

# Chapter One

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## Bainbridge Today

### Introduction

Chapter One of the Bainbridge Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan provides a detailed snapshot of current conditions in the City of Bainbridge. This chapter — organized into thematic sections ranging from the city’s physical and environmental context to its demographic profile, housing landscape, local economy, and municipal services — lays the groundwork for data-informed planning and future visioning. Understanding where Bainbridge stands today is essential to charting a course for where it wants to go.

The chapter begins with an overview of Bainbridge’s geographic setting and climate, describing the city’s relationship to regional transportation corridors, the Flint River, and surrounding counties. It outlines both the opportunities and vulnerabilities created by Bainbridge’s natural landscape, climate conditions, and environmental risks. The city’s historical evolution — from its riverfront origins as a trading post to its role as a small inland port and county seat — is also explored to provide context for its physical layout and civic identity.

Subsequent sections present a comprehensive demographic and economic profile. These include data on population growth, educational attainment, housing supply and condition, employment trends, and income levels. Particular attention is given to affordability, poverty, and economic mobility — factors that significantly influence Bainbridge’s livability and development trajectory. This portion of the chapter also reviews recent and projected growth, highlights areas of disinvestment and opportunity, and discusses ongoing efforts to revitalize neighborhoods such as West Bainbridge and corridors like Shotwell Street.

The chapter concludes with an overview of the city’s administrative capacity and built infrastructure. This includes the organizational structure of city departments, utility and public works operations, emergency services, transportation systems, and key assets such as parks, schools, healthcare facilities, and broadband access. Environmental sustainability efforts and alternative energy initiatives are also addressed, alongside ongoing challenges related to water quality, air quality, and climate resilience.

# Physical Setting

The City of Bainbridge was originally established as a trading post in 1765 and officially became the county seat of Decatur County in 1829. As a historical inland port city, Bainbridge is bisected by the Flint River near the county's geographic center, approximately 20 miles above the river's confluence with the Chattahoochee River, forming the Apalachicola River.

Bainbridge is situated in the 14-county Southwest Georgia Region. The city, as county seat, lies near the geographic center of Decatur County, which is bordered by Seminole County to the west, Miller, Baker, and Mitchell Counties to the north, Grady County to the east, and the State of Florida to the south.

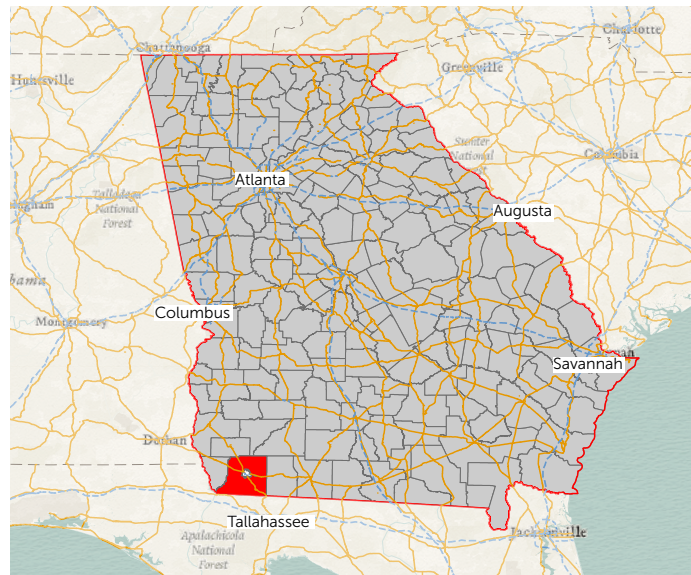


Figure 1.01: Georgia state map showing Decatur County (highlighted in red)

Bainbridge's infrastructure network includes major highways, such as US 84 and US 27, which provide critical connectivity to neighboring cities and regions. Public transportation and rail services complement this network, supporting freight movement.

Tallahassee, Florida, is the largest neighboring city, located approximately 40 miles southeast of Bainbridge. Thomasville is 38 miles to the east, and Dothan, Alabama, is 54 miles to the northwest. US 84 provides east/west connections to Dothan and Thomasville, while US 27 connects Bainbridge to Tallahassee and Columbus, Georgia (128 miles to the north).

The city spans 20.1 square miles, of which 18.8 square miles (52.9 km<sup>2</sup>) are land and 1.3 square miles (3.3 km<sup>2</sup>) are water. The city includes a large parcel off US 84 annexed for the new Bainbridge High School and a new middle school (opened in 2025). The downtown commercial area is vibrant, featuring new restaurants, shops and access to Flint River. A historic district encompasses most of downtown Bainbridge and the surrounding streets with antebellum homes.

