

# Baldwin County

GEORGIA



Urban Redevelopment Plan

April 2024

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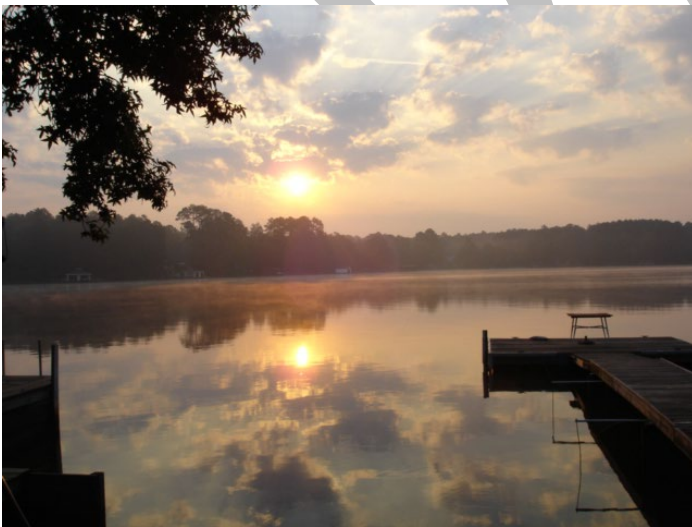
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Baldwin County lies in central Georgia on developed lands, once held by Creek Indians for centuries. Established in 1803, the county is named for Abraham Baldwin who was a minister, signer of the United States Constitution, and U.S. congressman. Milledgeville, the county seat, served as the state capital for 64 years, including during the American Civil War. It is named for John Milledge, who fought in the American Revolution and later served as United States Representative, 26th Governor of Georgia, and United States Senator.

During the last 25 years, Baldwin County has experienced extensive economic setbacks with closures of major employers including Rheem, Shaw, Concord, Mohawk, Georgia Power and Central State Hospital. While in a stagnant economy, there has been very little investment in redevelopment within the community causing several areas to be in severe decline. Businesses have closed and/or relocated. Buildings have been left vacant. Buildings and houses have fallen into disrepair. Distressed neighborhoods and blight have begun to grow.

To combat these situations, Baldwin County has chosen to correct these problems. Over the last 6 years, the County has taken aggressive steps to improve the community by:



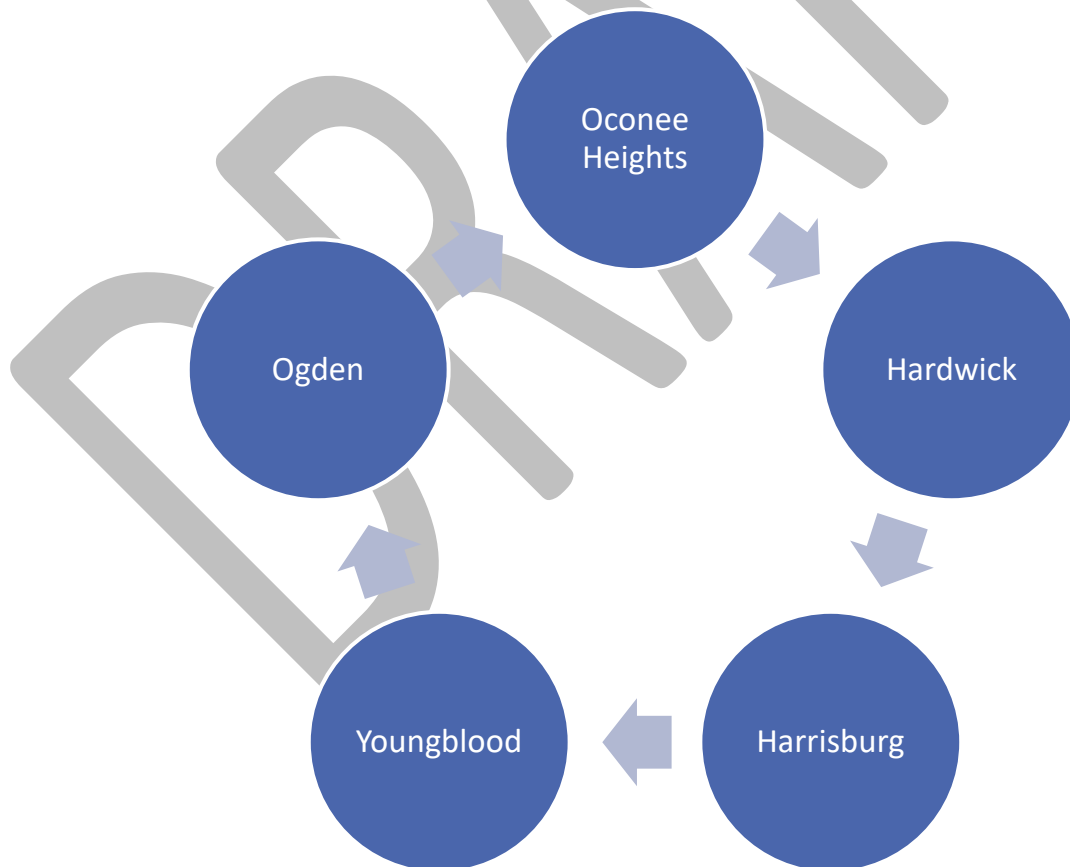
- Developing an aggressive program to require demolition of dilapidated structures
- Increasing code enforcement activities to require property owners to maintain their properties
- Applying for and using CDBG Housing and CHIP programs to renovate and rebuild homes
- Using American Rescue Plan Act, CDBG and SPLOST funds to improve infrastructure.

Baldwin County has experienced many positive changes over its 220-year history; however, there are areas which display persistent neglect and/or stagnation. Baldwin County, through the adoption of an Urban Development Plan (URP), will build upon its past and current successes by applying directed redevelopment strategies to alleviate existing negative conditions and help the county realize their full potential as a wonderful place to live, work, and play.

## 2. REDEVELOPMENT BOUNDARIES

In accordance with Urban Redevelopment Act (O.C.G.A. § 36-61-1, *et. seq.*), Baldwin County has established its Urban Redevelopment Area (URA) by resolution. The proposed Urban Redevelopment Area encompasses a contiguous area roughly 10.3 square miles, south of Hwy 49 to Fox Hill Road and to the East bound by Central State Hospital. While the area is comprised of distinctive sub areas which have unique concerns and characteristics of their own, these areas have individual character with various needs voiced by its citizens and business owners. These areas are represented in the Urban Redevelopment Area Boundary Map located in Appendix A.

The Baldwin County URP embraces the following areas:



**Oconee Heights:** Oconee Heights originally was a bedroom community of Central State Hospital, a place with well-manicured lawns and unlocked doors. However, as Central State started to decline and decay over the years, Oconee Heights started to decline and decay, as well. Oconee Heights can be loosely defined as everything between Caraker Avenue and the Milledgeville Manor, running north and south, and everything between Swint Avenue and Vinson Highway, running east and west. This area is just north of the Central State Hospital campus.

