

Jackson County Comprehensive Plan

**EXISTING LAND USE AND
CHARACTER AREAS**

**A Chapter of the Technical Appendix
Community Assessment**

Revised November 16, 2009

Prepared For:

**Jackson County Board of Commissioners
c/o Department of Public Development**

Prepared Under Contract By:

**Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc.
Planning & Development Consultants
Alpharetta, Georgia**

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EXISTING LAND USE AND CHARACTER AREAS

Jackson County encompasses 343.0 square miles, of which 342.4 square miles consists of land and 0.6 square miles consists of water. In terms of acreage, the size of the county is approximately 219,100 acres.¹

EXISTING LAND USE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Jackson County's 1998 comprehensive plan provides acreage data by type of land use in unincorporated Jackson County in 1997. Similarly, an update of the land use plan by a county planning consultant in 2003 also provided existing land use data. It is useful from a planning standpoint to recite those numbers here, as they allow one to get a sense of trends in terms of land use change. It is even more useful to place the historic and current existing land use acreage data in a single table in order to more easily reveal such changes. While such a comparison is desirable, the existing land use inventories at different points in time were done by different planning agencies or consultants, and thus their methods different making the data not perfectly comparable. For that reason, the land use data collected over time are provided separately, without statistics of land use "change" compiled." Table 1 summarizes land use data for unincorporated Jackson County as of 1997 and 2003.

Table 1
Existing Land Use, 1997 and 2003
Unincorporated Jackson County

Land Use	1997 Unincorporated Jackson County (Acres)	1997 Percent of Total Unincorporated County Area	2003 Unincorporated Jackson County (Acres)	2003 Percent of Total Unincorporated County Area
Agriculture and Forestry	148,300.9	76.0%	141,984.6	75.1%
Residential, all types	25,747.2	13.2%	27,798.5	14.7%
Public/Institutional	608.4	0.3%	762.2	0.4%
Commercial	876.2	0.5%	1,330.4	0.7%
Industrial	1,007.0	0.5%	1,090.6	0.5%
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	1,035.4	0.5%	1,477.3	0.8%
Park/Recreation/Conservation	296.8	0.1%	384.6	0.2%
Undeveloped/Vacant	17,324.1	8.9%	14,297.2	7.6%
Total Land (in original source)	195,196.0	100%	189,125.4	100%

Source: Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center based on Tax Assessor's data, 1997. WFR Associates. September 8, 2003. Jackson County Comprehensive Plan Update: Land Use Plan Amendment.

As indicated in Table 1, unincorporated Jackson County was predominantly agricultural and forestry in 1997. Residential comprised only 13.2 percent of the unincorporated land areas. Vacant land was more than 17,000 acres in 1997. Commercial, industrial, public/institutional, parkland, and transportation facilities each comprised well less than 1 percent of the unincorporated land area.

¹ *The 2002 Georgia County Guide, 21st Ed.*, edited by Susan R. Boatright and Douglas C. Bachtel (Athens, GA: University of Georgia, Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development), October 2002.

In describing existing land use as of 1997, the 1998 comprehensive plan indicated that the majority of existing land use in the unincorporated portions of Jackson County is low-density single-family housing and agricultural land. It found that the majority of residential, commercial and industrial land uses are concentrated within close proximity to the municipalities and along major transportation corridors.

The western portion of the county at that time was experiencing the most rapid development due to its proximity to Gwinnett County. Encroachment of industrial and heavy commercial development into residential areas was at that time considered relatively rare, as the county's zoning ordinance limited such incompatible land uses. Most of the undeveloped/unused land in 1997 was located adjacent to residential land use. Agriculture land use was located throughout the county and was found to be most prevalent in the eastern and northwestern portions of the county.

These findings in 1997 are still largely true today, in 2009, as Jackson County has witnessed a continuation of the same trends and patterns. Land use did not change significantly from 1997 to 2003, according to the figures in Table 1, except that most developed land categories increased marginally in acreage while agricultural/ forestry and undeveloped land decreased. Note also that the total unincorporated area decreased by approximately 6,000 acres, reflecting municipal annexations during the six-year time period. The decrease in total unincorporated land from 1997 to 2003 also has some marginal effect on the change in percentages from 1997 to 2003.

EXISTING LAND USE IN 2009

After a nearly one-year effort, Jackson County compiled and checked existing land use data for the entire county, including municipalities (see Table 2).

