

Wayne County Georgia

State of the County

2022

Table of Contents

- Executive Summary
- Financial Overview
 - Net Position
 - General Fund
- General Government
- Judicial
- Public Safety
- Public Works
- Culture and Recreation
- Health and Welfare
- Development
- Industrial Development Authority
- Wayne Memorial Hospital
- Moving forward

Executive Summary

The State of Wayne County is sound with a promising future. Although the past couple of years have had many challenges including an unprecedented world pandemic, Wayne County weathered these challenges and positioned itself to continue to grow and improve the quality-of-life enhancements that her citizens deserve and expect.

The COVID-19 virus has had a lasting effect on the world, including Wayne County. The county has lost many of our citizens to this disease, and everyone has had to adapt to the changing environment and causes of this disease. But from the beginning, the leadership of the county came together to communicate and discuss how to navigate through the pandemic together. This collaboration has been a reassuring and helpful measure for all groups involved, as well as being a model of how rural communities can and should collaborate during a community wide crisis.

Financially, Wayne County is in a much better condition than years prior to 2018. With continued growth, the county's financial stability should be good for the next several years. This growth has allowed the Board of Commissioners to meet their commitment to reduce the millage rate within two years of the 2018 tax increase.

Although there are inflationary pressures on the budgets, as well as increasing demands for services, the county's growth and cash flow management has tempered the effects of these pressures on property taxes. To that point, property taxes have been reduced two years in a row by 1.667 mils or nearly a third of the five mil increase in 2018, while the 2022 General Fund budget increased seven percent.

The increase was largely due to the addition of a full time EMS crew and pay increases for several positions in EMS and in law enforcement, as well as extra fire protection positions due to ISO rating requirements. The good news is that revenues from sales tax, insurance premium taxes, current and prior years ad valorem tax collections, and other revenue streams has helped to balance out these expenditure increases, allowing the reduction in the millage rate.

In addition, by the end of 2022 the county will have repaid the funds inaccurately used prior to 2018, and the county is building cash reserves for any unexpected expenses, or future needs, and the inevitable economic downturn. Tax Anticipation Note borrowing has decreased from \$6.5MM to \$3MM, while accrual borrowing was down to \$1.5MM in 2021 from \$6.5MM in 2018.

To continue the development of and preparation for growth in the county, the Wayne County Board of Commissioners initiated local legislation referendums to form two authorities aimed to improve the county's ability to attract tourism and improve the county's public facilities. The first is the Wayne County Altamaha River Leisure and Services Authority and the second is the Wayne County Public Works Authority. In addition, there is legislation pending to form an Election Board, as well as adoption of staggered terms for County Commissioners representing District 1, District 3, and District 5.

The 2020 census was completed, and although it showed the county only grew by forty-five individuals, the makeup of where citizens resided in the county changed significantly. Enough so that the districts needed to be rebalanced, especially between District 3 and District 4. In addition, Wayne County lost one State Representative while gaining another State Representative as a result of the state redistricting map.

Although the 2020 census showed minimal growth over that ten-year period, within the last three years job announcements from Chemours, Healthy Pets, and Domtar (EAM) from expansion of their respective operations in the county has and will continue to increase the population of Wayne County. Combined these three announcements will add over 200 well-paying high skilled jobs in Wayne County.

In addition, there are active projects that will continue the recent growth pattern for Wayne County, which included the acquisition of land for a new industrial park just South of Jesup, as well as completion of the road network in the existing park along US Hwy 341 near Mt. Pleasant. Other new infrastructure projects are also in the plans to aid future economic viability aspects of the county.

Several initiatives to improve the quality-of-life concerns for the citizens of the county were addressed beginning with improving animal control measures. The county created an Animal Control Office position and established an arrangement

with the City of Jesup to manage the increasing stray and vicious dog and cat populations in the county.

Another important quality-of-life initiative was the expansion of broadband internet access in the rural parts of the county. Initiatives by the county were taken to survey the county citizens' desire and need for faster internet access. Whether or not the survey had any influence on Satilla EMC's announcement that they were partnering with Connexion to provide high speed broadband internet service for all Satilla EMC customers within five years, the results are that many in our county will soon have fast and reliable access to the internet. Fast access to internet is an important aspect for growth and quality-of-life enhancements to the citizens of Wayne County.

The broadband initiatives are continuing with other providers also looking into increasing broadband access through the use of the American Rescue Plan Grant funding from the state. Although the first round of grant awards did not include Wayne County, providers are applying for the next round of these grants from the state, which are scheduled for late 2022. This investment in rural broadband will have a lasting positive effect on Wayne County and other rural counties of Georgia for years to come.

To help minimize duplicate services provided to the citizens of the county, the the three cities and the county renewed the ten-year Service Delivery Strategy agreements with minor changes, and with the understanding that agreements on fire protection will need to be addressed.

To that point, last year the City of Jesup Fire Services Audit had an audit that revealed a major deficiency with manpower when rendering aid to the unincorporated areas of the county. This was a result of changes in regulations. If corrective actions are not made by mid-2022, insurance rates for buildings will increase dramatically.

The County and the City of Jesup are in negotiations to increase manpower to address the shortfall. And while at this point this agreement is the most advantageous for both parties, the county will continue to look at improving fire protection in the growing unincorporated areas of the county.

Several road projects have been completed and more are in the planning stages. The final project for the current T.S.P.L.O.S.T. is underway and the referendum for renewal of the T.S.P.L.O.S.T. is scheduled for May. S.P.L.O.S.T. road paving projects are on schedule to be completed within two years and preparations for a new S.P.L.O.S.T. referendum is being planned, which will result in a new paving list.

The development of a maintenance priority list from surveying the deficiencies of every paved road has aided in resolving road problems before they become major problems. Unpaved road problems are being identified and solutions planned to eliminate or reduce chronic problems.

Recreation is a major part of the culture and fabric of this county and it is a vital quality of life component for the citizens of this county. To that point, the ballfields at Bill Morris Park, Babe's Park, and Ben Park have or are continuing to be upgraded and improved upon with the safety and enjoyment of all, as well as marketability of the county in mind.

These facilities are not only utilized by Wayne County Citizens, but they are used to host many tournaments including State GRPA championships for Soccer, Baseball, and Softball, which brings revenue and positive exposure to our county.

There are also plans to explore the feasibility of improving the indoor sports and recreational activities, as well as swimming opportunities for our county. In addition, a Multipurpose Agricultural Complex for agricultural sport and competition recreational activities is being developed to improve the opportunities and the accessibility of these types of events.

However, recreation is not just team or individual sport, it also is enjoying the fellowship of others, or enjoying what nature has to offer, which is vast in Wayne County. To that point, many initiatives have been completed or are being planned to enhance other recreational experiences the county has to offer. These include the revitalization of Hall Richardson Center and the building of a new Senior Center at Hall Richardson Park, as well as improvements to enhance the offerings at Jaycee Landing and Lake Grace.

Part of this recreational initiative included the formation of the Wayne County Altamaha Leisure and Services Authority to future enhance the experiences and ecotourism opportunities of the Altamaha River. There will be additional initiatives coming in the future from this authority centered around enhancing the opportunities the great Altamaha River has to offer.

Moving forward, as we have grown and will continue to grow, the capability and burden of meeting additional demands of county services has and will require improvements to our facilities and infrastructure. This begins with the courts, which is the foundation of every county. Currently, the Wayne County Courthouse is inadequate to meet the current judicial process and security requirements as mandated by laws and regulations. Therefore, plans are being developed to address the court facility deficiencies of capacity and security. The financing of this facility is also being planned through the formation of a Public Works Authority and renewal of the S.P.L.O.S.T. referendum.

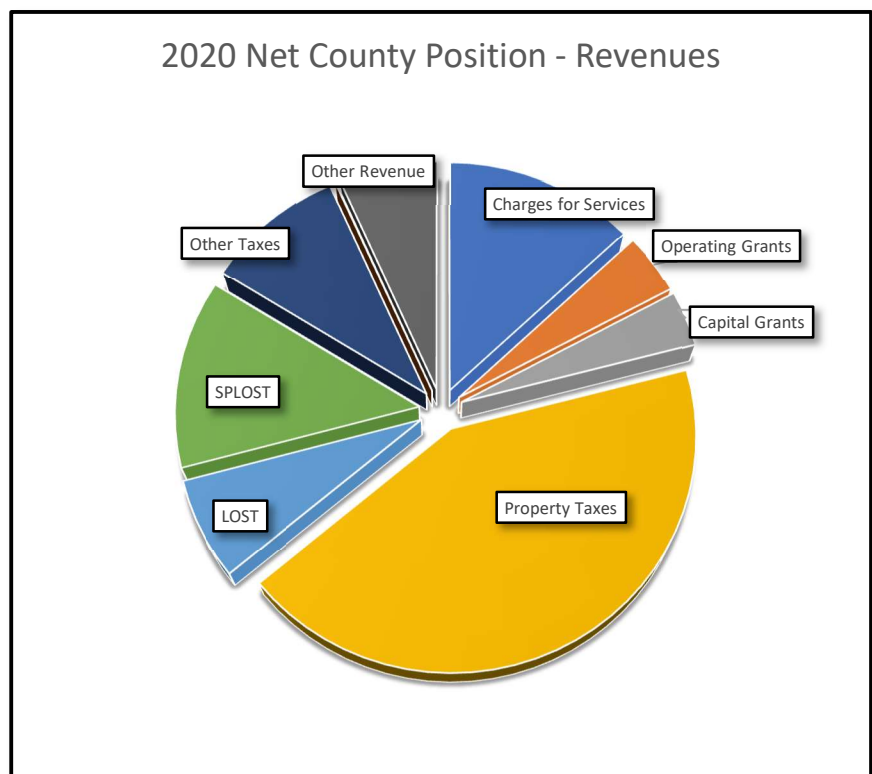
Even with all these current and planned initiatives, there is still a lot of work to be completed to meet the expectations to improve the quality of life for all the citizens of Wayne County. But this expectation is a commitment of the leadership and employees of this county, and this commitment will continue to make the State of the County strong, with a bright future.