In 2023 Baldwin County applied for and received a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant. This program enables the Department of Transportation (DOT) to invest in transportation infrastructure projects that align with national objectives.

Congress has allocated over \$12 billion across fourteen rounds of National Infrastructure Investments to fund projects with significant local or regional impact. The RAISE program allows DOT to evaluate projects based on their merits, ensuring that taxpayers receive the highest value for every dollar invested.

From 2013 – 2022, there were six pedestrian-related injury crashes within the target area. Five of these occurred on public roads or streets and could have been effectively mitigated and avoided by the implementation of the countermeasures identified in this project. Two of these five could have been avoided, but also had other substantive factors. The text below illustrates the issues leading to the three injury crashes or fatality crashes that are being assumed by the county as fully preventable due to roadway improvements. Highlights are specific issues that the proposed project would help to mitigate.

The project proposes two main pedestrian and bicyclist benefits:

- Installation of approximately 2,900 linear feet of new five-foot wide sidewalks
- Conversion of approximately 13,500 linear feet of two-lane roads into one-lane roads that also contain a 10-foot shared-use path, separated by decorative pedestrian bollards
- Solar Powered Streetlights
- Replacement of three narrow and failing culverts

Baldwin County submitted a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application in 2024. Oconee Heights is on the western end of the target area. If successful, Baldwin County will begin the process of replacing all terra cotta sewer lines and galvanized water lines throughout Oconee Heights.

**Hardwick Community:** Much like Oconee Heights, the Hardwick Community was a bedroom community of Central State Hospital. It, too, declined and decayed over the years after mental health care was decentralized. This area is west of the Central State Campus. Hardwick Street leads directly into the hospital grounds. The population was 3,513 at the 2020 census, down from 5,135 in 2000. Hardwick was home to Oglethorpe University during the 19th century. The Hardwick Community also suffers from numerous dilapidated structures.

**Harrisburg:** Harrisburg is a historically rich community in Baldwin County, Georgia, located just outside of the City of Milledgeville. It is centered around a former Harrisburg School, a portion of which has been converted into the Collins P. Lee Community Center. Collins P. Lee, for which the Community Center is named, was the first African-American councilman mayor pro tem, for which he served from 1977-1985 and the City of Milledgeville Public Safety Director.

Harrisburg is a mostly residential neighborhood of 645 households, mostly in single-family homes. Nearly two-thirds of the homes are owner-occupied. Eighty-four percent of Harrisburg's residents are Black, tracing back to the settlement patterns in which Blacks had to live outside the city limits of Milledgeville. Despite perceptions that might be held in other parts of Milledgeville, Harrisburg residents have a strong sense of community. The tight-knit nature of the community and the fact that so many families knew each other over multiple generations provides a strong sense of belonging and commitment.

For the residents of Harrisburg, there is hope and promise as a number of organizations have come together in a variety of important initiatives, including the creation of the Lucille Harris Community Garden and Solomon Harris Walking Path, which are located on the grounds of the former Harrisburg School.

The Community Garden and Walking Trail are located at the corner of Harrisburg Road and Laverne Circle. They are on property owned by Baldwin County Parks and Recreation, which has been very supportive of the effort and have had support from the Baldwin County Board of Commissioners and Milledgeville Community Garden Association. The Garden and Walking Path are prominent examples of an effort of a number of organizations coming together to improve the community and provide more opportunities for residents.

In the spring and fall of 2015 Habitat for Humanity, Baldwin County, Harrisburg residents, Georgia Military College, Georgia College & State University and other interested partners came together to develop a Harrisburg Neighborhood Revitalization and Park Master Plan. Habitat decided to focus its

efforts on Harrisburg for a number of reasons, but most notably the fact that a coalition was already organized, there was already a huge success in the creation of the community garden, and the importance of the historic legacy of the neighborhood and committed families working together to improve the area. Efforts such as Family Focus had shown the potential for partnership efforts guided and led by residents from the Harrisburg community, backed up by organizations such as Baldwin County, Habitat, Georgia College, and Georgia Military College that can bring additional resources to support the effort.

Since the master plan was created, Baldwin County has added an outdoor basketball court, a splash pad and secured a \$1.7 million grant for streetscape and park improvements. Additionally, Georgia U.S. Senator Jon Ossoff secured a \$1.2 million appropriation to convert the Collins P Lee Center into a state-of-the-art library which will be staffed full time by the Middle Georgia Regional Library system.

Six homes in the neighborhood have been revitalized with Baldwin County's first Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) grant. However, numerous dilapidated structures still stand and the county continues to require compliance with its Unsafe Building Abatement ordinance.

**Youngblood:** The Youngblood area has received significant public investment. Baldwin County began in 2012 to replace all the terracotta pipe sewer lines and galvanized water lines. Over three miles of sewer lines have been replaced. Over 4,000 linear feet are being replaced in the spring and summer of 2024 and the county has applied for one more Community Development Block Grant that, if funded, will replace another 4,000 linear feet.

The Youngblood area also suffered from the closure of the Southside School when the Baldwin County School District consolidated schools at its main campus. New Beginnings Outreach recently took over the campus and started a church and a homeless shelter.

**Ogden:** Baldwin County cleaned up the inert landfill at 124 Ogden Rd SE. It is a 21-acre site that has 8 buildable acres and now has a greenspace. The county is looking to developers who are interested in a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) project on that site.

Mr. Randy Garza, owner of Garza Mobile Home Parks, has completely renovated and filled in the mobile home park at 119 Ogden Rd SE and 2400 Belfair Dr. The park was full of unsafe and dilapidated single wide mobile homes. Mr. Garza added double wide and triple wide homes to make the park friendly towards children and families. The Garza Mobile Home Park is full and Mr. Garza has 80 people on his waiting list.

The Ogden Road area is adjacent to the Central State Hospital campus. Once a city unto itself, today the CSH campus has about 200 buildings and sits on about 2,000 acres of land. In its heyday, CSH was like a small city with over 12,000 clients and thousands of employees. In addition to the expected hospital and treatment centers, it included homes and apartments for both clients and staff, a network of roads, distribution systems for utilities, huge warehouse and kitchen facilities, and all of the maintenance and support apparatus to keep this large complex functioning well. Beginning in the 1960s, decentralization of mental health services coupled with new treatment methods, began to reduce the patient population until now there are less than 200 forensic mental health clients served at CSH. While many state agencies including the Department of Behavioral Health and Development Disabilities, the Department of Corrections, the Board of Pardons and Parole, the Georgia State Patrol, and the Department of Veterans Services all still have operations on the campus, many of the buildings are no longer needed and have been declared surplus by the State of Georgia.