The acreage data in Table 2 show both a compilation of the county as a whole, including all municipalities, and the unincorporated areas. The countywide numbers are especially important, because land use is ultimately controlled by 10 different local governments. While Jackson County has, by far, the largest jurisdiction, ignoring the land use trends in municipalities risks losing the true perspective of what is going on in total in all of Jackson County. Generally, like change from 1997 to 2003, land use change in unincorporated Jackson County followed the same trends of marginal increases in residential, commercial, industrial, and other development categories and significant reductions in the amount of undeveloped/vacant land. More is said about the individual land use categories in the paragraphs that follow. Table 3 provides a compilation of existing land use data for each municipality in Jackson County. Note that, for Braselton and Maysville, only the Jackson County portions are reported.

**Table 2
Existing Land Use, 2009
Jackson County and Unincorporated Jackson County**

Land Use	All of Jackson County (Acres)	Percent of Total County Area	Unincorporated Jackson County (Acres)	Percent of Unincorporated Area
Agriculture and Forestry	154,066.2	72.1	136,761.1	77.4
Single-family residential total	35,533.3	16.6	26,394.2	15.0
--Single-family residential, site built	28,731.6	13.4	21,298.1	12.1
--Manufactured home, single-wide	2,242.7	1.0	1,767.2	0.9
--Manufactured home, double-wide	4,559.0	2.1	3,328.9	1.9
Multi-family residential total	484.1	0.2	278.4	0.2
--Two-family residential (duplex)	61.7	0.0	22.9	0.0
--Multi-family residential	117.5	0.1	22.9	0.0
--Manufactured home park	304.9	0.1	232.6	0.1
Public/Institutional	2,003.7	0.9	1,054.0	0.6
Commercial	1,562.9	0.7	724.9	0.4
Industrial	3,129.2	1.5	1,350.6	0.8
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	941.5	0.4	437.1	0.2
Park/Recreation/Conservation	2,219.3	1.0	1,549.8	0.9
Undeveloped/Vacant	13,766.9	6.4	8,178.5	4.6
All Land Uses Calculated	213,707.1	99.8	176,728.6	100.1
Total Land	220,017.0			

Notes: The difference between all land uses calculated and total land is attributed to road right of ways. Percentages do not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.
Source: Jackson County GIS, August 2009.

**Table 3
Existing Land Use, 2009
Municipalities and Parts of Municipalities in Jackson County**

Land Use	Arcade	Braselton	Commerce	Hoschton	Jefferson	Maysville	Nicholson	Pendergrass	Talmo
Agriculture and Forestry	3507.8	1029.0	2539.8	356.5	5779.1	470.9	1162.4	1357.2	1102.3
Single-family residential total	1451.6	268.5	1727.9	584.9	3341.8	485.6	931.1	191.8	155.8
--Single-family residential, site built	651.6	266.5	1540.6	567.5	3254.0	363.2	470.1	177.0	143.0
--Manufactured home, single-wide	219.1	0.1	53.9	3.3	32.9	26.6	116.0	13.0	10.4
--Manufactured home, double-wide	580.9	1.9	133.4	14.1	54.9	95.8	345.0	1.8	2.4
Multi-family residential total	12.4	6.8	120.0	11.2	43.7	1.6	7.8	0	0
--Two-family residential (duplex)	7.9	2.3	5.0	11.2	6.5	1.6	2.3	0	0
--Multi-family residential	0	0	57.3	0	37.2	0	0	0	0
--Manufactured home park	4.5	4.5	57.7	0	0	0	5.5	0	0
Public/Institutional	28.7	41.5	206.0	38.6	458.2	111.8	41.3	9.2	14.4
Commercial	19.0	70.6	283.4	55.1	341.7	28.5	22.5	14.3	2.7
Industrial	0	330.0	270.0	62.9	1015.0	74.9	0	25.9	0
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	1.8	27.1	55.4	16.2	390.7	11.8	0.2	0.2	1.0
Park/Recreation/Conservation	0	74.7	141.1	21.9	251.1	0.3	49.8	40.6	0
Undeveloped/Vacant	260.4	1097.8	1577.5	548.7	1475.2	221.0	172.0	222.1	13.5
All Land Uses Calculated	5,281.7	2,946.0	6,921.1	1,696.0	13,096.5	1,406.4	2,387.1	1,861.3	1,289.7

Notes: Braselton and Maysville extend into other counties. The figures here are for Jackson County's portion only. The total for all land uses calculated is less than total city limits area because public right of ways are excluded.