The following is a general summary of the financial position of the county including the General Fund and other related funds that are reflected in this report, and may be on a cash basis and not necessarily an audited account of the Revenues and Expenditures of the County's financial condition, unless otherwise stated. It is a general reflection of the County's financial condition for the all years mentioned.

Financial Overview – Net Position

The financial net position of the county is moving in the right direction from where it was in 2018. The 2020 net position of all the funds of the county, including the general fund and special purpose or restricted funds is at \$34.8 million in revenues and \$29.3 million in expenses, according to the 2020 audit. All obligations are being met and assurances of a stable and prosperous future are being established.

The total net revenues and expenses reflect projects that include multi-year projects for roads and capital equipment, and approximately thirteen percent of the 2020 net position revenues and fifteen percent of the 2020 net position expenses can be attributed to these types of projects. These projects include paving roads, recreational improvements, capital equipment purchases, and buildings.



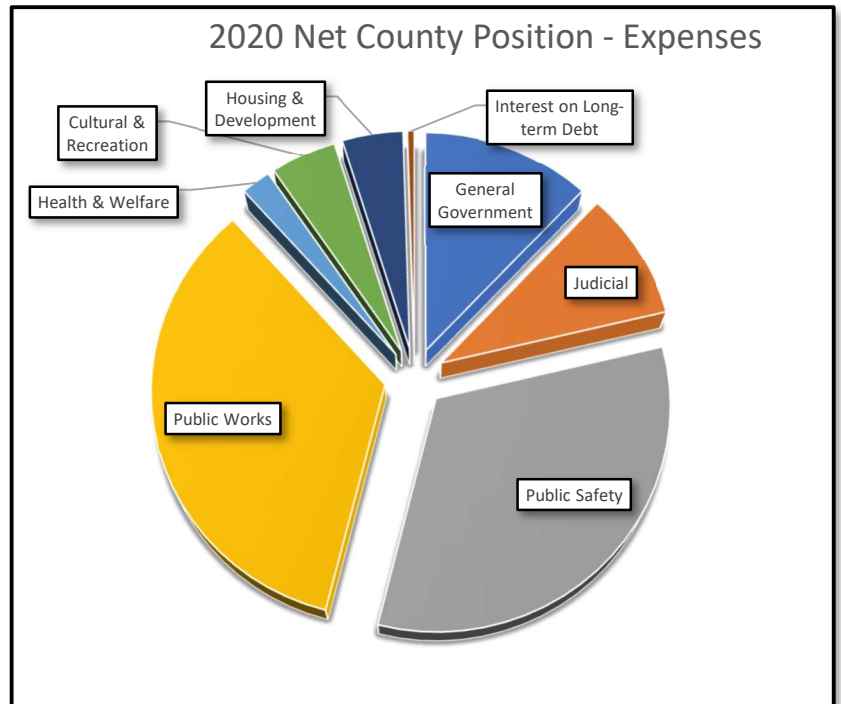
Approximately, forty-three percent of the revenue sources are property taxes, which compared to the 2019 audit is a reduction of three percent, reflecting an improvement in other revenue sources. These taxes include prior year collections for past due taxes. The Local Option Sales Taxes (L.O.S.T.) rose primarily due to

growth in the county and the state law charging sales tax for internet sales. Other taxes have also increased such as E-911 surcharges and Insurance Premium Taxes that have increased due to more insurance coverage in the unincorporated areas of the county.

Public Works, or road work, contributed to approximately thirty-four percent of the expense positions in 2020. This expense includes both maintenance of roads, paving projects, and capital equipment purchases associated with roadway work.

While Public Safety contributed to approximately one-third of the expense positions of 2020, which includes law enforcement, Jail, EMS, EMA, and E911.

Judicial, General Government, Recreation, Health and Welfare, and Housing and Development make up the remaining third of net position expenses.

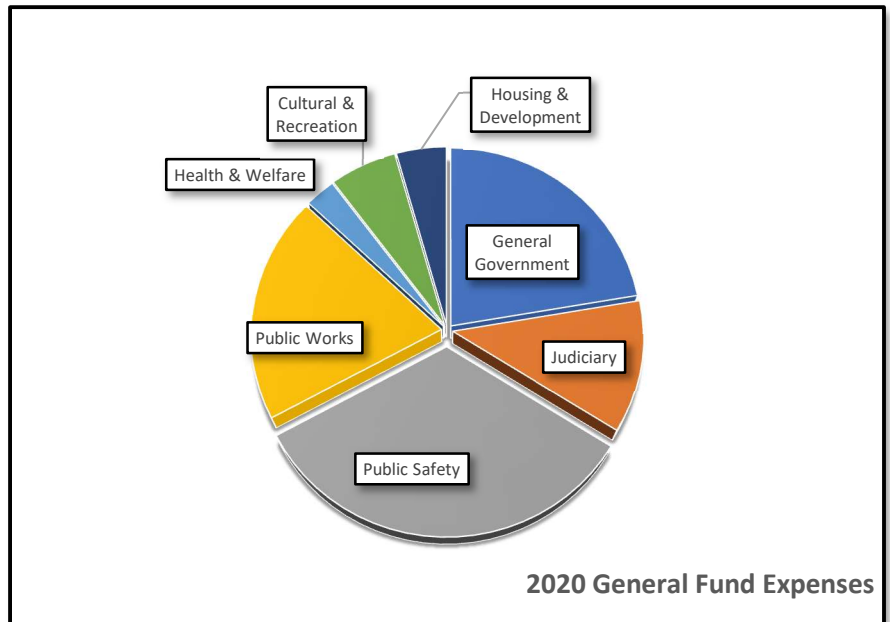


The expectation is that the net position of the county will continue to improve year over year until the county's financial position can withstand an unexpected event or significant downturns in the economy without drastically altering county services.

Financial Overview - General Fund

The General Fund is the day-to-day operational expenses of the county. The fund pays for the salaries, maintenance and upkeep of buildings and equipment, and small capital expenditures. In 2020, the final expense budget was nearly \$25 million with the actual expenses coming in under budget by nearly \$4 million due to effective management practices and timing of expenditures.

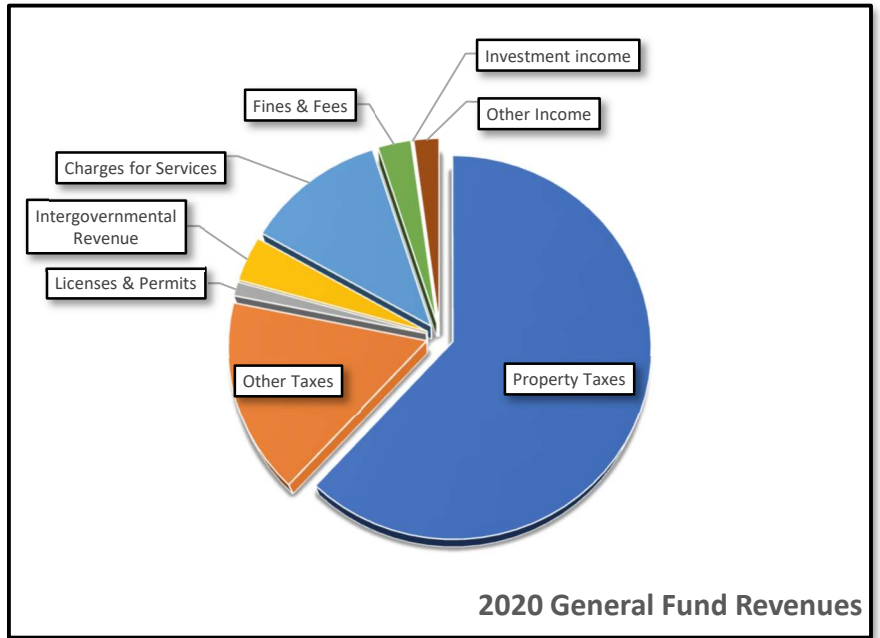
The functions and categories that are funded out of the General Fund are many but can be categorized in seven general areas: General Government, Judicial, Public Safety, Public Works, Health & Welfare, Cultural & Recreation, and Housing & Development. Public Safety makes up one third of the expenses which includes Law enforcement, Fire, and EMS services among other related services. General Government is twenty-two percent of the 2020 final budget and includes financial, tax collection and assessment, elections, and Building maintenance. Public Works is approximately twenty percent of the 2020 final budget and is related to the maintenance of roads. The Judiciary functions are the courts and related services of the courts that accounted for approximately twelve percent of the 2020 final budget. The remaining three categories made up approximately thirteen percent of the 2020 final budget.