Over the last ten years, with help from the Baldwin County Commission and the City of Milledgeville \$175 million has been invested on the CSH campus and over 700 jobs have been created. Some of these have come from the construction or expansion of facilities operated by our state agency partners such as the recently completed Treatment Mall behind the Cook Building, the Traumatic Brain Injury and PTSD facility at the Georgia War Veterans Home, and the new Headquarters for State Patrol Post 33 on Carl Vinson Road.

Private investors are also taking an interest in the development of the campus. One of the pioneers was Correct Life, LLC with the construction of their \$20 million “state of the art” 280 bed geriatric facility, Bostick Nursing Center, which has 225 employees. That purchase moved a state-owned property into private ownership and back onto the local tax digest. The success of Bostick Nursing home paved the way for over 25 other private businesses to invest on the campus.

In 2019, the Parham Kitchen Facility underwent a \$10 million renovation which now houses a frozen food processing facility. Peach State Kitchen, LLC is currently producing around 30,000 meals per day with 70 employees and has plans for further expansion.

Georgia’s Old Capitol Heritage Center purchased the old CSH Depot and is currently renovating that space for museum displays and community activities. They also have their offices and offer programming in a renovated house adjacent to the Depot.

Georgia Military College acquired the CSH Auditorium and several other properties on and behind Broad Street to meet the needs of their rapidly expanding student population.



The CSHLRA operates the former Chapel of All Faiths on Swint Avenue as the Grove Events Center. This facility, which contains both a chapel with a capacity of 300 and a reception hall, is available to the public to rent for weddings, funerals, receptions, reunions, etc.

In 2022, the 157-acre tract across Vinson Highway from the main CSH campus was sold to a private middle Georgia developer. This property contained 54 dilapidated houses that had previously been used for staff housing. The developer has completed re-roofing and renovating all but one home and put them back in service as single-family residence rentals.

The Lawrence Building was cleaned up and now houses numerous businesses including TriCoGo's contractor that installs fiber optic cable throughout Middle Georgia and DiscHub which is owned by David Feldberg a retired champion disc golfer who designed Baldwin County's first disc golf course that opened in October 2023.

### 3. DEMOGRAPHICS PROFILE

Baldwin County is located in the central portion of Georgia. Milledgeville is the county seat. The closest large city, Macon, is approximately 30 miles away. The population of Baldwin County is growing, as is its diversity. Table 3.1 shows the makeup of the population in the three qualified census tracts compared to Baldwin County as a whole.

	Baldwin County	Census Tract 9706	Census Tract 9707.01	Census Tract 9707.02
Total Population	43,799	3,586	1,889	1,830
Population of one race:	42,439	3,480	1,818	1,773
White alone	22,655	965	419	626
Black or African American alone	18,404	2,448	1,345	1,084
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	83	9	4	5
Asian alone	599	9	12	22
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	28	0	2	1
Some Other Race alone	670	49	36	35
Population of two or more races:	1,360	106	71	57

## 4. REDEVELOPMENT NEED

Baldwin County has researched data for the URA compared to the County as a whole. A significant number of negative conditions have been identified including poverty, high crime rates, derelict properties, poor housing conditions, excessive rental property, visual blight, dilapidated structures, depressed growth and high occurrence of house fires.

### 4.1 POVERTY DATA

Table 4.1.1 shows income levels for Baldwin County as a whole compared to the URA. A much larger percentage of households in the URA reflect lower income ranges (\$50,000 or less) than in the County as a whole. Of those who receive less than \$10,000 each year, the percentages are certainly higher in the URA versus Baldwin County as a whole.

Table 4.1.1 Income

	Baldwin County Estimate	Census Tract 9706 Estimate	Census Tract 9707.01 Estimate	Census Tract 9707.02 Estimate
Total	15,853	1,485	589	740
Less than \$10,000	11.3%	11.8%	27.5%	26.2%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	5.3%	6.1%	17.3%	5.8%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	9.3%	11.6%	18.3%	4.7%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	8.9%	15.8%	8.1%	2.6%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	10.9%	12.6%	10.4%	19.7%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	16.5%	26.1%	13.2%	20.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	14.3%	7.8%	1.4%	13.5%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	13.0%	6.3%	2.9%	4.5%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	6.4%	0.0%	0.8%	1.6%
\$200,000 or more	4.1%	2.0%	0.0%	1.4%
Median income (dollars)	54,699	38,505	16,773	45,618
Mean income (dollars)	83,400	56,933	26,719	47,234

Source: 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates S1901

The median household income in Baldwin County is \$54,699 compared to much lower numbers in the URA. In Table 4.1.2, we can see the age, sex, and race of those who are below the poverty level in the URA versus Baldwin County as a whole

The CDC’s Social Vulnerability Index (SVI), which factors in census-driven components such as economic data, education, family characteristics, housing, etc., rates Baldwin County as a highly vulnerable community with an SVI score of 0.887 (on a scale of 0 to 1 with 0 being Low and 1 being High). In Baldwin County there are 12,129 individuals who are 150 percent below the poverty level, with 28% or 3,376 residing in the URA.



Table 4.1.2 Poverty

	Baldwin County			Census Tract 9706			Census Tract 9707.01			Census Tract 9707.02		
	Total	Below poverty level	Percent below poverty level	Total	Below poverty level	Percent below poverty level	Total	Below poverty level	Percent below poverty level	Total	Below poverty level	Percent below poverty level
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Population for whom poverty status is determined	39,122	8,864	22.7%	3,397	821	24.2%	1,530	747	48.8%	1,964	664	33.8%
<b>AGE</b>												
Under 18 years	7,894	1,854	23.5%	670	114	17.0%	317	184	58.0%	349	192	55.0%
18 to 64 years	24,524	6,054	24.7%	2,146	532	24.8%	1,046	512	48.9%	1,443	393	27.2%
65 years and over	6,704	956	14.3%	581	175	30.1%	167	51	30.5%	172	79	45.9%
<b>SEX</b>												
Male	19,141	4,156	21.7%	1,419	452	31.9%	851	418	49.1%	1,024	177	17.3%
Female	19,981	4,708	23.6%	1,978	369	18.7%	679	329	48.5%	940	487	51.8%
<b>RACE</b>												
White alone	20,555	3,888	18.9%	912	268	29.4%	364	172	47.3%	412	247	60.0%
Black or African American alone	16,506	4,475	27.1%	2,299	543	23.6%	972	413	42.5%	1,352	290	21.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	43	0	0.0%	0	0	-	6	0	0.0%	0	0	-
Asian alone	668	7	1.0%	15	0	0.0%	0	0	-	0	0	-
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	59	0	0.0%	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0	-
Some other race alone	374	150	40.1%	0	0	-	0	0	-	132	75	56.8%
Two or more races	917	344	37.5%	171	10	5.8%	188	162	86.2%	68	52	76.5%

Source: 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates S1701

## 4.2 HIGH CRIME RATE

Table 4.2.1 shows crime data for the last two years for the County as a whole compared to the URA. From 2023 data, 30 percent of the total crime overall in Baldwin County occurs in the URA. The concentration of crime in this area is a large drain on law enforcement resources.