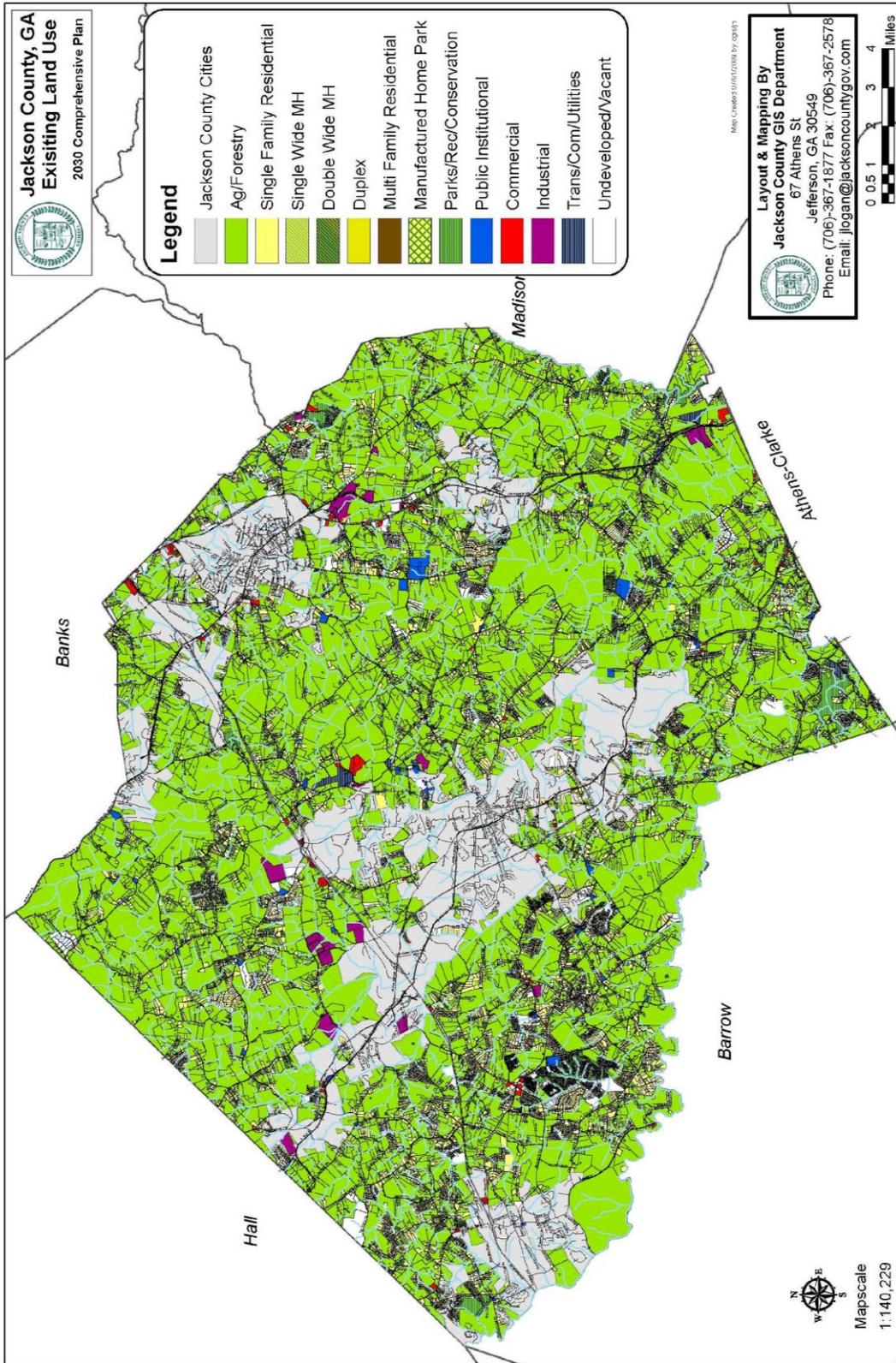
Source: Jackson County GIS, August 2009.

**Table 4
Percentages by Existing Land Use Category, 2009
Municipalities and Parts of Municipalities in Jackson County**

Land Use	Arcade	Braselton	Commerce	Hoschton	Jefferson	Maysville	Nicholson	Pendergrass	Talmo
Agriculture and Forestry	66.4	35.0	36.7	21.0	44.1	33.5	48.7	72.9	85.5
Single-family residential total	27.5	9.1	25.0	34.5	25.5	34.5	39.0	10.3	12.1
Multi-family residential total	0.2	0.2	1.7	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.3	--	--
Public/Institutional	0.5	1.4	3.0	2.3	3.5	8.0	1.7	0.5	1.1
Commercial	0.4	2.4	4.1	3.2	2.6	2.0	0.9	0.8	0.2
Industrial	--	11.2	3.9	3.7	7.8	5.3	--	1.4	--
Transportation/Communication/ Utilities	0.1	0.9	0.8	1.0	3.0	0.8	0.1	--	0.1
Park/Recreation/Conservation	--	2.5	2.0	1.3	1.9	0.1	2.1	2.2	--
Undeveloped/Vacant	4.9	37.3	22.8	32.4	11.3	15.7	7.2	11.9	1.0
All Land Uses Calculated	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Notes: Braselton and Maysville extend into other counties. The figures here are for Jackson County's portion only. The total for all land uses calculated is less than total city limits area because public right of ways are excluded.