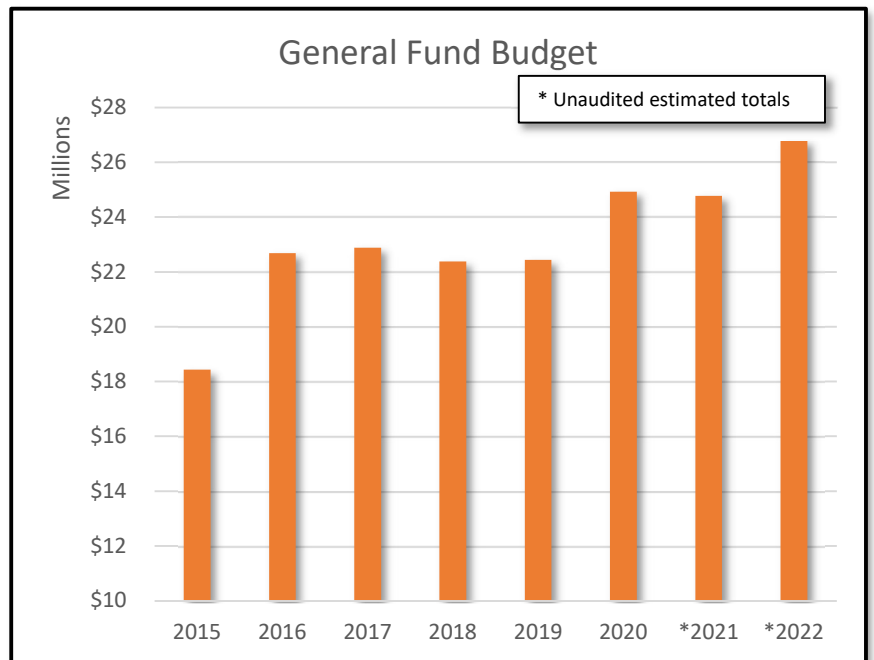
Public Safety makes up one third of the expenses which includes Law enforcement, Fire, and EMS services among other related services. General Government is twenty-two percent of the 2020 final budget and includes financial, tax collection and assessment, elections, and Building maintenance. Public Works is approximately twenty percent of the 2020 final budget and is related to the maintenance of roads. The Judiciary functions are the courts and related services of the courts that accounted for approximately twelve percent of the 2020 final budget. The remaining three categories made up approximately thirteen percent of the 2020 final budget.

The General Fund revenues can also be summarized in seven categories, which include property taxes, charges for services, other taxes, intergovernmental revenue, licenses and permits, fines and fee, and other income, and interest income. Property taxes made up sixty-two percent of the general fund revenue in 2020. While other taxes and charges for services made up twenty-eight percent of the 2020 revenues. While the remaining categories comprised ten percent of the revenues in 2020.

The general fund budget has grown significantly in recent years due to inflationary pressures on labor and goods and demands for services. In fact, the 2022 approved budget was seven-and one-half percent higher than the 2021 budget largely due to salary increases for first responders and others and the demands on emergency services that required more resources.



Inflationary pressures are a reality in the economy and the county is not immune to these cost pressures, especially with salaries and goods. In addition, as the county grows the demand on the county services has and will continue to increase as well. These demands for services and the requirements to deliver services are generally required by law and/or demanded by the citizens of this county such as emergency services. But it is not limited to emergency services, it also includes judiciary, health and welfare, and recreational among other services.

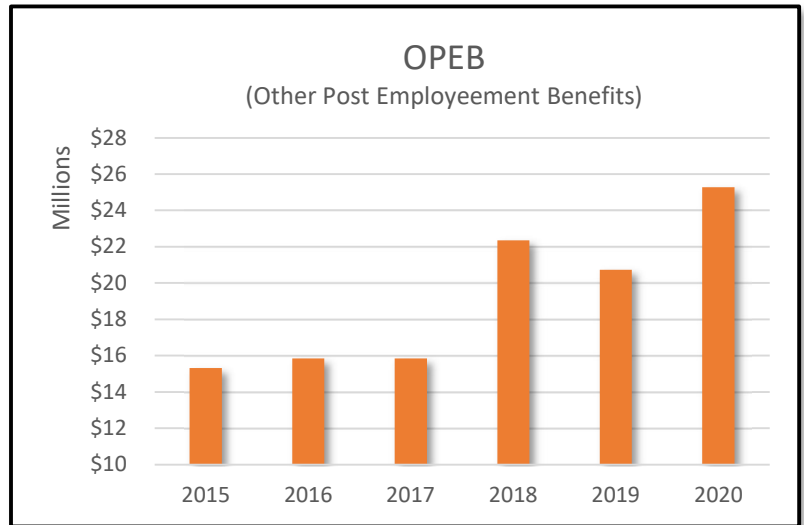


Even though, the growth of the budgets year over year has had periods of moderate growth, there are periods that the level of service is inadequate to the demands. As a result, the

General Fund budget growth is more significant. To that point, there are years that the General Fund budget is relatively flat, but there are years that inflationary pressures, as well as demands on services have significantly impacted the General Fund. Since 2015 the General Fund budget has increased approximately forty-five percent.

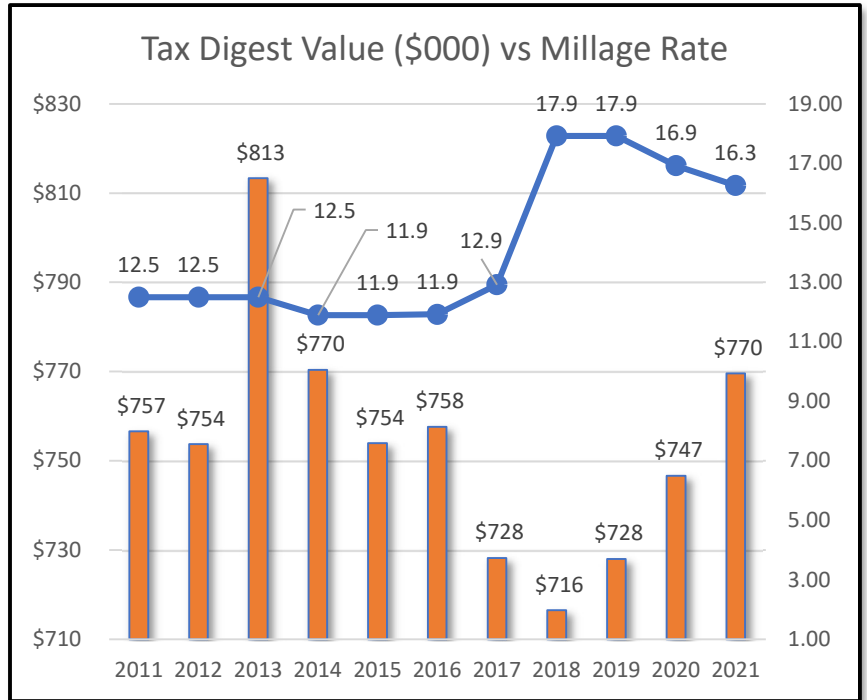
Unexpected expenses and long-term liabilities are fiscal requirements of the county, which include post-retirement benefits of employees and post-retirements liabilities such as landfills. The audited 2020 OPEB for the county is estimated at a little over \$25 million. That is a 65% increase since 2015.

Although, with proper oversight and management, the estimated obligations should not materialize; however, the potential is real.

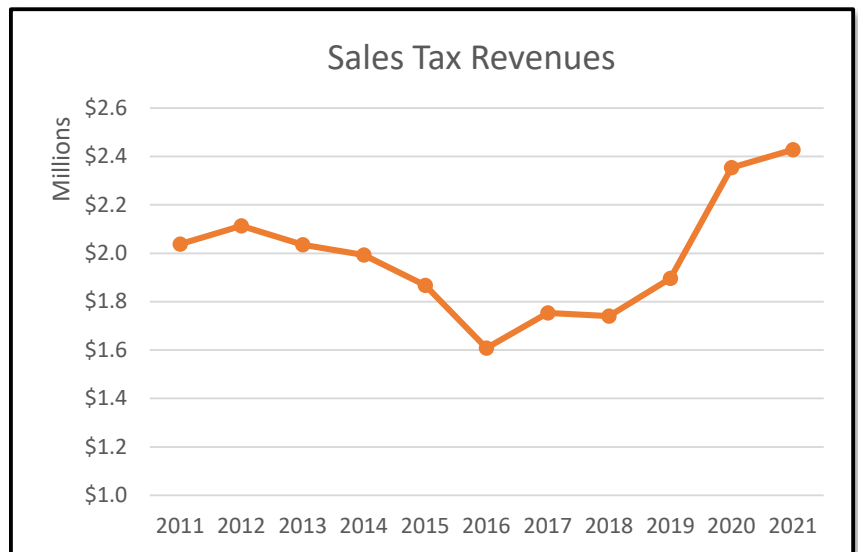


Fortunately, the demands on services and cost pressures have been largely offset by the General Fund Revenues. These revenues have stabilized and grown from recent years of declines and instability. This has allowed the county to meet its obligation to reduce taxes within a two-year period after the increase in 2018 while the budgets have increased. In fact, the millage rates have been reduced two years in a row for a combined total of 1.667 mils. This can be attributed to growth within the county, which has impacted the county tax digest, and various other revenue sources, as well as effective management of cash flows and budgets, and improvements in the efficiency of various county operations.