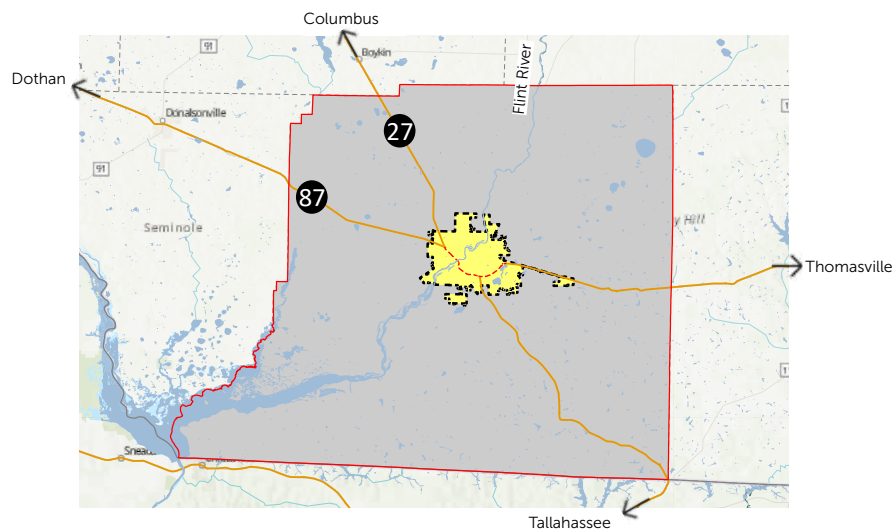


Figure 1.02: Regional map showing Bainbridge in Decatur County

According to the U.S. Census, Bainbridge had a municipal population of 12,697 in 2010, representing approximately 46% of the population of Decatur County. The city's population in 2020 was 14,468, accounting for about 49% of Decatur County's population of 29,367. The most recent annual Census estimate (2022) indicates a slight decrease in the city's population to 14,234 (-1.6%). This trend is mirrored in Decatur County, which also experienced a minor population decline, to an estimated 29,087 in 2023 (-1%). The U.S. 2020 Census identified 4,271 households.

Southwest Georgia is considered a reliable supplier of agricultural and forestry products, including peanuts, pecans, and cotton.<sup>1</sup> These products are essential to the local economy, the wider state of Georgia, and beyond.<sup>2</sup> The

1 Development Authority of Bainbridge and Decatur County. 2023. "Southwest Georgia: A Region on Radar." <https://www.bainbridgedecaturga.com/southwest-georgia-a-region-on-radar/>.

2 \$73.2 billion in output to Georgia's economy and 340,837 jobs to industries in the agricultural supply chain in 2021. Source: Development Authority of Bainbridge and Decatur County. 2023. "Southwest Georgia: A Region on Radar." <https://www.bainbridgedecaturga.com/southwest-georgia-a-region-on-radar/>.

region's agricultural outputs contribute substantially to the state's economy, supporting various industries, including food production and processing and textile manufacturing. In 2021, Southwest Georgia was a major contributor to Georgia's \$73.2 billion in agricultural output, illustrating its critical economic importance.<sup>3</sup>

Major employment sectors in Bainbridge include carpet and fiber manufacturing, agribusiness, glass press manufacturing, health, and education.

The region has seen expanding industrial investments, including the relocation of Taurus USA from Miami to Bainbridge in 2022 and the 2023 announcement of a new 1.5-million-square-foot manufacturing plant for Anovion Technologies.<sup>4</sup>

The city's educational institutions range from primary schools to higher education facilities, including an Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College campus and Southern Regional Technical College campus. Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College and Southern Regional Technical College offer local college and industrial training programs on the city's eastern edge.

Healthcare services are well-supported with local hospitals and clinics ensuring residents have access to quality medical care. The Memorial Hospital and Manor, operated by the Hospital Authority of the City of Bainbridge and Decatur County since 1960 provides 197 beds, a Level II emergency department, the Kirbo Woman's Center obstetrical and gynecological unit, and doctor's offices, and the Willow Ridge personal care facility on Faceville Highway.

The Flint River and associated lakes and waterways provide scenic beauty and recreational opportunities.

Recent investments by the city and private investors have spurred redevelopment and reinvestment in downtown Bainbridge, including streetscape improvements and new shops and restaurants catering to Boat Basin Park and local tourism.

Bainbridge offers a range of community services, including libraries, community centers, and social services that enhance the quality of life for its residents. Local organizations and initiatives actively contribute to community well-being and engagement.

Environmental and sustainability efforts are a priority in Bainbridge, with initiatives focused on conservation, green practices, and reducing environmental impact. The community is committed to protecting its natural resources and promoting sustainable growth.

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3 Development Authority of Bainbridge and Decatur County. 2023. "Southwest Georgia: A Region on Radar." <https://www.bainbridgedecaturga.com/southwest-georgia-a-region-on-radar/>.

4 Development Authority of Bainbridge and Decatur County. 2023. "Southwest Georgia: A Region on Radar." <https://www.bainbridgedecaturga.com/southwest-georgia-a-region-on-radar/>.