Table 4.2.1 Crime

	2022			2023		
	County	URA	%	County	URA	%
Homicide	6	3	50%	2	1	50%
Rape	10	3	30%	7	4	57%
Robbery	7	4	57%	7	6	86%
Aggravated Assault	39	21	54%	50	19	38%
Simple Assault	24	8	33%	13	5	38%
Burglary	65	24	37%	72	28	39%
Larceny	349	82	23%	296	69	23%
<b>Total # of Crimes</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>30%</b>

Source: Baldwin County Sheriff Department

## 4.3 DERELICT PROPERTIES

Baldwin County has had a full-time Code Enforcement Officer for six years. Duties include code enforcement on nuisance properties and dilapidated structures. Letters have been sent to property owners in violation of garbage, rubbish, junk or trash, overgrown, or unmaintained vegetation issues. These properties are identified by either public complaints or regular drive-by surveys. An overwhelming number of these properties were in the URA compared to the County as a whole.

One important aspect of enforcement is that the Baldwin County Board of Commissioners insisted on a complaint-based program rather than an aggressive, data-driven approach.

## 4.4 HOUSING CONDITIONS

Table 4.4.1 shows housing data from the U.S. Census Bureau for Baldwin County compared to the three URA Census Tracts. Across the three URA Census Tracts, we see a small percentage of houses being built here since 2000 compared to Baldwin County as a whole. There is a larger percentage of renter-occupied and vacant housing units in the URA. We also see that the value and condition of houses in the URA is certainly low as well.

Table 4.4.1 HOUSING OCCUPANCY

	Baldwin County		Census Tract 9706		Census Tract 9707.01		Census Tract 9707.02	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
<b>HOUSING OCCUPANCY</b>								
Total housing units	20,092		2,043		856		844	
Occupied housing units	15,853	78.9%	1,485	72.7%	589	68.8%	740	87.7%
Vacant housing units	4,239	21.1%	558	27.3%	267	31.2%	104	12.3%
<b>YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT</b>								
Total housing units	20,092		2,043		856		844	
Built 2000 or later	4988	24.80%	197	9.60%	13	1.50%	82	9.70%
<b>HOUSING TENURE</b>								
Occupied housing units	15,853		1,485		589		740	
Owner-occupied	9,974	62.9%	1,060	71.4%	103	17.5%	310	41.9%
Renter-occupied	5,879	37.1%	425	28.6%	486	82.5%	430	58.1%
<b>SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS</b>								
Occupied housing units	15,853		1,485		589		740	
Lacking complete plumbing facilities	87	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	27	3.6%
Lacking complete kitchen facilities	160	1.0%	44	3.0%	0	0.0%	45	6.1%
No telephone service available	224	1.4%	11	0.7%	15	2.5%	56	7.6%
<b>VALUE</b>								
Owner-occupied units	9,974		1,060		103		310	
Less than \$50,000	1,579	15.8%	239	22.5%	28	27.2%	117	37.7%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	1,779	17.8%	299	28.2%	49	47.6%	130	41.9%

Source: 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates DP04

#### 4.5 VISUAL BLIGHT

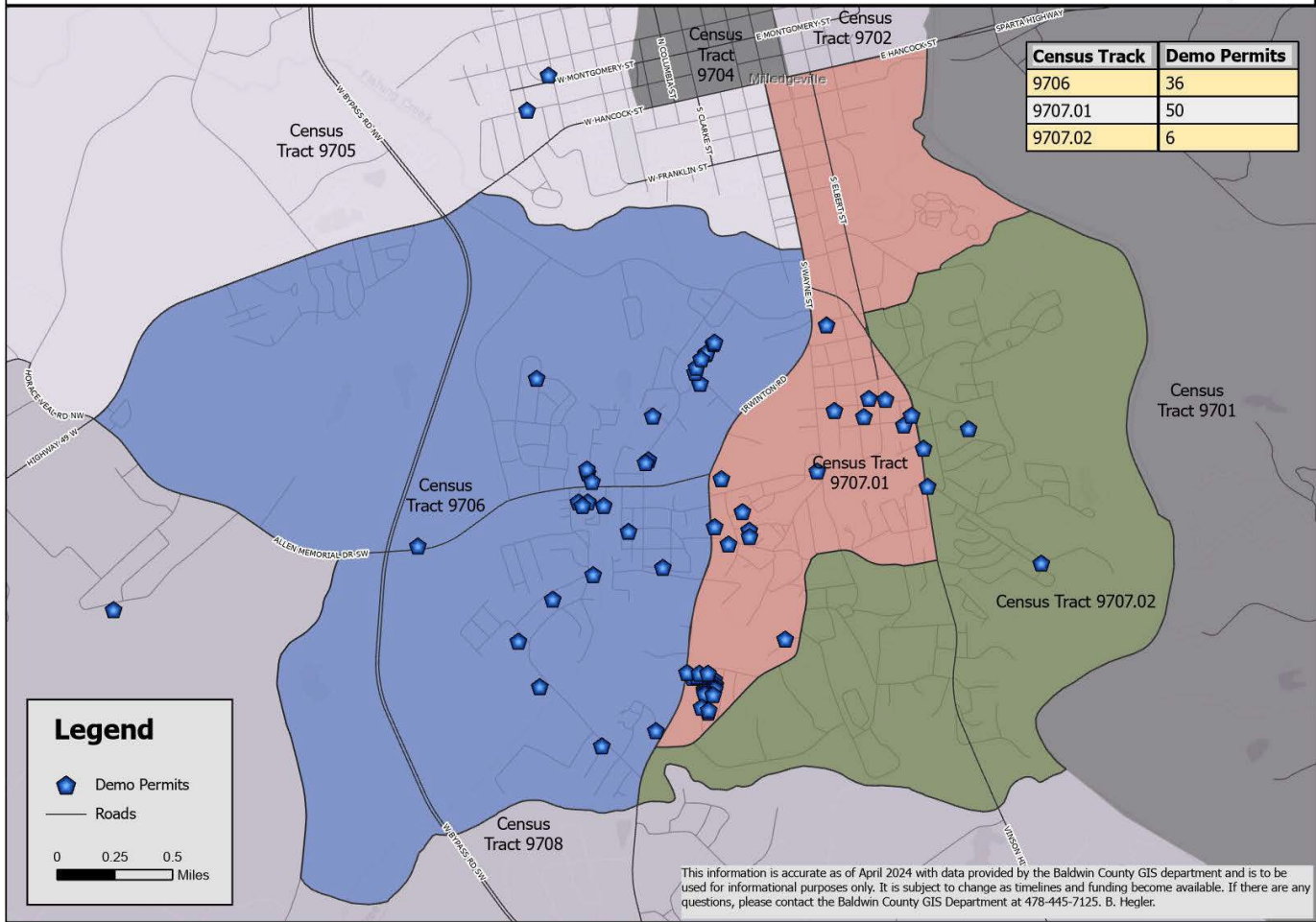
While conducting a visual survey of the County, blight and slum areas may not be immediately identified. The main corridors have been very well maintained. However, the visual survey tells a different story the farther south you travel. These areas are inundated with dilapidated and derelict properties. Rental housing is prevalent. The Photo Assessment in Appendix B demonstrate the existence of visual blight.