Since 2018 the County has reversed the decline in the tax digest with a consistent growth pattern that has brought the value of the county back to levels not seen since 2014. The growth pattern is the result of several factors, the first would be industrial and manufacturing investments in our county, as well as the commercial and housing construction taking place. There are some aspects of inflation in the tax digest, but the vast majority of the growth is new. Along with improved collections, the improved Ad Valorem tax revenue has allowed the Board of Commissioners the ability to reduce taxes by one-third of the of the total millage rate increase in 2018.



As mentioned, other revenue sources have grown as well, such as sales taxes, insurance premium taxes, fees, and permits. This can largely be attributed to growth in the county. The county Sales Tax revenues have grown fifty percent since the low of 2016. Although this revenue has grown with the growth of the county, changes in laws associated with the allocation of sales taxes from internet sales have also impacted this revenue.



Insurance premium taxes have increased based on the growth of investments insured in the unincorporated areas of the county. Fees derived from services such as EMS, recreation, and other services rendered by the county have grown with increased activity from the growth of the county.

Half of the allotted funds for the county from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) have been received totaling \$2.9 million. However, these funds have specific restrictions on when and how they can be used. Fortunately, the county was able to use the lost revenue calculation approach to justify most of the first half allocation the ARP funds, with premium pay to first responders and essential workers making up the remainder. A similar approach will be utilized for the justification of the second half of the funds. The lost revenue justification has allowed the county more flexibility in allocating the funds for use on capital needs, such as ambulances, law enforcement vehicles, other capital equipment needs and improvements to the county.

To prevent the events of the past and preparing the county for the future, cash reserves are being slowly built up to prevent disruptions of services due to lack of funding in the event of a natural disaster or an evitable downturn in the economy. Currently, there is approximately three months of general fund expenditures that have been amassed with an ideal target of six months the goal. This goal will take time but is being accomplished with improvements in revenue sources, effective management of expenses, and prudent borrowing measures in the form of Tax Anticipation Notes.

The county will continue to manage resources and obligations to meet the demands of services in an efficient manner while promoting and developing a quality growth pattern for the county. Together these strategies will allow the county to continue to meet the demands of services while lessening the burdens of the tax payers for these services.

General County Government

The function of the general county government involves elections, financial, tax collections, and oversight of government buildings. These functions and services are adapting to the demands and growth of the county with accountability and improvements to the services they provide.

The election processes, which includes voter registration, has changed with how voters vote and register to vote. Early voting has significantly increased in recent years to a point that the early voting location had to be changed due to conflicts and security concerns. In addition, the increasing demands around holding elections and the long-term continuity concerns with the organizations that conduct the elections has prompted the Wayne County Board of Commissioner to adopt a legislative resolution to form an Election Board and create an Election Supervisor position.

Early voting has grown to a point that the process occupied the Magistrate Court room disrupting the Magistrate and State Courts, and coupled with the pandemic and security issues surrounding all the courts, the location for early voting had to be moved. Several locations were considered, but ultimately the county owned facility at Hall Richardson was the most feasible location for early voting at this point.

The legislative process is currently underway for the formation of the Election Board, but the intent of the Wayne County Board of Commissioners is to have a board comprised equally with representation from the Republican and Democrat parties of the county to oversee the election process. The Election Supervisor and staff will be employed by the county and the current Election Superintendent and Chief Registrar positions eliminated. The enactment of this board is planned for January 1, 2023, or the end of the 2022 election cycle.

The financial and administrative functions of the county have focused on ensuring that the county has the ability to operate and that policies and followed throughout the county government, which has allowed the county to be on a more stable financial footing.

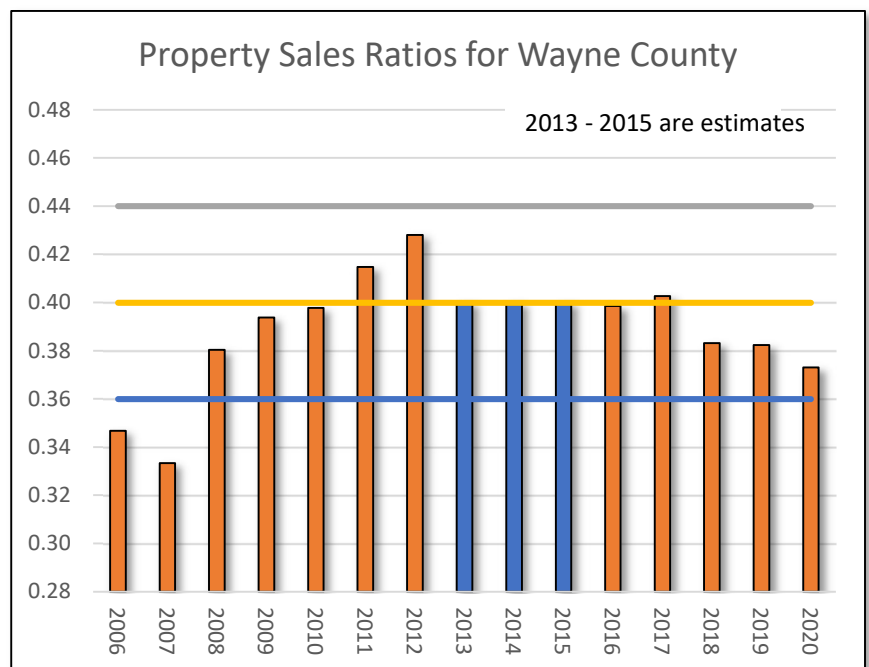
With a focus on cash flow and effective management of county directives, the county has reduced the burden of borrowing \$6.5 million in 2018 to \$3 million in 2022 on a revolving loan basis. The actual borrowing in 2021 was \$1.55 million, while cash reserves have been built to a three-month operation level, all while meeting the demands of the county services.

The Tax Collection is comprised of two processes, assessment and collection. These processes are two independent and separate functions that operate collaboratively to accurately assess and collect property taxes for the county.

Over the past few years, the Tax Assessors office has undergone a transformation of personnel and board members. The transformation process was and continues to be in a positive direction, with continuity of staff being built and the property assessments evaluated for accuracy and validity.

One measure of the accuracy of assessments is the Property Sales Ratios. Yearly, the Georgia Department of Revenue selects several properties that were sold in the county during the prior year. These sales are compared to the assessments of these properties and a ratio is derived to determine the accuracy of the assessments.

Ideally, the assessments should be at forty percent of the full value of the property. If the sales ratio is above 0.40, the assessments are high, and if the properties are below 0.40 the assessments are low. If the assessments are above 0.44 or below 0.36, and corrective actions not taken, significant GDOR penalties may apply.



With the recent real estate boom, the value of property has significantly increased putting pressure on the accuracy of assessments. As shown in the Property Sales Ratios for Wayne County, the sales ratio is trending downward

indicating that properties are undervalued. The 2020 sales ratio is 0.37. The assessor office is constantly evaluating property assessments and is systematically evaluating property throughout the county for accuracy to ensure that all assessments are accurate and fair.

Adjustments to assessments in this manner are considered inflationary and an overall inflationary component of the Tax Digest is calculated and presented to the Board of Commissioners as an inflationary millage rate. The Board of Commissioners are required to reduce the overall millage rate by the inflationary millage or it is considered a tax increase and associated requirements for an increase will apply.

The Tax Commissioner is responsible for determining the overall millage rates including the inflationary millage rate. The Tax Commissioner is also responsible for the timely submittal of the yearly digest to the State Department of Revenue, once the digest is rolled over from the assessor's office. In recent years, the timeliness of the submittal of the Tax Digest to the State has improved back to the normal expected schedule. This is a result of the efforts of both the Assessor's office and the Tax Commissioner's office.

Tax collections have improved as well, including prior years taxes. Settlements of major property owner and other class action law suits have been accomplished and confidence in the assessment and collection processes have increased, through the efforts of the office of Tax Commissioner and the Assessor.

The facility maintenance is an ongoing effort with many aging buildings that need improvements or modifications to meet the needs of the occupants. This includes the court house, the DA office, building and structures in our parks, and emergency service facilities.

The importance of information technology is a vital component of how the county operates, and the resources to manage this function has grown to the point that external services needed to be secured to help manage and plan for the future.

Judicial

The judicial functions of the county government include Superior Court, Drug Accountability Court, Juvenile Court, State Court, Magistrate Court, and Probate Court. The functions associated with the courts include the Clerk of Court, District Attorney, Public Defender, Solicitor, and Constable, as well as the Sheriff, who is responsible for security of the courts among other things. The Judicial functions are vast and complicated, but necessary in upholding laws of our County, State, and Nation.

Currently, there are three courtrooms and one conference room that serve all six courts; however, over the years the requirements of the courts have reached a point that the current court facilities are becoming more and more inadequate in meeting the demands and requirements of the judicial process.