# Bainbridge's Riverfront Legacy & Early Settlement

A major focus is on the riverfront. The site of Bainbridge on a high bluff on the east bank of the Flint River was at the head of reliably navigable water near a ford on a traditional trade route between Florida and the Chattahoochee River towns. The location made Bainbridge a collection center for agriculture (especially cotton) from the counties to the north downriver to ports on the Gulf of Mexico. The importance of the city's location has been historically significant since 1702 when a battle between the Spanish-backed Apalachee Indians and the Creek (Apalachicola and Chisca) Indians of the Chattahoochee Valley and their British trader allies erupted at the Flint River crossings. The British-allied Indians were victorious setting the stage for continued conflict between the British traders of the interior and the Spanish and French colonists on the Gulf Coast.

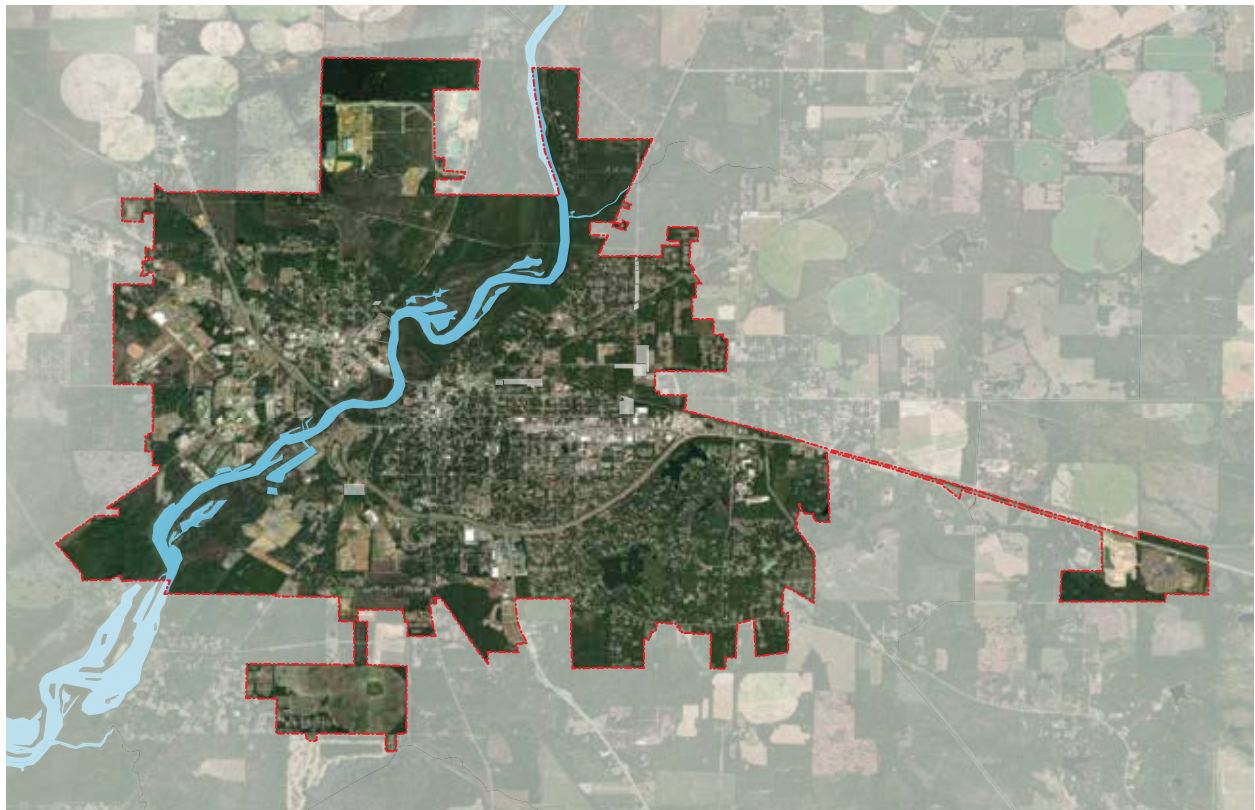


Figure 1.03: Flint River's Path through Bainbridge

More than a century later, the Fort Jackson Treaty between the U.S. government and the Creek Indians created the 1814 Cession of a large portion of southwestern Georgia by the Lower Creek Indians. Disputes of the treaty by the Mikasuki (also known as Red Sticks or Upper Creeks) led to the creation of Fort Hughes on the bluff where Chason

Park now overlooks the river. Battles at Fowltown (about four miles southwest of Bainbridge) and Ocheesee (on the Apalachicola River) marked the conflict later known as the First Seminole War, which ended in 1818, when Andrew Jackson built Fort Gadsden and the Mikasuki withdrew into Florida.

The 1814 cession from the Creek Indians was designated as Early County in 1821. Decatur County was created from the southwestern portion of the cession in 1823. The Georgia State legislature was active in identifying requirements for county seat towns to be built in the new counties and the City of Bainbridge was laid out and founded in 1824 as the county seat for Decatur County. The city's central square is typical of the towns in Virginia and the Carolinas from which many of the new settlers had immigrated.