#### 4.6 DILAPIDATED STRUCTURES

The County's first goal is to prevent these houses from becoming dilapidated. Using Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) funds, the county assisted six homeowners rebuild their homes and bring them up to modern codes. These six homes were likely going to become dilapidated structures. In 2024 the county applied for its first multiactivity CDBG grant. In addition to replacing sewer lines, three owner-occupied homes on Marion Street in Youngblood will be renovated. Also, in 2024 the county applied for and received its second CHIP grant. Up to six more homes will be rebuilt. Using CHIP, CDBG, and charity 15 homes have been or will be rehabilitated by 2025. Just south of Youngblood, in the same census tract but in the city limits, 53 homes were rehabilitated through private investment.

Baldwin County has had a very effective and successful program of removing dilapidated housing. As stated in 4.3 the commissioners were aware of the severity of the problem but recognized that the subject was politically volatile. Commissioners insisted on a complaint-driven, but kind approach in addressing dilapidated or unsafe substandard houses. To date, 256 totally dilapidated houses were demolished over the last five years. Today, dozens more houses remain on the target list, with more added regularly. However, the County will remain diligent in removing these structures if they do become dilapidated. There have been 244 demolition permits, some for multiple dilapidated mobile homes on one site, issued for the entire county since 2018. There have been 92 demo permits combined in census blocks 9706, 9701.01 and 9707.02, which is 38% of the number issued in the entire county.

# Demolition Permits for Urban Redevelopment Area



This information is accurate as of April 2024 with data provided by the Baldwin County GIS department and is to be used for informational purposes only. It is subject to change as timelines and funding become available. If there are any questions, please contact the Baldwin County GIS Department at 478-445-7125. B. Hegler.

## 4.7 BUILDING PERMIT DATA

An examination of the building permits issued, excluding demolition permits, reveals that only about 30% of the total permits issued in 2022 & 2023 were located in the redevelopment area. While there were permits issued for replacing dilapidated mobile homes, very few were for new growth or new construction in the URA. Most of the permits issued in the URA are simply for service upgrades, rewiring, or repairing service.

#### 4.8 FIRE RESPONSE

Baldwin County analyzed the number of structure fire calls in the URA compared to the County as a whole. Fire call data for 2022 indicates there were 39 calls with 23 in the URA, or 59%. In 2023, there were 22 total calls with 12 in the URA, or 54%. Fires in the URA are more likely to cause total destruction than fires in other parts of the County, due to the age and poor condition of the structures. Causes of these fires include old or poorly maintained electrical systems, fires set by vagrants in vacant houses, and a complete failure to maintain a home.



#### 4.9 FINDINGS OF REDEVELOPMENT NEED

The URA comprises, geographically, approximately 4 percent of the County, or 10.3 square miles. From reviewing the negative conditions and other information above, the URA has a proportionately higher level of:

- Poverty and depressed income
- Crime
- Derelict and nuisance property
- Dilapidated and substandard housing
- Vacant houses
- Rental houses
- Visual blight
- Depressed investment
- Fires



## **5. CONSISTENCY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The Urban Redevelopment Plan is consistent with the Baldwin County/City of Milledgeville Joint Comprehensive Plan. Projects highlighted within the Comprehensive Plan seek to address neighborhood specific problems through public investment in infrastructure, parks and trails, and pedestrian amenities. The Urban Redevelopment Plan is crucial for Baldwin County to continue the progress already realized. Components of the Comprehensive Plan which were used to guide the development of this plan are:

- Promoting quality housing opportunities for all citizens
- Advancing blight remediation efforts
- Continuing to seek CHIP funding to develop a housing rehabilitation program for low income residents

## **6. LAND USE OBJECTIVES**

Baldwin County has a Land Use Code and is in the process of adopting a District Based Land Use Code. In the past six years, Baldwin County has edited our Land Use Code to accommodate modern standards for more equitable outcomes. No districts will be changed as part of the Urban Redevelopment Plan. Some codes may be changed to facilitate affordable home building; for example, allowing more density where water and service exists already. The projected land use of the Urban Redevelopment Area remains Mixed Use, as stated in the Comprehensive Plan. There is a variety of development including residential and commercial anticipated in close proximity to these areas.

## **7. DESCRIPTIONS OF PARCELS TO BE ACQUIRED**

Baldwin County does not have the intention of acquiring properties in the URA at this time. Should circumstances change making property acquisition probable or necessary, the plan will be amended to reflect those changes. The county will assume ownership of parcels whose taxes are delinquent and which do not sell at tax sales. In the enforcement of the Unsafe Building Abatement Ordinance, the county, after exhausting all other options, will demolish dilapidated structures to remedy blight and tax liens on them. This property would then be gifted to the Land Bank Authority in efforts to continue creating

affordable housing working with Habitat for Humanity and other non-profit organizations.

## **8. STRUCTURES TO BE DEMOLISHED OR REHABILITATED**

The County does not currently have plans to demolish or rehabilitate any property, other than that which is county-owned if necessary. The county, in the last six years, demolished all dilapidated structures that were on county-owned land. We do not want to negate the possibility of future plans to partake in such activities.

## **9. PLAN TO USE PRIVATE RESOURCES**

The County has identified several measures to encourage the use of private and charitable resources in redevelopment. County staff has actively worked in facilitating and brokering arrangements between property owners and nonprofit organizations and the local colleges to develop mutually beneficial outcomes to help reach the specified goals.

Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) and Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (T-SPLOST) funds are used regularly as leverage to obtain funding for capital projects to enhance these neighborhoods.

The county's Georgia Initiative for Community Housing team has a new member: Brighter Days Ministry. Brighter Days Ministry is a new non-profit organization that is being gifted dilapidated housing and converting them to low income rental units. The ministry also rehabilitates owner-occupied homes. The non-profit organization anticipates securing financial support from local churches to expand its reach beyond its home church: Northridge Christian Church.