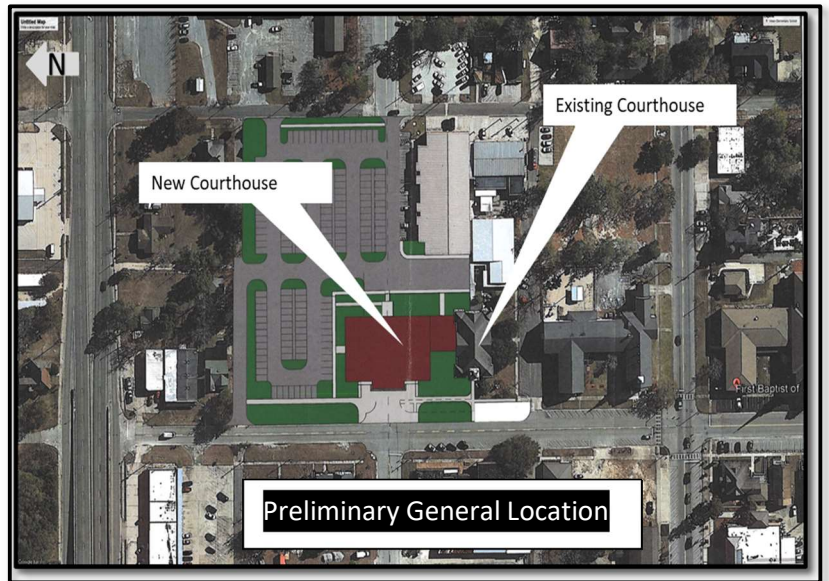
Many of these demands on the facilities are due to laws increasing security requirements around the courts. The current pandemic has also heightened the requirements of security around the courts significantly. To address the court requirements, the Wayne County Board of Commissioners have been preparing for several years to build a courthouse that will accommodate these functions well into the future.

In 2021, an Architect firm was hired to assess the needs of the courts and develop a conceptual design to meet the requirement of the courts. This would include the most suitable location for the courts. Recently, the court requirements were assessed through interviews with all pertinent groups, and conceptual designs are being developed following the needs ascertained from these interviews. Budgetary estimates will be established once the conceptual design has been completed.

The proposed general location is adjacent and attached to the existing courthouse. Which will keep the symbol of the county in the center of the seat of the county. The existing courthouse will be renovated and repurposed to continue to function as part of the courts. This will save cost and ensure that the significance of this historical building is preserved. The illustration showing the

location is very preliminary, and only indicates a general area of where the complex would be located.

This project will be paid for through the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (S.P.L.O.S.T.). And because of the many priorities of the county and cities depending on future S.P.L.O.S.T. funding, it will be over multiple cycles of the S.P.L.O.S.T.



In order to secure funding for the project, the Wayne County Board of Commissioners had legislation adopted to form the Wayne County Public Works Authority for the propose of getting funding over a multi-year period. This Authority is currently enabled and is waiting upon approval of S.P.L.O.S.T. V referendum passage and approval of the WCBOC to proceed with securing funding for this project. The existing GO-Bond debt will also have to be retired before funding can be secured, which is anticipated in early 2023.

A projected timeline for completion of the judicial complex is 2027.

Public Safety

Public Safety functions include the Law Enforcement (Sheriff), Jail, E-911, Rural Fire, Emergency Medical Services, Coroner, and Emergency Management. The onset of the COVID-19 Virus, increasingly higher demands public safety services, and the growth of the county has stretched the resources of public safety, and thus required adding personnel and increasing salaries to retain personnel.

The unprecedented pandemic has been a devastating event for many in our communities, and we all have had to adapt to the burdens and uncertainties that this pandemic has brought, but without the dedication and sacrifice of the men and women of public safety, the devastation and hardship would have been

unbearable. These frontline responders deserve the highest level of gratitude for their dedication and sacrifice to our county everyday but especially through this pandemic.

Aside from the demands of the pandemic, the security requirements of the courts, as well as the growth of the county have increased to a level that required approval of three additional deputy positions. In addition, the Sheriff, in collaboration with the City of Odum, has established a precinct in Odum to improve the presence of law enforcement in that area.

Attracting and retaining professional law enforcement personnel has required the county to adjust the compensation to compete with other law enforcement agencies. Also, to attract more to a law enforcement career, the Sheriff has instituted a Junior Deputy Academy at the county middle schools. This will help in attracting more of our future best and brightest to a career in law enforcement, and diminish the barriers and stigmas about law enforcement in many parts of our society.

However, law enforcement demands are dependent on society as a whole, and as the county grows so will the demands on this function of the county. One of many areas of focus for Wayne County law enforcement is the illegal drug activity in the county, which ultimately affects everyone in the county. To help combat this illegal activity, the Sheriff and the City of Jesup has reestablished a Drug Taskforce to but more resources to this issue.

In addition, the needs and demands of and for Emergency Medical Services has required the creation of an additional eight paramedic positions in order to provide two twenty-four full time EMS crews. These additions coupled with the high demand for Paramedics also required an increase in compensation for entry paramedics. The good news is that coupled with the leadership in EMS, the compensation and professional work environment as allow all the open positions to be filled. In addition, there are ongoing efforts to develop future professionals to fill this vital need.

The County operates a volunteer fire organization, with automatic aid agreements with the City of Jesup, Odum, and Screven. The City of Jesup is the only full-time firefighting organization inside the county, and recently the City of Jesup had an ISO accreditation inspection, and out of this inspection was the requirement that

the City had to have four firefighters remain inside the city limits, or ISO rates for property insurance would increase, drastically increasing the cost of property insurance.

That meant that the city could not respond to the county without the county supporting the addition of two firefighters per shift, or six firefighters total. That equated to approximately \$300 thousand annually. Many areas just outside the city would be subject to the increases insurance rates if the city could not respond or the county did not provide fire stations and associated equipment. Therefore, the county and city are currently in negotiations to maintain the current ISO ratings.

As the county grows the need for fire coverage will grow. The county will have to continually evaluate the fire coverage in the unincorporated areas to ensure adequate coverage is provided. The evaluation could mean new stations, recruitment and retainage of the volunteer force, or the possibility of a full-time contingency of firefighters.

The county has a contract with the State Forestry Commission to cover non-structure land fires. The State Forestry Commission Station recently moved to South Macon Street from their location on West Cherry Street. This location better serves they access to the unincorporated areas of the county and provides adequate room for their equipment.

Providing adequate equipment for the public safety functions is an ongoing management effort. Even though the funding for specific equipment needs has been identified, over the past couple of years the global supply chain issues has limited or delayed the acquisition of this equipment, such as vehicles. The supply chain issues will likely remain a concern for the foreseeable future, but the focus on securing the right equipment for public safety will continue as well.

The County Animal Control is making a positive impact on the quality of life for many of the citizens of Wayne County. Whether it is vicious dogs, feral cats, or other animals, the number of animals obtained by Animal Control has grown to a point that the existing pound is fully occupied the majority of the time. And as the county grows, so will the population of pets. This may require the expansion or relocation of a pound in the future, and increasing the resources to control the population of stray or abandon animals in the county.

In addition, the WCBOC is evaluating an animal control ordinance to further enhance the quality of life for the citizens and animals of Wayne County.

Public Works

Public works includes road maintenance and construction as well as maintenance of equipment and vehicles. Wayne County maintains early 775 miles of county-maintained roads, with approximately 500 of those miles unpaved. This equates to approximately 10 thousand miles of roadway graded annually.

Maintaining county roads requires a regularly scheduled program of grading, pulling ditches, repairing and installing culverts, as well as maintaining road right-of-way. Repairing road damage from storms and other unexpected events is also part of this county function. Paved roads require maintenance as well, with patching, resurfacing, and striping. To accomplish all these tasks effectively and efficiency the county road department works off a schedule. This planning and scheduling are key aspects of employee safety, productivity, cost savings, and meeting objectives.

Maintaining the equipment is an important aspect of keeping roads maintained, as well as the upkeep of equipment and vehicles throughout the county operations. Recently, the maintenance department has had an increased role in purchasing of equipment and vehicles. By including the county maintenance personnel in the specification decision of equipment and acquisitions, the life cycle costs, the availability, and durability of the county equipment and vehicles has been improved.

As with other aspects of the county operation, the pandemic has also affected public works, with meeting the demands of the employment environment. Whether directly or indirectly, the pandemic has caused limitations in recruiting over the past two years. However, the scheduling efforts and the skill of the public works employees have helped overcome the recruitment limitations. But, employee recruitment will continue to be a challenge into the near future.

The Public Works function also oversees several road paving projects, which are largely accomplished through contractors. Funding for these projects, in large part is derived from special purpose funding such as S.P.L.O.S.T. or T.S.P.L.O.S.T.

In addition, as part of maintaining county paved roads, major resurfacing road projects are also accomplished with contract forces, and is largely funded through grants from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT).

As part of the current S.P.L.O.S.T. referendum a county road paving list was approved by the WCBOC. The list consisted of thirteen roads. Of those thirteen, three have been completed and two are in the preconstruction right-of-way acquisition phase and are on target to be completed in 2022/2023. The remainder of the roads are scheduled to be completed by 2024.

S.P.L.O.S.T. Paving List				
Band	Road Name	Scope	Begin	End
2020	Killingsworth Road	Grade, Base & Pave	End Pave @ 1.755	Dead End @ 2.370
2020	Crummey Road	Grade, Base & Pave	Killingsworth Rd.	End County Road
2020	Hires Road	Grade, Base & Pave	SR 169	0.7 Miles
2022	Elmer Road	Grade, Base & Pave	Cherokee Lake Rd	Cherokee Lake Rd
2022	Hortense Road	Grade, Base & Pave	End of Pavement	Past Nebraska Rd
2023	J.C. Hamilton Road	Grade, Base & Pave	US 84 / SR 38	End of Road
2023	Linden Drive	Grade, Base & Pave	Shrine Club Road	Killingsworth Rd.
2023	Bluff Road	Grade, Base & Pave	Linden Drive	Dead End
2024	B. Baker Drive	Grade, Base & Pave	Beechwood Drive	Dead End
2024	Evors Road	Grade, Base & Pave	Killingsworth Rd.	Dead End
2024	Briarwood Road	Grade, Base & Pave	Killingsworth Rd.	Atwood Road
2024	King Road	Grade, Base & Pave	John Smith Road	Riddle Road
2024	Gray Drive	Grade, Base & Pave	Killingsworth Rd.	End of Private Rd

As part of the Heart of Georgia Region, Wayne

County is participating in the T.S.P.L.O.S.T. referendum that was passed in 2012. The referendum identified thirteen specific projects related to the county's part

of the Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (T.S.P.L.O.S.T). All have been completed but one, which is currently under construction and should be completed by spring of 2022.

