

5

Community Facilities and Services

This element provides an inventory of existing public facilities and services, and an assessment of their capacity for serving the future population and economic needs of Gilmer County and the incorporated cities. This assessment forms the framework for the formulation of goals and policies and the development of strategies for accomplishing capital improvements under the Five Year Work Program.

The purpose of this element is to assist local governments in coordinating the planning of public facilities and services in order to make the most efficient use of existing infrastructure and to efficiently and effectively plan for future investments and expenditures for capital improvements and long-term operation and maintenance costs.

5.1. Inventory

5.1.1. Transportation Network

Gilmer County's transportation network is addressed in Element 8: Transportation.

5.1.2. Water Supply and Treatment

5.1.2.1. Operational Responsibility

The Ellijay-Gilmer County Water and Sewerage Authority (WSA) is responsible for water supply, treatment, and distribution in Ellijay, East Ellijay, and Gilmer County. The WSA was approved by legislature in March 1987 and is governed by a five-member board of directors which meets monthly. Three members of the board are appointed by the Gilmer County Board of Commissioners, one member is appointed by the City of East Ellijay, and one member is appointed by the City of Ellijay.

Growth and Development Fees. In 2000, a Water and Sewerage Rate Design Study was conducted to address ongoing financial requirements and alternatives for future capital funding. The study recommended growth and development fees (impact fees) to support infrastructure improvements. The impact fees would be directly linked to water meter sizes and types of accounts (e.g. residential, commercial, etc.). In March 2001, Gilmer County

Element Outline:

5.1. Inventory

- 5.1.1. *Transportation Network*
- 5.1.2. *Water Supply and Treatment*
- 5.1.3. *Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment*
- 5.1.4. *Solid Waste Management*
- 5.1.5. *Public Safety – Law Enforcement*
- 5.1.6. *Public Safety – Fire Protection and Emergency Management*
- 5.1.7. *Hospitals and Other Public Health Facilities*
- 5.1.8. *Recreation*
- 5.1.9. *General Government Facilities*
- 5.1.10. *Education Facilities*
- 5.1.11. *Libraries and Other Cultural Facilities*
- 5.1.12. *Other Public Facilities*

5.2. Assessment of Current and Future Needs

5.3. Community Goals and Implementation Program

adopted a water and sewerage Growth and Development Fee Ordinance. Collection of impact fees began in October 2001.

Because the WSA utilizes impact fees for water and sewer capital facilities, this comprehensive plan must include a Capital Improvements Element (CIE) for both water and sewer facilities. A CIE is required to contain the following five components:

1. Projection of Needs
2. Service Area
3. Levels of Service
4. Schedule of Improvements
5. Funding Sources

The components as they pertain to the CIE for water supply and treatment are provided in the sections which follow.

5.1.2.2. CIE: Projection of Needs

According to the DCA's publication *Impact Fees: Georgia's Comprehensive Requirements, Volume Two*, the projection of needs should be based upon the population projections and employment forecasts presented in the population and economic development elements of this plan. It should indicate system improvements that will be required to serve growth and should consider the impact of extending or upgrading services to various areas within the county might affect the local economy; the rate direction and quality of development; and natural and historic resources.

As discussed previously in the population, economic development, and housing elements, Gilmer County has been experiencing significant growth over the past decade and this rate is expected to continue in the future. This growth has had and will continue to have a significant impact on community facilities and service and will require a significant investment on the part of public service providers, including the WSA, in terms of capital and other resources. The WSA has determined that a way to support infrastructure improvements was to implement impact fees.

Current Level of Service. The WSA has three raw water supplies: the Cartecay River, the Ellijay River, and Joyce Spring. Raw water from these sources is collected and treated chemically before being piped into the water supply system. The WSA has eleven storage tanks with a total storage capacity of 1,815,000 gallons. Its distribution system contains eight booster pumping stations and 344 miles of water lines.

In 1998, the WSA upgraded their Cartecay Water Treatment Plant from a permitted capacity of 4.0 MGD to 5.5 MGD of water. As of January 2004, withdrawal from the Cartecay River was 4.0 MGD. The WSA has applied for an additional withdrawal of 1.5 MGD from the Ellijay River. Given these figures, the current water treatment level of service can be quantified as 4.0 MGD (monthly average).

In 2002, the WSA had 3,167 residential/household connections with 224,251,800 total gallons billed and 393 commercial connections with 923,555,100 total gallons billed. (See Figure 5-A.) Approximately 45% of the WSA's water customers are in Gilmer County, 45% are in Ellijay, and 10% are in East Ellijay. Gold Kist Company is the largest water customer and uses about 40% of the total consumption.

The level of service index for water service is established in the WSA's *Water and Sewer Connection Fee Analysis*. Because of the unique nature of water demand in Gilmer County (approximately 40% of the total demand being used by one customer), a "Base Meter Equivalent" (BME) is used as the measure of level of service. The base meter is a ¾" meter, which is the standard for a residential unit and has a maximum rated capacity of 18 gallons per minute. A conversion factor is calculated for each larger size meter by dividing the capacity of the base meter into the capacity of the larger meter. For instance, the rated maximum capacity of a 1" meter is 50 gpm. Fifty gpm divided by 18gpm yields a factor of 2.78. In other words, a 1" meter has a capacity 2.78 times that of a ¾" meter and thus is the equivalent of 2.78 base meters. BMEs are calculated for each meter size in the system.

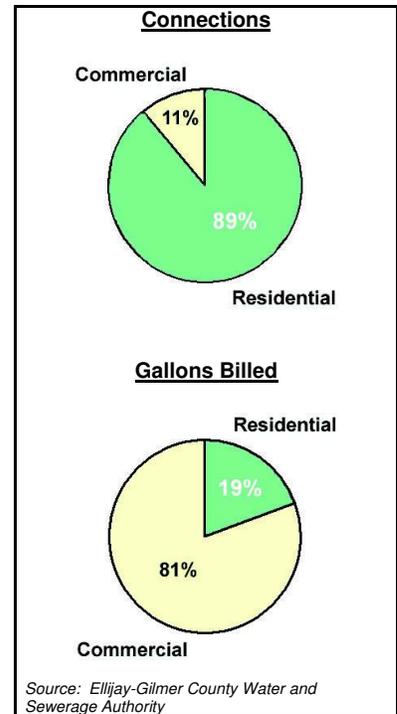


Figure 5-A. Water Connections and Gallons Billed in 2002

The intent of the BME calculation is to determine the average flow for an average water customer. The vast majority of customers in the county are on ¾" meters. Individual customers that use large amounts of system capacity can skew the flow calculations and this has been factored into the BME calculation. (Details on the specifics of the BME calculations can be found in the appendix of the *Water and Sewer Connection Fee Analysis*.)

Table 5-A shows the service levels using the BME method. The level of service for residential development is established at 492 gallons per day (gpd) while service levels for non-residential development are established by base meter equivalent.

Table 5-A. Level of Service for Water Customers Using Base Meter Equivalent

Development Type	Meter Size	BME	Average Daily Flow (gpd)
Residential Development	¾"	1	492
Non-Residential Development	¾"	1	492
	1"	2.78	1,368
	1 ½"	5.56	2,736
	2"	8.89	4,374
	3"	16.67	8,202
	4"	33.33	16,398
	6"	55.56	27,336
	8"	88.89	43,734
	10"	127.78	62,868

Source: *Water and Sewer Connection Fee Analysis, 2004*

Adequacy of Existing Service. The water treatment plant is utilizing its full permitted withdrawal of 4.0 MGD but not its full treatment capacity of 5.5 MGD. It has applied for an additional withdrawal of 1.5 MGD. If this permit is obtained, the treatment plant will be operating at its full permitted capacity of 5.5 MGD.

Current system deficiencies include limited fire protection in the Coosawattee River Resort and a lack of storage tanks. Offstream storage is needed for drought situations.

In addition, approximately 10,000 feet of Transite (asbestos cement) pipe along Main Street and River Street leading into Ellijay needs to be replaced. Replacing this line will not increase capacity.

Variations in and Limitations on Current Service. Public water lines only exist in certain parts of the county, primarily near in and near the limits of the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay. (See Figure 5-A.) All meters tied into the WSA system receive the same level of service using the base meter equivalent measurement presented earlier. Other measurements of service levels, such as system pressure, may vary depending upon location. Considering the steep topography in portions of Gilmer County, it is not surprising that users at high elevations will have a lower system pressure than those at lower elevations.

Additionally, the fact that inadequately sized lines exist throughout portions of the Coosawattee River Resort has prevented the provision of fire hydrants in all parts of the resort, even though public water service is available to all housing units.

Areas of Need for New Capital Facilities or Infrastructure. Two primary areas will be in need of new capital facilities to support future land use goals: the Highway 515 corridor in the area of the Highlands development and Clear Creek Road at and surrounding the new public school campus and proposed business and technology park. These two areas are discussed in the land use element on page 6-16.

Inventory Data and Projection Methodologies. The projection methodologies in the 2001 capital improvements plan and the subsequent *Water and Sewer Connection Fee Analysis* were based upon population and employment projections made by the NGRDC in 2000. This element uses the new projection figures for housing and economic development found in this 2004-2025 plan. These projections formed the basis for developing water facility needs through 2025. (Note: Infrastructure needs were found to be essentially the same as the "high residential/moderate industrial growth" scenario presented in the 2001 capital improvements plan. Project completion time frames have been modified.)

Infrastructure Needs for the Planning Horizon. To meet the demand for future water services, as well as the need for additional storage capacity, expansion of capital facilities will be needed. These needs can be best described in terms of the demand that can be met upon completion (total capacity) and are shown below in Table 5-B.

Table 5-B. Water Infrastructure Needs for the Planning Horizon

Total Capacity (MGD Average Weekday Demand)	Estimated Time Frame	Water Supply and Treatment Projects	Water Transmission and Distribution Projects	Estimated Cost to Increase to Capacity Level
5	2004-2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Raw Water Line from Ellijay PS to Cartecay WTP ▪ Expand WTP to 5.5 MGD ▪ Expand Ellijay River PS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4 Water Storage Tanks ▪ Line Replacement ▪ New Water Mains (6", 8", and 10") ▪ Misc. New Water Lines ▪ 1 Booster Pumping Station 	\$ 8.8 Million
7.5	2011-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Carter's Lake Intake and PS ▪ Coosawattee WTP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coosawattee Transmission Main (24") ▪ 2 Water Storage Tanks ▪ Misc. New Lines ▪ 2 Booster Pumping Stations 	\$ 21.6 Million
10	2016-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand Carter's Lake PS ▪ Expand Coosawattee WTP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 Water Storage Tanks ▪ Misc. New Lines ▪ 2 Booster Pumping Stations 	\$ 13.4 Million
15	2021-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand Carter's Lake PS ▪ Expand Coosawattee WTP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 Water Storage Tanks ▪ Misc. New Lines ▪ 2 Booster Pumping Stations 	\$ 27.9 Million

Source: WSA

Table 5-C on page 5-7 lists the specific water system improvement projects to be undertaken between 2004 and 2009.