Source: Jackson County GIS, August 2009.



Agriculture and Forestry

Because unincorporated Jackson County is predominantly agricultural in character, it is worthwhile to review recent statistics on agriculture in the county. Table 5 provides data on farmland trends in 2002 and 2007 for Jackson County. Note that all of the data presented here are for the county as a whole and therefore include farms within the city limits of municipalities in Jackson County. Table 1 shows the number of farms, total land in farms, and the average size of farm. Jackson County lost 23 farms and nearly 15,000 acres of farmland between 2002 and 2007; that was a decrease of 14.8 percent in terms of farmland acreage. The average size of farm also decreased from 109 acres in the year 2002 to 95 acres in the year 2007.

Table 5
Agricultural Land Statistics, 2002 and 2007
Jackson County

	2002	2007	Net Change 2002-2007	Percent Change 2002-2007
Number of farms	915	892	-23	-2.5%
Land in farms (acres)	99,554	84,869	-14,685	-14.8%
Average size of farm (acres)	109	95	-14	-12.8%

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service. 2007 Census of Agriculture, County Profile, Jackson County, Georgia.

Table 6 provides greater detail by size of farm. These statistics need to be interpreted with caution, in that they do not always represent what they seem to portray. To illustrate, a farm with 50 acres that sells off one acre of land between 2002 and 2007 is moved to a different category. Similarly, changes in overall acreages of farms can be deceiving in that a given farm may also increase acreage to the point that is classified five years later within a larger farm size category. Hence, one should be careful not to interpret individual categories as losses of farms, given that changes to acreage may simply have resulted in that farm being classified in a different farm size category.

The most striking finding is the loss of all three farms with 2,000 or more acres during the five-year reporting period. These farms could have been downsized (partially sold), or discontinued altogether, but one is unable to tell from the statistics provided. Most but not all of the farm size categories witnessed decreases in the number of farms, as well as acreage – this means generally that farmland loss from 2002 to 2007 occurred across the spectrum in terms of the size of farms; not only large farms were lost, but small- and medium-sized farms as well. The 2003 amendment to the land use plan noted the rapid conversion of A-2 zoned land to residential subdivisions, particularly near Braselton and Hoschton.

Table 6
Farms and Farm Acreage by Farm Size Category, 2002 and 2007
Jackson County

Farm Size Category	2002		2007	
	Farms	Acres	Farms	Acres
1 to 9 acres	78	362	62	299
10 to 49 acres	387	10,456	431	11,189
50 to 69 acres	127	7,113	101	5,980
70 to 99 acres	80	6,569	69	5,687
100 to 139 acres	76	8,584	63	7,273
140 to 179 acres	43	6,784	51	8,034
180 to 219 acres	28	5,538	20	3,861
220 to 259 acres	12	2,813	19	4,515
260 to 499 acres	49	16,771	47	16,124
500 to 999 acres	25	17,160	23	13,556
1,000 to 1,999 acres	7	10,927	6	8,351
2000 acres or more	3	6,477	--	--
Total	915	99,554	892	84,869

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service. 2007 Census of Agriculture, County Data, Georgia, Table 8.

Table 7 provides detailed data regarding the use of farms in Jackson County in 2002 and 2007.

Table 7
Land in Farms According to Use, 2002 and 2007
Jackson County

Farmland Use	2002		2007	
	Farms	Acres	Farms	Acres
Total cropland	541	42,903	495	24,479
--Harvested cropland	347	15,315	362	15,347
--Cropland used for pasture or grazing	346	24,924	157	6,773
--Other cropland	91	2,664	92	2,359
--Cropland idle, used for cover, or soil improvement but not harvested and not pastured or grazed	71	2,265	56	1,447
--Cropland on which all crops failed	22	375	36	679
--Cropland in cultivated summer fallow	8	24	12	233
Total wooded	509	20,198	510	17,468
--Woodland pastured	330	9,753	313	7,860
--Woodland not pastured	274	10,445	273	9,608
Permanent pasture other than cropland and woodland pastured	470	27,835	621	37,039
Land in farmsteads, buildings, livestock facilities, ponds, roads, wasteland, etc.	532	8,618	486	5,883
Pastureland, all types	762	62,512	757	51,672

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service. 2007 Census of Agriculture, County Data, Georgia, Table 8.