The layouts of early Georgia towns are described in interesting detail in Ms. Joan Niles Sears book referenced below.

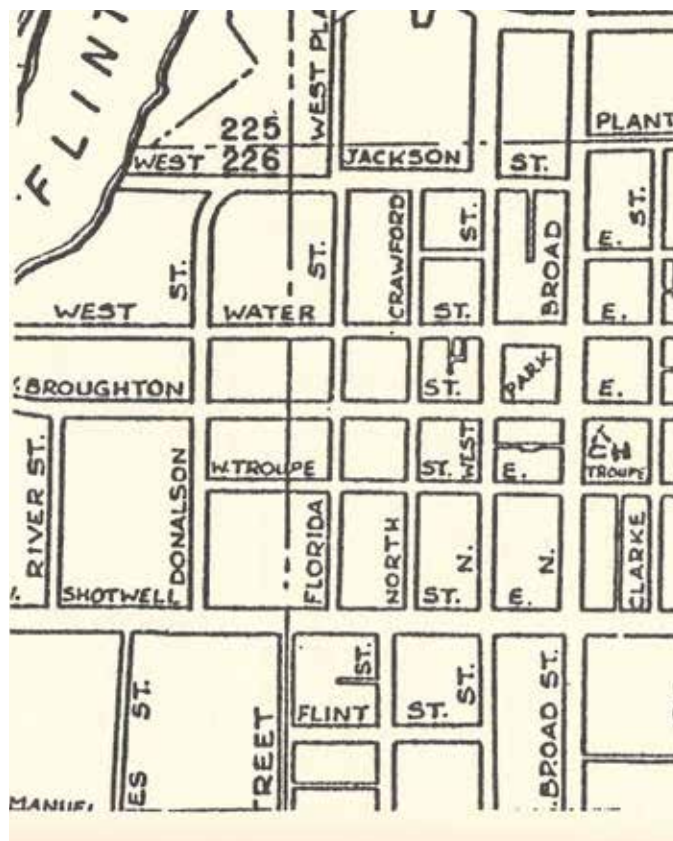


Figure 1.04: Layout of early Bainbridge

Source: Joan Niles Sears, *The First Hundred Years of Town Planning in Georgia*, Cherokee Publishing Company, Atlanta, Georgia, 1979).

# Climate

Bainbridge experiences a humid subtropical climate characterized by hot, humid summers and mild to cool winters. During the summer, temperatures in Bainbridge typically range from the mid-80s to the mid-90s Fahrenheit (29-35°C), with occasional heatwaves pushing temperatures above 100°F (38°C). The high humidity often makes it feel hotter, and frequent afternoon thunderstorms contribute to an annual average rainfall of about 50 inches (1270 mm).<sup>5 6</sup> Winters in Bainbridge are mild, with average high temperatures ranging from the mid-50s to mid-60s Fahrenheit (13-18°C). Overnight lows occasionally dip below freezing, but extended cold spells are rare. Precipitation is less frequent in winter, and snowfall is extremely rare.<sup>7 8</sup>

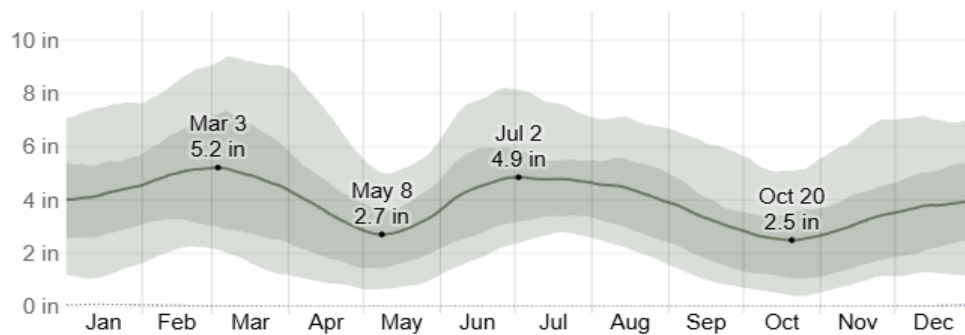


Figure 1.05: Annual Monthly Rainfall in Bainbridge

Source: <https://weatherspark.com/y/15554/Average-Weather-in-Bainbridge-Georgia-United-States-Year-Round>

5 Weather Atlas. "Climate and Monthly Weather Forecast." <https://www.weather-atlas.com/en/georgia-usa/bainbridge-climate>.

6 BestPlaces.net. "Bainbridge, GA Climate." <https://www.bestplaces.net/climate/city/georgia/bainbridge>.

7 BestPlaces.net. "Bainbridge, GA Climate." <https://www.bestplaces.net/climate/city/georgia/bainbridge>.

8 Climate-Data.org. "Bainbridge Climate." <https://en.climate-data.org/north-america/united-states-of-america/georgia/bainbridge-17860/>.

