

City of Blythe
Resolution of the City of Blythe for Adoption of the
Comprehensive Plan: 2023-2028

Resolution No. 2023-04

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLYTHE, GEORGIA, TO ADOPT A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2023-2028.

WHEREAS, the Blythe City Council, the governing authority of the City of Blythe, Georgia, has prepared the *City of Blythe Comprehensive Plan: 2023-2028* to replace their prior comprehensive plan and comprehensive plan update and,

WHEREAS, the *City of Blythe Comprehensive Plan: 2023-2028* was prepared in accordance with the Rules and Procedures of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; and,

WHEREAS, the *City of Blythe Joint Comprehensive Plan: 2023-2028* has been reviewed by the Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and found to be in compliance with the minimum “Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning;” and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Blythe City Council that the *City of Blythe Comprehensive Plan: 2023-2028* is hereby adopted and that a copy of this resolution shall be submitted to the Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, this resolution has been duly adopted by the governing authority of the City of Blythe, Georgia on the 28th day of August, 2023.



Noel Cartagena, Councilmember



Daniel Martin, Councilmember



Tom Cobb, Mayor



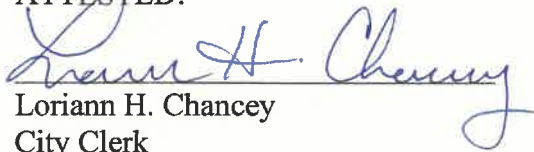
Judy A. Cordova, Councilmember



Rebecca B. Newsome, Councilmember



ATTESTED:


Loriann H. Chancey
City Clerk

City of Blythe

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2023-28







Prepared for
The Mayor and City Council
of Blythe, Georgia

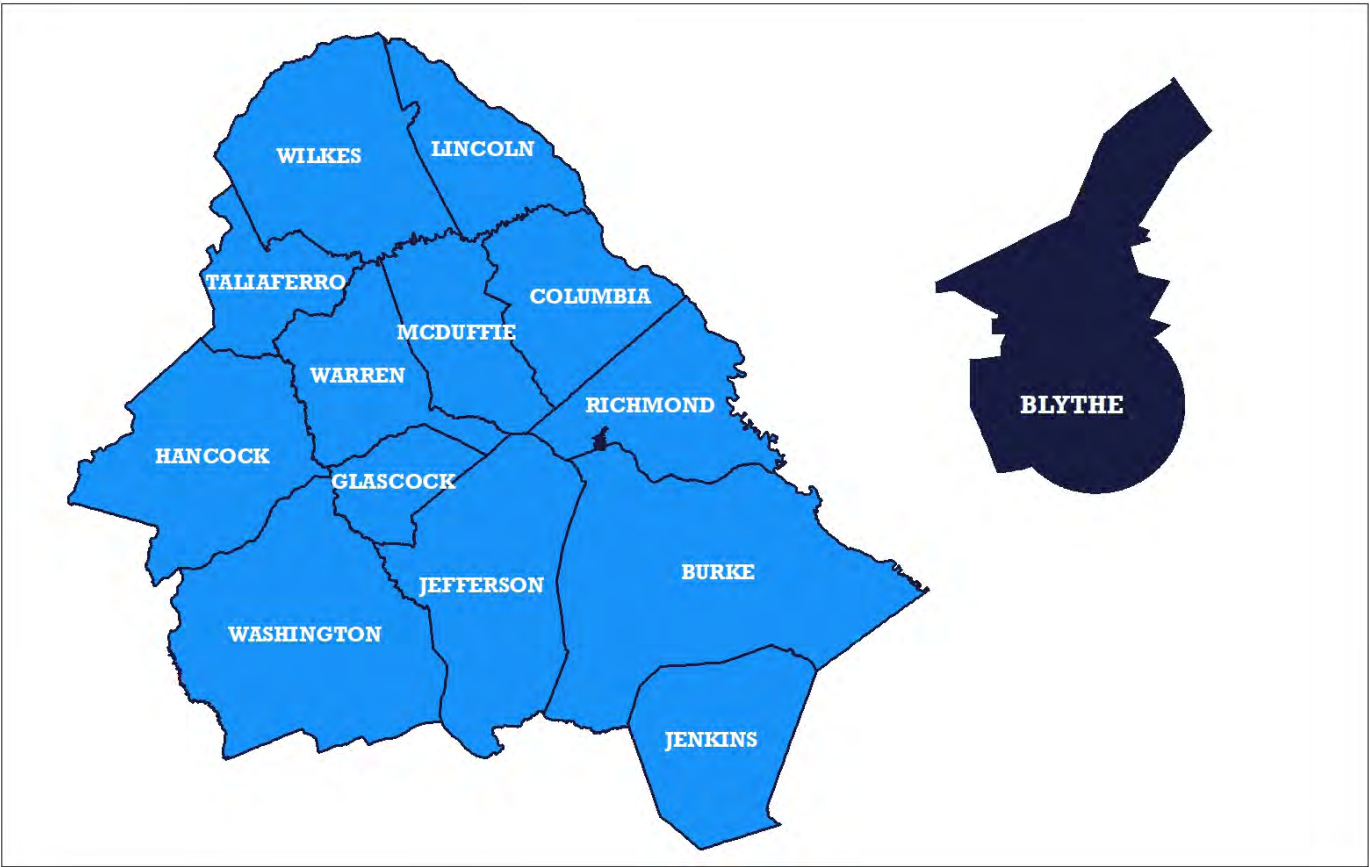
294 Church Street
Blythe, GA 30805

Adopted:

The Mayor of the City of Blythe, Georgia and Council members of The City of Blythe recognize the efforts and input of multiple individuals who contributed to the creation of this comprehensive plan document which will provide vital information for decision making over the course of the next five years. This blueprint, for future area development, is the culmination of multiple meetings in which area leaders came together to discuss the future of the City of Blythe.

City staff exhibited an unwavering commitment towards the development of this comprehensive plan as they have dedicated numerous hours compiling data, providing valuable time to provide their insight into their communities, and generating sound ideas to include in this plan.

**Central Savannah
River Area Region**



City of Blythe

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INTRODUCTION

Georgia counties and cities desire economic and population growth. The ability of these jurisdictions to anticipate and accommodate changes over a period provides them the ability to survive and potentially thrive over time. Uncontrollable variables (ex. National, state, and regional economic issues, etc.) can either have a positive or negative impact on the ability of a jurisdiction to remain a viable place to reside and work.

Change is an inevitable event in most communities through political leadership and ideology, population change, and development or stagnant development, which can lead to dilapidated buildings and increasing blight. Community stabilization is a vital factor in remaining viable and encouraging quality growth. A vision which is consistent and locally generated in conjunction with an implementation plan can ignite economic opportunities and encourage social cohesiveness in any given jurisdiction.

The elected officials and city leaders of the City of Blythe recognize the importance of a comprehensive planning process which is coordinated between the county and city that addresses the needs and opportunities each jurisdiction has regarding development, housing, vitality, and the maintaining of character which makes the City of Blythe unique. This comprehensive plan document presents these issues and agreed upon solutions.

The City of Blythe Comprehensive Plan is the official guiding document for the City of Blythe and serves to:

- **OUTLINE A DESIRED FUTURE**
- **PROVIDE A GUIDE FOR HOW TO ACHIEVE THAT FUTURE**
- **FORMULATE A COORDINATED LONG-TERM PLAN**

The comprehensive plan also seeks to capitalize on opportunities in the areas of economic development, pedestrian facilities, and cultural and natural resources. This is accomplished by providing guidance regarding:

- LAND DEVELOPMENT
- ATTRACTION AND RETENTION OF JOBS
- IMPROVEMENTS TO AMENITIES
- EFFICIENT PROVISION OF PUBLIC SERVICE

In conjunction with the City of Blythe's Service Delivery Strategy, this document is a resource to provide a road map for its jurisdiction. Appointed and elected officials should use this resource as they deliberate land development issues and help their respective residents understand the benefits of the policy.



Georgia's Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning are regulated by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and are intended to help local governments address immediate needs and opportunities while moving toward realization of long-term goals. The comprehensive plan should be referenced by local elected and appointed officials in the decision making process.

WHAT IS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that guides the future growth of Blythe. It is designed to facilitate a coordinated planning program that ultimately leads to desired future social and economic outcomes for its jurisdiction. It serves as a guide to both the public and private sector, providing guidance on items such as land development, housing improvements, economic development, cultural/environmental asset protection, and provision of community services and facilities. In short, the comprehensive plan is a unified document encouraging overarching consistency and coherence in county and municipal policies.

The comprehensive plan is structured as a dynamic document that should be amended when local priorities or conditions change. Periodic updates are necessary to ensure that the document's stated policies align with the needs and aspirations of residents. Over time, local and external conditions have changed. Some objectives have been met, and others have changed or been overtaken by competing priorities. The current comprehensive planning effort addresses these changes and integrates new or evolving priorities among residents and community leaders.

HOW TO USE THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This comprehensive plan is a guide for action and is intended to serve as a reference for potential users. A member of the City Council or government staff should refer to this plan's policies when deciding on the approval of a rezoning or location of new development. Companion planning documents should be used in conjunction with the comprehensive plan. These include but are not limited to the CSRA Regional Plan, the Richmond County Solid Waste Management Plan, the comprehensive and solid waste plans of other nearby jurisdictions, the Regional Water Plan, the CSRA Regionally Important Resource Plan, and other local and state regulatory documents (e.g. zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations).

COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

Blythe is 2.9 square miles located approximately 20 miles southwest of Augusta, Georgia, off State Highway # 1 and Georgia Highway 88. The first home was built by Sam Tarver in 1832 on state grant land (500-540 acres).

In October of 1883, application was made for U.S. Post Office. Also in 1883, narrow gauge railroad was built from Augusta to Gibson and on to Sandersville in 1884. The Augusta Southern Railroad, completed in 1885, ran from Augusta to Tonnille, complete with wood-burning locomotives.

The community of Blythe was built around the Tarver house, the railroad depot/post office, the school (built in 1881), and a store opened in 1883 or 1884 by R. J. Atkinson. The first store, after the railroad was completed in 1885, was opened by V.J. Murrow and James H. Tudor (a conductor for the Augusta Southern Railroad). They were co-owners of the Mercantile Establishment.

The name Blythe was given to the community in 1885. The county built the first school in 1894. This school was a three room frame building with an enrollment of 35 students. In 1917, Mrs. Elsie Wright Murphy, then teacher and principal of the school decided that Blythe needed a new school. She collected contributions from friends and neighbors, and finally in 1920, the sum of \$13,500 was turned over to Richmond County Board of Education. Blythe got its new and much larger school. This school served the area until it burned on August 18, 1975. Mrs. Murphy attended the dedication ceremony of the present Blythe Elementary School October 23, 1977. The school opened August 25, 1977, with grades K-7. The school has 16 classrooms, a media center, a music room and a cafeteria.

The Augusta Southern Railroad faded and was replaced by the Georgia and Florida Railroad. The Georgia and Florida Railroad stopped sending passenger trains through Blythe first and then freight trains. With the loss of the railroad, Blythe slipped back into its original beginnings – a farming, residential community.

Fire protection was volunteer until Richmond County built a fire station in Blythe. Behind the fire station is Blythe's Community Center which may be rented for parties or meetings. Blythe has a Police Department, a City Hall, and a city clerk/administrator. Blythe has its own Water System.

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPONENTS

The CSRA-RC is the city's selected planning coordinator for the City of Blythe's Comprehensive Plan 2023-2028. This document has been prepared to exceed the minimum requirements of Georgia DCA's 2018 Minimum Standards and Procedures For Local Comprehensive Planning (effective October 2018). The 2023 Comprehensive Plan includes the following state-required and elective components:

Community Goals | Needs and Opportunities | Report of Accomplishments
Community Work Program | Public Involvement Overview
Economic Development | Land Use | Housing | Broadband Services
Natural & Cultural Resources | Community Facilities & Services

All state-required comprehensive planning components and additional elective elements listed are distributed throughout the City of Blythe's Comprehensive Plan in various chapters and appendices.

THE SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGY

The state of Georgia's "Service Delivery Strategy Act" (O.C.G.A 36-70) was adopted in 1997 by the Georgia General Assembly. It required all Georgia counties and incorporated municipalities to adopt a joint "service delivery strategy" document by July 1, 1990.

The service delivery strategy document is an action plan supported by appropriate ordinances and intergovernmental agreements, for providing local government services and resolving land use conflicts within a county.

The purpose of this Act - and the service delivery strategy document - is for local governments to examine public services, identify overlaps or gaps in service provisions, and develop a better approach to allocating the delivery and funding of these services among local governments and other authorities within each county.

The City of Blythe's service delivery strategy document has been reviewed and updated in coordination with this comprehensive planning effort.

COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

CITY OF BLYTHE

Total Population	744
Median Household Income	\$55,313
Residents with a Bachelor's degree or higher	11.7%
Total Housing Units	314
Residents without Health Care Coverage	15%
Total Households	201
Population Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	73
Median Gross Rent	\$917
Median Age	35.7
Homeownership Rate	88.1%
Poverty Rate	6.5%
Employment Rate	60.3%

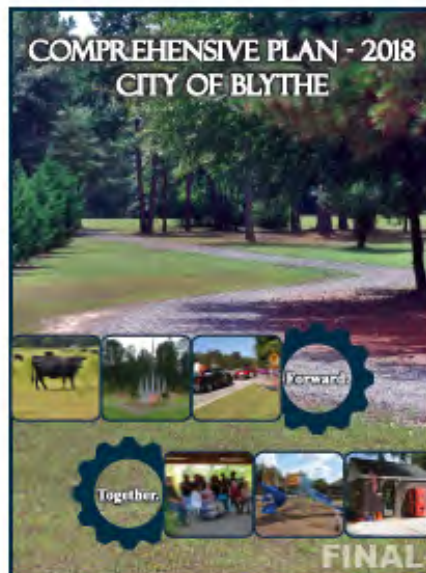
Source: 2020 Decennial Census P1, P2, H1, 2021 American Community Survey 5- year estimates DP02, DP04, S0101, S1501, S1901, S2701.



PRIOR PLANS

A comprehensive plan is a dynamic document which should be altered as community conditions change. Updates of these documents are required to ensure community needs are met. Prior versions of the City of Blythe's Comprehensive Plan have diminished in relevance as implementation recommendations have been completed or, due to the passage of time, have been found to be no longer a community priority. This allows the new plan to address relative community changes since the prior plan was adopted. This new comprehensive plan document addresses relative community changes since the 2018 plan was adopted.

The city of Blythe's 2018-2022 plan was prepared by Cranston Engineering. This plan was also independent of Augusta-Richmond county and met the minimum standard procedures for local comprehensive planning and complied with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs requirements.



OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

First Required Public Hearing: Briefs the public on the process and describes opportunities to participate

Plan Development: Includes data collection and analysis; includes opportunities for involvement from stakeholders and community members

Second Public Hearing: Provides an opportunity for comment on the publicly available draft plan and notifies the public of plan submittal for official review

Submittal of Draft Plan for Review: Requires a formal letter from the highest elected official to the CSRA-RC; CSRA-RC submits the plan to DCA

Notification of Interested Parties: Provides all interested parties (other governments, state agencies, etc.) the opportunity for plan for review and comment

Regional Commission & DCA Review: Includes CSRA-RC review for potential conflicts and DCA review for statute compliance

Report of Findings and Recommendations: Is transmitted within 40 days after submittal

Plan Revisions: May be made to the plan to meet state requirements or address comments from interested parties

Plan Adoption: Occurs after official DCA approval of the plan

Notification of Local Adoption: Requires the submittal of a signed resolution and adopted plan to the CSRA-RC within 7 days; CSRA-RC forwards this to DCA

Qualified Local Government status (QLG): Includes a written notification from DCA that the jurisdiction's QLG status has been extended

Publicizing the Plan: Occurs after plan adoption and informs citizens of final plan availability

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OVERVIEW

A comprehensive plan should be composed to reflect the shared vision, goals and objectives for all members of the community and those involved in the process. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs requires the planning process for comprehensive plans to follow a set of minimum procedures to ensure the public has the opportunity to provide input and review the comprehensive plan document as it is created.

Consistent public input is a necessary component for the creation and completion of the comprehensive plan document. One significant part of the process is forming a stakeholder committee of community members. This group of people is critical to the plan creation and informs the decision-making process. A primary purpose of the stakeholder committee was ensuring that CSRA-RC staff adequately presented the aforementioned shared vision, goals, and objectives of the community.

The members of the City of Blythe's stakeholder committee for this planning process were:

Tom Cobb, City Mayor, City of Blythe
Rebecca Newsome, City Council, City of Blythe
Noel Cartagena, City Council, City of Blythe
Judy Cordova, City Council, City of Blythe
Daniel Martin, City Council, City of Blythe
Lorianne Chancey, City Clerk, City of Blythe
M. Carter, Blythe Planning Commission, City of Blythe

Stakeholder meetings were held on the following dates to provide information, review data, and gain community perspective:

March 22, 2023 | May 11, 2023 | June 26, 2023

Two public hearings were also held as a part of this process on:

April 24, 2023 | August 14, 2023

Included in the community planning process this iteration was an electronic survey. The survey responses were reviewed and used to generate new ideas and provide community confirmation of priorities created by the stakeholder committee. Staff compared what the stakeholder committee developed with what survey results revealed when crafting the plan to ensure that voices were being heard. Local officials also retained survey results, including open ended responses for future consultation.

Public awareness efforts included the newspaper, website posts, social media posts, and on-line document hosting.



DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics, or the statistical data regarding a population or particular group, are significant for identifying trends within each community. While geography may remain the same, the character of a community can shift overnight as new citizens arrive or established businesses leave. Effective local governments analyze their respective demographics and adjust the policies that will allow their communities to flourish.

