coordinate zoning districts with plans for water & sewer services in the unincorporated areas.	2020-2024	County	Staff time	General Fund	Ongoing
Natural, Cultural & Historic Resources					
Seek funding to establish monuments and markers at historic sites throughout the County.	2020-2024	County; Historic Effingham	Staff time	General fund; Historic Effingham Society	Ongoing
Adopt local preservation ordinance to protect Ebenezer and historic sites along Savannah River.	2020-2024	County	Staff time	General fund	Ongoing
Increase public awareness of wetland and flood zone sensitivity; FEMA Community Rating System program.	2020-2024	County	Staff time	General fund	Ongoing
Develop Historical and Ecological Heritage Tourism Programs.	2020-2024	CC	Staff time	Private fund	Ongoing
Take proactive measures to protect valued historic and natural resources through local inventories, assessments, and ordinances.	2020-2024	County	Staff time	General fund	Ongoing

Appendix 1: SWOT

Effingham County

Strengths

- Sense of community
- Quality of education/school system
- Citizen engagement
- Development friendly
- Diverse housing options
- Access to ports
- Fiscally sound
- Core infrastructure (water/sewer)
- Progressive thinking
- Safe community
- Proximity to urban amenities
- Active recreation facilities and programs
- Career academy
- Strong church community/family oriented
- Room to grow
- Proximity to natural resources
- Engaged Commissioners and County Staff

Weaknesses

- Direct access to nature and passive recreation
- High turnover of county staff
- Lack of overnight accommodations
- No mixed-use developments
- Lack of knowledge of local history prohibits the growth of the tourism industry
- Limited entertainment options
- Underutilized transportation options
- Need a consistent message to the public
- Need for an alternate water source
- Road access/traffic
- Roads in need of repair
- Attracting new businesses

- Updating infrastructure (water/sewer)
- Citizen engagement
- Need for more revenue streams
- Zoning code needs updating
- Sales tax dollars (renegotiated to benefit new businesses)
- Government communication
- Lack of recreation/sports
- Pedestrian-oriented transportation
- Slow infrastructure improvements

Opportunities

- Installing infrastructure where growth is desired
- Use of nearby ports to increase industry
- Capture retiring military work force
- Atlas water reservoir
- Market recreational facilities (park complex)
- Leverage film ready status
- Streamline permitting process
- Attracting new businesses
- Accessing state and federal grants for projects
- Promoting local attractions
- Effingham Parkway
- More work opportunities for higher quality employee candidates
- Hi-Lo Trail
- Historic Preservation

Threats

- Lack of skilled workforce
- Natural disasters
- Residential-based economy
- Inconsistent interpretation of state and federal regulations
- School safety
- Growth, increased traffic, crime
- Misinformed citizens
- Lack of alternative transportation options
- Acts of terrorism