5.1.2.3. CIE: Service Levels

Designation and Description of Future Service Levels. Future service levels are designated in the same manner as the existing levels of service. Design capacity is based on an allocation of 492 gpd per BME. (Note that not all customers will utilize the full design capacity and that demand can vary significantly depending upon the time of day and day of the week.) The need for capital projects is based upon projected demand which is derived from economic development and housing projections.

Varying Service Levels. Service levels for the provision of water treatment and distribution will be uniform throughout the service area. In reality, the service demand place on the system by individual users will vary greatly.

Excess Service Capacity and Recovery of Costs. Excess Service Capacity and Recovery of Costs. The *2004 Water and Sewer Connection Fee Analysis* prepared for the WSA establishes excess system capacity for the water system of 1.05 MGD. (4.0 MGD total capacity less 2.95 MGD average daily flows.) This figure was then used to calculate the project cost amount that can be recouped from new growth. The net present value of the excess capacity is \$ 449,045.

5.1.2.4. CIE: Service Area

There is one service area for public water. It includes Ellijay, East Ellijay, and all of the unincorporated areas of Gilmer County. Figure 5-B illustrates where public water is currently available in the service area. While much of the residential development outside Ellijay and East Ellijay uses individual wells, water service is available in several of the county's residential developments.

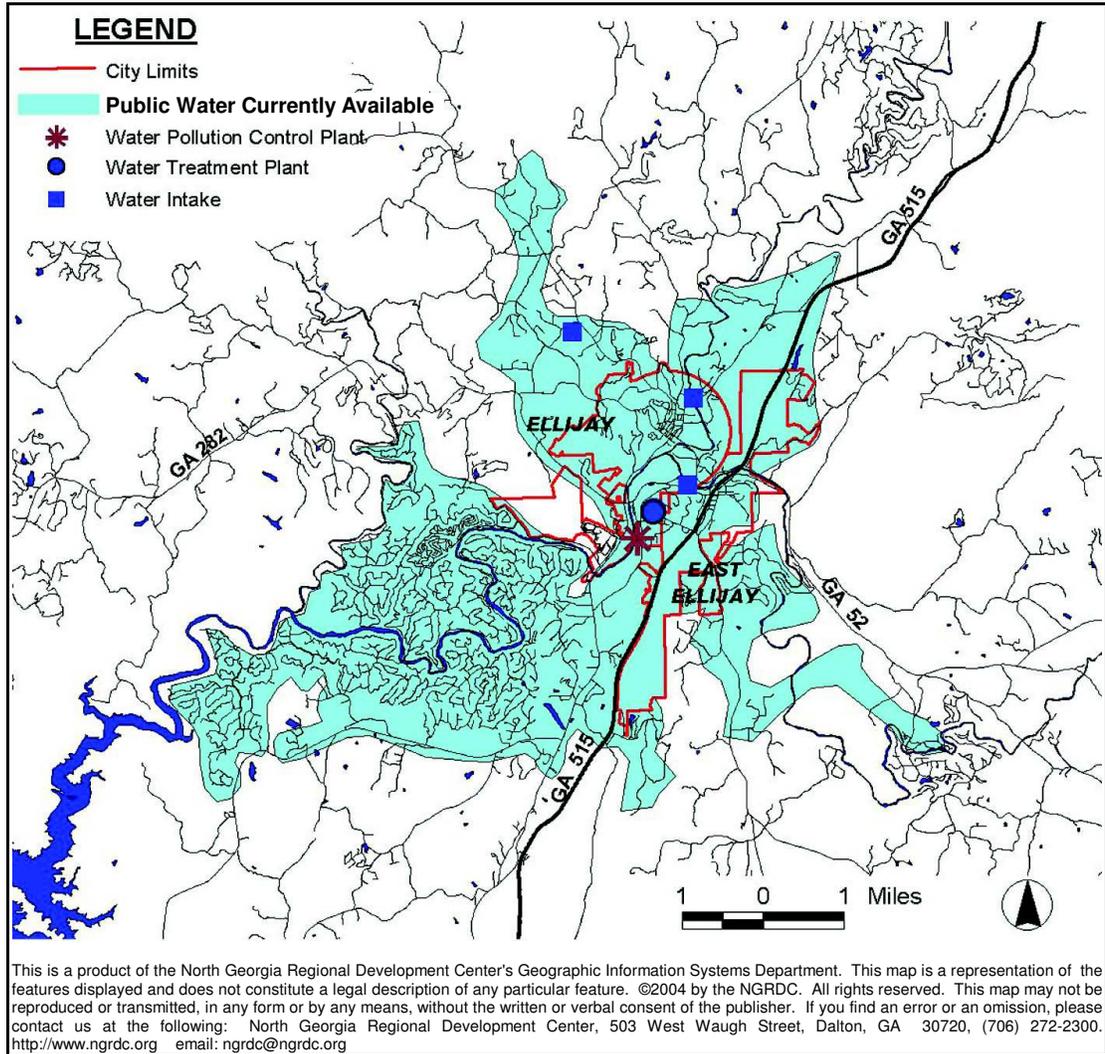


Figure 5-B. Public Water Availability in Ellijay, East Ellijay, and Gilmer County

5.1.2.5. CIE: Schedule of Improvements and Funding Sources

Table 5-C below presents all impact fee-related capital improvements to be undertaken from 2004 to 2009. All projects are assigned to the county-wide service area. These projects are not required to upgrade service levels for existing development. The percentage of each project's total cost that is directly attributable to adding capacity to serve new development is listed in the column entitled "Percentage of Funding from Impact Fees."

**Table 5-C. Ellijay-Gilmer County Water and Sewerage Authority
Water Transmission and Distribution Capital Projects: 7/1/04 to 6/31/09**

Project Number and Description	Project Start Date	Project End Date	Estimated Cost	Percentage of Funding from Impact Fees	Other Funding Sources
WD 13, Water Tank, location to be determined	2004	2005	\$600,000	55%	ARC
WD 35, Calhoun Transmission Main	2004	2005	\$1,800,000	33%	EGCWSA, GEFA
WD 36, Water Tank, to be located @ Victory Circle	2005	2006	\$750,000	100%	--
WD 37, Water Tank, to be located @ Victory Circle	2006	2007	\$750,000	100%	--
WD 38, Miscellaneous New Mains, 6 thru 8-inch	2004	2009	\$1,151,160	80%	EGCWSA, GEFA
WD 43, Miscellaneous Mains, 8 thru 10 inch	2004	2009	\$1,216,978	80%	EGCWSA, GEFA
WD 44, Miscellaneous Mains, 12-16 inch.	2004	2009	\$1,288,000	80%	EGCWSA, GEFA
WD 47, Booster Pumping Station, location to be determined	2004	2005	\$105,000	80%	EGCWSA, GEFA
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:			\$ 7,661,138		

Source: Ellijay-Gilmer Water and Sewerage Authority (EGCWSA)
ARC – Appalachian Regional Commission, GEFA - Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority

5.1.2.6. Additional Information

Staffing. The WSA has 33 full-time employees. Its Administrative Services Division includes management, administration, human resources, customer relations, regulatory liaison, accounting, and billing personnel. Because the WSA's present office space is small and does not have handicap access, a drive-thru payment window, or a conference room, the Authority purchased a building and property on Progress Road in November 2003. When the renovations of the building are complete, the Administrative Services Division will move its operations to that location.

Recent Programs and Accomplishments. To better serve its customers, the Authority has implemented the following programs:

- Developed a customer confidences report in June 1999 entitled "Water Life Lines."
- Made improvements to the Cartecay Water Treatment Plant through grants from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).
- Developed a Capital Improvement Plan to define line extensions and funding.
- Became a member of the North Georgia RDC source water assessment program.
- Approved a Meter Replacement Policy which will replace 50 meters per month.
- Developed the first entire water system map.
- Developed a financial plan in April 2000.

The Authority implemented a water conservation plan in 2003 with guidelines in the following areas: water loss, water demand management, treatment plant management, a rate making policy, plumbing ordinance/codes, conservation education programs, water use reports, and long term planning. This plan was required by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division.

Assessment: Water Supply and Treatment

As shown earlier in Table 5-B, the continued growth in population and the economy will require approximately \$72 million in water infrastructure improvements in the next twenty years. It is expected that these improvements will be funded through growth and development fees, state and local bonds, and federal and state grants.

5.1.3. Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment

5.1.3.1. Operational Responsibility

In addition to providing water service, the Ellijay-Gilmer County Water and Sewer Authority is responsible for the gathering and treatment of residential, commercial, and industrial wastewater.

As stated previously, the WSA implemented impact fees in 2001 for the provision of water supply and treatment and the provision of wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal. As such, this comprehensive plan must include a Capital Improvements Element for the

The required five components are provided in the following sections.

5.1.3.2. CIE: Projection of Needs

Current Level of Service. The Authority operates the Ellijay Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) sewerage treatment facility which is located on the southwest side of Ellijay. After treatment at this facility, sewerage is discharged into the Coosawattee River. The maximum wastewater treatment capacity is designed at 2.5 MGD and the present sewerage flow to the plant is approximately 2.3 MGD, average 7 day flow.

Demands on the WPCP have caused the Authority to require large industrial users to pre-treat their industrial wastes before they are discharged to the wastewater treatment plant. Currently, the largest sewerage customer is the Gold Kist Company which utilizes between 50% and 60% of the treatment plant capacity daily flows.

As with water service, the level of service index for sewer service is established in the WSA's *Water and Sewer Connection Fee Analysis* using a "Base Meter Equivalent" (BME).

Table 5-D shows the service levels using the BME method. The level of service for residential development is established at 391 gallons per day (gpd) while service levels for non-residential development are established by base meter equivalent.

Table 5-D. Level of Service for Sewer Customers Using Base Meter Equivalent

Development Type	Meter Size	BME	Average Daily Flow (gpd)
Residential Development	¾"	1	391
Non-Residential Development	¾"	1	391
	1"	2.78	1,087
	1 ½"	5.56	2,174
	2"	8.89	3,476
	3"	16.67	6,518
	4"	33.33	13,032
	6"	55.56	21,724
	8"	88.89	34,756
	10"	127.78	49,962

Source: *Water and Sewer Connection Fee Analysis, 2004*

Adequacy of Existing Service. Existing facilities meet current needs; however, the current sewerage treatment plant is operating near capacity.

Variations in Current Service. All meters tied into the WSA system receive the same level of service using the base meter equivalent measurement presented earlier.

Limiting Engineering, Economic, or Environmental Factors. The primary limitations involve steep slopes and the distance to the existing treatment plant. For example, the new school campus and proposed business and technology park on Clear Creek Road is located in a different drainage basin from the existing plant. For this reason, a pump system will be needed, substantially increasing the cost of providing sewer service to this project.

Areas of Need for New Capital Facilities or Infrastructure. Two primary areas will be in need of sewer facilities to support future land use goals: the Highway 515 corridor in the area of the Highlands development and (2) Clear Creek Road surrounding the new public school campus and future business and technology park. These two areas are discussed in the land use element on page 6-16.