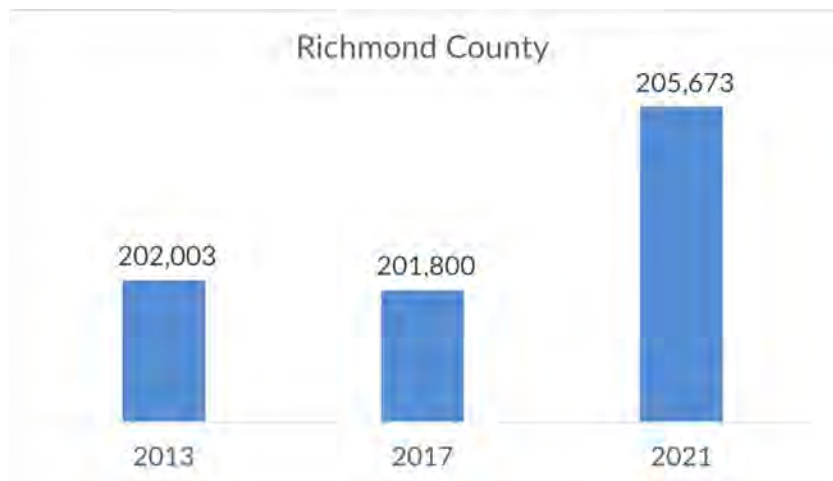
Data collected from the U.S. Census Bureau is the basis for the analysis of demographic and related changes throughout this document. Census data from the American Community Survey 5-year estimates are used.

Population

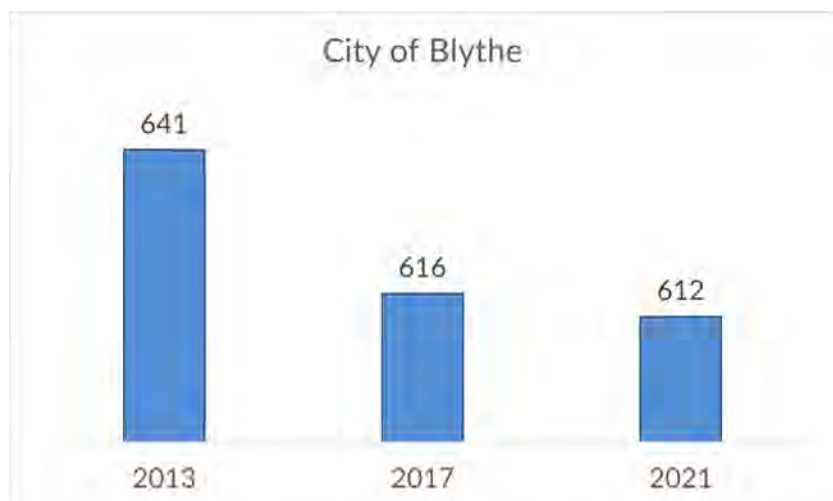
According to the American Community Survey 5-year estimates, the population in Blythe in 2021 was 612. This reflects a decrease of 0.06% from 2017 and a 4.5% decrease from 2013.

Alternatively, Richmond County saw an increase in population in 2021 from 2017 of almost 2%.

As of 2021 the median age in the city of Blythe was 35.7.

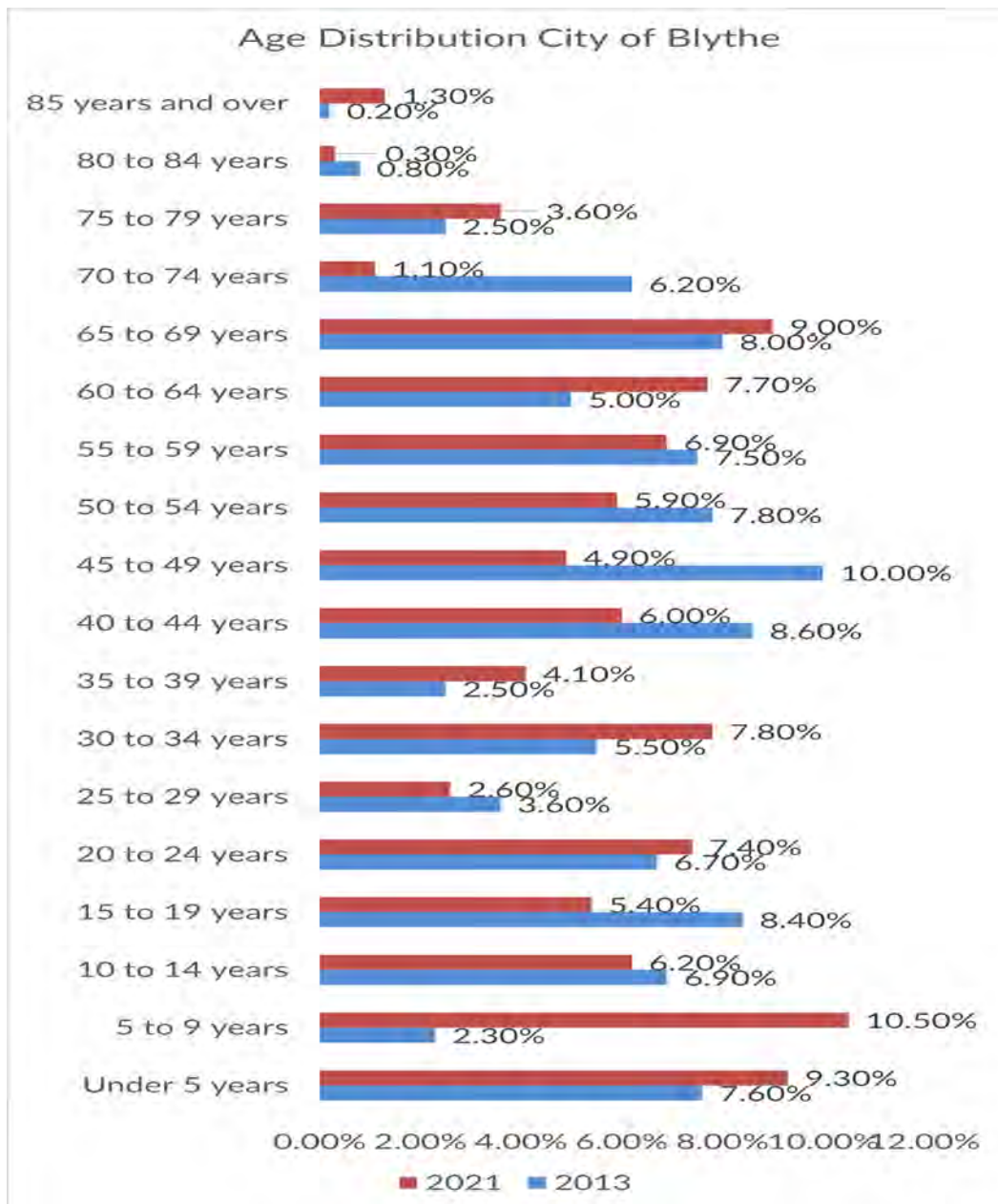


Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5- year estimates S0101



Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5- year estimates S0101

Age Distribution

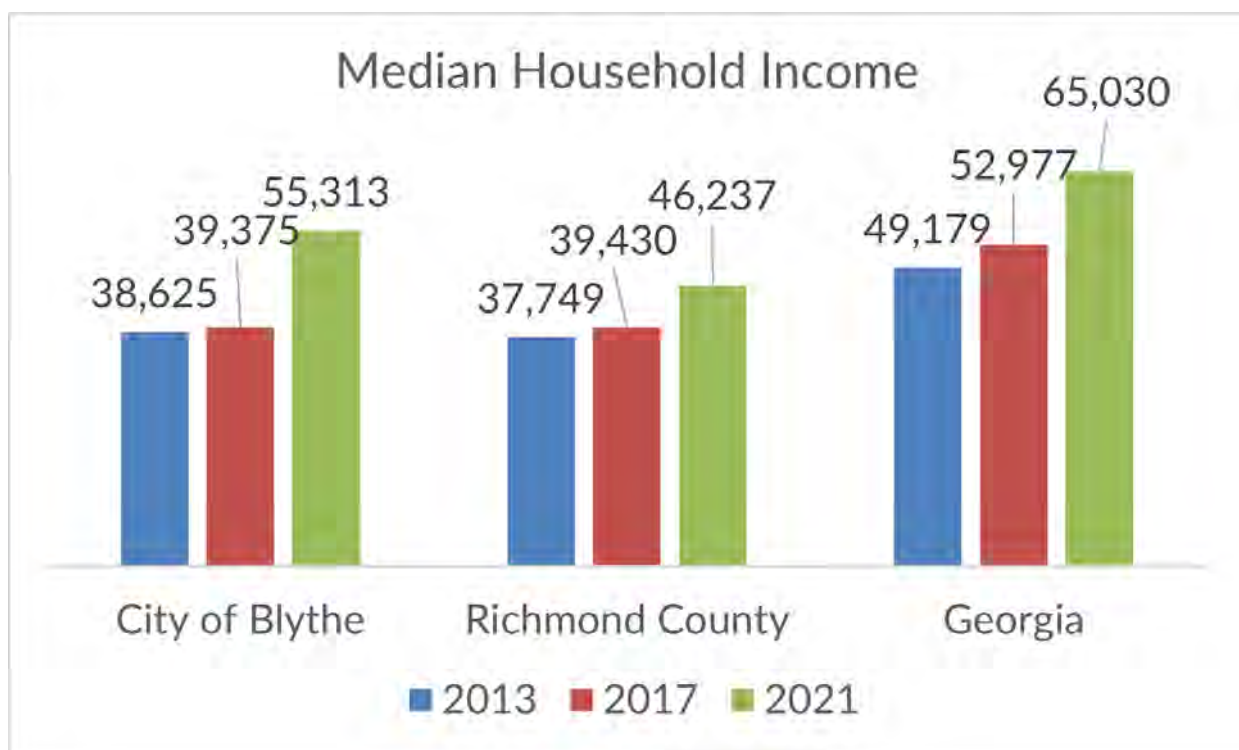


Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5- year estimates S0101

In the city of Blythe, the age groups with the largest portions of the population in 2021 were 5- 9 year olds at 10.5%, under 5 at 9.3%, and 65- 69 year olds at 9% of the population. The group with the largest increase since 2011 was 5 - 9 year olds with an increase of 8.2%. The largest decrease in age groups were ages 70 - 74 and 45 - 49, both had a loss of around 5.1% over the same eight year span.

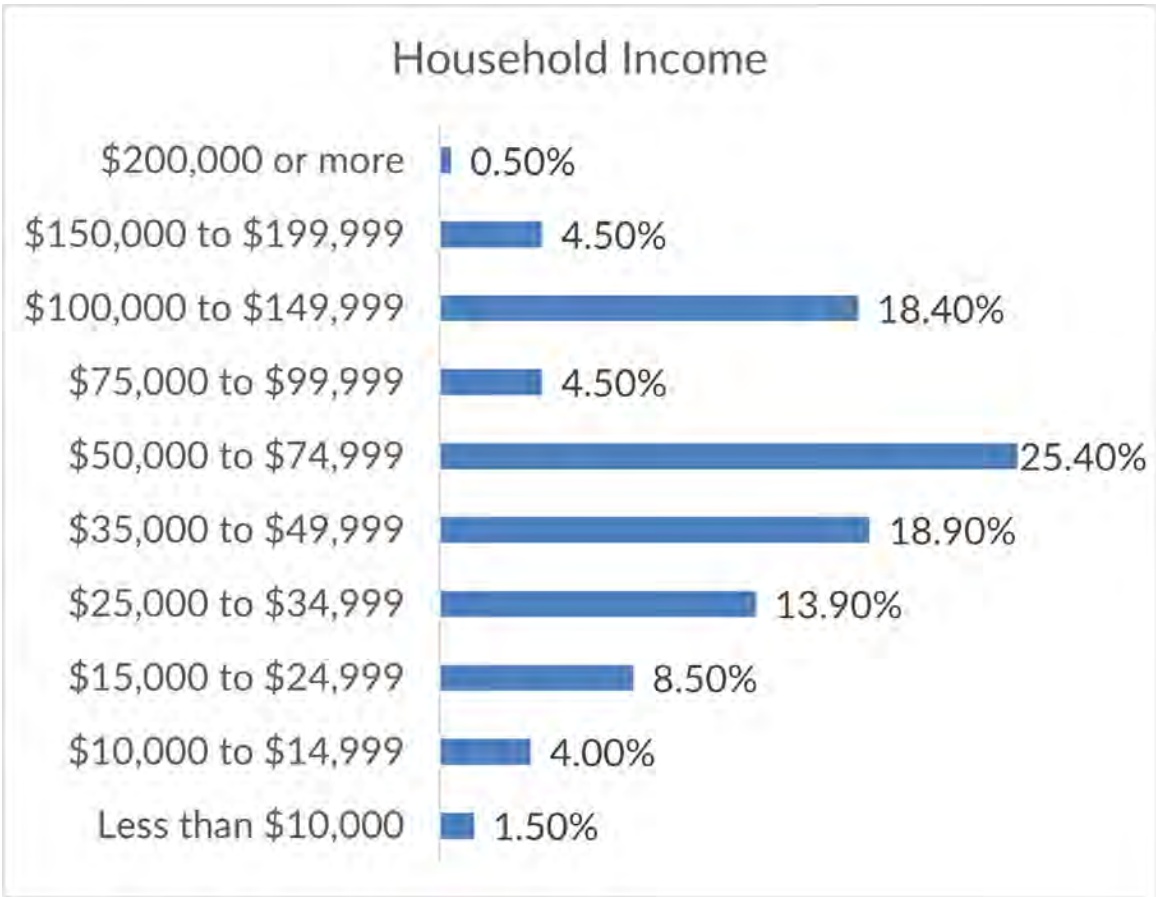
Income and Poverty

In general, poverty describes an absence of money or resources that would allow an individual to satisfy their basic needs. In an effort to better quantify poverty, the U.S. Census Bureau along with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) established monetary thresholds to determine poverty status. The thresholds are updated for inflation using the Consumer Price Index, but they do not change based on geography. For example, in 2021, a family of four was considered to be living beneath the poverty threshold if their combined income was under \$27,479.



Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5- year estimates DP04

The U. S. Census Bureau gauges a geographic area's income using Median Household Income (MHI). The MHI is meant to represent the average person living in a respective area. The MHI in the city of Blythe in 2021 was \$55,313. The city of Blythe has experienced an MHI increase of 43.2% since 2013. The state of Georgia MHI has grown by 32.2% and Richmond County 22.4% since 2013.



Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5- year estimates S1901

According to the Consumer price index, in 2021, a family of four was considered to be living beneath the poverty threshold if their combined income was under \$27,479. In 2021, around 86% of the residents living in the City of Blythe were above the threshold for poverty. Around 14% of the residents living in the City of Blythe in 2021 were considered beneath the poverty threshold.



BROADBAND SERVICES

Throughout this country and the world, the value of reliable Internet service is important. As technology advances, high-speed connections are becoming increasingly critical parts of everyday life. This high-speed Internet is also known as “broadband,” and it impacts many industries, including agriculture, retail, and education. Rural communities like the city of Blythe tend to lag behind their urban counterparts in broadband access, and this insufficient access affects the community’s ability to grow, recruit business, and retain residents.

What is Broadband?

Broadband is high speed Internet as defined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The FCC has set minimum standards for the speed at which the consumer receives data (25 Mbps) and the rate at which the consumer sends data back to the data provider (3 Mbps). Slow data speeds are frustrating for computer and smartphone users and can also have a negative impact upon business, education, and healthcare access.

The ACE Act

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) currently defines high-speed Internet access as download speeds of at least 25 Mbps and upload speeds of at least 3 Mbps. The infrastructure of broadband is often described in three different sections: backbone, middle mile, and last mile. The backbone (aka trunk lines) are the major high-speed transmission lines linking smaller networks across the country.

The middle mile is the connection between the backbone network and local networks. The last mile is the connection between the local network and end users (homes, institutions, businesses, etc.). Broadband includes several high-speed transmission technologies, such as fiber optic, wireless, Digital Subscriber Line (DSL), coaxial cable, and satellite.

In 2018, the Georgia General Assembly passed the “Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Act” as Senate Bill 402. The ACE Act enables several things, including:

- Local governments to apply for financial incentives for broadband services
- The Georgia Department of Transportation to use interstate highway rights-of-way for deployment of broadband services and other emerging communications technologies.

The ACE Act also requires each local government in the state to incorporate a “Broadband Services Element” into its local comprehensive plan.

Served and Unserved Areas

Working with several other state agencies, providers and the regional commissions, the Georgia DCA has mapped areas in the state that are served and unserved areas for broadband availability. Information on census-block level access was provided by the Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative (GBDI) for this section of the plan. The GBDI, launched in 2018, represents a collaborative effort by multiple state agencies to promote and deploy broadband level Internet in unserved areas across Georgia. This service is for a minimum of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload speeds. An “unserved” area means a census block in which broadband services are not available to 20% or more of the locations in that block (as determined by DCA). A “served” area does not imply subscription, only access. Additionally, it is still possible to have individual homes or businesses within a served area that are unserved. Jenkins County, as displayed in the map on the next page, is 51% unserved, with 2,444 served locations in the county.

Rate of Broadband Adoption

Research on the outcomes of broadband expansion has revealed that provision of the infrastructure itself is not typically sufficient to realize the myriad benefits touted. Results suggest that policy makers must broaden their focus to include adoption and efficient use of the technology. Once broadband is available, residents must be willing and able to pay for subscriptions and adequate hardware, and competent to use it for their personal/professional benefit. Research sponsored by the Benton Institute for Broadband and Society developed a four part strategy as being essential to promoting meaningful broadband adoption. The four-part strategy is below.