TSPLOST 1 Project List				
Road Name	Scope	Begin	End	Status
SR 169 Railroad Overpass	Construct Bridge over RR	Hwy 341	Over NS RR	Complete
SR 169 Widening	Widen from Overpass to Sunset Blvd	Overpass	Sunset Blvd	Complete
Rayonier Rd Widening	Widen and Resurface	Hwy 301N	Hwy 169	Complete
Gardi-Broadhurst Rd	Raise Grade???			Complete
Bridge Replacement Walter Griffis Rd @ Goose Creek	Replace Bridge			Complete
Broadhurst Rd West Reclaim and Widening	Reclaim and Widen	Hwy 301S	Hwy 84	Complete
RR Crossing at Louisiana Rd	Pave approach to RR	Hwy 301S	Pass RR	Complete
RR Crossing at Ed Harrell Rd	Pave approach to RR	RR Approach	Pass RR	Complete
RR Crossing at Slover Rd	Pave approach to RR	Hwy 301S	Pass RR	Complete
Whaley Rd	Resurface			Complete
Collins Loop Rd	Resurface			Complete
Replace Bridge on Holmesville Rd	Replace Bridge			Complete
Wayne US 341 Industrial Pk Rd	Construct Rd in Industrial Park			Complete
Linden Bluff Rd	Resurface			Complete
Killingsworth Rd	Resurface			Complete
Holmesville Rd Resurfacing	Resurface			Complete
Holmesville Rd Construction	Pave Road			Under Construction

Maintaining county paved roads is an ongoing and costly endeavor. Even though, the county performs patch work on county owned paved roads throughout the county, these efforts alone will not keep pace with the maintenance needs for paved roads in the county. To aid the county with maintaining paved roads, the county applies for a Local Maintenance Infrastructure Grant (LMIG) from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). With Wayne County participating in the

T.S.P.L.O.S.T., the county’s matching portion of this grant is ten percent. From this funding, the county selects a contractor to perform major work such as resurfacing.

If the county did not participate in the T.S.P.L.O.S.T., the match would be thirty percent for the LMIG. The funding for this match is large derived from the discretionary portion of T.S.P.L.O.S.T. funds received by the county.

Even with these funding mechanisms, the maintenance needs of the county roads out weight these funds. To help manage these needs and address the current liabilities of the county paved roads, a comprehensive survey was performed that identified existing deficiencies with the roads and prioritized the severity of needs and liabilities. A list of priorities was developed from this survey.

These priorities are spread over three years (2022 -2024) to approximately match the grant amount from GDOT. These priorities include replacement or improvement of

conditions of culverts, resurfacing including spot areas, and replacing bridge guardrails. These priorities may change somewhat as conditions warrant. The 2022 priority list is extensive with several guardrail and culvert replacements included. The list of roads to resurface was based on a engineering assessment of the conditions as compared to other priorities.

2022 LMIG				
PRIORITY	ROAD NAME	BEGINNING	ENDING	DESCRIPTION OF WORK
1	Gardi Road	1.118 mile from US HWY		Remove/replace culvert
2	Beards Bluff	0.496 mile from SR 169		Remove/replace culvert
3	Grantham	0.714 miles from US 301		Remove/replace culvert
4	Gardi Road	US HWY 341	Broadhurst Road	Spot surface and stripe
5	North Eagle	Eagle Drive	Cul-de-sac	Resurface
6	Pine Forest	US HWY 341	Pavement Joint at Club	Resurface
7	Bailey Drive	Woods Bridge Road	End of Existing	Resurface
8	Austin Court	Bailey Drive	cul-de-sac	Resurface
9	Broadhurst	0.586 mi from		Remove/replace culvert
10	Broadhurst	1.097 mi from		Remove/replace culvert
11	Broadhurst	1.986 mi from		Remove/replace culvert
12	Broadhurst	US HWY 301	Gardi Road	Spot surface
13	Odum Road	US HWY 341	Odum Ritch Road	Spot surface
14	Huckleberry	From SR 169	End of Pavement	Resurface
15	Humming Bird	Huckleberry Lane	End @ cul-de-sac	Resurface
16	Mt. Pleasant	Post Road	0.1 mile from Post Road	Resurface
17	Nine Run Rd.	0.87 mi. from HWY 84 in		Replace guardrail
18	Nine Run Rd.	1.15 mi. from HWY 84 in		Replace guardrail
19	Bethlehem	1.34 mi. from HWY 301		Replace guardrail
20	Odum Rd.	0.74 mi. from HWY 341		Replace guardrail
21	Broadhurst	4.72 mi. from Hwy 84 in		Replace guardrail
22	Joey	0.370 mile from US 341		Install Culvert
23	Manningtown	Gardi Road	Lucille Drive	Resurface

The 2023 and 2024 priority lists include several roads that need resurfacing. Many of these roads are in poor condition as a result of inadequate county road building specifications at the time of construction. Many of these deficiencies in the specifications have been addressed and moving forward the construction of new roads should last longer.

2023 LMIG				
PRIORITY	ROAD NAME	BEGINNING	ENDING	DESCRIPTION OF WORK
1	Best Loop	Mt. Pleasant	Mt. Pleasant	Resurface
2	Spring Grove Rd	Rayonier Rd	SR 169	Resurface
3	Club Drive	HWY 301	Pine Forest	Resurface
4	Palm Tree Place	Sea Island	Cul-de-sac	Resurface
5	Palm Tree Road	Sea Island	Cul-de-sac	Resurface
6	Palm Tree Court	Sea Island	Cul-de-sac	Resurface
7	Sea Island Road	Chapman	Meadowood	Resurface
8	Yellow Pine	Fannie Head	Dead End	Resurface
9	Seminole Woods	Shrine Club	Killingsworth	Resurface
10	Amy Beck	SR 169	Timberlakes	Resurface
11	Mallard Pve	SR 169	New Hope	Resurface

There are some bridge replacement projects that are in the planning stages for Wayne County, as a result of state inspections. The funding for these replacements is largely from the GDOT with a minimal matching portion from the county. These bridge projects are designed and managed by the GDOT.

2024 LMIG				
PRIORITY	ROAD NAME	BEGINNING	ENDING	DESCRIPTION OF WORK
1	Post Road	US HWY 341	County Line	Resurface
2	Mimosa St	Dogwood Avenue	Dead End	Resurface
3	Evinrude Dr	US HWY 301	Douglas Way	Resurface
4	Sandy Run Rd	Beaver Creek Road	Thunder Road	Resurface

To keep pace with the growing needs of the county and with the term of the existing T.S.P.L.O.S.T. expiring within a year, a referendum to renew the T.S.P.L.O.S.T. is slated for the May primary elections in 2022.

GDOT MPO & Project Statuses for Wayne County			
County	Project ID	Short Description	Project Sponsor
Wayne	0013197	CR 396/RAYONIER ROAD @ CR 392/SPRING GROVE ROAD - HRRR	GDOT
Wayne	0016564	CR 31/OGLETHORPE ROAD @ LITTLE GOOSE CREEK	GDOT
Wayne	0016565	CR 31/OGLETHORPE ROAD @ LITTLE GOOSE CREEK 9 MI NW OF JESUP	GDOT
Wayne	0017315	CR 190/Stanfield Road @Reedy Creek	GDOT
Wayne	0017316	CR 207/Dixie Road @Boggy Creek	GDOT

The approved regional and local county road projects for the T.S.P.L.O.S.T. renewal focused on meeting the growing economic needs of the county, as well as many of the county's major roadway infrastructure needs and improvements that are impractical to accomplish with the other maintenance programs of the county.

With an existing manufacturing base located on Sunset Blvd. and the new Wayne County Commerce Park located in the southern end of Jesup on US Hwy 84, the need to increase the capacity of Sunset Blvd. and connector roads to the major highways crossing the county was a regional priority.

The local county list priorities were heavily traveled or connector roads that need widening and resurfacing that the scope of work required

would be greater than the funding resources of other road maintenance programs. There were other county roads needs that did not make the list due to the funding limitations for local portion. Three addition roads were identified to widen and resurface that would be funded through the discretionary portion as funds are built up.

The county is also pursuing funding for roads that qualify for Community Development Block Grants. Availability will be at least 2024 timeframe and the residents that live on these roads will need to meet the economic qualifications for the grant to be award, but the real potential exists to improve the quality of life for these areas through the utilization of CDBG funds.