The amount of harvested cropland remained more or less the same from 2002 to 2007, at about 15,300 acres. However, total cropland declined by 18,424 acres from 2002 to 2007; almost all of the total cropland lost was “cropland used for pasture or grazing” (18,151 acres). Total woodland decreased by 2,730 acres from 2002 to 2007; the largest share of the decrease during that time period was for woodland pastured.

In looking at the statistics from the U.S. Census of Agriculture, one must address a discrepancy between those data and the existing land use data from the county’s existing land use inventory. Specifically, the *Census of Agriculture* indicates that there were 84,869 of land in farms in Jackson County in 2007 (including cropland, woodlands, and pasture). On the other hand, the county’s existing land use data which was informed by tax assessor’s data, show a much larger acreage in 2009: 154,066 acres. What accounts for this difference?

First, in comparing data from two different sources, one should always be cognizant of differences in classification methods. Second, the Census of Agriculture may be low in terms of estimates of existing farmland. Census of Agriculture data generally include lands for which some income was made, and hence those data may not capture the full scope of agricultural land in Jackson County since some (especially smaller) farms may not have income or reported income. Third, tax assessor’s data (the existing land use inventory) may be high, based on the character or look of the property or on historic usage (i.e., used for farmland in the past but no longer active). Fourth, the existing land use inventory most likely classified some wooded tracts as forestry, even though the properties are not owned and utilized for timber land. Most likely, this latter explanation is the best answer: the difference between the Census of Agriculture statistic and the county’s existing land use statistics is probably attributable to vacant, forested sites that are not under active timber management. This is further corroborated below.

Separate statistics are kept for forest land by Georgia County. The most recent year for which published data are available is 2007, and year 1997 data are also available (Table 8). These data help further explain the discrepancy.

**Table 8
Forest Land, 1997 and 2007
Jackson County**

	1997	2007
Acres of forest land	126,800	109,200
Total areas in county (acres)	219,100	219,100
Percent of total land county land area in forest	57.8%	49.8%

Source: 1997 data and total county area from *The 2002 Georgia County Guide, 21st Ed.*, edited by Susan R. Boatright and Douglas C. Bachtel (Athens, GA: University of Georgia, Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development), October 2002. 2007 data from www.georgiastats.uqa.edu.

If one adds together the year 2007 land in farms (Census of Agriculture) and the acres of forested land (2007), then subtracts the amount of wooded farm acres, there is a total of 176,601 acres of agriculture and forestry in Jackson County as of 2007. That figure is much closer to the 154,066 acres found in the existing land use inventory for 2009. And the difference

could quite possibly be attributed to the difference in reporting period (2009 versus 2007), suggesting significant further loss of forest land in Jackson County in the last two years.

Regardless of what the explanation might be, from a land use planning perspective, the discrepancy between the two sources on total farmland acreage is not troublesome, since it is better to overestimate agriculture and forestry than to under-recognize it.

Residential Development

Table 9 of the housing analysis chapter in this technical appendix indicates that Jackson County has added approximately 7,117 housing units from July 1, 2000 to July 1, 2007. As of July 1, 2007, Jackson County had an estimated 23,572 housing units, up from 16,455 only July 1, 2000.

Table 5 shows total number of residential building permits issued in all of Jackson County from 2003 to 2007. That figure includes all permitting authorities; Jackson County issues building permits only for the unincorporated areas, so its number is less than the totals shown.