1. Providing low-cost broadband
2. Connecting digital literacy training with relevant content and services
3. Making low-cost computers available
4. Operating public access computer centers

Census Block Status

- Served
- Unserved
- No Locations

Richmond County

Unserved Locations: 748
Served Locations: 115,238
Percent Unserved: 1



Source: <https://broadband.georgia.gov/2022-georgia-broadband-availability-map>

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Labor Force Participation

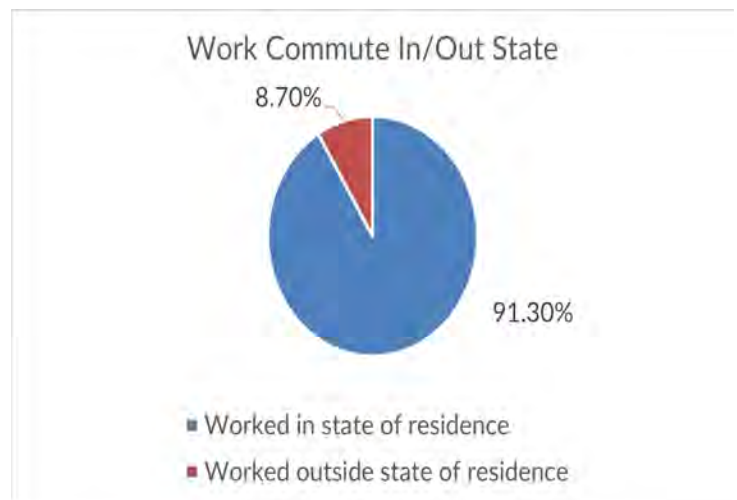
Census data reveals the population over the age of 16 in 2021 was 443, with 62% of them in the labor force.

Population 16 and older	443
In Labor Force	275
Not in Labor Force	168

Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates DP03

Jobs by Distance/Destination

The majority of the labor force in the city of Blythe work inside the state of Georgia with only 8.7% of the workforce traveling outside the state of Georgia. Most of the residents (33.7%) in the city of Blythe travel 30 - 34 minutes to work.

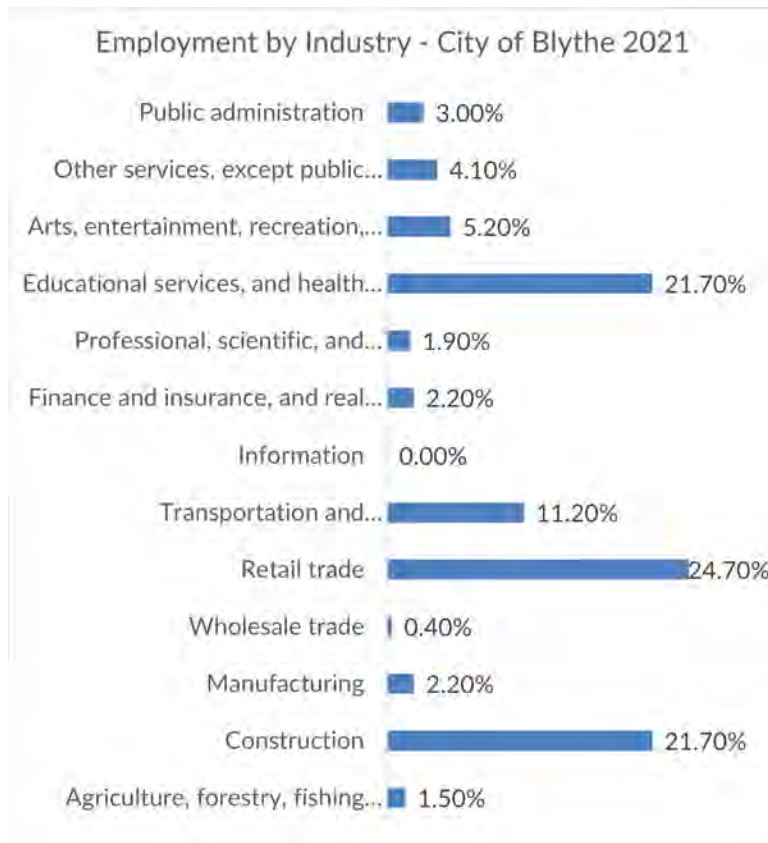


Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates DP03



Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates S0802

Employment By Industry

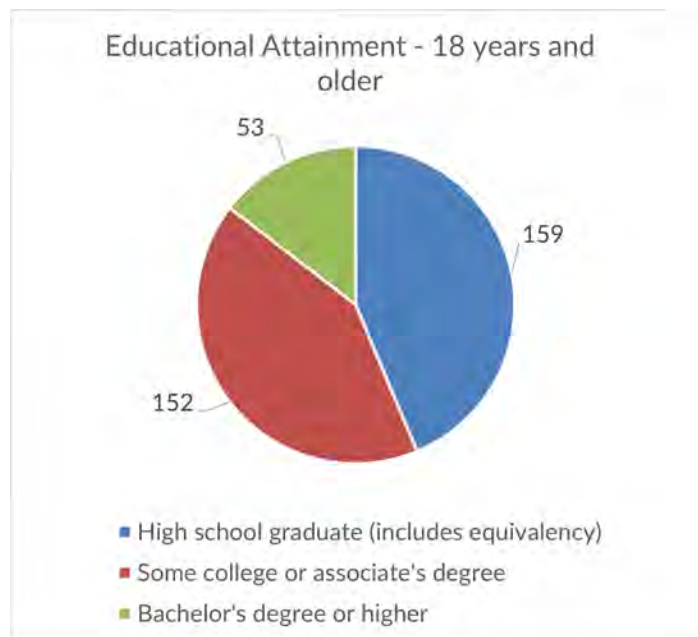


Retail trade was the largest industry of employment by citizens of Blythe in 2021 at 24.7%. Construction and educational/healthcare/social assistance both came in second as the second largest industry of employment of the citizens of Blythe at 21.7%. Transportation, warehousing, and utilities was the third leading industry of employment of citizens in 2021 at 11.2%

Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates DP03

Educational Attainment

The 2021 ACS data indicates that 59% of the population of Blythe has a high school diploma equivalency or higher. In 2021, 53 residents reported having a bachelors degree or higher, 153 residents reported having some college or associates degree, and 159 residents reported having some high school degree or equivalent.

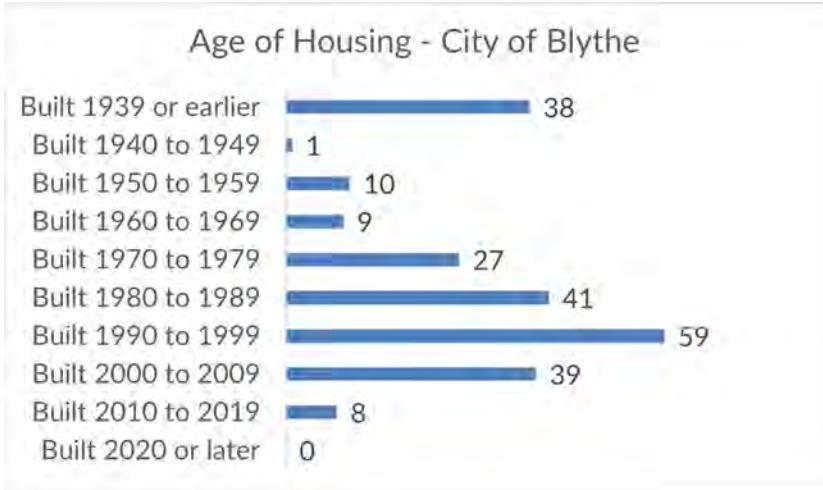


Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates S1501

HOUSING

Age of Housing

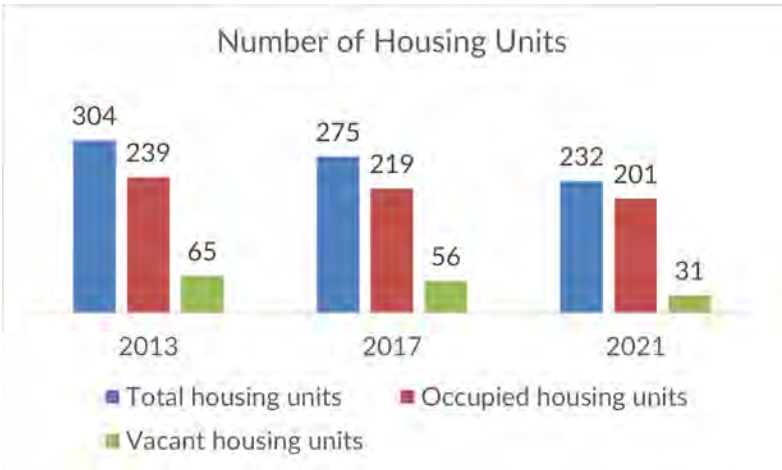
Housing units built in between 1990-1999 are the largest group of housing in Blythe. Only 21% of the existing housing units were built prior to 1960. As with a number of rural communities in the CSRA, new construction of affordable housing is a challenge.



Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates DP04

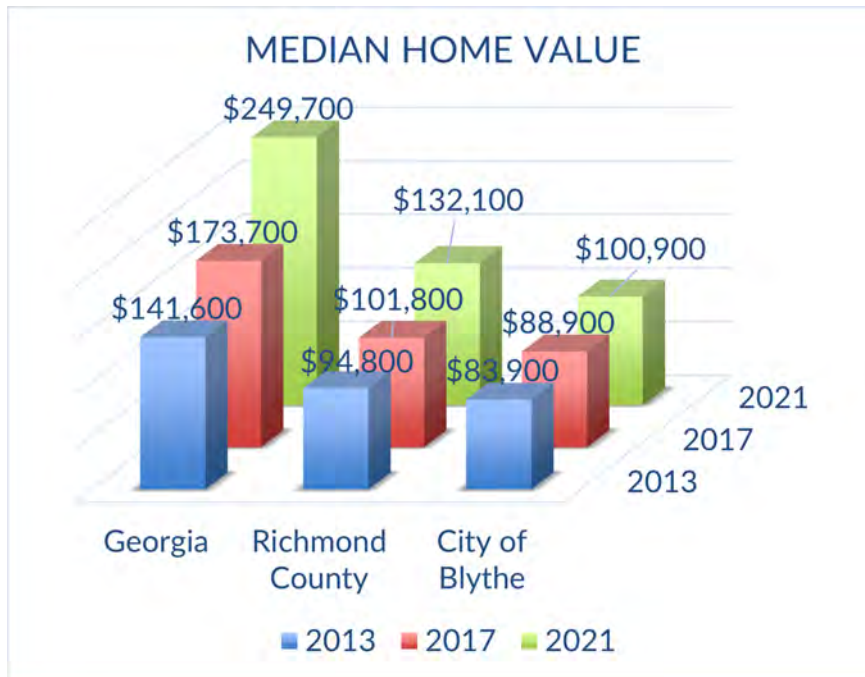
Number of Housing Units

Housing unit comparisons show that the City of Blythe has lost housing units since 2013. From 2013 to 2017 there was a loss of 9.5% in housing units in Blythe. From 2013 to 2021 there was an almost 15.6% loss of housing units in Blythe.



Source: 2013, 2017, 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates DP04

Housing Cost



Source: 2013, 2017, 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates CP04

Median home values in the city of Blythe have increase since 2013. From 2013 to 2017 home values in Blythe saw an increase of about 6%. From 2017 to 2021, home values saw an increase of about 13.5%. This is also true for Richmond County and the State of Georgia, both saw increases in home values during this time.

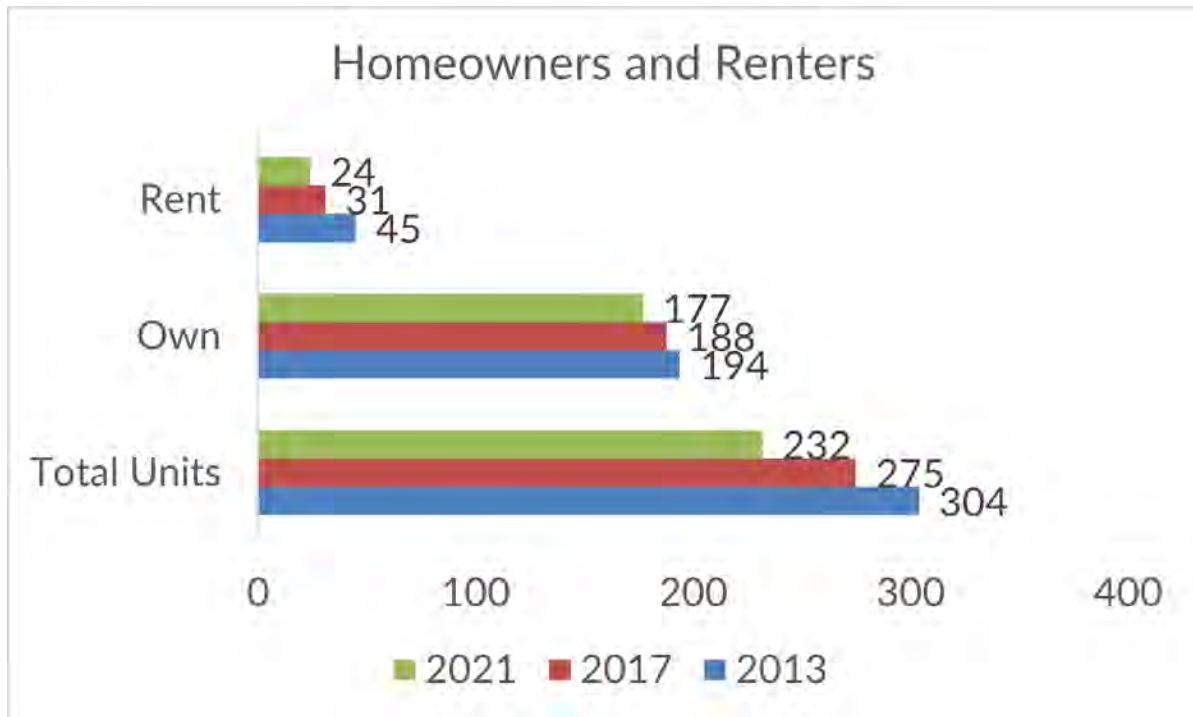
Type of Housing Units

There is little housing diversity in the types of housing found within the City of Blythe. Citizens must choose between a mobile home or a detached single family home if they chose to live in the community. The lack of multi-family units makes it hard to accommodate senior citizens, and potential homeowners that are seeking smaller units requiring less upkeep.

Total housing units	232
1-unit, detached	129
1-unit, attached	0
2 units	2
3 or 4 units	0
5 to 9 units	0
10 to 19 units	0
20 or more units	0
Mobile home	101
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0

Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates DP04

Home ownership



Source: 2013, 2017, 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates S1101

Home ownership and renters have decreased over time in the City of Blythe. Since 2013, there has been a decrease of about 46% in renters in Blythe, and almost 9% decrease in home owners. Total housing units have decreased by 24% since 2013.



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

An assessment of the availability and adequacy of community facilities is important to understanding the ability of a jurisdiction to provide residents, businesses, and potential developments sufficient resources. Having the appropriate amount of resources is necessary for both maintaining community livelihood and attracting future residents and commercial interest. This section of the comprehensive plan focuses on the following existing public facilities and services for this purpose:

- Water Supply
- Wastewater Treatment
- Public Safety
- Fire Protection
- Parks & Recreation
- Library & Cultural Facilities
- Educational Facilities

Water Supply and Treatment

The ability to access potable water is a fundamental need for communities. A surplus of potable water can be attractive for both residential and commercial development within a jurisdiction. The City of Blythe owns its own public water distribution system. The City of Blythe can provide up to 250,000 (GPD) per day per well. They are able to treat 331,200 (GPD), and have one tank that holds 100,000 gallons.

Sewerage and Waste Water

A sewerage system is another fundamental component of a sustainable community. This serves as a separate but necessary companion to the water supply. The City of Blythe does not offer sanitary sewer services, residents have septic tanks.

Public Safety

Public safety and emergency services are critical components to the infrastructure of the City. By keeping these systems working smoothly and prepared for a city's growth, the police, fire, and other services can better provide for the residents. The city of Blythe operates a police station within the city limits. The police department has two full time officers. Police headquarters are located in a separate building located at 138 Gin House Street. Blythe uses Richmond County Sheriff's office Charles B. Webster Detention Center for jail facilities.



Fire Protection

The city of Blythe has an agreement with Augusta-Richmond county for fire protection. Augusta-Richmond County provides fire protection services in Blythe and surrounding areas, working from a building owned by the City of Blythe. The staff here are first-responders to area traffic emergencies. This Fire Department company has back-up from other Augusta companies for more extensive fires.

Parks and Recreation

The city of Blythe currently has a City Park as well as a Veterans Memorial Park that are open for public use. The City Park has playground equipment, a gazebo, park benches, picnic tables, and open space and is located on 0.5 acres. Veterans Memorial Park has a playground, pavilion with restrooms, picnic tables, a walking trail, and contains monuments commemorating veterans' service.



Library

The city of Blythe library is independent of any regional library system. The library has one part-time staff, books, computers, printers, and work areas. The commons within the library may be rented out for events.



Educational Facilities

The city of Blythe has one elementary school within city limits. Blythe Elementary school is a part of the Richmond County Board of Education and provides classes for students in K-3 through 5th grade.