Inventory Data and Projection Methodologies. The projection methodologies in the 2002 capital improvements plan and the subsequent *Water and Sewer Connection Fee Analysis* were based upon population and employment projections made by the NGRDC in 2000. This element uses the new projection figures for housing and economic development found in this 2004-2025 plan. These projections formed the basis for developing sewer facility needs through 2025. (Note: Infrastructure needs were found to be essentially the same as the "high residential/moderate industrial growth" scenario presented in the 2002 capital improvements plan. Project completion time frames have been modified.)

Infrastructure Needs for the Planning Horizon. To meet the demand for future sewer services, as well as the need for additional storage capacity, expansion of capital facilities will be needed. These needs can be best described in terms of the demand that can be met upon completion (total capacity) and are shown below in Table 5-E.

Table 5-E. Sewer Infrastructure Needs for the Planning Horizon

Total Capacity (MGD Average Weekday Demand)	Estimated Time Frame	Sewerage Treatment Projects	Collection and Transmission Projects	Estimated Cost to Increase to Capacity Level
5	2004-2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WPCP Expansion to 4 MGD ▪ Biosolids Treatment Facility ▪ WPCP expansion to 5 MGD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lift Station - 1 MGD ADWF ▪ Multiple 8" to 30" sewers 	\$ 24.6 million
7.5	2011-2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Phase 4 WPCP Expansion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lift Station - 1 MGD ADWF ▪ Multiple 8" to 30" sewers 	\$ 20.6 million
10	2018-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Phase 1, South Area WPCP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lift Station - 1 MGD ADWF ▪ Multiple 8" to 30" sewers 	\$ 22.4 million

Source: WSA

Table 5-F on page 5-12 lists the specific sewer system improvement projects to be undertaken between 2004 and 2009.

5.1.3.3. CIE: Service Levels

Designation and Description of Future Service Levels. Future service levels are designated in the same manner as the existing levels of service. Design capacity is based on an allocation of 381 gpd per BME. (Note that not all customers will utilize the full design capacity and that demand can vary significantly depending upon the time of day and day of the week.) The need for capital projects is based upon projected demand which is derived from economic development and housing projections.

Varying Service Levels. Service levels for the provision of wastewater treatment, collection, and transmission, will be uniform throughout the service area. In reality, the service demand place on the system by individual users may vary greatly.

Excess Service Capacity and Recovery of Costs. The *2004 Water and Sewer Connection Fee Analysis* prepared for the WSA establishes excess system capacity for the water system of 0.63 MGD. (3.0 MGD total capacity less 2.37 MGD average daily flows.) This figure was then used to calculate the project cost amount that can be recouped from new growth. The net present value of the excess capacity is \$ 864,058.

5.1.3.4. CIE: Service Area

There is one service area for public sewer. It includes Ellijay, East Ellijay, and all of the unincorporated areas of Gilmer County. Sewerage service is presently limited to areas within the cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay as shown in Figure 5-C.

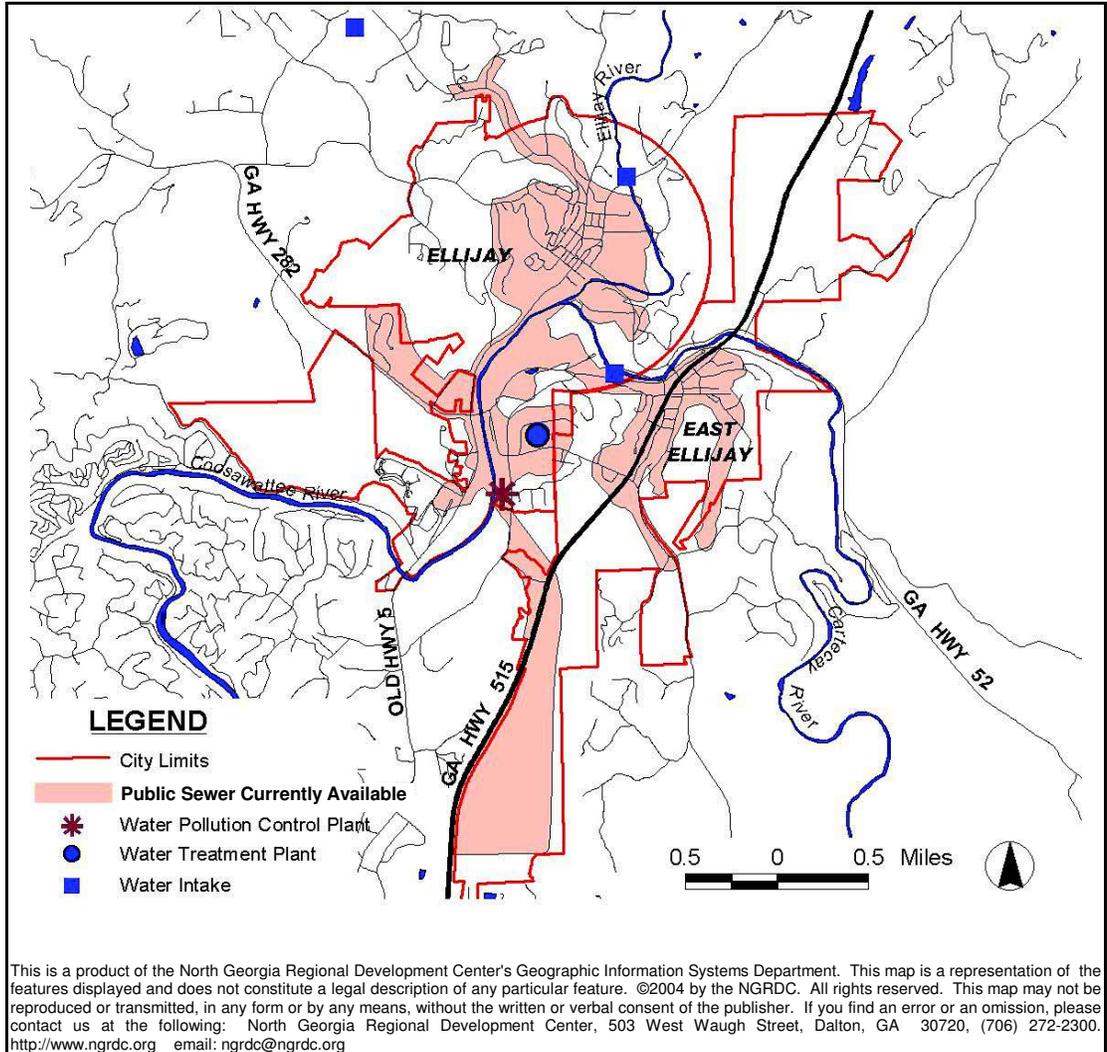


Figure 5-C. Public Sewer Availability in Ellijay and East Ellijay

5.1.3.5. CIE: Schedule of Improvements and Funding Sources

**Table 5-F. Ellijay-Gilmer County Water and Sewerage Authority
Sewage Treatment, Collection, and Transmission Capital Projects: 7/1/04 to 6/31/09**

Project Number and Description	Project Start Date	Project End Date	Estimated Cost	Percentage of Funding from Impact Fees	Other Funding Sources
ST 9, Phase 3 WPCP Expansion to 4 MGD	2005	2006	\$4,500,000	10%	GEFA, WSA
SC 13, Miscellaneous 8-inch Sewer Mains	2004	2008	\$191,100	80%	GEFA, WSA
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:			\$4,691,100		

Source: WSA
GEFA – Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority

Assessment: Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment

As shown previously in Table 5-E, \$67.6 million in infrastructure improvements will be needed to accommodate anticipated growth over the next 20 years.

Gilmer County will continue to issue septic tank permits for residential and commercial developments; therefore, the sewer service should not be strained by such developments in the County.

5.1.3. Solid Waste Management

Collection and Disposal: Gilmer County.

Gilmer County presently does not provide streetside garbage collection services. Solid waste management activities are handled through collection facilities or “convenience centers.” The main convenience center is located at 456 Tower Road. The County operates six additional centers at the following locations: Cartecay, Tails Creek, White Path, Whitestone, Yukon, and Coosawattee. The newest facility is the Coosawattee convenience center which opened in August 2003. The locations of these facilities are shown in Figure 5-D. The useful life of the convenience centers is virtually unlimited because there is no landfilling, just waste compacting and transfer.



“Convenience Centers” are used throughout Gilmer County for solid waste disposal.

All waste collected at the convenience centers is contracted to a private hauler. The contract is reviewed annually, in accordance with County contractual policy. The current hauler is Appalachian Waste Systems (AWS).

A Corrective Action Plan (CAP) has been completed for the closed Old Tower Road Landfill and this plan has been submitted to the Georgia EPD Solid Waste office. The CAP includes improvements to the leachate management system with a new and enlarged sewer line connection, and the installation of a methane venting system.

The County presently does not intend to permit or construct a new “municipal” solid waste landfill. Instead, the County realizes the efficiency of regionalized landfills as being in the current best interest of the County.

The County operates an inert facility at its Public Works property off of Highway 52 East. This facility accepts landscape debris, but is expected to reach its capacity in the next year. The county does not plan to open another inert landfill as a private inert landfill (the K & M inert landfill) has recently opened near the Gilmer/Pickens County line.

Collection and Disposal: Ellijay. The City of Ellijay contracts with Cantrell Sanitation to provide curbside trash collection for residential properties in Ellijay. Collection occurs once a week at a cost of \$10 per month to the residential customer and \$9.86 to the City. The City of Ellijay does not provide curbside collection to commercial or industrial properties. Commercial waste is handled by private contractors on a subscription basis.

Collection and Disposal: East Ellijay. The City of Ellijay contracts with Sanford Garbage Service to provide curbside trash collection for residential properties in East Ellijay. Residents are not billed directly for this service which costs the City approximately \$24,000 per year, plus certain expenses such as the provision of a dump truck to Sanford. Commercial waste is handled by private contractors on a subscription basis.