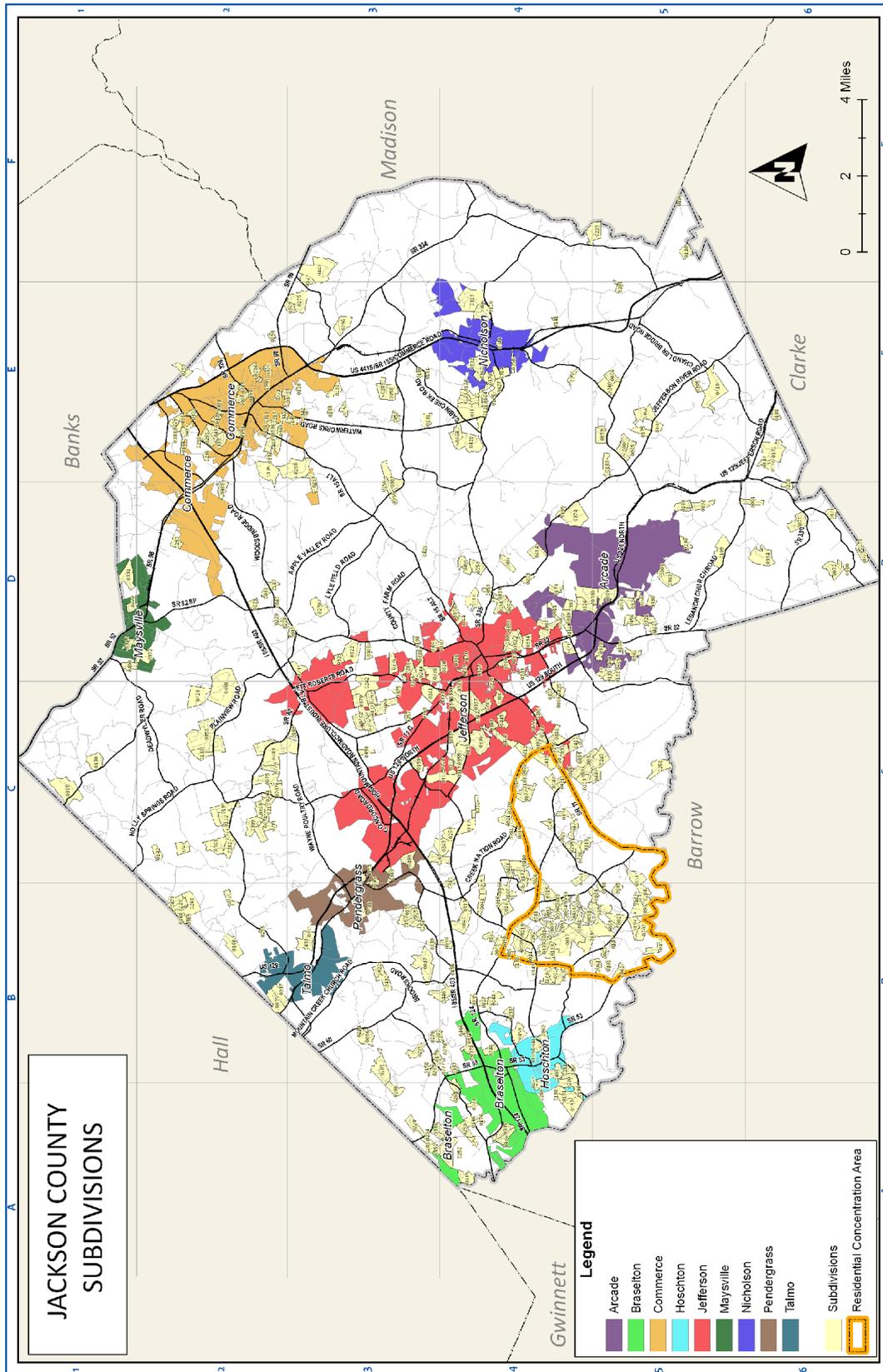
**Table 9
Residential Building Permits (Units) 2004-2007
Jackson County**

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Residential Building Permits Total, Jackson County	1,523	1,457	1,388	819

Source: www.georgiastats.uga.edu

As noted in the 2003 update of the land use plan, Jackson County has followed standard practices for most suburbanizing communities, allowing and even encouraging conventional suburban land development patterns in a dispersed pattern. The following map, “Jackson County Subdivisions,” shows the geographic distribution of residential subdivisions in unincorporated Jackson County. This map provides a good indicator of the extent of organized residential development in unincorporated Jackson County. It does not indicate the extent of rural residential development which has occurred on individual lots. Clearly, residential subdivision development has occurred in most parts of unincorporated Jackson County. As noted on the map, the largest concentration of residential subdivisions in unincorporated Jackson County is east of Hoschton and southwest of Jefferson. There is also substantial residential subdivision development within the unincorporated areas within the overall geographic extent of Jefferson. Clearly, residential subdivision development is more heavily concentrated in the western half of Jackson County.

Those areas of unincorporated Jackson County which have so far escaped significant subdivision development activity include the northern tip (west, southwest and south of Maysville), Apple Valley (between Jefferson and Commerce along SR 15 Alt.), the Brockton area (east of Jefferson, north-northeast of Arcade, and west of Nicholson), and most areas on the eastern fringe of Jackson County. Not surprisingly, these areas not subjected to residential subdivision development correspond pretty closely with the county’s agricultural preservation designation on its future land use plan map.