Solid Waste Management

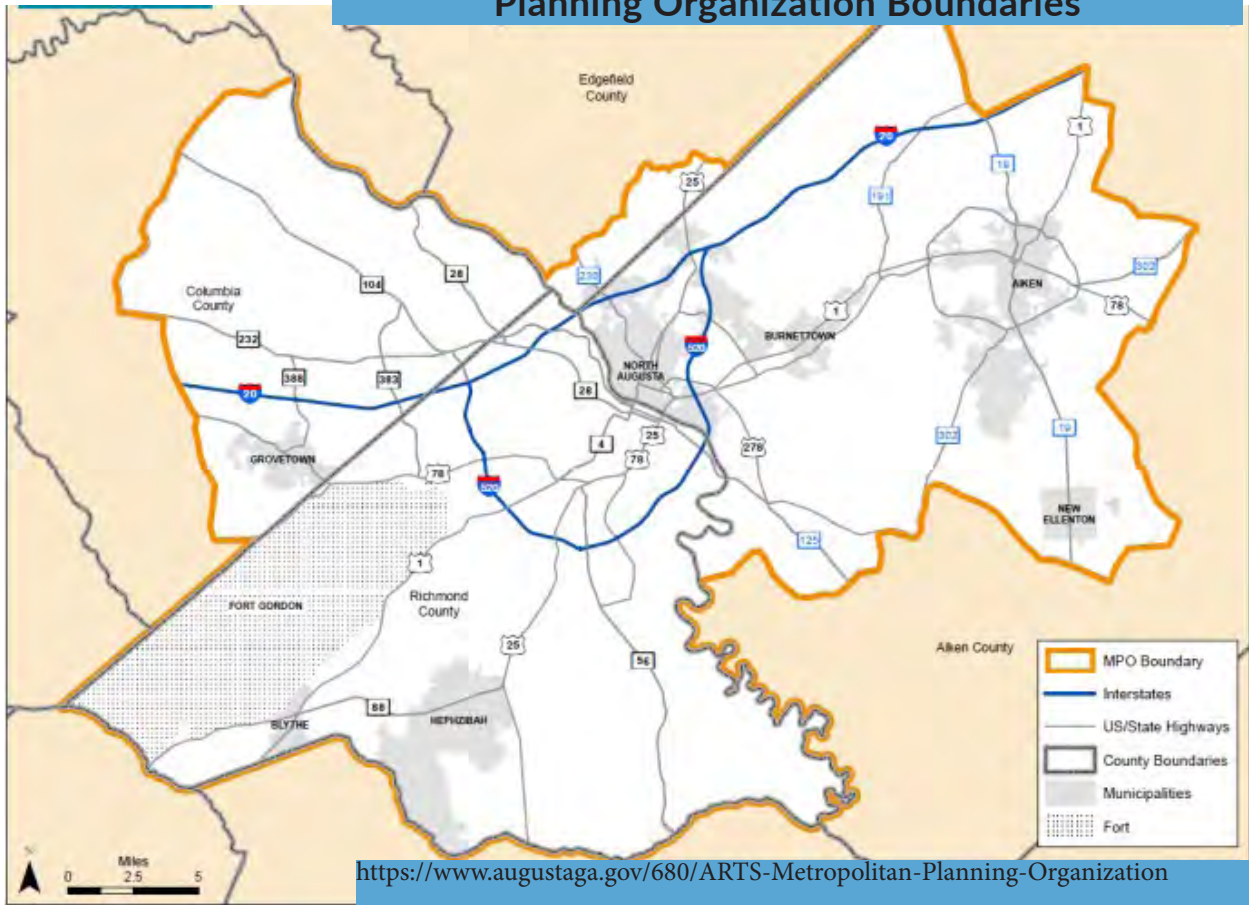
The city of Blythe garbage collection through private enterprise.

TRANSPORTATION

Road System

The City of Blythe is located within the Augusta Regional Transportation Study (ARTS) as the official Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Transportation is addressed on a larger scale in the Augusta Regional Transportation Study; this study is the MPO's transportation strategy for the region, and it is incorporated through this reference in the Comprehensive Plan to satisfy DCA's "Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning" in relation to transportation. The road system within the city consists of one federal highway (U.S. Highway 1, Deans Bridge Road), one Georgia highway (State Route 88), and a network of local roads. Most streets within the city are rural in character with drainage ditches along the sides and mostly without sidewalks. An opportunity exists to add sidewalks along key streets in the future, as needed.

Augusta Regional Transportation Metropolitan Planning Organization Boundaries



Alternative Modes of Transportation

The City of Blythe is a small community and faces resident concerns that development pressure will result in too much growth. This is a rural community that wants to preserve its current way of life. Blythe is unique in that it does not have traffic congestion nor pedestrians and is in a slow paced environment.

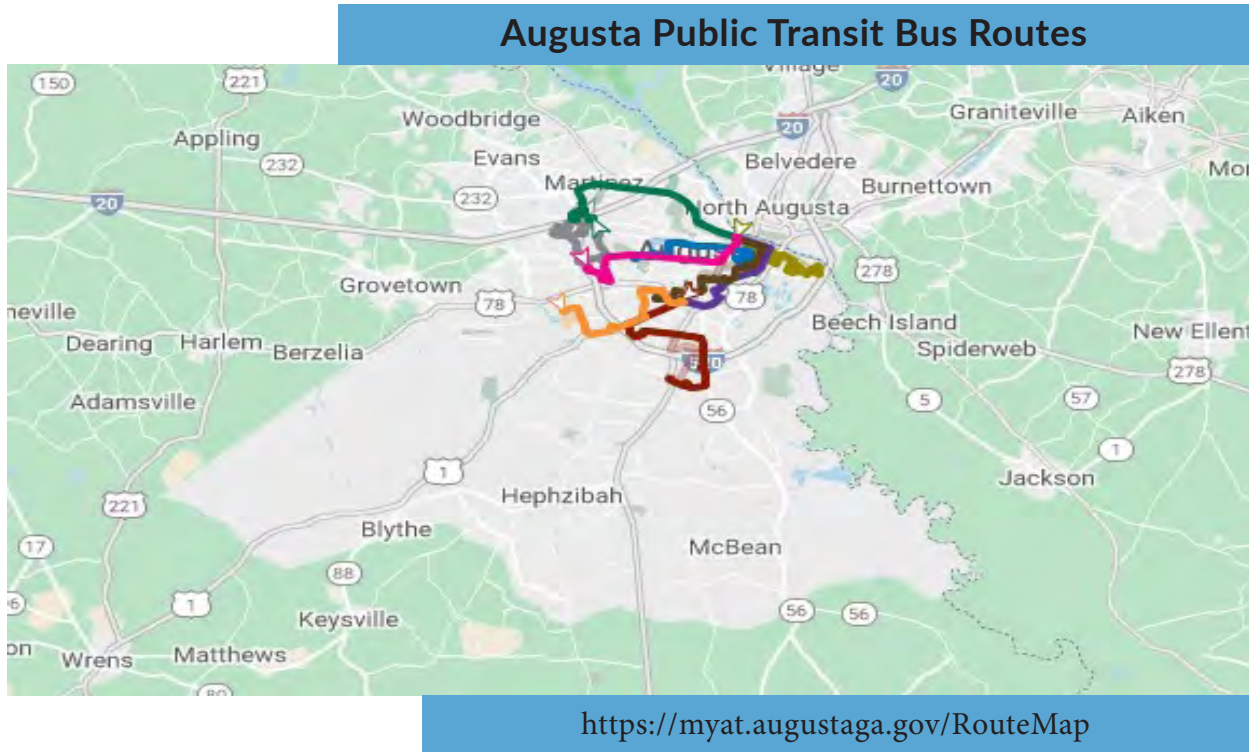
Electric Vehicles (EV)

The innovative technology of electric vehicles has made them more popular among consumers. They may reduce the use of imported fuels and reduce greenhouse emissions. Any jurisdiction that wishes to promote or support the adoption of EVs will need to build out its public EV charging infrastructure while also making it easier for individual EV owners, businesses, and developers to install private charging stations or networks. EVs use rechargeable batteries to power an electric motor. These batteries need to be recharged regularly. Local governments can play a key role in encouraging the adoption of EVs by influencing standards, codes, processes, and policies to approve the installation of private and public charging stations. Local governments may choose to host or operate public charging stations.



Public Transit

Augusta Transit serves portions of Richmond County, there are currently no routes on the bus line that transport to the City of Blythe.



Parking, Railroads, and Airports

The City of Blythe does not have any parking issues. City Hall, and Veterans Park have adequate parking. There are no railroads or airports in the City of Blythe.

Transportation and Land Use Connection

Land use and transportation planning must coordinate to achieve a more sustainable community. This coordinated planning effort will enable the city to create places with a balance of uses, mixed uses, preserved local character, and greater access to recreation, employment, and services.

Transportation Investment Act

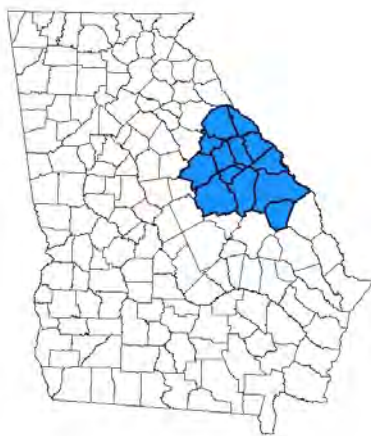
In 2012, the CSRA region was one of only three (3) in the state to pass the Transportation Investment Act (TIA, aka TSPLOST). The proceeds from TIA have been used to design and construct dozens of essential transportation improvements across all 13 counties in the region, either through the projects designated on the region's final project list, or through the 25% discretionary funds.

TIA represents a 1% transportation sales tax to fund regional and local transportation improvements, of which 75% of funds go to a predefined project list. Discretionary funds are used on a variety of projects, such as airports, roads, bridges, bike lanes, and pedestrian facilities. The funds can be used on any new or existing transportation projects, including operation and maintenance or as a match for state and/or federal funds. The regional TSPLOST was reauthorized in 2020, TIA 1 (2013-2022), TIA 2 (2023-2032).



TIA 1 (2013-2022)

Total Projects: 84
Projects Under Construction: 25
Projects Completed: 58
Original Approved Budget (2011 Dollars):
\$713,019,813.00
Total Expenditure to Date: \$326,625,875.96



TIA 2 (2023-2032):

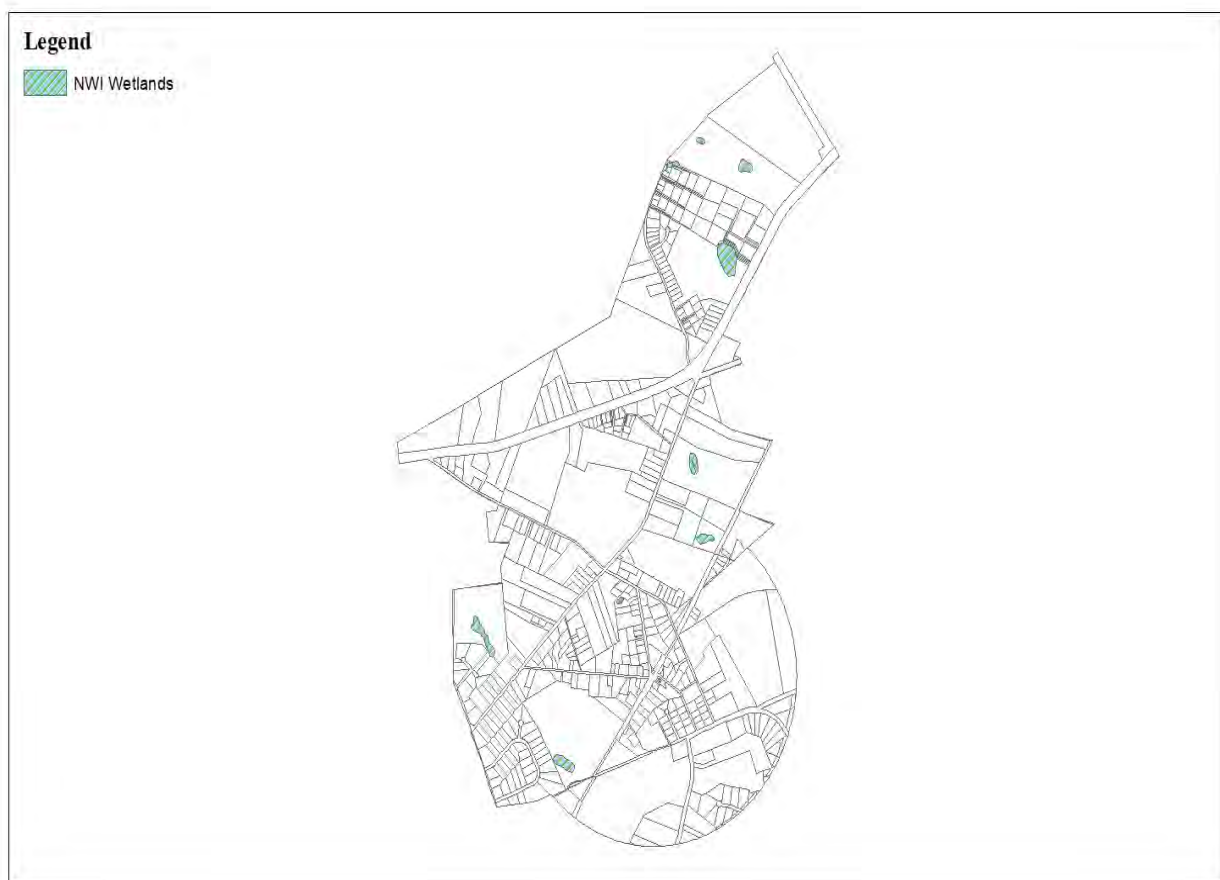
Total Projects: 162
Projects Under Construction: 7
Projects Completed: 0
Original Approved Budget (2019 Dollars):
\$798,375,814.00
Total Expenditure to Date: \$130.38

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Wetlands

Wetlands are lands which are permanently or seasonally saturated with water from a nearby water body or through prolonged rain events. These areas contain a unique ecosystem with vegetation characteristic to the southern United States. Wetlands provide a singular habitat for fish and certain types of wildlife, breeding grounds, and an ecosystem for plant life and animal species that have adapted to these special conditions.

There are five specific categories of wetlands that are required by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to have special protection. They are as follows: open water, non-forested, scrub-scrub, forested, and altered.



Flood Plains

Flooding can be defined as a situation in which the overflow of water submerges land that is not usually inundated with water. A floodplain is an area designated to store natural water and conveyance, maintain water quality, and provide for ground water recharge. Floodplains sometime contribute to community issues such as property damage and the loss of potentially developable land. Land development has also had the impact of creating new flood areas due to a mix of increased storm water runoff, lack of storm water draining to accommodate increased runoff, and continuous development with impervious surfaces.

The city of Blythe does not contain flood plains, according to the United States Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map.



COMMUNITY VISION

Vision Statement

Blythe seeks to remain a welcoming, peaceful bedroom community where a country lifestyle is predominant and where free-willed citizens and newcomers alike cooperate to maintain it as the “Best Kept Secret in Georgia.”

S.W.O.T. Analysis Summary

Stakeholders participated in several activities and facilitated discussions to define the needs, goals, and community work program projects. The foundation of moving forward with the aforementioned items was an understanding of the current position of both the county and city. The creation of a S.W.O.T (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis for the City of Blythe provided a foundation for the steering committee to move forward in this planning process. Combined with information provided by CSRA Regional Commission staff, the S.W.O.T. analysis provided support for establishing long-term goals.

STRENGTHS

- Proximity to Fort Gordon (Gate 5).
- Active and engaged citizens.
- Safe community.
- City clerk who advocates for the City of Blythe.
- Strong City Council.
- Leadership that works well together.
- Decision-making by leadership is supportive of the majority.
- Competent and capable maintenance staff, up-to-date maintenance.
- Good rental facility options (Library Commons meeting room, Pavilion at the Veterans Park).
- Fire Department (Shared with the City of Augusta).
- Police Department (City-owned).
- Strong financial situation.
- Veterans Park as part of the City appeal.
- Free wi-fi in centralized area.
- Good roads.
- Abundance of undeveloped land.
- Dollar store.
- 11 Acres, city owned green space.
- Country Charm
- Country Environment
- Small Community Feel
- A quiet rural community
- Diversity
- Rural
- Close knit community
- Library
- Large lots

WEAKNESSES

- Limited communication with citizens
- Blighted properties- need enforcement
- City website
- Theft
- Lack of locally owned businesses ie restaurants, hardware stores, pharmacy
- Availability of EMS
- Trash Pickup
- No Stores
- No local restaurants, no local ambulance service

OPPORTUNITIES

- Update zoning ordinance (Ongoing).
- Rewrite or consolidate amendments.
- New park could be created North of US 1 on Hoods Chapel Road (Acquire Land).
- Increase use/rental opportunities of Veterans Park Pavilion and Library Commons meeting room.
- Property maintenance ordinance.
- Improve City website to better serve the citizens.
- Ongoing infrastructure improvements
- Community Center
- Potential growth for business
- Several parks, walking track
- Library
- Availability of land for residential growth

THREATS

- Closure of facilities (Post office, Elementary School, Area Stores).
- Relocation of Fire Department
- Crime from larger cities
- Drug activity
- Development
- Commercial growth



Concurrent with completion of the 2023 Comprehensive Plans final list of needs and opportunities, stakeholders and other planning participants identified the shared planning goals of the City of Blythe.

The “Community Goals” component includes the following elements:

Goals: Broad statements of understanding and intent regarding the long-term growth and development of both jurisdictions. In addition to the “Needs and Opportunities” the Georgia Department of Community Affairs “Quality Community Objectives” were reviewed in order to create goals to guide the implementation strategies contained in the work program.

Policies: To accompany the goals, supporting policies were developed, some as ongoing initiatives, maintenance, and general best practices for local action. When the opportunity presents itself, potential actions derived from the policy statements contained in this section of the 2023 Comprehensive Plan may be incorporated as amendments into the Community Work Program at a future date.



GOAL: PRESERVE RECREATION RESOURCES

Maintain recreation areas and make updates as needed.