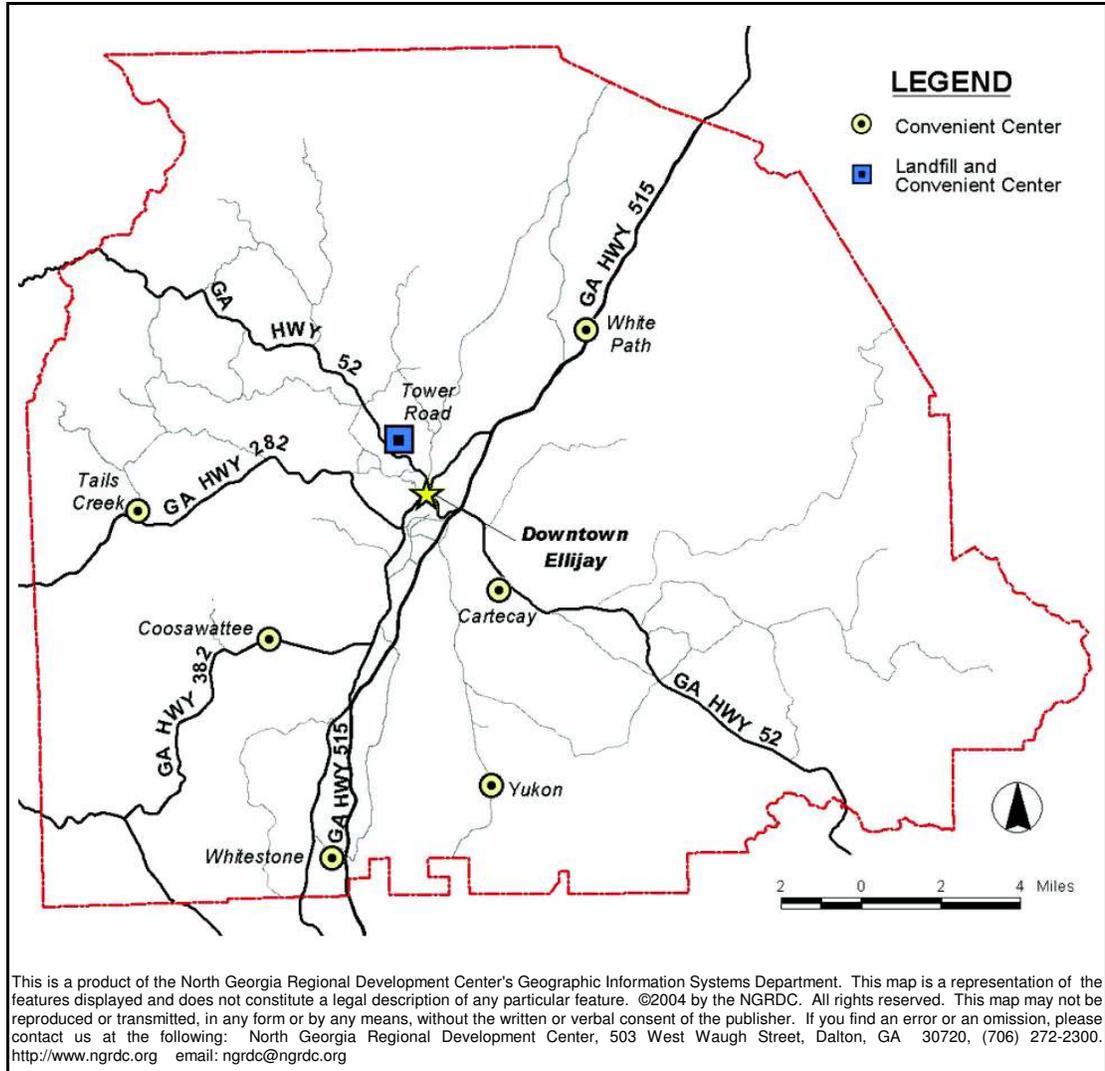


Figure 5-D. Solid Waste Facilities

Waste Generation and Reduction. Gilmer County generates approximately 725 tons of waste per month (8,700 tons per year) from all of the convenience centers and the Tower Road collection facility. This is a 29% reduction from the 1993 figure of 12,229 tons per year. All waste is contracted to private regional landfill facilities.

Table 5-G shows some of the sources of the reduction in the volume of waste generated. Much of the reduction comes from the fact that farmers can no longer dispose of dead chickens through the County centers; they must be composted or disposed of by other means. In addition, the County operates an inert landfill which primarily accepts yard waste and tree debris. This waste is ground into mulch, and on average, one fourth of the mulch is given away. The inert facility handles approximately 670 tons per year.

Table 5-G. Waste Reduction Measures

Source of Reduction (tons)	1998	1999	2000
Composting of dead chickens on farms	1,601	1,890	2,018
Mulched inert waste	168	164	165
Recycled metals	780	790	800
Recycled tires	108	110	112
Recycled newspaper	--	--	149
Total Tons	2,657	2,954	3,244

Recycling. Special containers for the recycling of newspaper, magazines, and aluminum are provided at the county convenience centers. Refrigerators, stoves, washers, dryers, air conditioners, and compressors are collected and processed at the Tower Road facility. Freon is carefully removed from non-salvageable compressors and recycled. Appliances which can be safely reconditioned are offered to needy or disadvantaged families as available.

Gilmer County is now processing roughly 500 used tires per month. These are sent to tire recycling facilities in the Georgia and this program has resulted in the efficient removal over 15,000 used car and truck tires from across the county.

Assessment: Solid Waste Management

The Gilmer County Solid Waste Department will continue to expand and improve its convenience centers and will add new centers in growth areas as needed. The County will be expanding its primary waste collection convenience center at Tower Road by adding capacity for two large roll-off container collection bins with expansion of the bin access ramp for non-putrescible household rubbish and/or construction debris.

Detailed information on solid waste management in Gilmer County can be found in the Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay *Joint Solid Waste Management Plan*, which is being prepared concurrently with this comprehensive plan.

5.1.5. Public Safety – Law Enforcement

Operational Responsibility and Service Area. The Gilmer County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement to the unincorporated areas of Gilmer County. The Ellijay Police Department and the East Ellijay Police Department provide law enforcement services in their respective municipalities.

Facilities and Resources. Law enforcement facilities and resources are listed below in Table 5-H. The locations of the various facilities are shown in Figure 5-E.

Table 5-H. Law Enforcement Facilities and Resources*

Resources	Gilmer County Sheriff's Department	Gilmer County Detention Center	Ellijay Police Department	East Ellijay Police Department
Current Base Location	Highway 52 East	Highway 52 East	Ellijay City Hall	East Ellijay City Hall
Personnel	1 sheriff 23 full-time deputies 6 investigators 2 school resource officers 6 other staff positions	25 staff	1 police chief 9 full-time officers 1 records clerk	1 police chief 5 officers 2 city clerks assist with paperwork
Vehicles/Fleet	32 vehicles	2 vehicles	6 patrol vehicles	6 patrol vehicles

Sources: *As of January 2004.

The Gilmer County Detention Center is operated by the Gilmer County Sheriff's Department. It can accommodate a maximum of 144 inmates (116 males and 28 females). In May 2004, the facility housed 102 male and 24 female inmates. The inmates were from Gwinnett County (16), Dawson County (2), East Ellijay (6), Ellijay (7), and Gilmer County (95).

Demand for Service. In 2003, the Gilmer County Sheriff's Department averaged 2,000 calls per month, while the Ellijay and East Ellijay Police Departments averaged 410 and 456 calls per month, respectively. Crime statistics as reported by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation are shown below in Table 5-I.

Table 5-I. Gilmer County Crime Statistics by Offense

	Murder	Rape	Robbery	Assault	Burglary	Larceny	Vehicle Theft
1997	1	1	1	4	53	62	14
1998	0	2	9	4	92	65	23
1999	1	0	1	10	109	64	31
2000	1	0	1	1	105	112	39
2001	1	1	2	14	175	115	31
2002	1	0	0	6	90	114	19

Source: Georgia Bureau of Investigation <http://www.ganet.org/gbi/gbistate1.html>

Gilmer County is facing a growing rate of drug-related activity, particularly related to methamphetamines. Family violence is also common in the county. The City's of East Ellijay's police department deals with more business-related crimes (e.g. counterfeiting, shoplifting, fraud) because of the number of business located within its boundaries. The City of Ellijay has more gang activity than East Ellijay or the unincorporated county.

Assessment: Law Enforcement

Gilmer County Sheriff's Department. The patrol division of the County Sheriff's Department has a shortage of officers. Currently, two officers patrol the county during each shift, but the normal workload requires four officers per shift. Adding two patrol officers per shift would bring the total number of deputies/officers/investigators to 37. This equates to a level of service of 1 officer per 750 citizens using 2004 population estimates.

Based on future population projections, by 2015, the Gilmer County Sheriff's Department will need at least 60 deputies/officers/investigators to achieve the level of service provided by adding 2 patrol officers per shift. By 2025, it will need a total of 98 to maintain the same ratio.

City of Ellijay Police Department. Plans are being developed for a new public facility to be built next to the existing Ellijay City Hall. This facility will house both the Ellijay Police Department and the Ellijay Fire Department, with the departments sharing certain resources such as a kitchen, fitness room, training room, etc. Constructing a shared facility should be very cost-effective for the City of Ellijay. In 2003, the department replaced its 40-year-old base communication system. The new system will be adequate for the planning period. Vehicles are replaced on an as-needed basis, usually one per year.

Based on future population projections, by 2025, the City of Ellijay will need at least 13 officers to maintain the current ratio of 1 officer per 176 citizens.

City of East Ellijay Police Department. Currently, the department would be better able to serve the community with the addition of 2 or 3 more officers. By 2025, the department will need at least 13 police officers to maintain the current ratio of 1 officer per 141 citizens. (Given that the City of East Ellijay Police Department handles more business-related crime, and given the rapid rate at which commercial development is occurring in the City, it is possible that even more officers will be needed by 2025 than is estimated.)

5.1.6. Public Safety – Fire Protection and Emergency Management

Operational Responsibility and Service Area. The Gilmer County Fire Department provides fire protection services to all areas of the county, including the City of East Ellijay, while the City of Ellijay Fire Department serves the City of Ellijay. The Gilmer County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) provides emergency management services to all areas of the county. The Gilmer County E911 Center provides emergency dispatching services service to all of Gilmer County.

Facilities and Resources. Fire protection and emergency management resources are listed below in Table 5-J. The locations of the facilities are shown in Figure 5-E.

Table 5-J. Fire Protection and Emergency Management Resources

Resources	Gilmer County Fire Department	Gilmer County Emergency Management Agency	Ellijay Fire Department
Number of Stations	10	2	1
Primary Service Area	Gilmer County and East Ellijay	Gilmer County	City of Ellijay
Mutual Aid Area	Murray, Pickens, and Dawson Counties	--	Fannin, Murray, Pickens, and Dawson Counties
Personnel	3 full-time career firefighters 3 part-time career firefighters 80 volunteer firefighters 2 certified arson investigators	17 full-time and 10 part-time paramedics and EMTs, and numerous volunteer search and rescue personnel	1 Chief 3 full-time career firefighters 20 volunteer firefighters
Vehicles/ Fleet	8 Class A Pumpers 6 Brush Trucks 3 Rescue Vehicles 4 Tankers	4 ambulances 2 rescue boats 4 four-wheel drive vehicles	2 Engines 1 Eighty-Five Foot Platform
State Insurance Office (ISO) Rating	East Ellijay: 7 Gilmer County locations within 1000' of a fire hydrant: 7 Gilmer County locations more than 5 miles from a fire station: 9	n/a	Ellijay: 5

Sources: Gilmer County and Ellijay Fire Departments

Gilmer County Fire Department. The Gilmer County Fire Department headquarters is located at 1561 South Main Street. The facility includes equipment bays, living quarters, and offices. Shifts operate 24 hours on/48 hours off.

The fire department has nine additional fire stations at locations throughout Gilmer County as shown in Figure 5-E. The newest station is Station 10 in Turniptown which opened in November 2003. The fire department has a target response time of 8-10 minutes.