The county also partnered with Habitat for Humanity. Baldwin County staff assisted the Habitat for Humanity staff in preparing a Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) grant for new housing construction. Habitat for Humanity Milledgeville-Baldwin County received a \$600,000 CHIP grant in 2023 to build four new homes in the county. Baldwin County created a land bank authority in 2023 and will gift two lots to the authority in order for the authority to gift these two lots to Habitat to build two of the four homes with the CHIP grant.

The county has issued a Request for Proposal for the county's first Rural Housing Initiative. Developers are preparing submissions which are due on April 29, 2024. If successful the county will secure funding for public infrastructure and the developer will use its funds to build homes.

The County has and will continue to utilize all sources of available funding to revitalize this area including Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Community HOME Investment Project (CHIP), Employment Incentive Program Grants (EIP), Economic Development Administration Grants (EDA), USDA Rural Development Grants, Georgia Department of Transportation Alternatives Programs, Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) (for senior housing), DOT Local Maintenance and Improvement Grants (LMIG), and others sources of funds.

#### **10. STRATEGY FOR RELOCATING DISPLACED RESIDENTS**

The County does not anticipate the need to displace or relocate residents since the majority of the severely dilapidated structures are vacant. If displacement of residents or businesses becomes necessary at a later date, the URP will be amended to incorporate a strategy/plan for relocating displaced residents in accordance with all local and state statutory requirements.

#### **11. COVENANTS AND RESTRICTIONS TO BE PLACED ON PROPERTIES**

Baldwin County does not currently have plans to enter into covenants or place additional restrictions on properties in the URA. The entire County is expected to operate under the Property Standards Code. The County will reserve the right in the future to consider such additional restrictions if necessary in order to achieve its goal of redevelopment.

#### **12. PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE TO BE PROVIDED**

The County will continue to assess infrastructure such as transportation, water, sewer, sidewalks, lighting, streetscapes, public recreation and parks in conjunction with every project. As specific projects are identified, the County will make the necessary improvements to infrastructure at that time.

##### *Sewer Lines*

In the Youngblood area east of Vinson Highway, the county has replaced sewer lines since 2012 with five separate Community Development Block Grants. The county applied for a

2024 Multiactivity Community Development Block Grant. In 2025 it will apply for one more Multiactivity Community Development Block Grant. If both grants are funded all sewer lines will be new in Qualified Census Tract 9707.02.

With the 2024 CDBG application the county will begin its westward from Youngblood to replace sewer lines in Oconee Heights in Qualified Census Tract 9707.01. In 2010 the county replaced sewer and water lines in Ogden which is at the south end of Qualified Census Tract 9707.01. The county plans to replace all the sewer lines in Oconee Heights and Hardwick. That will conclude the sewer replacements in 9707.01. After all the work is done in QCTs 9707.01 and 9707.02 the county will begin the work to replace sewer lines in QCT 9706 or the Harrisburg Community.

### *Water Lines*

The county is undergoing a galvanized water line inventory to determine the location of the remaining galvanized lines in the county. The county plans to replace all those lines regardless of location. Some of the CDBG projects did replace galvanized water lines already; for example, Frazier Dr in QCT 9707.02 and Ogden Dr in QCT 9707.01.

### *Roads*

In 2023 Baldwin County residents voted for the Transportation Special Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST). Among the first roads to be paved the first year are in the Hardwick area. Deteriorating roads in the other neighborhoods, except Oconee Heights, will be paved with TSPLOST over the next five years.

### *Parks*

Baldwin County, in partnership with Georgia College & State University is converting a county-owned parcel at the corner of Coombs and S. Elbert Street in Oconee Heights into a micropark which will be ADA accessible and have a playground set.

### *RAISE Grant*

In 2023 the county received a \$4.9 million Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) that will rebuild all the roads in Oconee Heights, replace three narrow box culverts, create one-way streets with adjacent shared-use paths, and install hundreds of solar-powered streetlights. The grant will also pay for the extension of the sidewalk on Vinson Highway from Caraker to McDade's Grocery store. This will give residents in Oconee Heights walking/bicycling access to the Piggy Wiggly on north side of Oconee Heights and McDade's Grocery on the south side of the heights.

## 13. STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### GOALS

#### **#1: Encourage Citizen Participation**

1. Adopt a Resolution defining the Urban Redevelopment Area.
2. Advertise and host a Public Hearing to receive public comment on the Urban Redevelopment Plan.
3. Approve the Resolution adopting the Urban Redevelopment Plan.
4. Publicize and make URP information available to local citizenry on website and social media.

#### **#2: Promote Economic & Community Development**

1. Continue to assist the Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce with recruiting and retaining industry and business.
2. Apply for and obtain CHIP funding for housing improvement projects.
3. Apply for and obtain CDBG Multiactivity Grant.
4. Review and Update available GDOT and FHWA funds.
5. Apply for and obtain GDOT and/or FHWA funds.
6. Explore other eligible grant sources.