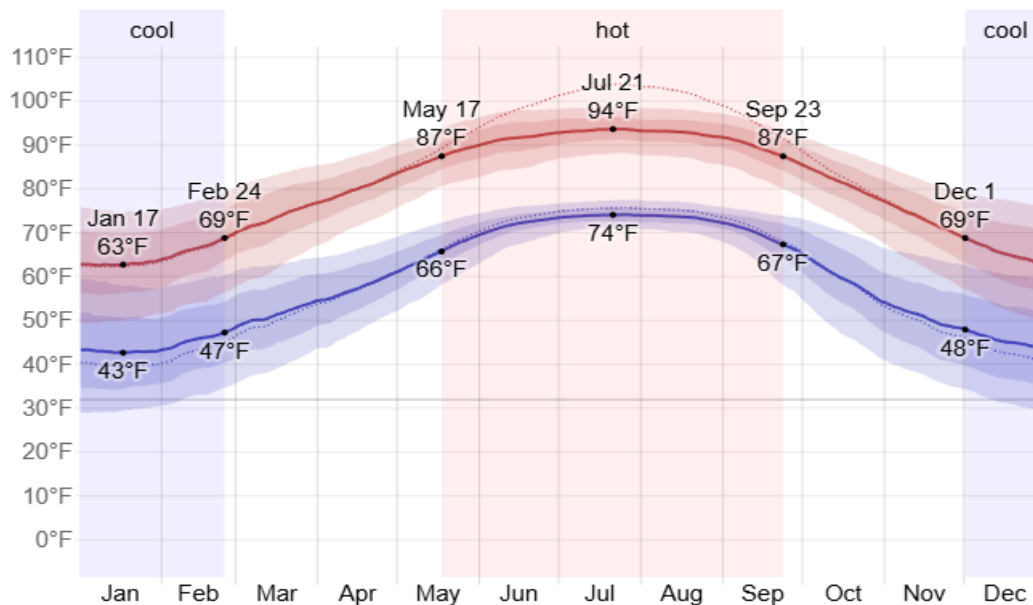


Figure 1.06: Average High and Low Temperature in Bainbridge  
Source: <https://weatherspark.com/y/15554/Average-Weather-in-Bainbridge-Georgia-United-States-Year-Round>

The daily average high temperatures are shown by the red line, while the blue line represents the average low temperatures on the temperature graph. The dotted lines indicate the corresponding average perceived temperatures. Spring and fall in Bainbridge are transitional seasons with moderate temperatures. Spring temperatures rise from the 60s to the 80s Fahrenheit (15-30°C), while fall temperatures cool from the 80s to the 60s Fahrenheit (30-15°C). Both seasons experience rainfall, but it is generally less intense than in summer. Spring can bring occasional severe weather, including thunderstorms and tornadoes.<sup>9 10</sup>

9 Time and Date. "Climate & Weather Averages in Bainbridge, Georgia, USA." <https://www.timeanddate.com/weather/@4180775/climate>.

10 Climate-Data.org. "Data and Graphs for Weather & Climate in Bainbridge." <https://en.climate-data.org/north-america/united-states-of-america/georgia/bainbridge-17860/>.



Bainbridge's proximity to the Gulf of Mexico results in relatively high humidity levels year-round.<sup>11</sup> Like much of Southwest Georgia, Bainbridge can be affected by tropical storms and hurricanes during the Atlantic hurricane season, which runs from June 1 to November 30. Although Bainbridge is not on the coast, these storms can bring heavy rain, strong winds, and occasional flooding. This is a typical pattern for inland areas in the southeastern United States, which can experience the remnants of coastal hurricanes and tropical storms.<sup>12 13</sup> Bainbridge can also experience periodic droughts, particularly in late summer and early fall, affecting agriculture and water resources. Prolonged periods of extreme heat in summer pose health risks and stress local water and energy resources.