Priority	Desired Band/Yr	REGIONAL PROJECTS					
		Road Name	Scope	Begin	End	Quantity	Units
1	23-25	Sunset Boulevard	Widen Road with Center Turn Lane and Major Intersection Improvem'ts	US 84 / SR 38	US 301 South	3.50	MI
			Widen to 24' & Resurface	CSXRR	US 301 South		
				Turn Lanes at WC, CGE & S.Palm St.			
2	23-25	US 84 Ind Pk Entrance	Construct Road	US 84 / SR 38	To Spine Road	1.50	MI
3	26-29	US 301 South	Improve all intersections with Major improvements at Sunset Blvd for truck traffic	Middle School	Louisiana Rd	3.00	MI
4	30-32	Hinson Moseley Road	Widen Road with Center Turn Lane and Major Intersection Improvem'ts	Sunset Blvd	US 84 / SR 38	1.00	MI
5	30-32	Joey Williamson Road	Widen Road with Center Turn Lane and Major Intersection Improvem'ts	US 84 / SR 38	US 341 / SR 27	1.30	MI
			With Traffic Signal @ US 341 / SR 27				

Priority	Regional / Local	Desired Band	LOCAL and DISCRETIONARY PROJECTS					
			Road Name	Scope	Begin	End	Quantity	Units
1	Local	23-26	Oglethorpe Road	Widen to 24' & Resurface	SR 169	SR 169	7.00	MI
2	Local	23-26	Tank Road	Widen to 24' & Resurface	US 341 / SR 27	Beards Bluff Rd.	7.00	MI
3	Local	26-29	Odum Road South	Widen to 24' & Resurface	US 341 / SR 27	K'ville Road	5.37	MI
4	Local	26-29	Odum-Screven Road	Widen to 24' & Resurface	Odum Road South	US 84 / SR 38	8.32	MI
5	Local	30-33	Broadhurst Road	Widen to 24' & Resurface	Gardi Road	US 301 South	3.80	MI
6	Discretionary	26-29	Beards Bluff Road	Widen to 24' & Resurface	US 341 / SR 27	SR 169	6.88	MI
7	Discretionary	30-33	K'ville Road	Widen to 24' & Resurface	Odum Road South	SR 203	5.25	MI
8	Discretionary	30-33	Walter Griffis Road	Widen to 24' & Resurface	Railroad Street	SR 169	5.44	MI

Desired Band	CDBG PROJECTS		
	Road Name	Begin	End
2024	Chickasaw Trail	Killingsworth Rd.	Dead End
2024	Indian Trail	Killingsworth Rd.	Dead End
2024	Shanandoah Road	Killingsworth Rd.	Dead End
2024	Osceola Trail North	Killingsworth Rd.	Seminole Woods Dr
2024	Osceola Trail South	Seminole Woods Dr	Dead End
2024	Cheyenne Court North	Seminole Woods Dr	Dead End
2024	Cheyenne Court South	Seminole Woods Dr	Dead End
2024	Kiowa Drive North	Seminole Woods Dr	Dead End
2024	Kiowa Drive South	Seminole Woods Dr	Dead End
2024	Dakota Court North	Seminole Woods Dr	Dead End
2024	Dakota Court South	Seminole Woods Dr	Dead End
2024	Mohican Trail North	Seminole Woods Dr	Dead End
2024	Mohican Trail South	Seminole Woods Dr	Dead End
2024	Shawnee Way	Seminole Woods Dr	Dead End
2024	Harper Road	Killingsworth Rd.	Dead End

Cultural and Recreation

Cultural and recreation includes the ball fields, the parks, and river landings, as well as the library. These functions are an essential to the quality-of-life experience of our county. Whether playing sports, enjoying outdoors, or utilizing the information and enjoyment of reading the library offers, the county has a lot to offer.

With recreational sports a big part of the county function, a lot of focus is given to the ballfields at Bill Morris Park, Babe's Park, Ben Park, and soccer fields to ensure the safety of the kids, as well as marketability of the county in mind. To offset the cost of maintaining these fields, several tournaments including State GRPA championships for Soccer, Baseball, and Softball are being held in Wayne County, which brings revenue and positive exposure to our county.

To improve the accessibility of Bill Morris Park, the parking area along Hinson Mosely Road and around to the entrance to the park on Sunset Blvd. will be paved. The design of the parking lot is currently underway, and upon approval the paving will be coordinated between seasonal use of the fields. The funding will be from S.P.L.O.S.T. IV.

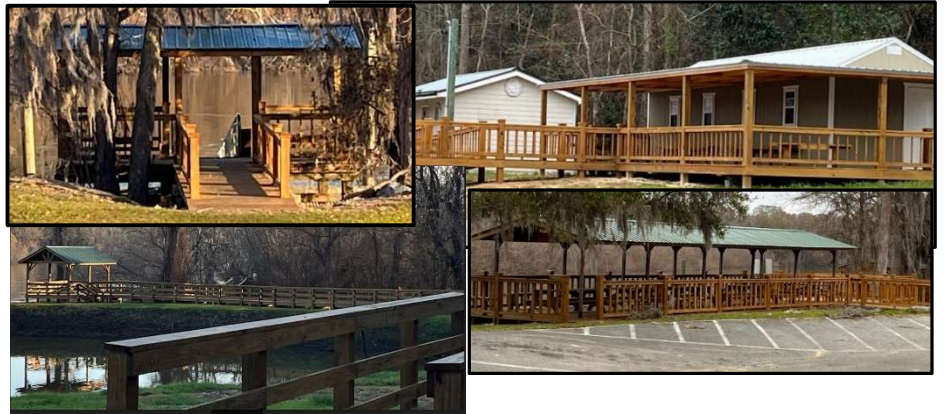


But recreation is more than baseball, football, and soccer. It is basketball, equestrian sports, agricultural related sports, walking trails and exercise tracks, swimming, socializing, or just enjoying the what the river and outdoors have to offer.

To enhance the indoor recreational activities, a Senior Center is being designed that will be located at Hall Richardson Park. The majority of the funding for the new Senior Center is from a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) the county was awarded 2021. In addition, revitalization of the existing Hall Richardson Center was completed in 2021.



The county made significant steps in increasing the experience that the Altamaha River has to offer by revitalizing or enhancing the facilities offerings at Jaycee Landing, such as the bait shop, the pavilion, the boat dock access, and a new nature trail. The formation of the Altamaha River Leisure and Services Authority was accomplished in 2021 and will oversee and operate the facilities located at the Landing and at the existing RV park overlooking the landing.



The purpose of the Altamaha River Leisure and Services Authority is to enhance the ecotourism potential the Altamaha River has to offer Wayne County. There is a tremendous amount of opportunity the river system has to offer, from hunting and fishing, or just enjoying the river. The river also has a vast amount of history and unique natural amenities. A dock was installed at Lake Grace to enhance the boating access to the lake, and plans are being developed to take advantage of what the lake has to offer.

The county is also working with multiple groups to develop a Multipurpose Agricultural Complex for agricultural type of recreational activities. These activities would include an equestrian complex, and potentially other agricultural type recreational events, all located in a central area.

Wayne County has had a long rich swimming culture, but for several years there has been no public pool for recreation or competition swimming sports. There are discussions underway with leaders of the community on determining the best way to fund and operate a public pool in Wayne County, while incorporating other on door recreational activities that are important to many in the community.

Health and Welfare

The county role in the Health and Welfare functions are largely state agencies that county aids in helping them provide these services to the county. However, there is local community leadership participation on boards with several of these agencies to help determine how to provide the best health services to the citizens of the county. These services include the Georgia Department of Public Health, DFACs, Pineland, and Welfare services.

During the pandemic, the Wayne county's GDPH staff were on the front lines of keeping our community safe. They were instrumental in disseminating the correct and timely information about the virus and vaccines, and through the tireless efforts this department thousands of vaccine shots were administered on top of providing all the other health services offered by the GDPH.

The Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS) and the Welfare services have also seen the effects of the pandemic, with suicides, increases in substance abuse, and other mental related issues that effects the whole family, but most importantly the children.

The mental health crisis in the county has also increased the demands of crisis intervention and counseling resources. As a result of this growth, Pineland Mental Health Counseling Services recently moved into their new home on South First Street that was built and funded by the county through CDBG funds.

The rise in mental health and related issues are not isolated to Wayne County, these issues are on the rise everywhere. The pandemic increased the mental health issues, but this was growing before the pandemic, and it will continue to grow after the pandemic is over.

This mental health crisis is having an impact on all segments of our communities, within our families, in the workplace, in the courts, in the jails, and increasing the law enforcement burdens. It has increased the homelessness population, and it has increased the demands on the healthcare providers.

The county is working with many groups to focus on the issues and responses that could help stem the tide of the increasing burdens that mental health puts on our county. However, this is an issue that needs focus from all aspects of society.

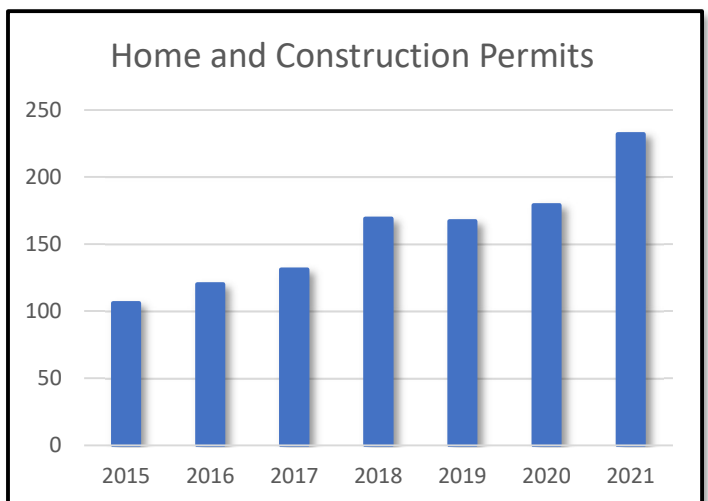
The Developmental Disability program that Pineland operates in the county is vital for the individuals and families of our developmentally disabled community. It provides a whole host of programs to help this community, including a place to work, a place to socialize, while providing some level of hope and support to the families of this community.