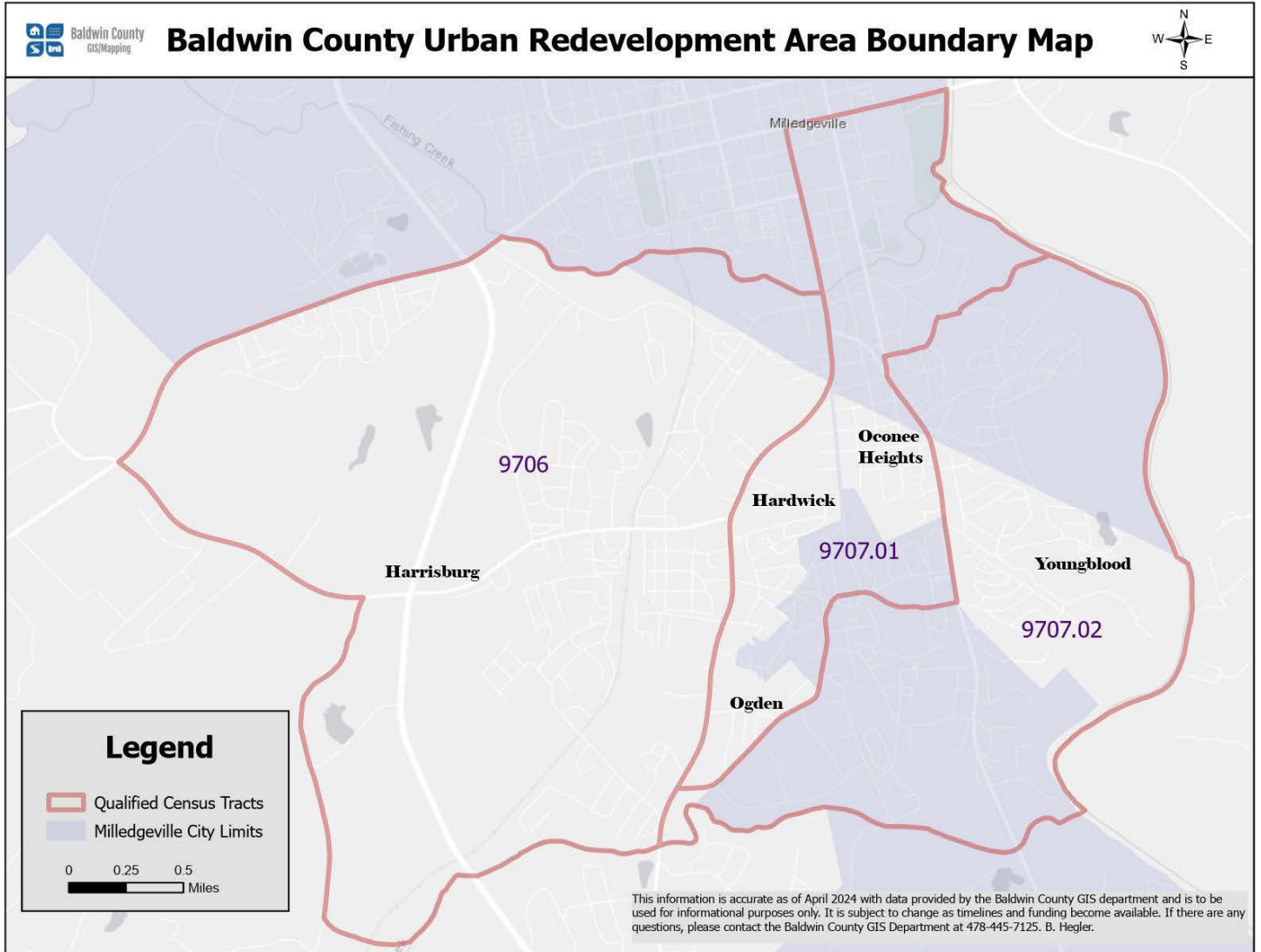
#### **#3: Continue Aggressive Code Enforcement Activities**

1. Enforce the Property Maintenance Code & Unsafe Building Codes.
2. Encourage owners to demolish totally dilapidated structures.
3. Encourage renovation of substandard houses.

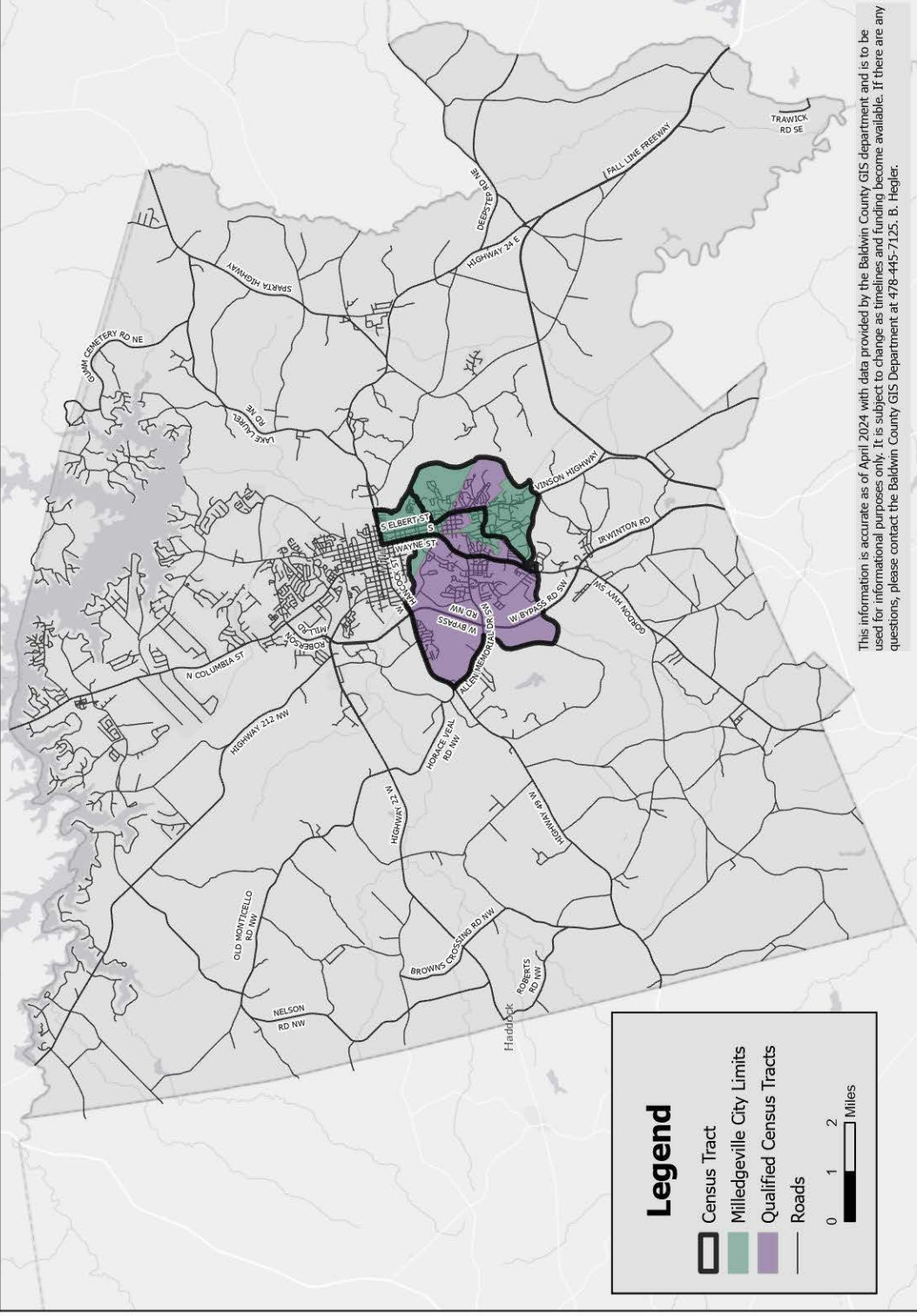
#### **#4: Improve Housing Conditions**

1. Apply for Rural Housing Initiative Grants.
2. Work on establishing partnership with local groups. (i.e. Habitat for Humanity, Brighter Days Ministry)
3. Encourage Workforce Housing Developments.

## APPENDIX A: URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AREA BOUNDARY MAPS



# Baldwin County Urban Redevelopment Area



**Legend**

- Census Tract
- Milledgeville City Limits
- Qualified Census Tracts
- Roads

0 1 2 Miles

This information is accurate as of April 2024 with data provided by the Baldwin County GIS department and is to be used for informational purposes only. It is subject to change as timeliness and funding become available. If there are any questions, please contact the Baldwin County GIS Department at 478-445-7125. B. Hegler.