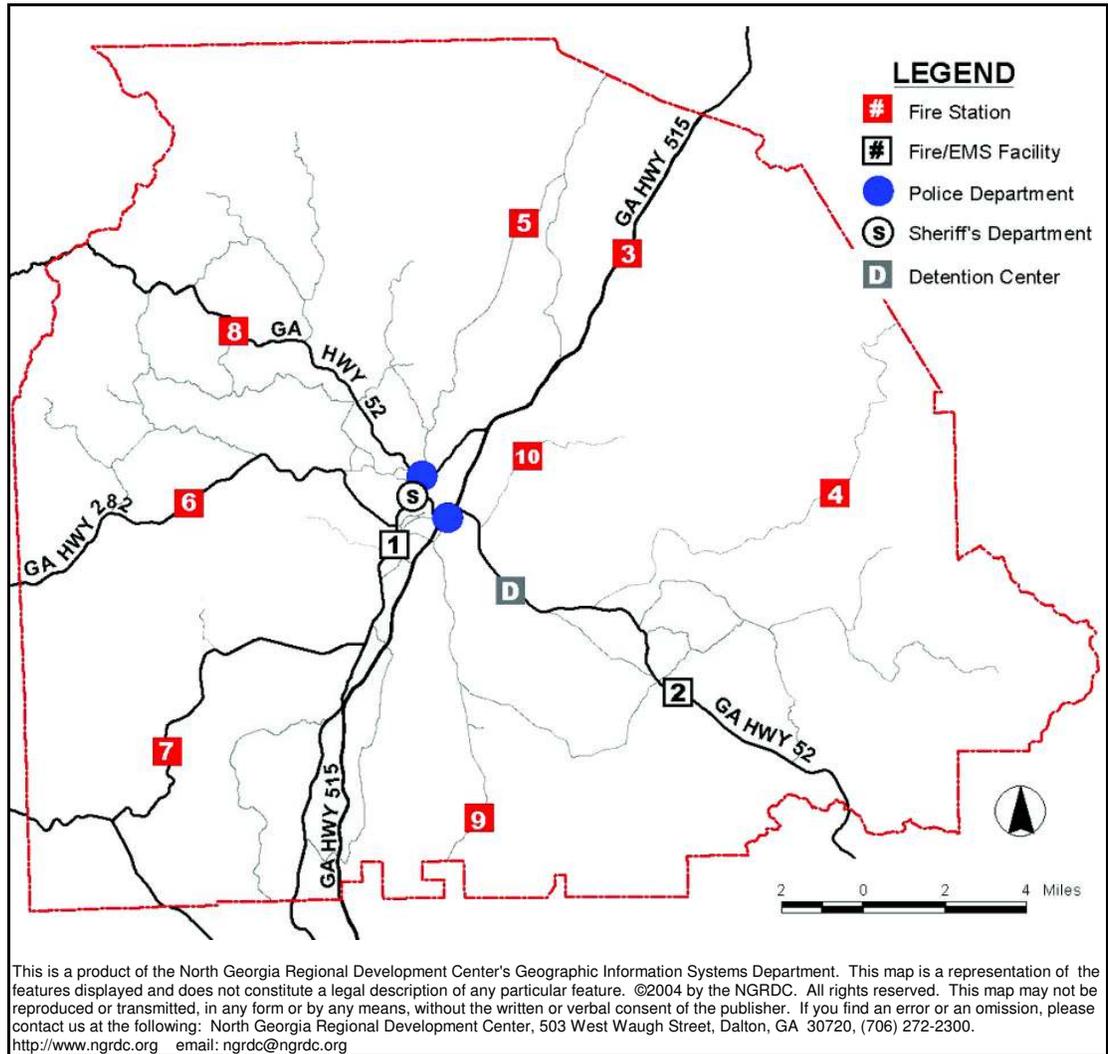


Figure 5-E. Public Safety Facilities

Gilmer County Emergency Management Agency (EMA). The Gilmer County Fire Department manages the EMA. The EMA facility is located at 1561 South Main Street and includes 8 bays for equipment, living quarters for eight employees, and multiple offices. All EMA personnel meet the annual state recertification requirements and also perform firefighting and rescue operations. Personnel are trained in ground search and rescue and swift water rescue. The EMA also has a dive team. Ambulances are located at the EMA facility and at Fire Station #2 in Cartecay.

Ellijay Fire Department. Historically, the City of Ellijay has relied on the Gilmer County Fire Department for fire protection, prevention, and safety services. Because of growth in Ellijay and Gilmer County, the City of Ellijay decided to form its own fire department. It was officially certified by the State of Georgia on February 21, 2002, and began responding to calls in July 2002.



The City of Ellijay Fire Department began operations in 2002.

Gilmer County E911. The E911 Center is located in a 2,800 square foot facility at 1561 South Main Street. It is staffed by a director, nine full-time dispatchers, two to three part-time dispatchers and two addressing/mapping personnel. Dispatchers work in twelve hour shifts, with 2 personnel minimum in each shift. Part-time personnel are used to provide a third operator on duty during peak hours.

Dispatchers have the capability of providing radio communications with all personnel in fire, EMS, search and rescue, ambulance, city police departments, county sheriff's department, Georgia Emergency Management Agency, and Georgia State Patrol. Other responsibilities of the E911 center include providing addresses for all structures in the county, maintaining an accurate addressing database for use in the enhanced 911 system, placing all street signs at intersections on county roads, and working with the tax assessor's department in keeping the county maps up-to-date.

Demand for Service. For the past three years, the Gilmer County Fire department has responded to an average of 1,200 calls per year. EMS has responded, on average, to 4,000 calls per year. Between 2001 and 2003, calls received at the 911 center increased by 26.7% as illustrated in Figure 5-F.

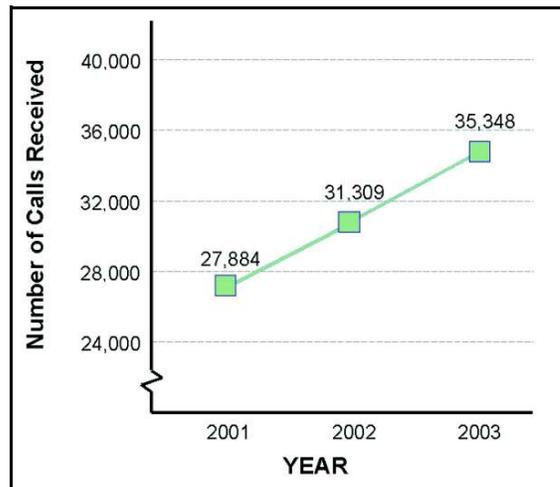


Figure 5-F. Number of Calls Received at the E911 Center

Assessment: Fire Protection and Emergency Management

Gilmer County Fire Department. Currently, the Fire Department is operating with 1 ½ staff persons per shift at each station. For optimum operations, four full-time persons are needed per station per shift.

Due to population growth in the outlying county area, future plans call for establishing two more fire stations with 4 full time people rotating each shift. A station in Whitestone is planned for 2004 and one more station is planned for the near future. The construction cost (excluding land cost) is estimated to be between \$50,000 and \$75,000.

The department has plans to upgrade communications, add personnel and equipment, and upgrade training requirements for all personnel. In addition, the department plans to upgrade and expand its efforts in promoting fire prevention through education, inspection, code enforcement, and investigation. Funding for this would come from grants and local funds.

A high priority need is a new, fully-equipped fire department headquarters. The current location on South Main Street has problems with ingress and egress, particularly during the AM and PM peak hours. Three acres of property have been donated for a new fire station on Highway 515, just south of the Highlands Center. Ideally, the new facility would be a combination Fire/EMS Station with administrative space and living quarters.

Gilmer County Emergency Management Agency. The EMA needs a hazardous warning system which includes the installation of 20 sirens to notify citizens of emergency situations such as tornado warnings. The county also needs to construct an emergency operations center containing a classroom for emergency operations training and a room to house citizens in emergency disaster situations. Potential sources of funding include federal grant programs.

To accommodate the growing county population, future plans for the EMA call for expansion of office facilities, and the addition of two or three units at key spots in the county. Potential locations include the north end of the county or the southwest corner of the county.

Ellijay Fire Department. Currently, the fire department's equipment is housed in a metal building behind City Hall that has been retrofitted to house fire trucks. This building was initially intended to serve as the City maintenance and storage facility. Because this space is inadequate, the City of Ellijay plans to build a new, two story fire department building. The building, which will be shared with the Ellijay Police Department, will contain three bays for fire trucks, an apparatus/equipment storage area, training room, physical fitness room, offices, and sleeping quarters.

Additional equipment will be needed in the future as the population grows and more businesses locate in the area. The City of Ellijay Fire Department will continue to improve operations, which will lead to lower ISO classifications in future years.

5.1.7. Hospitals and Other Public Health Facilities

Operational Responsibility. The North Georgia Medical Center, the Gilmer County Health Department, and Highland Rivers provide public health services in Gilmer County.

North Georgia Medical Center. The North Georgia Medical Center, located on South Main Street in Ellijay, is owned by SunLink Healthcare, Inc. The Medical Center provides a variety of services to Gilmer County residents and its primary facility is a 58-bed hospital, staffed by 15 physicians and 20 nurses. The hospital is also equipped with a 5-bed intensive care unit and a new emergency room with ER physician coverage 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Medical Center also operates a 100-bed nursing home for the elderly in Gilmer County. Currently the Gilmer Nursing Home has a staff of 10 registered nurses, 21 licensed practiced nurses, and 51 certified nursing assistants. The nursing home has a waiting list of 100 applicants.



The North Georgia Medical Center provides a variety of medical services to area residents.

In September 2003, the Gilmer Nursing Home was awarded the American Health Care Association's National Quality Award for demonstrating its commitment to the highest quality standards. It is the first hospital-based nursing home in Georgia to receive this award.

Another facility operated by the Medical Center is the specialty outpatient clinic, which offers special medical services to local patients. The clinic contracts with medical physicians such as cardiologists, urologists, vascular surgeons, gastrologists, and physical therapists from Atlanta and other areas to visit patients on a scheduled basis.

Gilmer County Health Department. The Gilmer County Health Department has a clinic that provides services such as immunization, family planning, cancer detection, blood pressure, diabetes detection, pediatric dental services, flu shots, scoliosis, and tuberculosis testing. The clinic is located at 28 Southside Church Street in Ellijay.

The Health Department is overseen by the Board of Health which is comprised of the Chairman of the County Commission; a licensed, practicing physician; a consumer or consumer advocate; a consumer representing the needy, underprivileged, or elderly; the superintendent of schools; the Mayor of Ellijay; and a person interested in promoting public health who is a consumer or a licensed nurse.

As of January 2004, the Health Department had a staff of 12, including a director, two registered nurses, one licensed practical nurse, one part-time nurse practitioner, two full-time interpreters (who also serving in other capacities), one "Women with Infants and Children" (WIC) clerk, several clerical positions, and an office manager.

The Health Department currently has 1,150 WIC clients, of whom approximately 40% are Hispanic/Latino. It also has a large family-planning clientele. The department offered 31 offsite flu shot clinics in 2003 and also participated with several local industries in offering health screening programs. The number of clients served by the Health Department over the past several years is shown in Table 5-K.

Table 5-K. Average Annual Number of Health Department Clients/Patients

	WIC	Family Planning	Child Health*	Adult Health**
1998	--	784	2,072	2,359
1999	824	824	2,103	3,186
2000	900	800	2,355	2,125
2001	1,013	796	2,158	3,627
2002	1,095	785	1,697	4,103
2003	1,150	858	1,514	3,757

Source: Gilmer County Health Department

* The number of child health clients has declined due to a new local pediatrician offering immunizations.