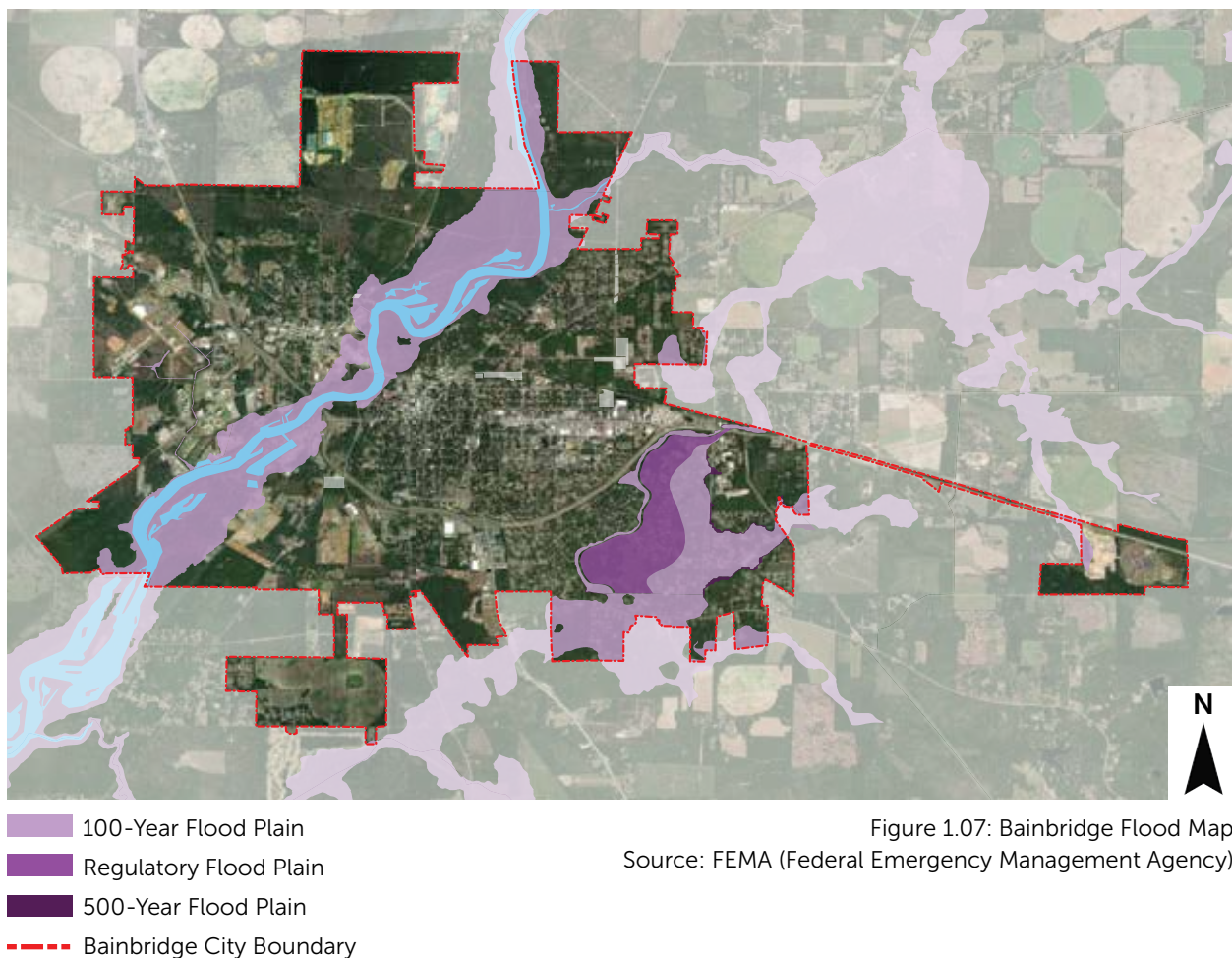


Figure 1.07: Bainbridge Flood Map  
Source: FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency)

11 BestPlaces.net. "Bainbridge, GA Climate." <https://www.bestplaces.net/climate/city/georgia/bainbridge>.

12 BestPlaces.net. "Bainbridge, GA Climate." <https://www.bestplaces.net/climate/city/georgia/bainbridge>.

13 BestPlaces.net. "Bainbridge, GA Climate." <https://www.bestplaces.net/climate/city/georgia/bainbridge>.



The climate in Bainbridge is relatively predictable in terms of seasonal patterns, though larger climatic influences, such as El Niño<sup>14</sup> and La Niña<sup>15</sup> events, can impact precipitation and temperature patterns.<sup>16 17</sup> Bainbridge’s climate supports a diverse range of agricultural activities, including cultivating peanuts, cotton, pecans, and forestry. The warm climate allows for a long growing season, benefiting various agricultural operations. The Flint River bisects Bainbridge, provides scenic beauty and recreational opportunities, and plays a crucial role in the local ecosystem and water management practices.<sup>18 19 20</sup>

According to the First Street Foundation, a nonprofit organization focused on making climate risk data accessible and actionable, Bainbridge faces an extreme risk of high-wind events, including hurricanes, tornadoes, and severe storms. The Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency<sup>21</sup> notes that hurricane season runs from June to November, with most severe storms occurring between August and October. The Atlantic coast is more likely to suffer the extreme effects of high winds from hurricanes or tropical storms. However, the Peach State is still susceptible to significant impacts from tropical storm remnants and systems that make landfall along the Gulf Coast or Southeast Coast. South Georgia can experience significant effects, particularly from heavy rainfall leading to flood conditions. Despite being inland, cities like Bainbridge, Albany, and Valdosta have experienced substantial damage from hurricanes. Some of the worst damage in the past decades<sup>22</sup> has come from inland flooding along rivers after hurricanes move ashore.