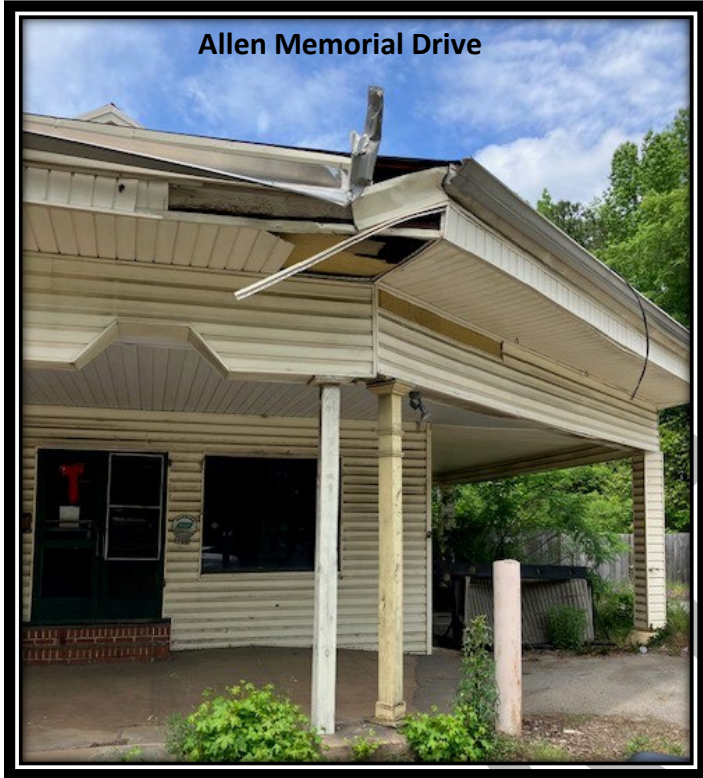
**APPENDIX B: PHOTO ASSESSMENT OF THE URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AREA**



As a result of homeowners not having the financial means for maintenance, houses and mobile homes fall into disrepair over time and force the residents out. This leaves the vacant property a safety hazard for the community.







**Allen Memorial Drive**

Many businesses and stores that have been closed for decades remain an eye-sore to the community.



**S. Elbert Street**



Vinson Hwy



Irwinton Road



Thomas Field Road

Negative conditions have been identified in the URA including poverty, high crime rates, poor housing conditions, depressed growth and high occurrence of house fires.



Youngblood Road

## APPENDIX C: URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AREA RESOLUTION

BALDWIN COUNTY, GEORGIA

### RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AREA

**WHEREAS**, the rehabilitation, conservation, or redevelopment, or a combination thereof, of blighted areas is necessary in the interest of the public health, safety, or welfare of the residents of Baldwin County; and

**WHEREAS**, O.C.G.A. § 36-61-1, et. seq., entitled the "Urban Redevelopment Law," authorizes Baldwin County, Georgia to designate an "urban redevelopment area," which is defined to contain one or more "pockets of blight"; and

**WHEREAS**, the Urban Redevelopment Law defines "pocket of blight" to mean an area in which by reason of the presence of a substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating structures; unsanitary or unsafe conditions; deterioration of site or other improvements; the existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes; or any combination of such factors, substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the County, inhibits the provisions of housing accommodations, or constitutes an economic or social liability and is a menace to the public health, safety, or welfare in its present condition and use; and

**WHEREAS**, after careful study and investigation, Baldwin County desires to designate the area described in the attached map titled, "Baldwin County Urban Redevelopment Area Boundaries Map" and dated **INSERT DATE** as an urban redevelopment area;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the County Manager and Board of Commissioners that the area shown in the map attached to this resolution is hereby determined to be a "pocket of blight" which substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of Baldwin County or constitutes an economic or social liability, and that such area is therefore designated as appropriate for an urban redevelopment project.

Adopted this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024.

## APPENDIX D: URBAN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN RESOLUTION

BALDWIN COUNTY, GEORGIA

### RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE URBAN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

**WHEREAS**, Baldwin County, Georgia has prepared an Urban Redevelopment Plan adopted under O.C.G.A. 36-61-1 et. seq. to rehabilitate, conserve, or redevelop a defined geographical area; and

**WHEREAS**, the Urban Redevelopment Plan can be used alone, or in combination with many of Georgia's other legislative redevelopment tools to support local comprehensive planning, revitalize faltering commercial corridors, recruit and nurture small businesses, rehabilitate older homes and neighborhoods, ensure architecturally compatible infill development and generate new adaptive reuses for old industrial and agricultural facilities; and

**WHEREAS**, Baldwin County has identified a defined geographic boundary that constitutes the Urban Redevelopment Area. The Urban Redevelopment Area is comprised of these subareas: Oconee Heights, Hardwick, Harrisburg, Youngblood, and Ogden. The boundaries of these areas are described in detail in the Baldwin County Urban Redevelopment Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, Conditions within this delineated area suffer from pockets of blight, are detrimental to public health, safety, and welfare, and are negatively affecting the community. (36-61-5); and

**WHEREAS**, Baldwin County desires to work with public and private sector partners to ensure that the desired redevelopment is achieved; and

**WHEREAS**, Baldwin County hereby identifies the influences on the geographic areas designated and intends to work diligently to foster conditions conducive to redevelopment within these areas; and

**WHEREAS**, a public hearing on the adoption of the Baldwin County Urban Redevelopment Plan was held on **INSERT DATE**, at **INSERT LOCATION**; and

**WHEREAS**, the said Baldwin County Urban Redevelopment Plan shall be included as part of this resolution as Exhibit A.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT**, the County Manager and Board of Commissioners does hereby approve and adopt the Baldwin County Urban Redevelopment Plan.

Adopted this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024.

## APPENDIX E: PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE, AGENDA, AND MINUTES

### **Baldwin County**

#### **NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

#### **URBAN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN**

A public hearing to present the Urban Redevelopment Plan (URP) for Baldwin County will be held on **insert date**, 2024 at **insert time** at 1601 N. Columbia Street, Suite 230 Milledgeville, GA 31061.

Baldwin County has drafted an Urban Redevelopment Plan for an area known as the Urban Redevelopment Area (URA) to:

- Expand opportunities for state/federal grant funding to repair and upgrade infrastructure of streets, sidewalks, water and sewer lines
- Expand opportunities for neighborhood revitalization through elimination of blight

The URA is a defined geographic boundary comprised of these subareas: Oconee Heights, Hardwick, Harrisburg, Youngblood, and Ogden. Conditions within this delineated area suffer from pockets of blight, are detrimental to public health, safety, and welfare, and are negatively affecting the community.

The purpose of the hearing will be to brief the community on the URP, provide an opportunity for public participation and input, and answer any questions or concerns.

DRAFT

DRAFT