** Beginning in 2002, lab services were no longer available to the general public through the Health Department. The increase in adult health services reflects an increase in population-based programming and an increase in the number of flu shots given in the community.

Other programs offered by the Health Department include the following:

- perinatal case management
- hearing and vision screening
- well child check-ups
- population-based programs in local industries
- car seat fitting clinics and classes
- provision of car seats to anyone unable to purchase seats (funding from a Department of Highway Safety grant program)

Highland Rivers. Highlands Rivers Community Service Board is a mental outpatient health facility which provides programs for residents in counseling, alcohol and drug rehabilitation, psychiatric consultation, social work, mental retardation, and childhood and adolescent counseling.

Assessment: Hospitals and Public Health Facilities

North Georgia Medical Center. The Medical Center has made vast improvements such as the opening of their new state-of-the-art Emergency Room in January 2003. This facility contains seven treatment rooms, nine beds, two pediatric beds, two trauma rooms and an isolation room for communicable diseases or biohazards. In addition, a new, outpatient surgery center opened in November 2003.

The number of persons served by the hospital has continued to increase. As a result, plans are to break ground for a new 75 to 90 bed hospital in the next three to five years. The existing hospital would be renovated to include an additional 100 beds for the nursing home.

Gilmer County Health Department. Due to State budget cuts, the Gilmer County Health Department has reduced programs and staff.

Although the current facility is only ten years old, it is already overcrowded. The size of the waiting room is inadequate and maintaining client confidentiality is difficult because the rooms and waiting areas must serve multiple functions. The facility also lacks adequate program-specific rooms, so staff members must conduct education programs at off-site locations.

A new or expanded facility is needed to serve their growing population. This new facility would provide a meeting room as well as specialized rooms to maintain clients' privacy. Funding for such a facility would likely come from grants.

Because of the area's high teen pregnancy rate, the Health Department would like to offer teen parenting classes in the future. It would also like to offer well-child checkups in school.

Highlands Rivers. Due to budget cuts in programming, the Highlands Rivers Community Service Board has reduced their mental health services.

5.1.8. Recreation Facilities

Operational Responsibility. A five member Recreation Commission under the appointment of the Gilmer County Board of Commissioners provides policy direction to the Gilmer County Recreation Department. The Recreation Department is responsible for the day-to-day management of recreation activities.

Gilmer County River Park. The Recreation Department administers Gilmer County River Park and organizes recreation activities for county residents on a year-round basis. In addition, the Recreation Department has an agreement with the Gilmer County School Board for public use of school facilities for general and organized recreational use.



The Gilmer County River Park is an outstanding community amenity.

The majority of the Gilmer County River Park is located within the city limits of Ellijay, south of Highway 382 along the Coosawattee River. It is currently the only park and recreation facility that

is operated by Gilmer County and serves the entire county population including the cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay.

The River Park is approximately 50 acres, of which approximately 14 are leased from Georgia Power Company. Six of the 50 acres are located on the east side of the Coosawattee River and were donated by Gold Kist in 2003. The park contains the following facilities:

- five lighted baseball/softball fields
- two tee ball fields
- two soccer fields
- four lighted tennis courts
- one sheltered pavilion with rest room facilities
- two sheds with grills and picnic tables
- two playgrounds with equipment
- one swimming pool
- two paved parking areas
- a director's office which also provides public rest room facilities
- 4,000 linear foot walking/jogging trail
- one restroom facility at the soccer fields

The River Park functions as more than just a recreation facility. It is the site for numerous community events. For example, every year in October the Apple Festival occurs, attracting 50,000 visitors to the Gilmer County Fairgrounds which are located adjacent to the park. The park, trail, and parking areas are used extensively by visitors to the festival.

White Path Golf Course. White Path Golf Course, owned by Gilmer County, is an 18 hole course located north of Ellijay. It is open to the public and also offers memberships.



White Path Golf Course is open to the public.

Trails. There numerous hiking trails in Gilmer County including the 6.7 mile Bear Creek Trail and the 5.6 mile Mountaintown Creek Trail. The Bear Creek Trail and the Mountaintown Creek Trail are located in the northwest portion of the county off Gates Chapel Road. More information on the trails can be found at www.theblueridgehighlander.com/hiking_trails/north_georgia/gilmer.html.

Ellijay City Square. A small park is located in the middle of the square in downtown Ellijay. (See photo on page 4-38.) The City of Ellijay maintains this park which contains sidewalks, benches, landscaping, and flag poles. The City of Ellijay also sponsors the Fourth of July fireworks and the Christmas tree on the square. In the past, the City has provided funding for special recreation projects such as the resurfacing of the tennis courts at the County River Park.

Assessment: Recreation Facilities

According to the park standards established by the National Recreation and Park Association, every community of should have a park system of 6.25 to 10.5 acres per 1,000 persons. To meet this standard, in 2000 Gilmer County should have had between 126 and 246 acres of parks. By 2025, the County would need between 426 and 716 acres of parks.

The current recreation park does not contain enough space to serve the growing population, therefore more recreation sites need to be developed. Potential sites for new recreation areas

include White Path, near the entrance to the existing public golf course, and Clear Creek, on the new school campus. Smaller, passive recreation sites or “pocket parks” are also desirable. A small park in the downtown area or close to the Elementary and Primary Schools on McCutchen Street would be beneficial.

A long range planning committee has been established to develop a Park and Recreation Master Plan. A preliminary evaluation shows that the following recreation facilities are needed in the county in next ten years:

- three to four satellite parks at locations throughout the county,
- a multi-purpose building that would house a gymnasium, classrooms, and office space,
- a separate football complex, and
- two, stand alone soccer complexes.

5.1.9. General Government Facilities

Gilmer County. Gilmer County government offices are located in several places in downtown Ellijay including the Courthouse and the Perry House. Several offices are located in temporary facilities until the new courthouse is complete.

Ellijay. Ellijay City Hall is located on North Main Street. The building houses the office of the mayor, the city clerk, and council chambers.

East Ellijay. East Ellijay City Hall is located on Oak Street and houses all city offices including the East Ellijay Police Department.

For a number of years, the City of East Ellijay has been setting aside funds to construct a new municipal building. In the summer of 2004, construction of a new city hall will begin. The new building will include offices for the mayor, city clerk, court clerk, building inspector, and codes enforcement officer as well as a courtroom, judge’s chamber, and space for the police department. When construction of the new facility is complete, the old building will be torn down and replaced with a parking lot.

Assessment: General Government Facilities

Gilmer County. Gilmer County is in the process of constructing a new 45,500 square foot, three story courthouse on Broad Street, just off the square in downtown Ellijay. The first floor will include offices for the probate judge, juvenile court, magistrate court, a shared courtroom, and sheriff’s office. The clerk of court’s office and district attorney will be located on the second floor. The third floor will house offices for superior court judges, two courtrooms, jury assembly room, holding cells for prisoners, jury rooms, and offices for superior court staff. Funding for the new courthouse will come from the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax which was passed by a referendum in 2003.

Ellijay. The current City Hall is expected to meet the needs of the community during the planning period.

East Ellijay. The new City Hall should serve the needs of East Ellijay throughout the planning period.

5.1.10. Education Facilities

5.1.10.1. Gilmer County Public School System

Operational Responsibility and Service Area. The Gilmer County School System is governed by an elected board of education of five members with an appointed superintendent. The school system services all of Gilmer County.

Staff and Enrollment. At the beginning of the 2003/2004 school year, the Gilmer County school system had a total of 580 employees and 3,940 students. The student enrollment has increased at a steady rate over the past several years as illustrated in Figure 5-F on the following page.

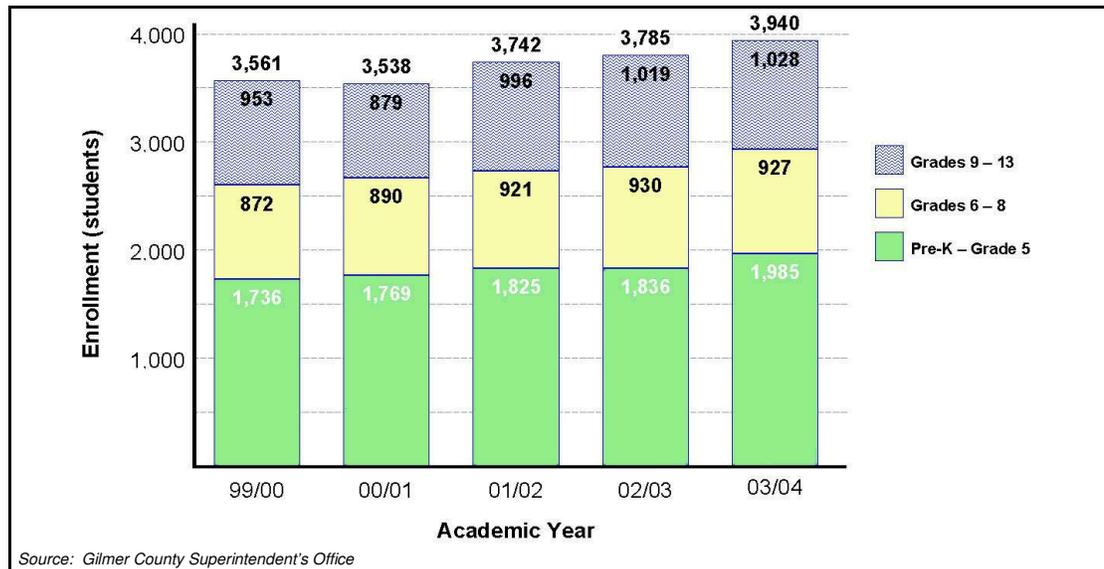


Figure 5-G. Student Enrollment in Gilmer County Public School System

Facilities and Capacity. The Gilmer County Public School system facilities are listed in Table 5-L below.

Table 5-L. Gilmer County Public School System Facilities

School	2003/2004 Enrollment	Capacity	% over or under capacity
Ellijay Primary School (Pre K - 2)	653	650 ¹	+ 0.5%
Oakland Elementary School (Pre K - 5)	307	350 ¹	- 12.3%
Mountain View Elementary (Pre K - 5)	547	650 ¹	- 15.8%
Ellijay Elementary School (Grades 3 - 5)	534	650	- 17.8%
Gilmer Middle School (Grades 6 - 8)	920	900	+ 2.2%
Gilmer High School (Grades 9 - 12)	1069	1200	- 10.9%
Crossroads Alternative School (Grades 6-12)	*70		

Source: Gilmer County School Superintendent's Office *Enrollment in included in middle school and high school figures.

¹Pre-K students will be moved to a different facility in 2004/2005. This involves 60 students from Ellijay Primary, 40 from Oakland Elementary, and 40 from Mountain View Elementary.

Transportation. The school system has 44 buses for transporting students from home to school. Included in these 44 are 5 mini-buses, each of which are equipped with a lift for transporting students in wheelchairs. The school system purchases an average of four new buses per year to replace aging vehicles. Between 2,300 and 2,400 students ride buses to school. (Source: Superintendent's Office)

5.1.10.2. Higher Education

Currently, there are no higher education facilities located in Gilmer County. Nearby colleges are shown in Figure 5-H and include the following:

- Appalachian Technical College, Jasper;
- Reinhardt College, Waleska;
- North Georgia College, Dahlonega.
- Northwest Georgia Technical College, Blairsville; and
- Dalton State College, Dalton.