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- 14 El Niño is a climate pattern that describes the unusual warming of surface waters in the eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. This warming can influence weather and climate patterns around the world. El Niño typically leads to drier conditions in the Western Pacific and wetter conditions in the Eastern Pacific. It can also influence the development and intensity of tropical storms and hurricanes, often leading to fewer hurricanes in the Atlantic but more in the central and eastern Pacific. Source: NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration). “El Niño and La Niña.” <https://www.noaa.gov/education/resource-collections/weather-atmosphere/el-nino>.
- 15 La Niña is the opposite phase of El Niño and involves the cooling of surface waters in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. La Niña generally brings wetter conditions to the Western Pacific and drier conditions to the Eastern Pacific. It often results in an increased number of hurricanes in the Atlantic and fewer in the central and eastern Pacific. Source: NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration). “El Niño and La Niña.” <https://www.noaa.gov/education/resource-collections/weather-atmosphere/el-nino>.
- 16 BestPlaces.net. “Bainbridge, GA Climate.” <https://www.bestplaces.net/climate/city/georgia/bainbridge>.
- 17 Time and Date. “Climate & Weather Averages in Bainbridge, Georgia, USA.” <https://www.timeanddate.com/weather/@4180775/climate>.
- 18 Weather Atlas. “Climate and Monthly Weather Forecast.” <https://www.weather-atlas.com/en/georgia-usa/bainbridge-climate>.
- 19 BestPlaces.net. “Bainbridge, GA Climate.” <https://www.bestplaces.net/climate/city/georgia/bainbridge>.
- 20 Climate-Data.org. “Data and Graphs for Weather & Climate in Bainbridge.” <https://en.climate-data.org/north-america/united-states-of-america/georgia/bainbridge-17860/>.
- 21 Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency. 2018. “Georgia Disaster History.” <https://gema.georgia.gov/georgia-disaster-history>.
- 22 Action News 5. 2021. “Why Hurricanes Aren’t Just a Coastal Problem.” <https://www.actionnews5.com/2021/07/25/breakdown-why-hurricanes-arent-just-coastal-problem/>.

The Hurricane Risk Map (Figure 1.08) illustrates generalized hurricane risk across Georgia, based on frequency and wind speed. Areas along the Atlantic coast show the highest risk, while inland areas generally face lower risk. However, the state's southwestern corner, including Bainbridge, retains exposure due to proximity to the Gulf Coast and the Florida Panhandle.

For comparison, Figure 1.09 represents a wind-speed heat map specific to Hurricane Michael (2018). Unlike the statewide risk map, this figure reflects a single event, highlighting the severity of wind impacts that the state of Georgia experienced during that storm.