Promote the use of Veteran’s Park Pavilion and Library Commons.

GOAL: UPGRADE AND EXPAND CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Maintain roads and repairs when necessary.

Expand and update water department equipment as needed.

GOAL: PROMOTE REDEVELOPMENT AT THE HISTORIC VILLAGE CENTER

Encourage new businesses to develop in existing buildings to maintain communities character.

GOAL: PROTECT BEDROOM COMMUNITY LIFESTYLE

Encourage new development in the cities peripheral corridor to be compatible with the small city charm.

Encourage entry-level homes for new families to help maintain supply of sound housing and meet needs of expected population.

Improve existing housing and remove buildings which present safety hazards to the public.



The needs and opportunities included in this section of the plan present issues to address and possibilities to pursue across both jurisdictions. These items were generated during the 2023 comprehensive planning process utilizing: input from the stakeholder committee, the previous plan, community survey, and SWOT analysis. This plan section also informed other parts of the plan, including goals and work program activities. As a reminder, these aren't the only possible needs and opportunities, and this document is flexible to change as the community does.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	
NEEDS	OPPORTUNITIES
Attract new businesses.	Promote facility rental options - Veterans Park Pavilion & Library Commons meeting room.
HOUSING	
Encourage new entry-level homes for new families.	Encourage new housing development.
LAND USE	
Update zoning ordinances. Re-write or consolidate amendments.	Update zoning ordinance.
COMMUNITY FACILITIES	
Increase use and rental opportunities at public places. Promote the Veterans Park Pavilion and Library Commons areas as rental options.	Advertise community facility rentals through website.
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES	
Continue to provide sustainable water system.	Use 11-acres of green space to upgrade water system, tank supply.





The demographic trends, economic circumstances, and social attitudes of local governments provide guidance to meet certain needs through the designation of land for particular uses. These land uses should ensure that land is equitably distributed, prevents/mitigates nuisances, and provides an appropriate amount of area for a designated use and limits disturbance of other surrounding land uses.

***Existing land uses for the city include the following:
Agricultural | Rural Residential | Peripheral Corridor Development |
Historic Village Center***

This comprehensive plan includes the use of character areas in lieu of a parcel-based future land use map.

CHARACTER AREAS

The majority of land in the City of Blythe is categorized as Rural Residential. Rural Residential makes up for approximately 60 percent of the land, Agricultural 30%, and Peripheral Corridor Commercial about 10 percent.

The City of Blythe adopted its zoning ordinance in 2000 and has updated it multiple times since then. The stated purpose of the ordinance is “promoting the health, safety, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare of the people of the City of Blythe, Georgia, considering, among other things, present conditions and anticipated future growth and development...”

The Planning and Zoning Ordinance provides for additional uses for certain specialized activities such as animal kennels, personal care homes, cemeteries, junk yards, liquor stores, and adult entertainment uses (subject to certain restrictions). The ordinance also provides for a Special Overlay District covering the Groundwater Recharge Area Protection.

The current ordinance zoning classifications:

Agricultural District - The Agricultural Districts (AG) will maintain the quality of life and aesthetic character for the rural areas of the City of Blythe, and will protect the character and suitability for such uses. These districts will promote open spaces and protect these areas from congestion and heavy traffic. (Blythe Planning and Zoning Ordinance, Article V)

Neighborhood Business/Professional District - The Neighborhood Business/Professional zones should protect and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of the City of Blythe by providing sufficient space for commercial and retail uses and related activities, and by keeping such activities a sufficient distance away from residential areas of the City of Blythe in order to protect residential areas against traffic, noise, and other hazards created by such commercial and retail uses. (Blythe Planning and Zoning Ordinance, Article VI)

Residential Districts - The Residential Districts will maintain the quality of life and aesthetic character of the areas of the City of Blythe in which citizens live. The residential districts are divided into three classifications as follow:

•**R1 – Residential District.** Lots in the R1 Residential district have a minimum area of one (1) acre for conventionally-built single family dwellings. Other allowed uses are schools, accessory buildings, churches, parks, open spaces, and public uses.






•**R2 – Residential District.** Lots in the R2 Residential district have a minimum area of one (1) acre for conventionally-built single family dwellings and manufactured homes on masonry foundations. Other allowed uses are schools, accessory buildings, churches, parks, open spaces, and public uses.

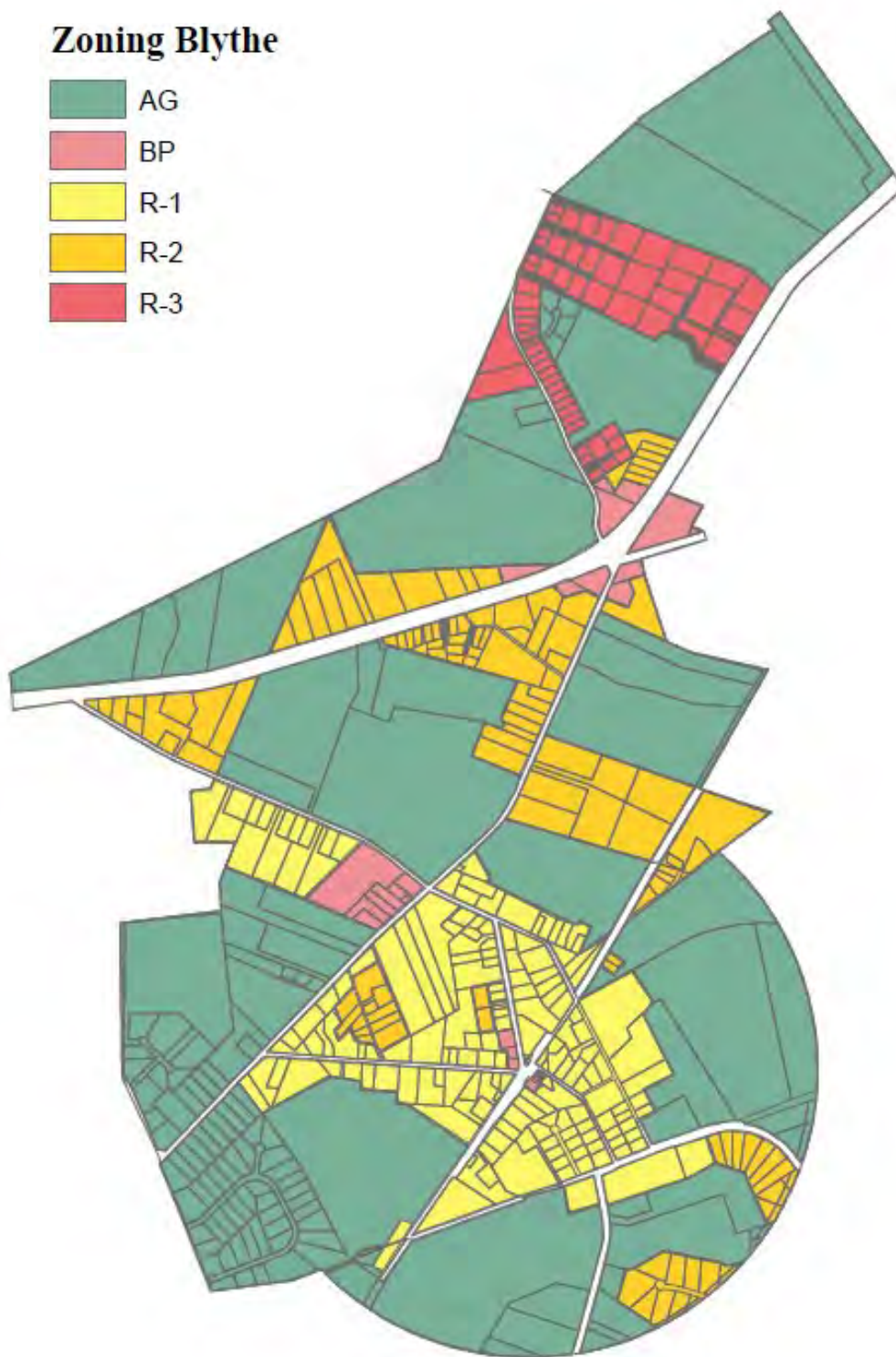
•**R3 – Residential District.** Lots in the R3 Residential district have a minimum area of one (1) acre for conventionally-built single family dwellings, manufactured homes, including single wide manufactured homes. Other allowed uses are schools, accessory buildings, churches, parks, open spaces, and public uses.



ZONING MAP

Zoning Blythe

-  AG
-  BP
-  R-1
-  R-2
-  R-3



The 2023 City of Blythe Comprehensive Plan incorporates Character Area Maps as its principal means by which to address long-term use goals and policies of the city.

The 2023 presented comprehensive plan character area maps and supporting character area narratives are located on the following pages. When determining how best to use the character area maps and supporting narratives, the reader should be mindful of the follow parameters:

Character Area Boundaries

Unlike a parcel-specific future land use map, character area boundaries are conceptual and may cross parcel lines. The character area boundaries in this document represent “approximate” character area location. This flexibility allows the governing body charged with implementing the plan to make decisions based on changing conditions while reducing the need to continually amend the comprehensive plan. As a result, it is possible to assume that small parcels located directly adjacent to one or more character areas may be permitted by the local government to develop according to the parameters of the adjacent area rather than the area in which it is located. Such an action should be taken sparingly and the decision should only be made if the local government can show that it is consistent with the recommendations provided in other sections of the 2023 Comprehensive Plan or other local policy document. For the most part however, tracts should develop according to the parameters established in the specific character area in which it is located. Each jurisdiction is strongly encouraged to initiate amendments to their Character Area Map whenever the community intends to promote a development pattern in an area that is contrary to the adopted map.

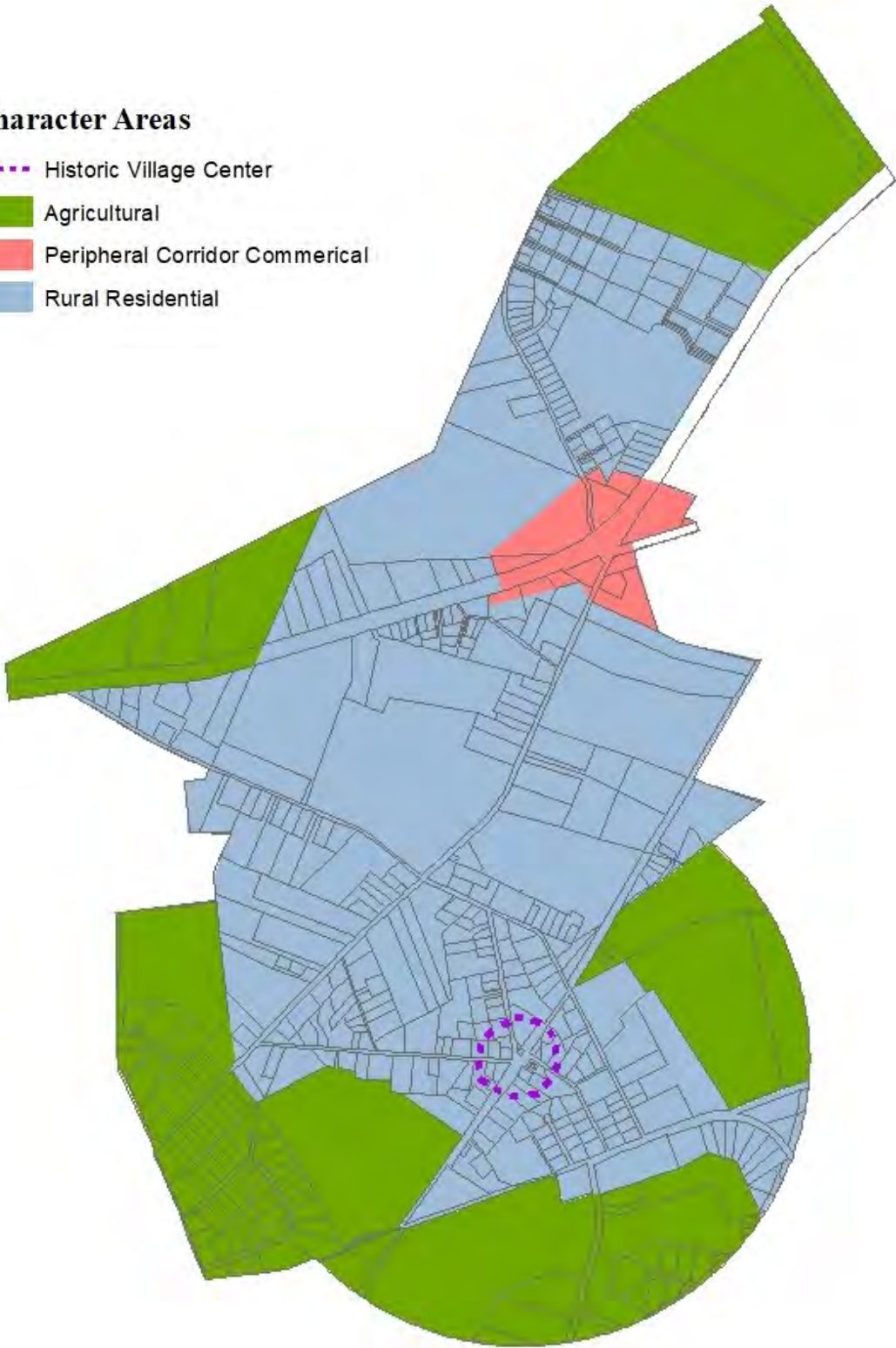
Character Area Narratives

The narratives corresponding to the Character Area Map should be viewed as general policy statements - as statements of intent. Their use and applicability is similar to those other goals and policy statements found in the Community Goals section. They should inform future development decisions and perhaps form the basis for more detailed topic-specific studies in the future.

City of Blythe CHARACTER AREAS

Character Areas

- Historic Village Center
- Agricultural
- Peripheral Corridor Commercial
- Rural Residential



CHARACTER AREAS



AGRICULTURAL



GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Agricultural Character Area comprises the majority of incorporated Blythe. It is largely defined by agricultural and forestry uses – with low-density residential uses scattered throughout. The emphasis of this character area will be to preserve the pastoral nature of existing open space, encouraging the productive use of naturally regenerative resources (e.g. crops, pasture), as opposed to building and other hard-scape development. Residential development should occur at low densities – either existing parcels or large lots that preserve open space. Commercial enterprise should be largely limited to agrarian and recreational enterprises in order to leverage the economic value of open space retention.

LAND USE AND ZONING CATEGORIES

Agriculture

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

- Policy adoption limiting major development for the protection of rural context. Enforcement of limited residential development

CHARACTER AREAS



HISTORIC VILLAGE CENTER



GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Historic Village Center Character Area is the traditional heart of the City of Blythe. It contains several historic buildings that front the streets, including storefront commercial and institutional buildings and nearby historic homes, all in a walkable setting. This area has the capability to become a more charming neighborhood that can give a renewed vitality and historic feeling to this part of the City of Blythe.

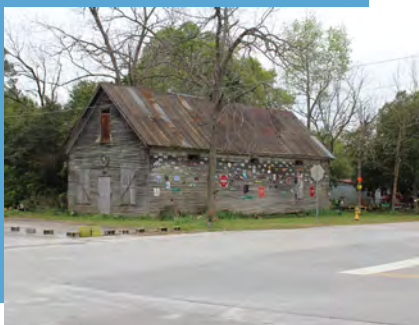
The Historic Village Center includes small lots and commercial storefronts that predate the zoning ordinance and whose character can be maintained by “grandfathering” special exceptions and conditional uses.

LAND USE AND ZONING CATEGORIES

Business /Professional (BP), Residential (R-1, R-2, R-3), Existing non-conforming and historic uses.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

- Incentives for businesses to locate to this area.
- Construct infrastructure improvements to enhance attractiveness of the area.
- Encourage protection of historic properties.



CHARACTER AREAS



PERIPHERAL CORRIDOR



GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Peripheral Corridor Development Character Area contains a mix of commercial developments along and near the intersection of Church Street and Georgia Highway 88. This area is ripe for further commercial development, and that would provide services aimed at the traveling public and the daily needs of the local citizens.

LAND USE AND ZONING CATEGORIES

Business/Professional (BP)

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

- Policy adoption limiting major commercial development to this area.
- Provide additional infrastructure as needed to facilitate increased development.



CHARACTER AREAS



RURAL RESIDENTIAL



GENERAL DESCRIPTION

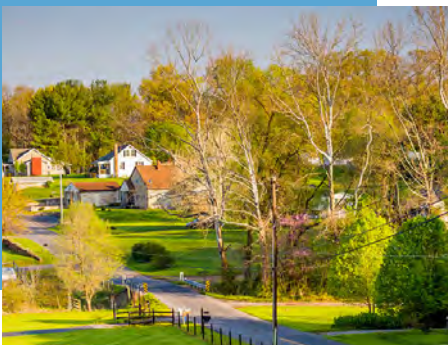
The Rural Residential Development Character area is the area with potential for low and medium density residential development to occur. This area is located primarily near the center of the city and has potential for added recreational amenities and minor service establishment within it.