Gilmer County is a member of the North Georgia Regional Educational Services Agency (RESA). College courses are frequently offered at Appalachian Technical College, Gilmer County High School and Fannin County High School through the RESA office. In addition, the Gilmer County School Board coordinates with Appalachian Technical College to offer courses at Gilmer County High School.

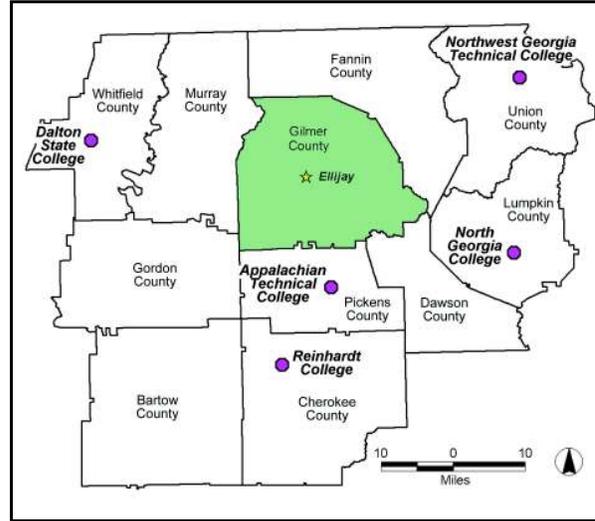


Figure 5-H. Colleges near Gilmer County

5.1.10.3. Vocational Training

Gilmer High School staff conduct vocational training courses for students who do not plan to attend college. The pre-vocational programs provide courses in agriculture, auto-mechanics, construction, art, business education, and home economics. Students from Gilmer High School can enroll in these courses as part of their high school program.

Assessment: Education Facilities

The school system has an immediate need for additional classroom space to accommodate the growing student population. Based on population projections, by 2015 the school system will need 4.7 primary/elementary schools (650 students each), 1.8 middle schools (900 students each), and 2.1 high schools (1,200 students each). By 2025, the school system will need 6.8 primary/elementary schools, 2.5 middle schools, and 2.5 high schools.

In May 2003, the School Board purchased 300 acres along Clear Creek Road for a new school campus. If sewer lines are extended to the property, a new middle school, a high school, and an elementary school will be built. The new middle school is planned for completion in the next five years.

Additional post-secondary educational opportunities should also be explored.

5.1.11. Library and Other Cultural Facilities

5.1.11.1. Library

Operational Responsibility. The Gilmer County Library is part of the Sequoyah Regional Library System which serves Cherokee, Pickens, and Gilmer Counties. The headquarters is located at the R.T. Jones Public Library in Canton, Georgia.

Mission Statement. It is the mission of the Sequoyah Regional Library System to provide organized print, non-print, and electronic materials to meet the informational, educational, recreational, and cultural needs of a growing, diverse community, with emphasis placed on the chosen roles of the library system.

Facilities and Services. The Gilmer County Library was built in 1977 and was expanded and renovated in 1991 with 10,401 total square feet. The library presently has 9,500 borrowers and approximately 24,851 volumes. Other facilities include a 50-seat meeting room and two small study rooms.

Library circulation and catalog are automated. The online catalog is available via the internet at <http://www.sequoyahregionallibrary.org>. At the Gilmer County Library, there are 23 computers available for public use, including 15 computers with internet access. The Gilmer County Library is open seven days a week, including four evenings and Sunday afternoon, for total of 62 hours per week. Figure 5-1 illustrates attendance and book circulation levels at the Gilmer County Library over the last five years.

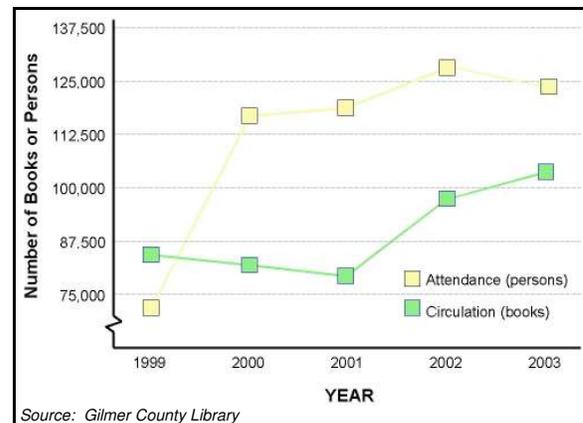
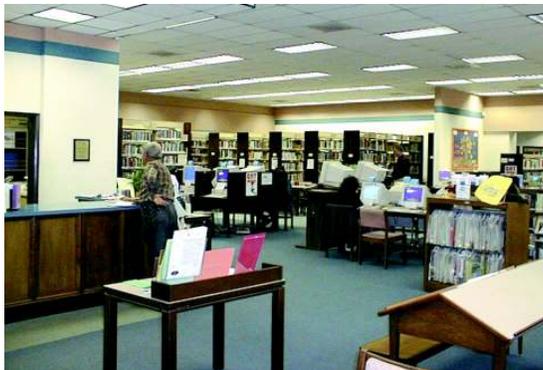


Figure 5-1. Library attendance and circulation.

In addition to circulation of books and other materials, the Gilmer County Library offers a wide range of services to the community: copiers for public use (including a color copier/scanner), fax service, Spanish/bilingual materials, Spanish computer, microform readers, genealogy/local history room, computer classes, low vision reader, adaptive computer with software and accessories for patrons with special needs, laminating, children's story times and vacation reading club, tax forms, and voter registration.



Gilmer County has plans to build a new library to replace the current one on Dalton Street.

Recent enhancements to library service include an express checkout station where patrons who prefer self-service may check out their own materials. The library web site also has been enhanced to include the capability for renewing materials online, requesting interlibrary loans online, and applying for a library card online. New improved library cards with keychain cards were introduced in 2003.

Funding. Annual operating funding for the Gilmer County Library is provided by the County Government, Board of Education (\$10,000 per year), City of

Ellijay (\$3,000 per year), and City of East Ellijay (\$1,500 per year). The library also receives per capita funding from the State for maintenance and operations and for library materials.

Staff. As of January 2004, the library had five full-time employees and four part-time employees. The library is administered by a certified, state-paid librarian, who is assisted by a Circulation Manager, Circulation Clerk, Reference Coordinator, and Children's Coordinator. Except for the one state-paid librarian, all other library positions are funded by the County.

5.1.11.2. Senior Center

Operational Responsibility and Service Area. The North Georgia Community Action Agency is responsible for oversight of the Senior Center. The Center is open to all senior citizens in Gilmer County.

Facilities and Services. In 2000, the construction of a new, 2,400 square foot senior center in downtown Ellijay was completed. The center is open Monday through Friday. Services provided include home delivered meals and meals served at the center. Senior citizens use the facility for bingo, exercise classes, quilting, and dominos.



The new Gilmer County Senior Center opened in 2000.

Funding. Funds for construction of the new senior center came from a \$315,640 Community Development Block Grant and local sources. The building is owned and maintained by Gilmer County. Funding for staff salaries comes from the North Georgia Community Action Agency.

Staff. The senior center has three paid personnel: one full-time director and two part-time staff members. The center relies heavily up on volunteers to provide services to senior citizens in the community.

5.1.11.3. Gilmer Arts and Heritage Association

Operational Responsibility. Gilmer Arts and Heritage Association (GAHA) is a local non-profit, service and educational organization established in 1979. Its Board of Directors has 13 members.

Facilities and Services. The Gilmer County Arts and Heritage Association is an umbrella organization supporting a variety of community based arts programs. The Arts and Heritage Council is important to Gilmer County because it is the only organization in Gilmer County that provides art and cultural education to local residents. The Council also works closely with the Chamber of Commerce to promote tourism for Gilmer County.

The GAHA Community Players put on two to three well-known theatrical productions each year, such as *Steel Magnolias* and *On Golden Pond*, and are committed to building a children's theatre program. The Community Chorus and the Community Band provide a variety of musical programs throughout the year. "Write-On," the literary arm of the organization, meets monthly and is popular with amateur and professional writers in the area. The Historical Heritage Committee is dedicated to documenting, preserving, and celebrating the area's rich heritage, and produces a historical calendar each year. The Gilmer Arts Academy provides classes and workshops in all aspects of the arts, and has ongoing children's programming in both drama and dance.

GAHA's outreach programs include projects that provide exposure and participation in the arts for those who might not otherwise have the opportunity. Theatre classes are taught at the middle school level at no expense to the school system, and the Atlanta Ballet provides free instruction in both ballet and jazz.

GAHA also hosts BEST (Bringing Ellijay Sensational Talent) and BEST for Kids. The BEST Series features nationally known talent, such as Rita Coolidge, Jerry Reed, Sandi Patti, and the Russian Ballet. BEST for Kids provides experiences in the arts to the schools, with performances by such notable groups as Glen Road and the Atlanta Opera.

Funding. Funding for GAHA is provided by corporate sponsorship, community membership, and grants.

Assessment: Library and Other Cultural Facilities

Library. The recommended standard for libraries is 0.7 square feet per person and 2.5 books per capita. The current Gilmer County Library is well below minimum space requirements for a county of its size; therefore, the Gilmer County Library Board of Trustees is working on a long range goal of obtaining funding for a new public library building. The Gilmer County Board of Education has offered 5 acres of land adjacent to the new Mountain View Elementary School off Hwy 282. In order to take advantage of this property, a public library must be built on the site within 5 years.

A 20,000 square foot facility is planned. Proposed features of the new Gilmer County Library include space for more books, a large parking area, larger browsing areas, more self-service, a story time and crafts area for children, a young adult area, a quiet area for study, a snack area, computer labs, additional meeting space, and an expanded genealogy and local history room. In addition to providing for adequate library space, another long-range goal is to obtain adequate funding for library materials. While State standards require 2-4 books per capita, Gilmer County has only about 1 book per capita. The Library Board will work toward raising both state and local government contributions for library materials.

A campaign to increase financial support from private businesses and organizations also is planned. In addition, the library will take advantage of grant opportunities to fund materials for special needs (business, home school, Spanish, etc.)

Using recommended library standards and population projections presented in the Population Element, by 2015, Gilmer County will need almost 31,500 square feet of library space. By 2025, the county will need almost 48,000 square feet of library space.

Senior Center. Even though the senior center is only a few years old, it is already functioning at capacity. Using a level of service based upon current square footage per population over 65 years of age, by 2015, Gilmer County will need approximately 6,400 square feet of senior center space. By 2025, the county will need 11,650 square feet.

Gilmer County Arts and Heritage Association. GAHA is searching for a permanent home to provide the necessary visibility to promote the arts. Both the Arts and Heritage Council and the Chamber of Commerce recognize the potential for coordinating expanded cultural activities with tourist promotions

5.1.12. Other Public Facilities

There are no emergency shelters in Gilmer County. A tri-county emergency children's shelter is planned for construction in Pickens County and will serve Gilmer County. In the future, the need for a separate facility in Gilmer County is likely.