Transportation/Communication/Utilities

Major land uses classified in this category include: Jackson County Airport east of SR 82 North along Airport Road and Lyle Field Road (north of Jefferson's city limits); the waste water treatment property west of Opossum Creek Road north of Interstate 85 in Jefferson; wastewater treatment plant property along Curry Creek in Jefferson; water treatment property at New Savage Road and Bear Creek Lake; property east of Jarret Road which lies east of U.S. Highway 441 south of Commerce; and property at the intersection of Davis Road, County Farm Road and Airport Road.

Public Institutional

As would be expected for a rural county with numerous municipalities, the lion's share of public and institutional properties are located within city limits, especially Jefferson which is the county seat. Land uses in unincorporated areas consist primarily of schools and churches.

Commercial and Industrial

Like with public-institutional uses, most of the existing commercial land is located within municipalities. The extent of unincorporated commercial land use is actually quite limited; commercial uses (with some exceptions for isolated zones) exist along segments of U.S. Highway 129 and U.S. Highway 441, and near the interchange of SR 53 and I-85 outside the city limits of Braselton. Most of the existing industrial land use outside of municipalities is located between Interstate 85 and Wayne Poultry Road.

For additional discussion of commercial and industrial trends, see the report "labor force and economy" in this technical appendix.

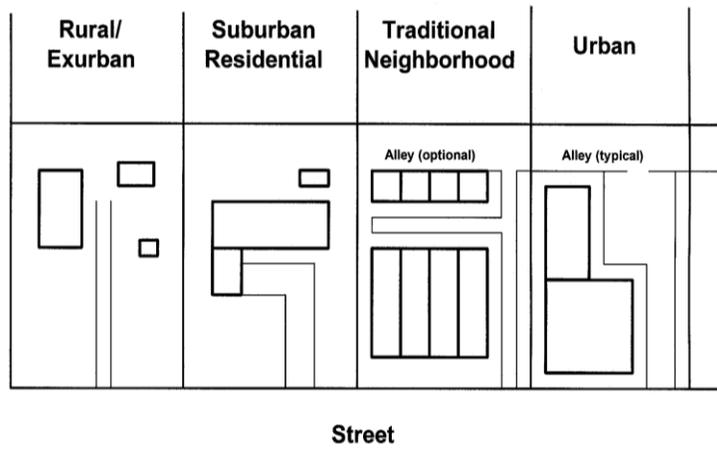
CHARACTER AREAS

Delineating Character Areas

The intent behind delineating character areas is to capture the unique design or feel of a given area, regardless of land use. That is to say, one generally hopes to define these areas in ways where one land use is not dominant. However, from a practical standpoint, character areas are often defined almost as much by "function" (i.e., use) as they are by "form" (i.e., character).

Geographically, as the examples below show, character is often defined in terms of a particular geography: character may follow a linear "corridor," usually a roadway; or it may be concentrated (or conceptualized to be located) in a "center" of some type, such as a place centered at the intersection of two major roadways. Or, it may simply be some other type of "area" or "neighborhood" that does not follow a linear (corridor) pattern or is not geographically centered around a given place or road intersection.

Character are almost always appropriately based on a continuum from exurban, to rural, to suburban, to urban, or some combination of them, such as that shown in the figure below.



Continuum of Rural to Urban Character

Character Areas in Municipalities, Jackson County, and in Abutting Counties

This analysis focuses on compatibility of the county planning effort with the plans of the various cities in Jackson County, as well as abutting counties and Jackson County itself. An understanding of the intentions of municipalities and abutting counties is important with respect to land use and character areas, because Jackson County should plan seamlessly to extend municipal planning concepts into unincorporated areas, where appropriate, and to plan for similar character in areas that cross into abutting counties.

Attention is paid below to those character areas that apply at the fringes of municipalities, as opposed to their more urban or downtown areas (and character areas applied to those parts of cities are not discussed here). Based on review of available plans, including Jackson County’s own (existing) policies, the following character areas have been articulated by cities within and counties abutting Jackson County in addition those applying to unincorporated Jackson County itself. Where names are slightly different, they have been consolidated in the listings below, so as to provide some generalizations.

As described in the following paragraphs, character areas can be generally classified into the following types: conservation; agricultural and rural; neighborhoods (residential); centers; corridors; employment and industry; and special districts and others.

Conservation

These character areas are usually termed “conservation” (Arcade, Jackson County, Jefferson) and sometimes “preserve” (Banks County, Barrow County). Generally, these are natural resource areas and the intent is to conserve or preserve them in a more-or-less natural state, allowing or encouraging only those land uses that are compatible with natural resource protection goals and objectives.