LAND USE AND ZONING CATEGORIES

Residential (R-1, R-2, R-3)

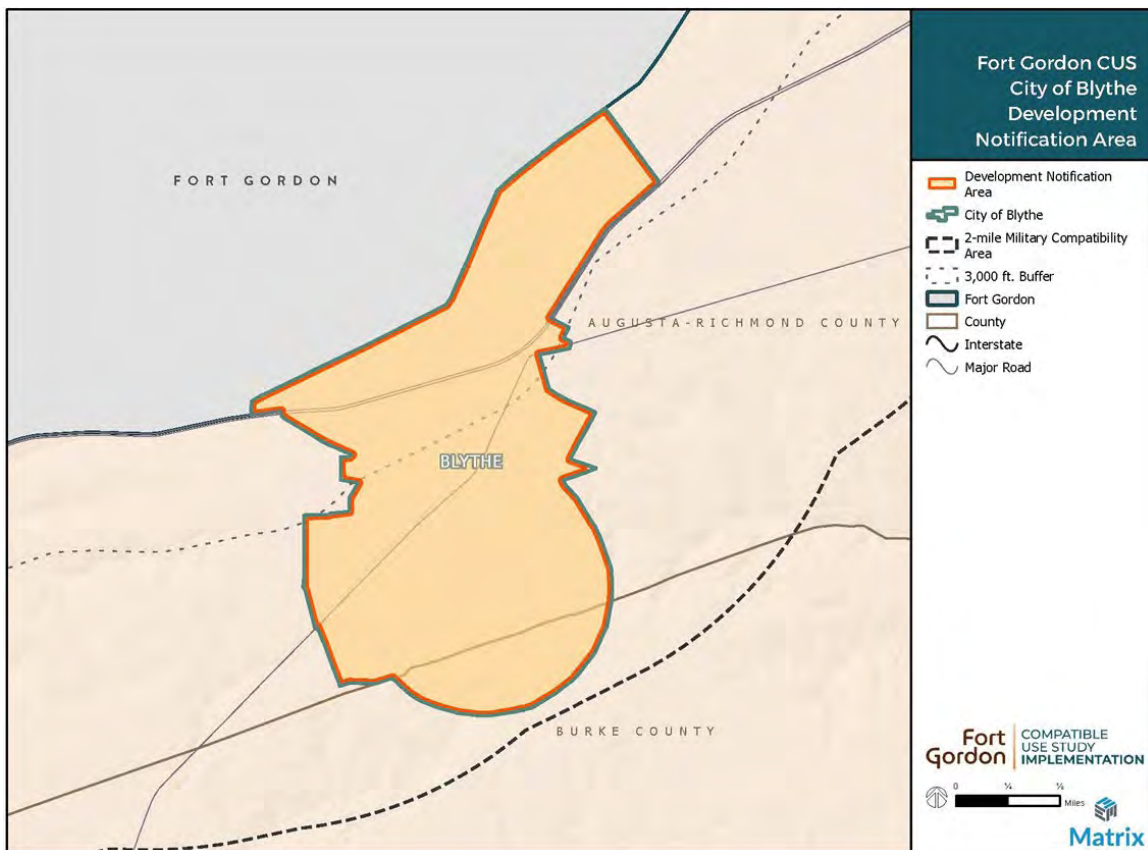
IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

- Limitation of residential development to areas where appropriate



Fort Gordon

A Compatible Use Study (CUS) was completed in 2019 for Fort Gordon by the Central Savannah River Area - Regional Commission. The CUS included recommendations to enhance compatible development and relationship between the community and Fort Gordon. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in 2023 between the City of Blythe and Fort Gordon. The purpose of the MOU was to establish a mutually beneficial process for ensuring timely and consistent procedures for the review of development application a within the CUS 2-mile military compatibility area and State mandated 3,000-foot notification area per Georgia Code § 36-66-6.





PLAN
IMPLEMENTATION



As part of the report, a list of activities from the prior community work programs is included on the following pages, and activities are assigned the following identifiers to acknowledge the status of each project as:

- **Completed:** the listed activity has been concluded
- **Underway:** the listed activity has started and is continuing
- **Postponed:** the listed activity has not been started or has halted for some reason
- **Not Accomplished:** the listed activity has not and will not move forward

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ACTIVITY/PROJECT	STATUS				COMMENTS
	COMPLETED	ONGOING	POSTPONED	NOT ACCOMPLISHED	
Attract small businesses, such as a hardware store, a parts store, and/or a restaurant to potentially encourage business formation in downtown for current population and expected growth.		X			This is considered an ongoing operating policy and will not appear in the 2024 CWP.
Increase use/rental opportunities. Promote Veterans Park Pavilion and Library Commons as rental options through ads, website, or newsletter.		X			Advertisement of the park has been placed on city website and bulletin board. Library Commons is advertised on their website and Facebook page. This will become operating policy and not appear in the new CWP.
Continue maintenance of City right of ways.		X			This is considered an ongoing operating policy and will not appear in the 2024 CWP.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

ACTIVITY/PROJECT	STATUS				COMMENTS
	COMPLETED	ONGOING	POSTPONED	NOT ACCOMPLISHED	
Continue to provide a sustainable water system		X			This is considered an ongoing operating policy and will not appear in the 2024 CWP.
Continue to implement enhancement projects on the City right of ways.		X			This is considered an ongoing operating policy and will not appear in the 2024 CWP.
Continue to promote green space and protection of environmentally sensitive land as open space.		X			This is considered an ongoing operating policy and will not appear in the 2024 CWP.
Continue to enforce the applicable requirements of Part V Environmental Ordinances adopted by the City of Augusta.		X			This is considered an ongoing operating policy and will not appear in the 2024 CWP.
Continue community outreach related to water quality and quantity.		X			This is considered an ongoing operating policy and will not appear in the 2024 CWP.

HOUSING

Activity/Project	Status				Comments
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Encourage entry-level homes for new families to help maintain supply of sound housing and meet needs of expected population.		X			This is considered an ongoing operating policy and will not appear in the 2024 CWP.
Improve existing housing and remove buildings which present safety hazards to the public.		X			This is considered an ongoing operating policy and will not appear in the 2024 CWP.
Encourage “Opportunity Zones” funding to attract new development.				X	No longer a priority of the city.

TRANSPORTATION

Install sidewalks along key streets and/or heavily traveled streets, as warranted.	X				
Repaving various roads (Hood Chapel)	X				

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Activity/Project	Status				Comments
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Create a plan for the library expansion/ opening and a source of renewable funding for operations.	X				
Open and furnish the library as it is expanded.	X				
Improve communication with citizens. by making an improved website; using a “Code Red” contact system; digital and printed newsletters; Facebook page.	X				
Create a splash pad and/or children’s playground area near Veterans Park Pavilion.				X	No longer a priority of the city.
Create a new park north of U.S. 1 on Hood Chapel Road.				X	Lack of funding. Will not be pursued at this time.
Develop an ongoing plan for the City-owned, 11-acre property	X				
Explore additional opportunities for expanded broadband internet service.		X			This will be reworded in the new work program to say encourage new businesses to provide WI-FI access.

LAND USE

Activity/Project	Status				Comments
	Completed	Ongoing	Postponed	Not Accomplished	
Update zoning ordinances; re-write or consolidate amendments to identify and protect structures and sites which are historically significant to the City and provide orderly, balanced, and quality development of all land use categories.			X		The city will look up cost to make changes in Municode and evaluate the best way to move forward on this project. This will appear in the new CWP.
Continue participation in and consideration of information in Joint Land Use Studies of the area.	X				





The Community Work Program component establishes priority activities (divided by topic area) that the county, city, and/or other vested or partnering agencies will undertake over the next five (5) years. It is the key implementation tool for addressing the needs and opportunities identified during this planning process. Although designed by local planning participants to guide community building activities prioritized from the local level, the community work program is structured to adhere to DCA minimum state comprehensive planning standards. Consistent with state rules, the 2023 Joint Comprehensive Plan’s Community Work Program includes the following information:

- Description of each activity | Time-frame for undertaking the activity
- Responsible party and potential partners for implementing the activity
- Estimated Cost (if any) of implementing the activity | Funding Source(s)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Activity/Project	Time frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)
	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28			
Research the feasibility of implementing a facade grant program for historic city center.					X	City	Staff Time	City Funds
Determine ability to expand advertisement of community events.			X			City	Staff Time	City Funds
Promote community events on website calendar.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Staff Time	City Funds
Develop strategy to attract small business to the peripheral corridor character area.			X			City	Staff Time	City Funds

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Activity/Project	Time frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)
	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28			
Work with Richmond County to update fire station.	X	X	X	X	X	City, County	TBD	TBD

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Activity/Project	Time frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)
	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28			
Install and replace water distribution lines.	X	X	X	X	X	City	\$300,000	SPLOST, State and Federal Grants
Make improvements to city park and Veterans Park.	X	X	X	X	X	City	\$100,000	SPLOST, State and Federal Grants
Make improvements to storm water infrastructure	X	X	X	X	X	City	\$150,000	SPLOST
Make upgrades to public safety equipment.	X		X		X	City	\$200,000	SPLOST
Develop new playground off Hoods Chapel Road			X	X		City	\$200,000	SPLOST
Update computers, software, books, equipment in library.		X		X		City	\$50,000	SPLOST

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Activity/Project	Time frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)
	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28			
Construct a new elevated water storage tank.			X	X	X	City	1,470,000	Local Funds, SPLOST, State and Federal Grants

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Activity/Project	Time frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)
	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28			
Take inventory of historic buildings in the city.		X				City, RC	Staff Time	City Funds
Evaluate the feasibility of nominating buildings for the National Register of Historic Places.			X			City	Staff Time	City Funds
Pursue funds for gateway entrances landscape beautification.			X			City, TBD	TBD	City Funds, TBD

HOUSING

Activity/Project	Time frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)
	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28			
Inventory of blighted properties.	X	X				City	Staff Time	Local Funds
Rehabilitation of blighted properties.			X	X	X	City	\$100,00	SPLOST

TRANSPORTATION

Activity/Project	Time frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)
	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28			
Resurface 200 Block of Church Street.	X	X				City	\$106,000	SPLOST
Resurface Gin House Street.	X	X				City	\$45,000	SPLOST
Research the feasibility of adding an EV charging station.	X	X	X			City	Staff Time	TBD
Add sidewalks to main streets.	X	X	X			City	\$100,000	SPLOST
Apply for EV charging stations.	X	X	X	X	X	City, CSRARC	TBD	State and Federal Grants

LAND USE

Activity/Project	Time frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)
	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28			
Update zoning ordinances; re-write or consolidate amendments to identify and protect structures and sites which are historically significant to the City and provide orderly, balanced, and quality development of all land use categories. Determine the cost to make changes in Municode.			X			City	\$9,000	Local Funds

BROADBAND

Activity/Project	Time frame					Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source(s)
	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28			
Encourage new businesses to provide WI-FI access.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Staff Time	City Funds

APPENDIX A: Public Involvement

This portion of the planning document provides the following: Steering Committee Members | Meeting Dates | Sign In-Sheets
Newspaper Ads

Stakeholder Committee

The members of the City of Blythe's stakeholder committee for this planning process were:

Tom Cobb, City Mayor, City of Blythe
Rebecca Newsome, City Council,, City of Blythe
Noel Cartagena, City Council, City of Blythe
Judy Cordova, City Council, City of Blythe
Daniel Martin, City Council, City of Blythe
Lorianne Chancey, City Clerk, City of Blythe
M. Carter, Blythe Planning Commission, City of Blythe

Stakeholder meetings were held on the following dates to provide information, review data, and gain community perspective:

March 22, 2023 | May 11, 2023 | June 26, 2023

Two public hearings were also held as a part of this process on
April 24, 2023 | August 14, 2023



Privacy fears stymie surveyors as responses dive

Mike Schneider ASSOCIATED PRESS

ORLANDO, Fla. — Erik Paul didn't mind answering government questions about where his software development business was located or how many employees it had. But when queries from the U.S. Census Bureau broached the company's finances, the chief operating officer hesitated.

"When you start asking financial questions, I get a little squirrely," said Paul, of Orlando, Florida, who recently responded online to the 2022 Economic Census.

It's a problem the Census Bureau and other federal agencies are facing as privacy concerns rise and online scams proliferate, lowering survey response rates in the past decade. The pandemic exacerbated the problem by disrupting in-person follow-up visits.

Low response rates introduce bias because wealthier and more educated households are more likely to answer surveys, which impacts the accuracy of data that demographers, planners, businesses and government leaders rely on to allocate resources.

Survey skepticism has grown so much that the Federal Trade Commission recently put out a consumer alert reassuring the public that the American Community Survey, one of the Census Bureau's most vital tools, is legitimate.

The ACS is the bureau's largest survey and asks about more than 40 topics ranging from income, internet access, rent, disabilities and language spoken at home. Along with the census, it helps determine how \$1.5 trillion in federal spending is distributed each year, where schools are built and the location of new housing developments, among other things.

Though it's considered the backbone of data about the U.S., the survey's response rate fell to 85.3% in 2021 from 97.6% in 2011, while other federal questionnaires have fared even worse.

Wariness is understandable, the FTC alert said, but the information being sought serves a vital public purpose.

"The ACS is a legitimate survey to collect information...

responsibilities include warning the elderly about potential scams.

In an email, she said her comment was a personal opinion and that she didn't want to elaborate. "Probably not in my best interest, professionally," she said.

Declining response rates can be blamed on survey fatigue consumers suffer from things like answering questions when they purchase products, as well as privacy concerns and the amount of time it takes to answer queries. Surveys also reach fewer people because of spam filters, caller ID and doorbell cameras, said Douglas Williams, a senior research survey methodologist at the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"What is most unique about the past decade, aside from COVID, is the magnitude of the decline," Williams said. "It is difficult to pinpoint any one reason or cause, but technology is a likely candidate."

Federal statistical agencies have tried sending advanced and follow-up notices, making follow-up calls and visiting households that don't respond. They're also allowing respondents to answer via different modes, such as internet, mail or phone. Some have even offered money to get answers about how much people earn.

Officials are also looking for alternative data sources, such as administrative records collected by government agencies like the Social Security Administration and the Internal Revenue Service. They also are looking to capture and aggregate real-time financial transactions, such as soda purchases at a grocery store. The details are still being worked out on that, but they will include privacy protections preventing any particular purchase from being attached to an individual.

The Census Bureau, which conducts more than 130 surveys and related programs each year, already is taking steps toward using more administrative records. This month the bureau proposed using existing records on property acreage instead of asking about it on the American Community Survey. It's also examining how to leverage other sources for information

Public Hearing Notice
City of Blythe Comprehensive Plan 2023-2028

A public hearing for the Comprehensive Plan will take place on Monday, April 24, 2023 at 5:30 p.m., at Blythe City Hall, 294 Church Street, Blythe, Georgia. The purpose of this meeting will be to initiate the City of Blythe's Comprehensive Plan process by briefing members of the community on the process for plan development and pending opportunities for public participation and gather general input. The Comprehensive Plan document establishes long-term goals and policies and a short-term action plan by which the City of Blythe will manage future community growth and development. Residents wishing to comment or make suggestions should be in attendance.

Persons with special needs relating to handicapped accessibility or foreign language should contact Lorian Chancy, City Clerk at 706-592-6255 prior to April 24, 2023. This person can be located at Blythe City Hall, 294 Church Street during the following hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 8:00 am - 4:00 pm (closed 12 - 1 for lunch) and Wednesday 8:00 am - 12:00. Persons with hearing disabilities can contact the Georgia Relay Service, at (TDD) 1-800-255-0056, (Voice) 1-800-255-0135, 7-1-1.

AG3307074


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City of Blythe Comprehensive Plan
 Public Hearing #1
 April 24, 2023 | 5:30 pm | Blythe City Hall, 294 Church Street, Blythe



Name	Email	Affiliation (City Department Name, Organization Name, or Resident)
Judy Cardona	JudyCardona@gmail.com	City Council
Tom Cobb	TCCS189@Aol.com	Mayor
Harry Reeves		CITIZEN
Alice Reeves		CITIZEN
Lorann Chancy	cityofblythe@comcast.net	City
Melody Carter		CITIZEN
Jodi Dixon		CITIZEN
Daisy Price	richardprice08@comcast.net	CITIZEN

Ukrainian surgeons treat waves of soldiers

Samya Kullab
ASSOCIATED PRESS

DNIPRO, Ukraine — The horrors of war arrive through the night at a hospital in eastern Ukraine, a procession of stretchers bearing limp bodies whisked from the front line.

The soldiers come with bandaged limbs soaked in blood, faces blackened with shrapnel fragments and stunned eyes fixed on the ceiling, frozen in shock. Lately, they've been coming with ever-greater frequency.

"Pain!" shrieks a serviceman with a gaping thigh wound as medical workers move him to a surgical gurney.

Evacuated from trenches in the east, forests in the north and the open fields of the south, wounded soldiers begin showing up at the Mechnikov Hospital in late afternoon, and dozens more in desperate need of surgery are wheeled in before the sun rises the next day.

The surge of wounded soldiers coincides with the major counteroffensive Ukraine launched in June to try to recapture its land, nearly one-fifth of which is now under Russian control. Surgeons at Mechnikov are busier now than perhaps at any other time since Russia began its full-scale invasion 17 months ago, according to doctors at the hospital, who declined to be more specific.

In a war where casualty counts are treated as state secrets, the hospital — one of Ukraine's biggest — serves as a measure-



A nurse prepares to treat UI
EVGENIY MALOLETKA/AP

ment of distant battles. When they intensify, so does the doctors' workload, which these days consists of 50 to 100 surgeries per night.

"Here, we see the worst of the front line," Dr. Serhii Ryzhenko, the hospital's 59-year-old chief doctor, says with a weary smile. "We have 50 operating rooms, and it's not enough."

The Associated Press was given rare access last week to the hospital, a 12-hour visit to witness doctors and nurses care for soldiers rushed from the battlefield to the operating room.

took hours to evacuate him. Sechen had tried to encourage blood flow, but it may be too late. "We did all we could to fight for his leg," he says.

The soldier is taken to the operating room, where Dr. Yakov Albayuk takes one look and determines that the leg must be amputated to save the soldier's life. "After 12 hours without blood circulation, the limb will die," Albayuk said, explaining that a tourniquet must be taken off after two hours and, if necessary, reapplied. "Because of tiny mistakes we're losing people's limbs."