A Family Resource Center is planned for Gilmer County which would provide a user-friendly, one-stop facility housing a variety of service providers, while saving taxpayer dollars. Having providers housed in one location would allow for better communication and interaction between agencies and prevent duplication of services. The following agencies would potentially be housed in the facility.

Family Crisis Services

- Department of Family and Children Services
- Gilmer County Sexual Assault Center
- Prevent Child Abuse Gilmer
- Foster Parents Association
- Dept. of Juvenile Justice

Emergency Family Services

- Family Connection
- Food Pantry
- Clothes Closet
- Community Action
- Habitat for Humanity

Education and Youth Services

- Department of Labor
- Family Connection (including Low Income Housing Program, Targeted Case Management Services, Hispanic Services Bureau, and Youth Leadership Development Center)

5.2. Assessment of Current and Future Needs

In Section 5.1, the capacity, performance, general condition, and expected life of the community facilities and services in Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay was provided. This assessment of current and future community facilities and services needs involves the following:

- an analysis of the data provided in Section 5.1., including consideration of the implications of historical trends, current conditions, and 20-year forecasts,
- an evaluation of this data in terms of its significance to the community and its relevance to other plan elements,
- a statement(s) of current and future needs base upon projections of future growth, and
- an assessment of how these needs may affect or be affected by other elements.

This assessment can be completed by answering the following questions which were derived from Section 110-12-1-.0 4(12)(e)2.(ii) of Georgia's Minimum Local Planning Standards.

- Are existing facilities and current levels of service adequate to meet the current needs of the community and how can the utilization of existing facilities be optimized (e.g. through conservation measures, multi-purpose uses, increased productivity, extended operating hours) as an alternative to expanding existing facilities to meet community needs and goals?
- Are existing facilities and current levels of service adequate to meet the future needs of the community or will improvements be needed to accommodate anticipated population and economic growth?

These questions are answered in Section 5.2.1. and 5.2.2.

5.2.1. **Are existing facilities and current levels of service adequate to meet the current needs of the community and how can the utilization of existing facilities be optimized as an alternative to expanding existing facilities to meet community needs and goals?**

Many of the community's existing facilities are operating at capacity and plans are underway to remedy the situation. New planned facilities include a county courthouse, a library, a middle school, a hospital, and a tri-county emergency children's shelter.

Other facilities and services which do not meet current needs include the following:

- Emergency Management – a new fire station headquarters is needed to replace the existing facility on South Main Street.
- Health Department – additional space or a new facility is needed.
- Family Resource Center – a shared facility is needed.
- Parks and Recreation – additional passive and active recreation facilities are needed.
- Gilmer County Arts and Heritage Association – a permanent facility is needed.
- Planning Department – additional staff is needed.
- Environmental Health Department – additional staff is needed.

Most of the existing public facilities are generally used at or near capacity. Alternatives for expanding capacity without the construction of new facilities is limited; however, a capital facilities maintenance plan would be very beneficial to ensure that facilities are well-maintained and can be safely used for as long as possible.

5.2.2. Are existing facilities and current levels of service adequate to meet the future needs of the community or will improvements be needed to accommodate anticipated population and economic growth?

Growth in Gilmer County is occurring at a rapid pace and new facilities and the addition of staff are needed in several key areas to meet both current and future needs. Table 5-M provides an estimate of staffing needs for 2015 and 2025 while Table 5-N on the following page provides an estimate of future community facility needs for the years 2015 and 2025.

Table 5-M. Potential Community Facilities and Services Needs (Personnel)

Community Service	Current # of Employees	Current Level of Service	Desired Level of Service	2015 Needs	2025 Needs
Gilmer County Sheriff's Department	1 Sheriff 31 Deputies, Officers, and Investigators (plus 6 other staff)	1 Sheriff plus 1 Deputy/Officer/ Investigator per 757 persons	1 Sheriff plus 1 Deputy/Officer/ Investigator per 750 persons	1 Sheriff plus 60 Deputies/ Officers/ Investigators	1 Sheriff plus 98 Deputies/ Officers/ Investigators
Gilmer County Fire Department	1 Chief, 3 FT firefighters, 3 PT firefighters, 80 volunteer firefighters, 2 arson investigators	1.5 FT firefighters per station per shift (10 stations)	4 FT firefighters per station per shift	144 FT equivalent firefighters (12 stations)	144 FT equivalent firefighters (12 stations)
Gilmer County EMS	17 FT EMTs 10 PT EMTs	8.5 FT EMTs and 5 PT EMTs per station (2 stations)	same as current	34 FT EMTs 20 PT EMTs (4 stations)	34 FT EMTs 20 PT EMTs (4 stations)
Gilmer County Health Department	1 Director plus 11 staff members including 4 nurses	1 nurse per 5,864 persons	same as current	8 nurses	13 nurses
East Ellijay Police Department	1 Chief and 5 Officers	1 Chief plus 1 Officer per 141 persons	same as current	1 Chief and 10 Officers	1 Chief and 13 Officers
Ellijay Police Department	1 Chief and 9 Officers	1 Chief plus 1 Officer per 176 persons	same as current	1 Chief and 12 Officers	1 Chief and 13 Officers
Ellijay Fire Department	1 Chief, 3 FT firefighters, 20 volunteer firefighters	1 chief plus 1 FT firefighter per shift	3 firefighters per station per shift	9 FT equivalent firefighters	9 FT equivalent firefighters

Population in 2000: Gilmer – 23,456; Ellijay – 1,584; East Ellijay – 707
 Population in 2015: Gilmer – 45,119; Ellijay – 2,010; East Ellijay – 1,332
 Population in 2025: Gilmer – 68,241; Ellijay – 2,250; East Ellijay – 1,752

Table 5-N. Potential Community Facilities and Services Needs (Capital Projects)

Community Facility or Service	Potential Future Project	Date of Need	
		by 2015	by 2025
Solid Waste Management	Additional Convenience Centers	✓	✓
East Ellijay General Government and Police Department	New City Hall to Include Police Department Offices	✓	--
Gilmer County Fire Department	New Headquarters Additional Satellite Station	✓ ✓	--
Gilmer County EMS	New Ambulance Stations (2)	✓	--
Ellijay Fire Department/Police Department	New Fire Station possibly to include facilities for the Ellijay Police Department	✓	--
Hospital (private)	New Hospital	✓	--
Health Department	Additional Square Footage	✓	--
Public Parks	3 or 4 satellite parks	✓	✓
	multi-purpose building	✓	--
	football complex	✓	--
	2 soccer complexes	✓	--
Gilmer County General Government	East Ellijay City Hall Gilmer County Courthouse	✓	--
Education	New Middle School	✓	✓
	New High School	✓	✓
	New Elementary School	✓	✓
Library	New Library	✓	--
Senior Center	Additional Square Footage	--	✓
Family Resource Center	New Facility	✓	--

Population in 2000: Gilmer – 23,456; Ellijay – 1,584; East Ellijay – 707
Population in 2015: Gilmer – 45,119; Ellijay – 2,010; East Ellijay – 1,332
Population in 2025: Gilmer – 68,241; Ellijay – 2,250; East Ellijay – 1,752

5.3. Community Goals

As part of the comprehensive planning process outlined by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay are required to develop community goals and an associated implementation program that sets forth a plan for community facilities and services in terms of the following:

- capital improvements,
- services expansions, and
- utilization strategies.

The implementation program must support the Community Vision and include actions which should be undertaken to achieve the Community Vision.

5.3.1. Community Vision

In the year 2024, Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay will be known as vibrant, safe, healthy, and attractive places to live, work, and play. The excellent quality of life experienced by all of our residents and visitors is a result of the following:

Livability. We have healthy residential neighborhoods, thriving commercial areas and activity centers, strong agricultural establishments, and outstanding public facilities and services. Opportunities for quality education, employment, and recreation are varied and plentiful.

Community Character. We recognize that our community's abundant natural resources and rich history contribute greatly to our quality of life and to our economic prosperity. We seek measures to protect these resources while promoting and facilitating well-planned growth and development.

Shared Direction. The public and private sectors work together as partners to proactively plan for growth in the community. The local governments provide excellent leadership and residents are well-informed about the projects and activities which are planned for and occurring in the community.

5.3.2. Goal, Policies, and Action Items

To support and achieve the Joint Vision Statement above, Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay have developed the following community facilities and services goal and associated objectives and action items:

<p>Goal: Public Facilities which have the capacity, and which are in place when needed, to support and attract growth and development and maintain and enhance the quality of life of all residents in the community.</p>	
<p>Policy 1: Regional Solutions. * Regional solutions should be used when needs are shared by more than one local jurisdiction, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.</p>	<p>Action Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Investigate multi-jurisdictional use of regional water supply sources including Carters Lake.
<p>Policy 2: Water Supply and Treatment. Assure an adequate and economical supply of water for the growth needs of the county and incorporated cities.</p>	<p>Action Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Update and implement the Water and Sewer Authority's CIE. b. Continue to make system-wide improvements.
<p>Policy 3: Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment. Provide public sewer service to growth areas as consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.</p>	<p>Action Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Update and implement the Water and Sewer Authority's CIE. b. Continue to make system-wide improvements.
<p>Policy 4: Solid Waste Management. Manage solid waste activities in a manner consistent with State requirements and the Joint Solid Waste Management Plan.</p>	<p>Action Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Update, adopt, and maintain the Solid Waste Management Plan.
<p>Policy 5: Public Safety. Provide excellent emergency management and law enforcement services commensurate with the unique needs of the area.</p>	<p>Action Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Construct a new County Emergency Management Headquarters building. b. Construct one additional satellite fire stations. c. Construct two additional EMS stations. d. Construct a fire and/or police department building in the City of Ellijay.
<p>Policy 6: Public Health Facilities. Support improvements in the area's health care system.</p>	<p>Action Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Plan for and develop a new public health facility. b. Support the development of a new hospital and expanded nursing home.
<p>Policy 7: Recreation. Provide recreation facilities and programs that meet both the active and passive recreational needs of community's residents.</p>	<p>Action Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Prepare and implement a Parks and Recreation Master Plan. b. Develop up to 4 satellite parks in the community. c. Develop a multi-purpose recreation building to include a gymnasium, office space, and classrooms. d. Develop a football complex. e. Develop two soccer complexes. f. Provide additional multi-purpose trails throughout the community. g. Seek grant funding for recreation projects when appropriate.

* A DCA "Quality Communities" Objective

<p>Policy 8: Government Facilities. Expand and/or construct government facilities necessary to meet the demands of the growing population.</p>	<p>Action Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Construct a new County Courthouse. b. Construct a new East Ellijay City Hall. c. Seek a new location for the Chamber of Commerce.
<p>Policy 9: Education Facilities. Provide excellent education facilities and support coordination between local governments and the school system to assure new school locations are consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.</p>	<p>Action Items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support the development of the new public school campus on Clear Creek Road.
<p>Policy 10: Cultural and other Public Facilities. Support the expansion of cultural facilities and programs and other public facilities in keeping with population growth.</p>	<p>Action Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Seek a permanent location for the Creative Arts Guild. b. Support Gilmer County Family Connection efforts to construct a Gilmer County Family Resource Center as well as an emergency children’s shelter. c. Support the development of a new library.