Wayne Memorial Hospital played a big role in providing health services to the citizens of this county through the pandemic. The hospital also is a tremendous partner in the mental health issues that the county is facing. In addition, the hospital played a big role in meeting the health needs of the underprivileged segments of our county, with facilitating the arrival of Diversified Health Clinic which opened a couple of years ago. This clinic is a tremendous asset to many in our community.

A great deal of gratitude and thanks has to go out to all the healthcare providers during this unprecedented pandemic including the staff of the hospital. Their dedication and efforts helped us all through this unprecedented pandemic. Wayne County has a thriving medical community and without it, the devastation of the pandemic would have been worst.

Development

The county is growing in many ways. The county building inspection department has seen a tremendous growth in housing and commercial permits recently. In fact, the permits for housing and commercial in the unincorporated areas of the county increased 30% in 2021 over the previous year, and seventy percent over five years. New yearly permits have grown 130% over the past seven years. The growth is coming from many places, including migration to our county from other states. The county's manufacturing base has grown as well. Although this growth is needed and economic activity of the



county has increased, so has the increases on the burdens and demands of the county services.

Development also includes a big part of the county's economic engine, which is agriculture. The county helps support the efforts of the UGA Extension Services, 4H, and USDA forest resource programs to support and aid the agriculture community, which provides a tremendous amount of economic impact to the county.

Industrial and manufacturing investment and growth is essential in the quality of growth for the county. The county has worked closely with the Industrial Development Authority in helping their efforts in securing high paying jobs in the county. This collaboration in some part has led to over 200 new job announcements associated with industrial and manufacturing investment in Wayne County over the last three to four years. And this collaboration is continuing. However, attracting new industrial and manufacturing investments requires two major things, a capable and ample workforce and a product such as land and infrastructure.

The workforce recruitment has always been a challenging endeavor, but it has been especially challenging during the COVID pandemic. There is an ample workforce in and around the county to meet most of the new prospective industry and manufacturing requirements; however, a major obstacle with the workforce availability is the illegal drug use. Although Wayne County is not alone in dealing with this problem, it does diminish the available workforce and limits the ability to recruit more business investment in the county.

There are many aspects of the county that are participating in programs to help educate our children on the harms of using illegal drugs. But there is not a simple solution to this problem and it has to be addressed by all segments of our society to truly make a difference in curtailing this activity.

The other requirement is the land and infrastructure, which the county has worked with the Industrial Development Authority in many ways to acquire and build. However, the need to address how the IDA is funded to acquire the land and infrastructure requirements to attract the high paying manufacturing jobs, has to be addressed. The county and the IDA are working on funding solutions that satisfy the needs of both groups.

Wayne Memorial Hospital is a tremendous economic engine for the county. Over \$300 million a year of economic activity is generated in this county from the hospital, and the hospital services are expanding. Although this Authority operates independently, the county and WMH work closely to help each other meet the needs of the citizens.

Industrial Development Authority

As Georgia and Wayne County continue to emerge from the economic downturn of a few years ago, great things are happening in economic development. Along with a current manufacturer's expansion, in 2021, the IDA purchased 300 acres and began development on a new commerce park to accommodate future industry.

Healthy Pet completed a \$18 million expansion to bring in new equipment and packaging processes at their Jesup facility, providing approximately 15-20 additional high-skill technical jobs in 2019.

In 2021, Chemours, dba Southern Ionics Minerals, began their mining operation for titanium and other heavy sand minerals at the first site off of Holmesville Road, providing nearly 80 jobs and over \$65 million in economic impact to Wayne County.

EAM Corporation, local manufacturer of engineered absorbent materials, completed an expansion in 2019 that included a \$7 million investment and 26 jobs. And in 2021, they began a larger expansion, doubling the size of their current facility, constructing a 180,000 square foot building to expand its absorbent core manufacturing operations. This expansion will bring with it a \$65 million private investment with plans to employ 75 additional workers at an average wage of \$37,440 plus benefits within the next four years. The State of Georgia is providing \$225,000 for site preparation, the IDA is providing incremental ad valorem tax abatements over 10 years, and the City of Jesup is working with EAM on permitting fees. Completion of the expansion and startup operations are expected to culminate in May 2022.

Sierra International Machinery, maker of industrial balers and other recycling equipment, also expanded their operation in 2019, adding a 24,000 square foot

warehouse. The IDA provided 2.3 acres of property adjacent to the building in order to offer additional outside storage and future warehouse expansion space.

The IDA continued facilitating the Industry Roundtable Group meetings in 2019, but 2020 brought COVID-19 and a temporary halt to all in-person gatherings. The same was true for the industry/education partnership, WorkSource Wayne, which had been established to align our county's school system, Coastal Pines Technical College and industry in order to bring awareness to the school system and their students about the many well-paying jobs available here in Wayne County's manufacturing industry and the skills required for those jobs. Student industry tours were canceled in 2020 and 2021, but we plan to begin activities again in 2022 for both groups.

Marketing continues to be a priority for the IDA, including a newsletter to ensure all state project managers are kept current on available buildings and sites in Wayne County and to share news of economic development in Wayne County.

Looking forward, the IDA continues to make strategic plans for future economic development in Wayne County. With the recent purchase of 300+ acres on Highway 84 west of Jesup, IDA has established Wayne Commerce Center. Infrastructure development is underway, beginning with construction of a preliminary entrance road. A \$500,000 OneGeorgia Equity grant from Georgia Department of Community Affairs has been awarded to construct off-site water and sewer infrastructure connecting with City of Jesup's current water/sewer system to the property line of the center. In addition, we have partnered with City of Jesup to apply for ARPA funding to continue construction of water and sewer infrastructure within the commerce center.

Our GRAD (Georgia Ready for Accelerated Development) site, 341 South Commerce Center, is also currently under development with the installation of a natural gas line to the property and construction of a road system project funded by TIA SPLOST dollars that was completed in 2019. IDA will continue development of this site including water and sewer services as well as electrical power. These enhancements will make this property even more attractive to industry looking to locate in Wayne County.

The IDA is also participating with the County and its agricultural community to secure funding to build a multipurpose ag complex. Plans include a covered

competition-size arena with bleachers, a concession stand and restrooms. The facility will also include a teaching area for 4-H and FFA ag projects related to swine, cattle, goats, sheep, poultry, rabbits and alpacas with space to practice and hone students' skills for exhibitions, shows and competitions.

This arena can also accommodate competition rodeo and equestrian events that will bring competitors from neighboring counties in Southeast Georgia and hopefully farther away. It may also be used for cattle, horse, swine and other animal sales for farmers. These events will generate tourism dollars and can potentially make a significant economic impact in Wayne County.

Wayne Memorial Hospital

Wayne Memorial Hospital is not only an important healthcare provider in Wayne County, it is a major economic engine for the county. With just over \$351 million in gross patient revenue in FY' 21, the hospital and associated operations provide a valuable aspect to the quality-of-life in Wayne County, and the hospital is growing its health services and its economic importance.

In October of 2021 Wayne Memorial Hospital constructed and moved into its brand-new Oncology/Infusion Center. Over 500 infusions a month are done at this center, with patients coming from as far away as McRae and Fitzgerald to receive the chemotherapy and other infusions. And WMH also now has a GI physician, Dr. Ahmad Irfan who comes to Jesup once a week to see patients and to perform endoscopy procedures.

For 2022, WMH is looking at expanding its radiology department with three initiatives: increased availability of PET Scan's, additional purchase of a CT Unit, and a potential purchase of an additional Mammography unit. This is being done to create additional access for both CAT Scans and Mammograms. The hospital is also looking at expanding our spine surgery program with some new navigation equipment that will allow us to do additional spine procedures.

The hospital also a tremendous partner with many community related efforts in the county, including the recent dedication of Wayne County Veterans Memorial located on the front lawn of the WMH. The monuments are being assemble and should be erected in mid-2022.

Moving Forward

Wayne County is growing in many ways and the demands of this growth and preparing for this growth has been a priority of the WCBOC and the county functions. But, the day-to-day concerns and activities of the citizens of this county are a focus as well, and with the proper planning and effective execution of services the county can continue to address the needs of the citizens of this county. Which is a top priority.

Navigating through this pandemic and preparing for other unexpected events is also a priority of the county. These and other events have brought about many changes, but through the collaboration and efforts of many, Wayne County has and will become stronger. Preparing and planning for the future whatever it brings is and will continue to be the best solution and a priority of the county.

The growth of Wayne County has changed trajectories from a downward trend to an upward momentum in recent years, but to maintain this upward momentum a tremendous amount of work is still needed. This work will take collaboration and help from everyone, but with this collaboration will unlock the potential best that Wayne County has to offer and continue the momentum upward. The future is bright with the right focus and collaboration.

Southern
Snapshots 2009