For Albayuk, every wound inspected on the operating table is a raw and unvarnished account of the brutality of the

City of Blythe Comprehensive Plan
Public Hearing #2
August 14, 2023 | 5:30 pm | Blythe City Hall, 294 Church Street, Blythe



Name	Email	Affiliation (City Department Name, Organization Name, or Resident)
Doel Cantreana		Blythe Council
Tom Cobb		Blythe Mayor
Jonathan & Valerie Welch		Citizen
Lorriann Chancey		Blythe
Daniel Martin		Councilman
Rebecca Newsome		Council
Melody Carter		CITIZEN

Public Hearing Notice
City of Blythe Comprehensive Plan 2023-2028

The City of Blythe will hold a public hearing on Monday, August 14, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. at Blythe City Hall, 294 Church Street, Blythe, Georgia. The purpose of this hearing is to brief the community on the contents of the City of Blythe Comprehensive Plan 2023-2028 DRAFT and notify residents of when the plan will be submitted for review. Residents wishing to comment or make suggestions should be in attendance.

The draft plan is available digitally on the CSRA Regional Commission's website (<https://csra.org/planning-documents>) and in hard copy at Blythe City Hall, 294 Church Street, Blythe, GA.

For more information,
Contact: Lorriann Chancey, City of Blythe Clerk, Phone: (706)592-6255

The City of Blythe is committed to providing all persons with equal access to its services, programs, activities, education, and employment regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability, or age. For a reasonable accommodation or if you need an alternative format or language, please contact Lorriann Chancey, City Clerk at 706-592-6255 at least two business days prior to the public hearing. Office hours Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (closed 12-1 for lunch) and Wednesdays 8:00 a.m. – 12 p.m., except holidays. Persons with hearing disabilities can contact the Georgia Relay Service, at (TDD) 1-800-255-0056, (Voice) 1-800-255-0135, 7-1-1.

clearer before Ukrainian soldiers can attempt to root them out. Any initial momentum from the opening phase of the counteroffensive

ely, he said. It doesn't stop." Other soldiers being cared for by Mechnikov's doctors were injured while clearing mines

wide gap in his skull. A tourniquet was applied for roughly half a day, he explained, because the soldier was trapped in a faraway trench, and it

begin treating wounded soldiers until Russia's invasion in 2014, when it was not prepared for the task, said Ryzhenko. Soldiers would be admitted with guts spilling out and massive amounts of blood loss. Back then, Ryzhenko saw cases he had only read about in textbooks. Today, Mechnikov is lauded for its state-of-the-art facilities and expertise — roughly 400 doctors spread across six buildings.

On Dr. Mykyta Lombrozov's operating table is a soldier who sustained a shrapnel injury on the left part of the brain. The 28-year-old neurosurgeon's elegant hands work methodically. Crushed skull pieces are removed, one by one, until he can extract the small metal fragments lodged in the soldier's brain.

It's a complicated surgery that would normally take up to four hours. The war has taught Lombrozov to finish it in 55 minutes. He does it every day, he says, sometimes up to eight times in a single 24-hour shift.

"It is very important to me, that's why I am here. That's why we all work here," Lombrozov said as he looked down at the soldier. "He is our hero."

NOTICE OF PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The **Columbia County Board of Commissioners** has tentatively adopted a millage rate which will require an increase in property taxes by **5.45** percent.

All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearings on this tax increase to be held at the Evans Government Center Auditorium, 630 Ronald Reagan Drive, Evans, GA on **August 08, 2023 at 8:30 am.**

Times and places of additional public hearings on this tax increase are at the Evans Government Center Auditorium, 630 Ronald Reagan Drive, Evans, GA on **August 15, 2023 at 6:00 pm.**

This tentative increase will result in a millage rate of **4.895** mills, an increase of **0.253** mills. Without this tentative tax increase, the millage rate will be no more than **4.642** mills. The proposed tax increase for a home with a fair market value of **\$200,000** is approximately **\$20.24** and the proposed tax increase for non-homestead property with a fair market value of **\$550,000** is approximately **\$55.66.**

City of Blythe Comprehensive Plan
Stakeholder Meeting #1
March 22, 2023 | 10am | Blythe City Hall, 294 Church Street, Blythe



Name	Email	Affiliation (City Department Name, Organization Name, or Resident)
Loriann Chancey Noel Cartagena	cityofblythe@comcast.net	City Clerk Council
Tom Cobb	tc5189@aol.com	Mayor elect
Rebecca B. Newsom	bartlett_rebecca@yahoo.com	
Daniel Martin	councilmanmartin@yahoo.com	Council
Judy Cordova	JudyCordova@gmail.com	Council



City of Blythe Comprehensive Plan
Stakeholder Meeting # 2
May 11, 2023 | 5:30 pm | Blythe City Hall, 294 Church Street, Blythe

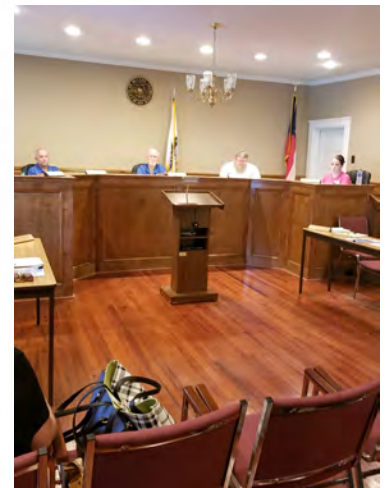


Name	Email	Affiliation (City Department Name, Organization Name, or Resident)
Chuck Reeves		RESIDENT
M. CARTER		BLYTE PLANNING COMMISSION
Tom Cobb		Mayor Blythe
Alice Reeves		resident
Laura Cherry	cityofblythe@comcast.net	City Clerk
Daniel Martin	bartlett_rebecca@yahoo.com councilmanmartin@yahoo.com	Council

City of Blythe Comprehensive Plan
Stakeholder Meeting # 3
June 26, 2023 | 5:30 pm | Blythe City Hall, 294 Church Street, Blythe



Name	Email	Affiliation (City Department Name, Organization Name, or Resident)
Tom Cobb	TC5189@aol.com	Mayor
Loriann Chancey		city clerk
RANDY KIDD		RESIDENT
Rebecca B. Newsom		Council
NOEL (CARTAGENA)		Council
Judy Cordova		City Council



LOCALiQ

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PROOF OF PUBLICATION

April Young
Loriann H. Chancey
City Of Blythe
294 Church ST

Blythe GA 30805-3408

STATE OF GEORGIA, COUNTY OF RICHMOND

The Augusta Chronicle, a newspaper that is generally circulated in the county of Richmond and in the area adjacent thereto, State of Georgia, printed and published and personal knowledge of the facts herein state and that the notice hereto annexed was Published in said newspapers in the issues dated on:

07/28/2023

and that the fees charged are legal.
Sworn to and subscribed before on 07/28/2023



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CSRA Regional Commission
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<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NV6QJLF>



City of Blythe Comprehensive Plan Update

The City of Blythe is updating the 2023-28 comprehensive plan. This effort is led by a stakeholder committee that wants the input of those who live, work, and own property in the city. The plan serves as an update to the 2018 plan and will be the guiding document for community projects over the next 5 years. The final plan will include information on economic development, housing, broadband, community facilities, and cultural resources. The CSRA Regional Commission provides community support for this plan development process. Please take a few minutes to express your thoughts on the future of the City of Blythe through the community survey. This survey will help the stakeholder committee develop the plan.

👍 2

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share



cityofblythega.com

Home City Council Utility Services Municipal Court Dates

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Blythe Georgia
 Georgia's Best Kept Secret

Please view our master plan here at
https://csrarc.ga.gov/sites/default/files/csrarc/planning/07312019_blythe_comp_plan_update_adopted.pdf


Share your thoughts by taking our survey here at
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NV6QJLF>

On behalf of the Blythe City Council, as Mayor I would like to welcome you to our quaint city.

"The City of Blythe - Georgia's Best Kept Secret"
 We are a small, relaxed city with all the big city amenities within reasonable distance.

Tom Cobb
 Mayor of The City of Blythe
 294 Church Street
 Blythe GA 30805

Contact Me
 Phone: 706-592-6255
 Fax: 706-592-0511



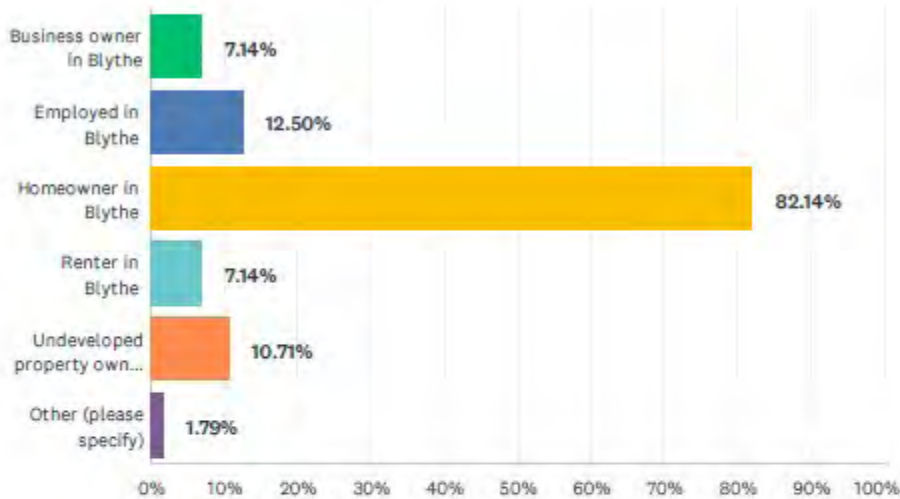


Community Survey

The following are summary response charts of select questions from the community survey. Open-ended questions are not included herein, but those questions are covered areas such as SWOT and Needs and Opportunities. The local government officials have retained copies of open-ended responses, including redevelopment ideas and general comments for future use.

Q1 Which of the following categories currently describes you? Check all that apply.

Answered: 56 Skipped: 0

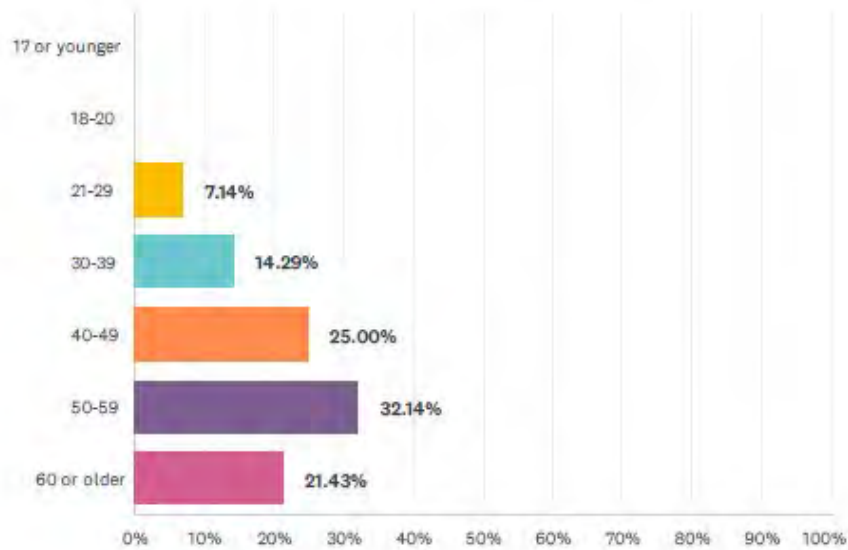


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Business owner in Blythe	7.14%	4
Employed in Blythe	12.50%	7
Homeowner in Blythe	82.14%	46
Renter in Blythe	7.14%	4
Undeveloped property owner in Blythe	10.71%	6
Other (please specify)	1.79%	1
Total Respondents: 56		
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	elected official	5/31/2023 9:39 AM

City of Blythe Comprehensive Plan 2023-2028 Community Survey

Q2 What is your age?

Answered: 56 Skipped: 0

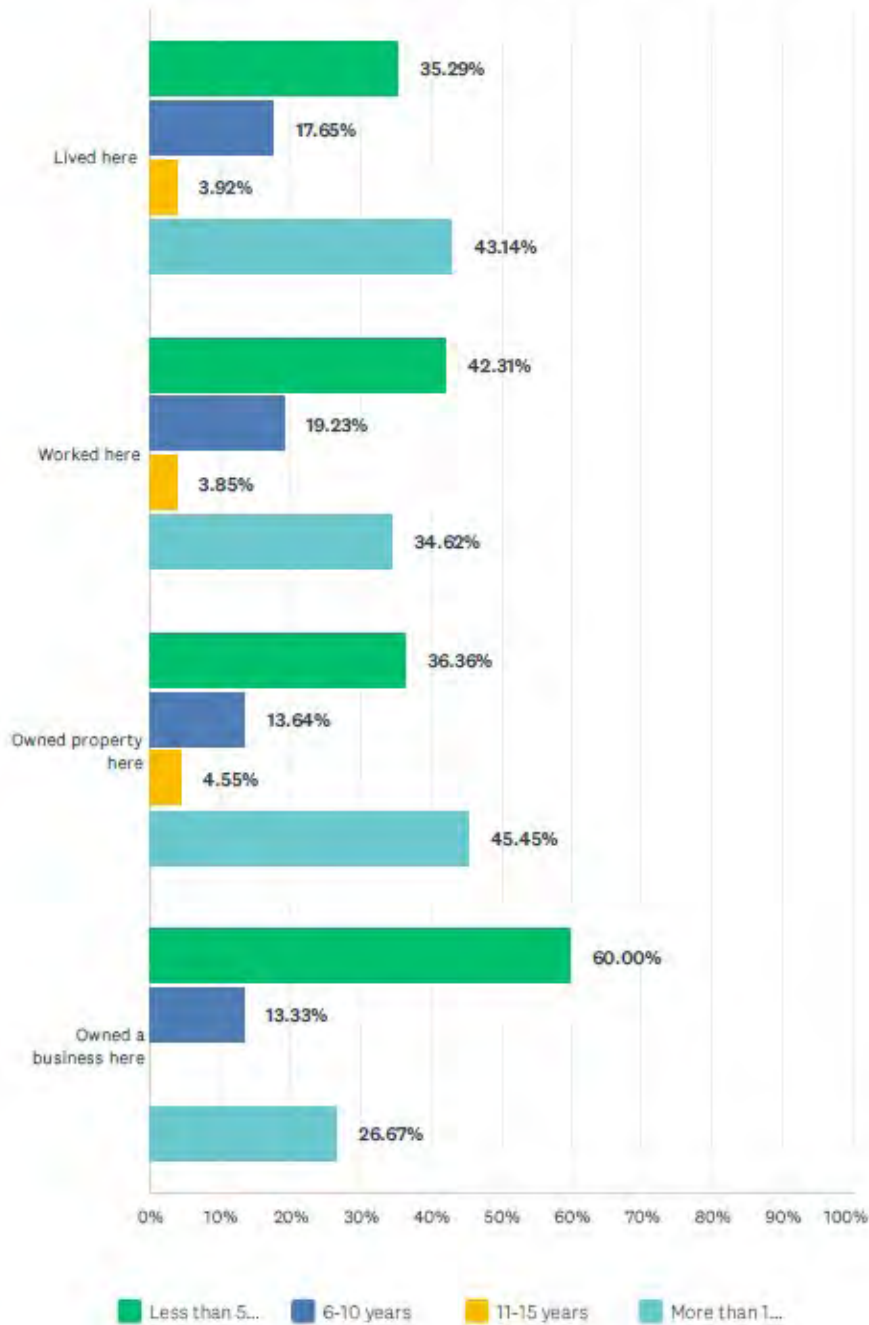


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
17 or younger	0.00%	0
18-20	0.00%	0
21-29	7.14%	4
30-39	14.29%	8
40-49	25.00%	14
50-59	32.14%	18
60 or older	21.43%	12
TOTAL		56

Q3 How long have you lived, worked, or owned property in our community?

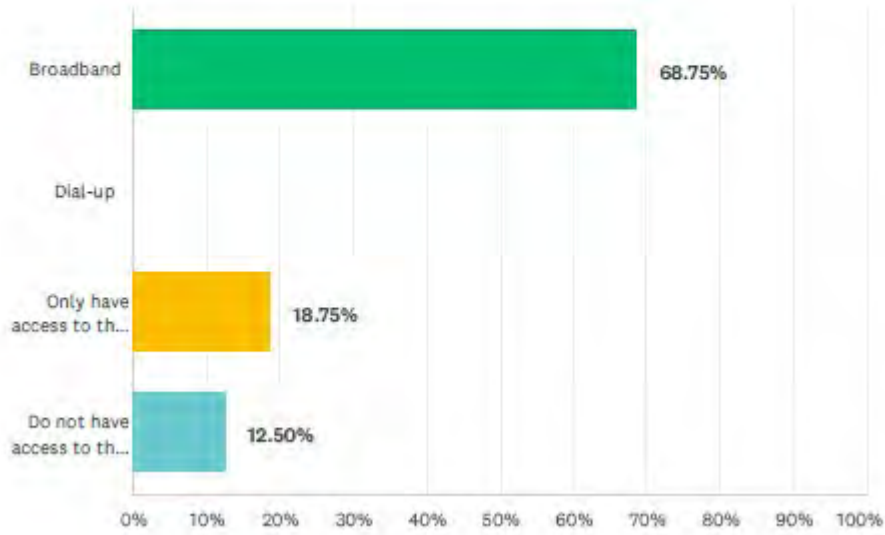
Answered: 56 Skipped: 0

City of Blythe Comprehensive Plan 2023-2028 Community Survey



Q8 What type of internet access do you have at home?