Agricultural and Rural

Agricultural character is sometimes distinguished (appropriately) from “rural” areas, as is the case with Jackson County’s currently adopted “agricultural preservation” and “rural places” character areas (Jackson County). Most often, however, communities lump together agricultural and rural areas (Banks County, Maysville, Barrow County). Others notice and encourage peculiar “rural residential” (Banks County, Jefferson) or “estate” residential areas (Arcade), thus recognizing that very low- or low-density residential use is predominant. In the case of more urban Athens/Clarke County, it does not have an agricultural area but does have a “rural” character area which follows the fringe of the county, including areas near the Jackson County line.

Neighborhoods (Residential)

Residential areas are often distinguished from one another in terms of their densities (again, see the graphic above describing a rural to urban continuum). As noted above, residential can be very low density (“rural” or “estate”) in nature or they can be “suburban” or “urban” in nature, each being different in terms of overall density. Jackson County has an “urban” residential category.

Also, residential neighborhoods can differ in terms of development characteristics such as street pattern and design, building placement, and existence of or design type of open spaces and amenities. Here, a key difference is the “traditional neighborhood” (most often found in urban areas which in turn are most often found within municipalities; these are not cited here since they generally don’t matching anything yet built in unincorporated Jackson County) and “suburban,” or “conventional suburban” (e.g., Barrow County, Jefferson, and Maysville), reflecting design characteristics of conventional residential suburbs (i.e., curvilinear streets ending in cul-de-sacs). Finally, sometimes a timing element is introduced, suggesting that areas are “emerging suburban” (Banks and Barrow) or ready for (or experiencing) “growth.”

Centers

Character is often defined based on a central place, which is most often the intersection of two major roads. Usually, centers are defined as having a mixture of uses, including civic/institutional and others, but almost always including retail and service commercial as the predominant land use in a given center. Similarly, just the same as with neighborhoods, centers can run the full range of rural to urban character, including rural crossroads (e.g., Barrow County), to more urban forms like “town center” (e.g., Arcade). Sometimes, these are simply called “activity center” (e.g., Jefferson). Centers are often given different names to distinguish the scale and size of land uses around the central place, based generally on the market area such a mixed-use center will support. These include centers serving an immediate “neighborhood” (e.g., Jackson County; Athens/Clarke County), “community” activity centers (e.g., Athens/Clarke County, Banks County, Barrow County, and Jackson County), and “regional” (e.g., Athens/Clarke County, Barrow County).

Corridors

As noted above, many character areas follow major roads and highways. Like with some of the character areas already described, corridors can have character ranging from rural (Banks County), scenic rural (Barrow County), to commercial corridors lined with primarily highway-

oriented businesses and auto traveler-related services (Arcade, Barrow County). Several communities generalize several road corridors that enter the communities as “gateway” corridors (Arcade, Barrow County, Jackson County, Jefferson) and focus on particular design treatments and guidelines in an effort to improve the appearance of the community to the entering traveler.

Others single out “bypasses” (Banks County, Barrow County, Jefferson) as having particular character or deserving recognition for peculiar land use patterns and issues (or recommended design treatments). Yet others apply the corridor character designation to specific highways or segments of them (e.g., the I-85 commercial corridor in Jefferson and the “Banks Crossing” area along U.S. Highway 441 corridor at Interstate 85 in Banks County). Finally, some define the corridor character area on the basis of the future pattern, calling them “growth” (Banks County) and “transitional” (Barrow County) corridor(s).

Employment and Industry

Most local governments single out their major employment or industrial areas and call them, simply, “industrial (Barrow County, Maysville, and Jefferson) or “industrial workplace” (Jackson County). In Athens/Clarke County these places are called “manufacturing and distribution centers.” Such areas are dominated by manufacturing and industrial employment, and usually do not have any sort of mixture of uses. Their “character” is mostly large, single-story building with heavy or frequent freight transportation.

Special Districts and Others

In some instances there is a need to distinguish special land uses as their own character due to particular impacts or needs, such as is the case with airports (e.g., Barrow County, Jefferson), where surrounding land use needs to be limited due to airport noise impacts and heights of buildings have to be controlled to protect aircraft approach zones. Also, some character area schemes of local governments separately designate large properties according to single-function land use (e.g., Transportation/Communications/Utilities and Public Institutional in Jackson County), given that they really don’t have “character” per se but are large or common enough to be separately identified on the character area/future development map. Other possibilities exist, such as Maysville’s designation of a “potential annexation area.”