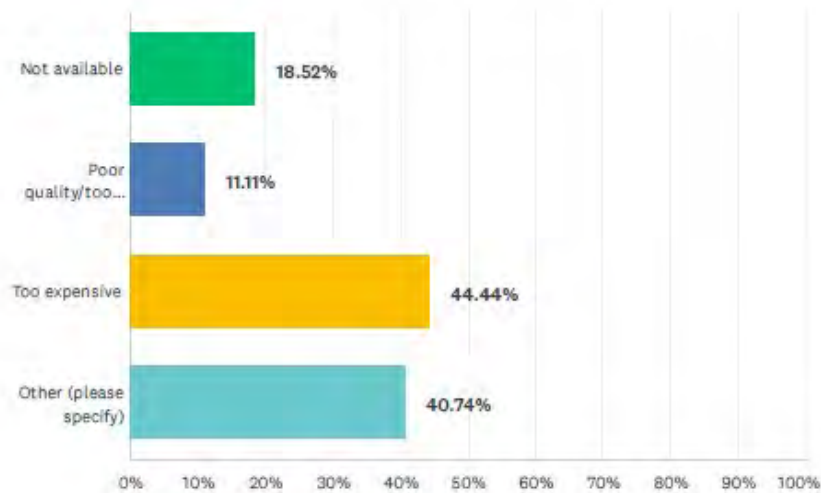
Answered: 32 Skipped: 24



City of Blythe Comprehensive Plan 2023-2028 Community Survey

Q9 What issues do you have with internet at home? Check all that apply.

Answered: 27 Skipped: 29

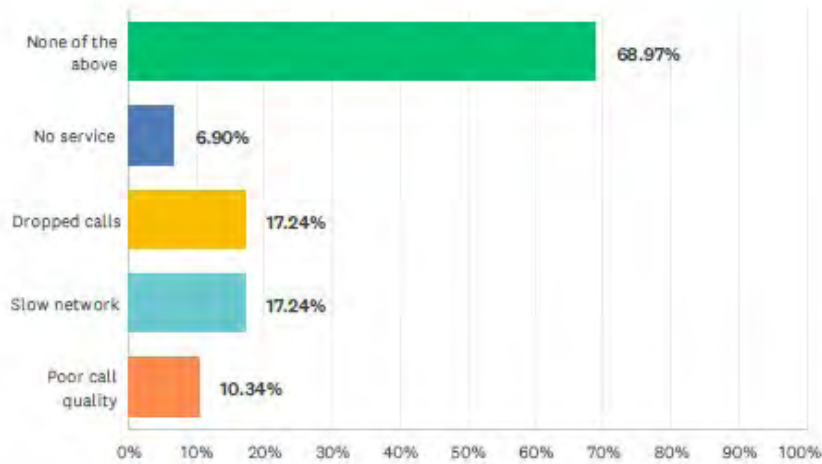


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not available	18.52%	5
Poor quality/too slow	11.11%	3
Too expensive	44.44%	12
Other (please specify)	40.74%	11
Total Respondents: 27		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	I	7/2/2023 4:09 PM
2	Lack of genuine customer service regarding antiquated installation approach.	7/2/2023 4:23 AM
3	As a network engineer, there is nothing wrong with the internet	7/1/2023 10:19 PM
4	None	6/12/2023 10:45 AM
5	I can only get satellite which is spotty at best and extremely expensive	6/2/2023 12:51 PM
6	lose connection during bad weather	5/31/2023 10:48 AM
7	People here need free internet	5/26/2023 9:04 AM
8	None	5/18/2023 7:02 PM
9	None	5/17/2023 1:20 PM
10	None	5/17/2023 7:40 AM
11	We are able to use our phones as hot spots and it works well.	5/15/2023 9:10 AM

Q10 What issues do you have with cell phone service at home? Check all that apply.

Answered: 29 Skipped: 27

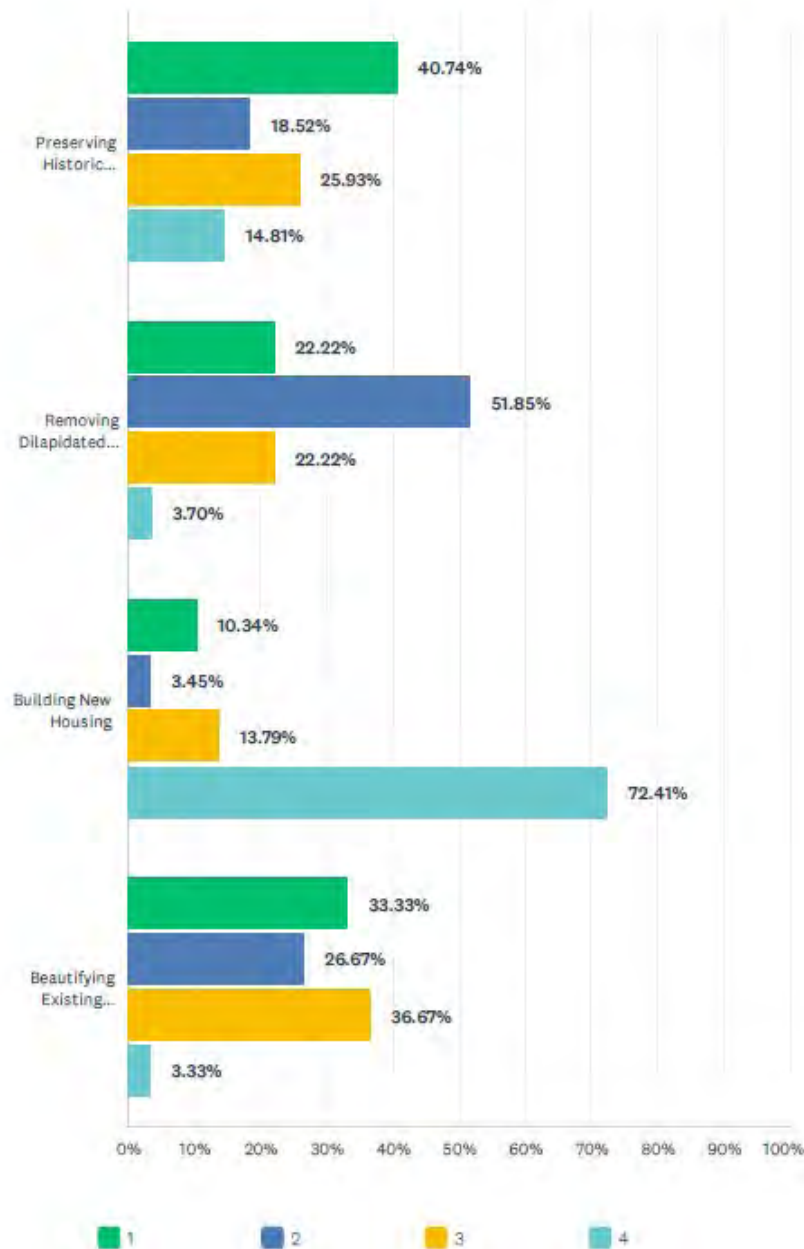


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	68.97%	20
No service	6.90%	2
Dropped calls	17.24%	5
Slow network	17.24%	5
Poor call quality	10.34%	3
Total Respondents: 29		

Q11 Please rank the following housing topics based on their importance to you from 1 to 4 (with 1 being most important). Each answer option does require a number rank, and each number can only be used once.

Answered: 30 Skipped: 26

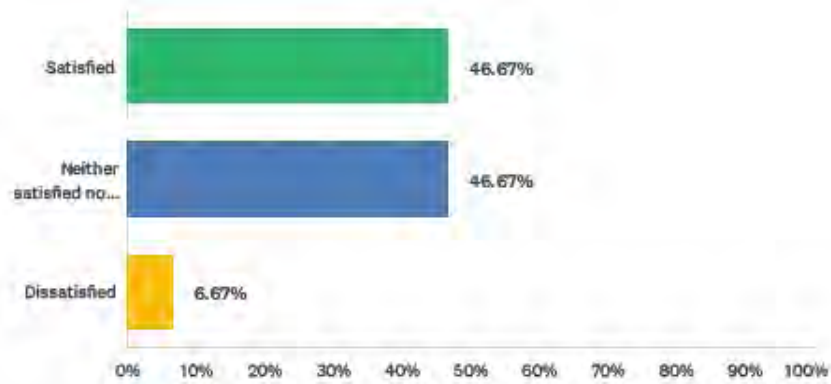
City of Blythe Comprehensive Plan 2023-2028 Community Survey



City of Blythe Comprehensive Plan 2023-2028 Community Survey

Q12 How satisfied are you with the variety of housing in our community?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 26

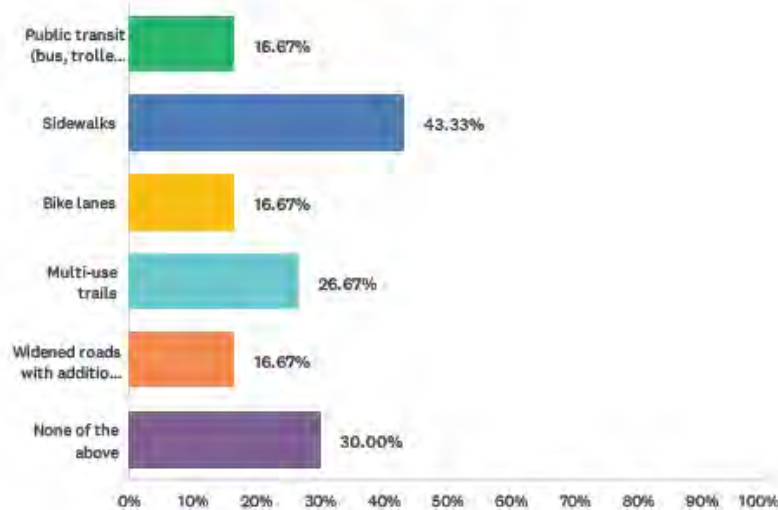


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Satisfied	46.67%	14
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	46.67%	14
Dissatisfied	6.67%	2
TOTAL		30

City of Blythe Comprehensive Plan 2023-2028 Community Survey

Q13 Which transportation improvements would you like to see more of in our community? Check all that apply.

Answered: 30 Skipped: 26



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Public transit (bus, trolley, etc)	16.67%	5
Sidewalks	43.33%	13
Bike lanes	16.67%	5
Multi-use trails	26.67%	8
Widened roads with additional lanes	16.67%	5
None of the above	30.00%	9
Total Respondents: 30		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Speed limits enforced	7/7/2023 10:27 AM
2	repairing and widen certain roads (i.e. church st & murrow st)	7/5/2023 8:01 PM
3	Provide a means to eliminate street signage that has been abandoned by the city with property owner consent.	7/2/2023 4:25 AM
4	Better roads not wider. and cut the trees beside roads.	7/1/2023 9:52 PM
5	Why move to the "country" if you want city life	7/1/2023 9:25 AM
6	pave all streets	5/31/2023 10:49 AM

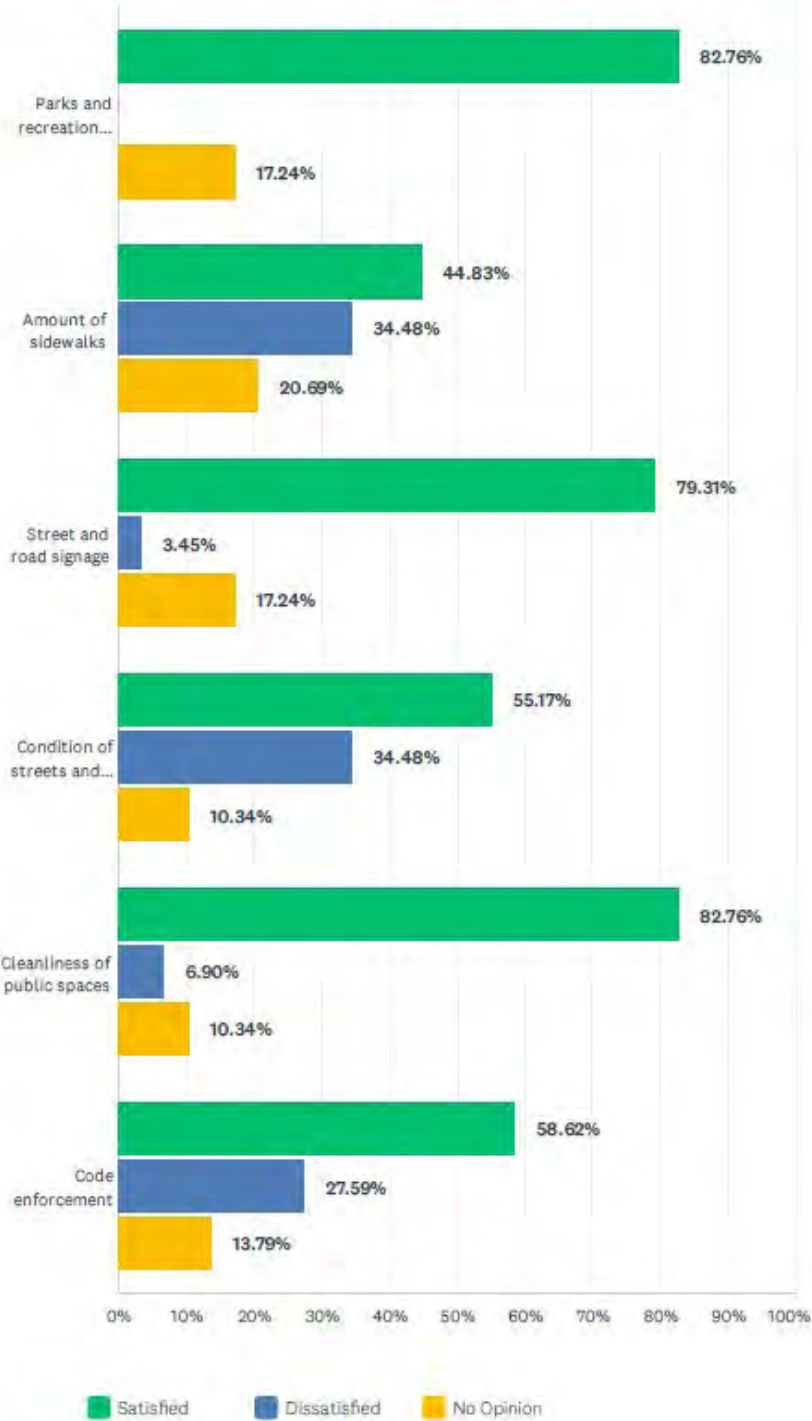
City of Blythe Comprehensive Plan 2023-2028 Community Survey

7	Speed humps	5/18/2023 7:04 PM
8	Some roads Need widening desperately	5/17/2023 7:44 AM

Q14 Please rate your level of satisfaction with each of the following public services or facilities.

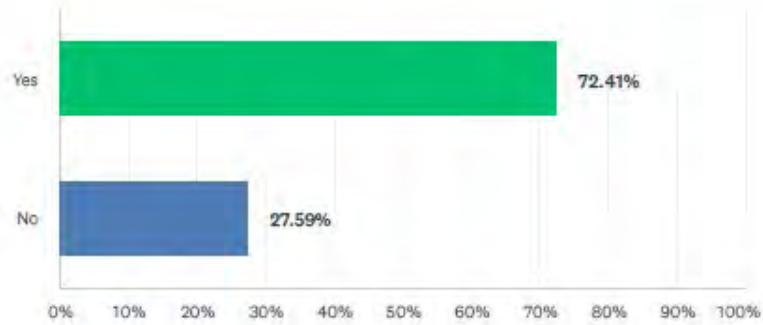
Answered: 29 Skipped: 27

City of Blythe Comprehensive Plan 2023-2028 Community Survey



Q16 Do you use public facilities such as parks, trails, and ball fields?

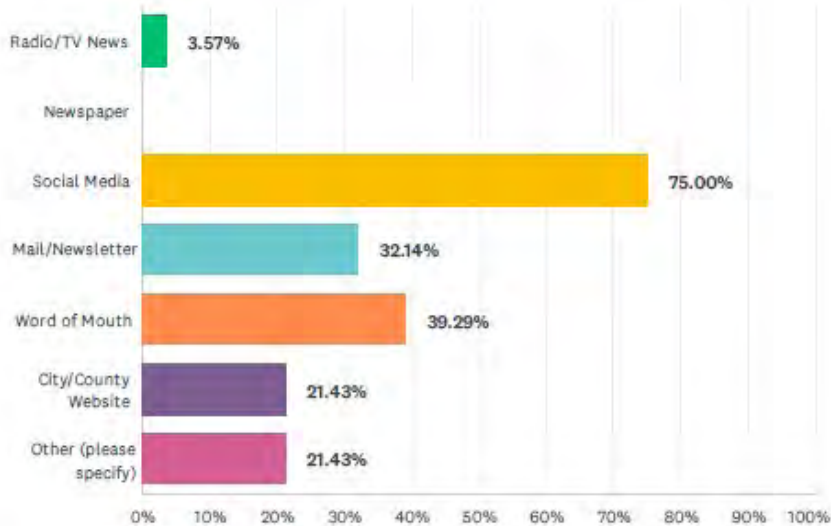
Answered: 29 Skipped: 27



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	72.41%	21
No	27.59%	8
TOTAL		29

Q20 How do you typically find out about what's happening in our community? Check all that apply.

Answered: 28 Skipped: 28



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Radio/TV News	3.57%	1
Newspaper	0.00%	0
Social Media	75.00%	21
Mail/Newsletter	32.14%	9
Word of Mouth	39.29%	11
City/County Website	21.43%	6
Other (please specify)	21.43%	6
Total Respondents: 28		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	The corrupt community page.	7/2/2023 4:38 AM
2	I have to rely on people on Facebook which is underwhelming	7/1/2023 10:28 PM
3	The sign in front of city hall	7/1/2023 12:16 PM
4	waterbill	6/5/2023 10:36 AM
5	City website needs to be updated	5/17/2023 8:07 AM
6	city digital information sign	5/15/2023 9:14 AM