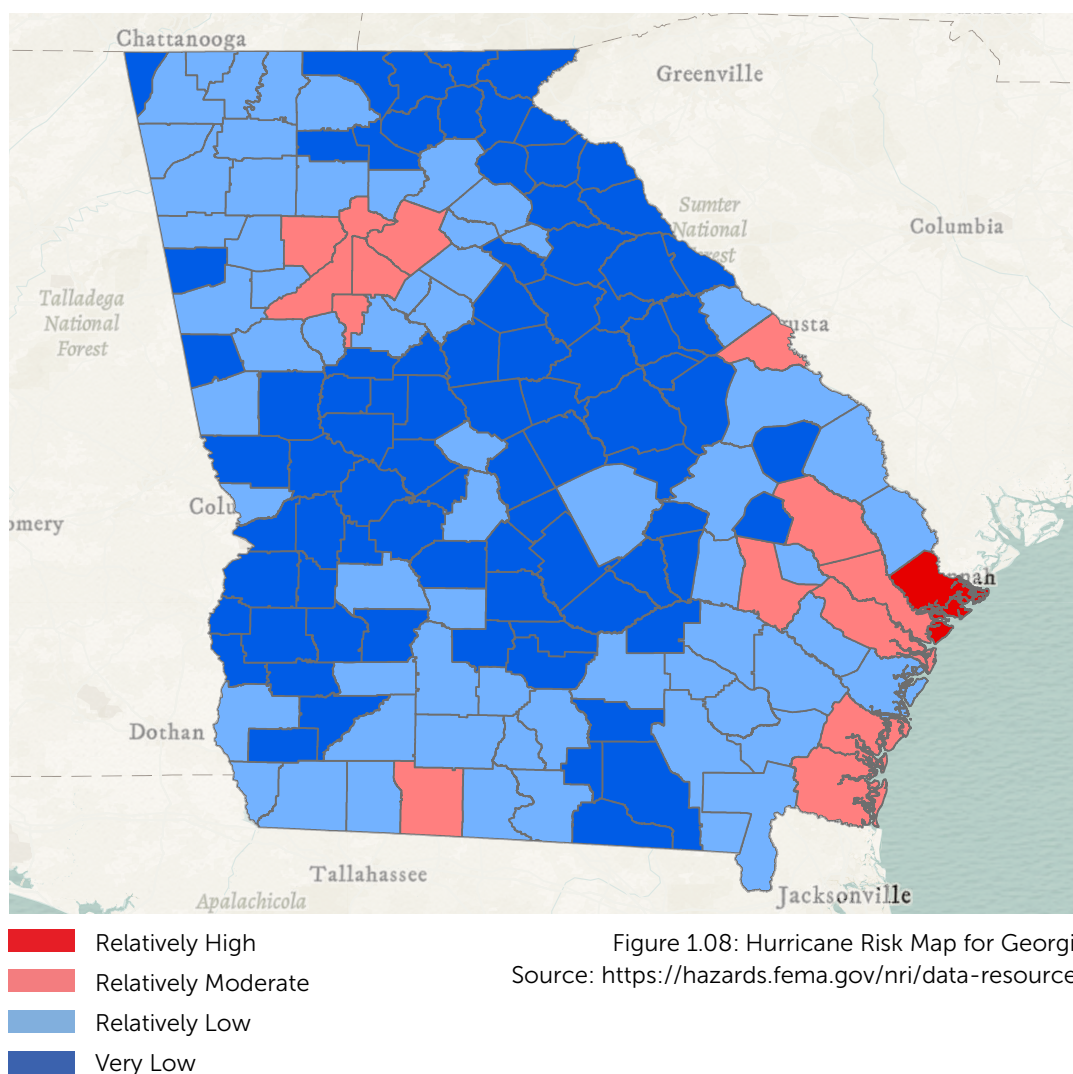


Figure 1.08: Hurricane Risk Map for Georgia  
Source: <https://hazards.fema.gov/nri/data-resources>

Major past tropical storm events include a 1941 storm with recorded wind speeds in Bainbridge of 155 miles per hour. Tropical Storm Alberto in July 1994 required the evacuation of 300 homes in Bainbridge due to rising flood waters on the Flint River. Hurricane Michael in October 2018 maintained Category 3 status, devastating Decatur County through high winds and causing extensive damage to trees and crops.

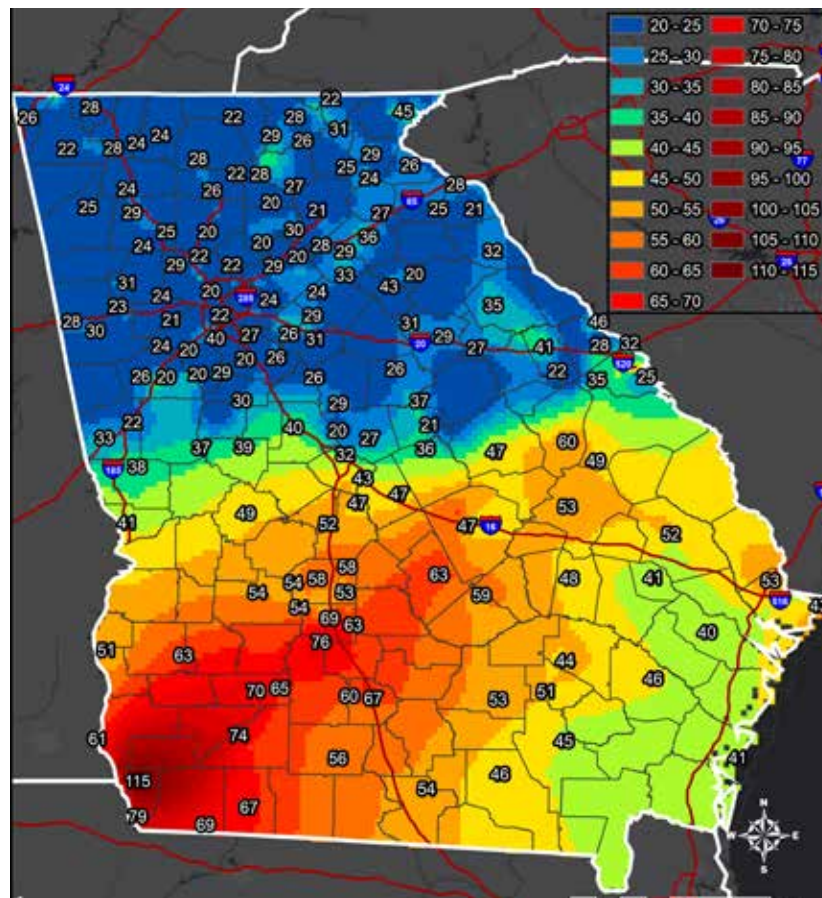


Figure 1.09: Hurricane Micheal 2018 Wind Speed Graphic for Georgia  
Source: [https://www.weather.gov/ffc/2018\\_hurricane\\_michael#damagingwind](https://www.weather.gov/ffc/2018_hurricane_michael#damagingwind)

The hurricane statistics are a valuable tool for evaluating risk, but hurricanes are unpredictable and can cause damage in areas not typically prone to such events. The recent early Hurricane Beryl in June and July 2024 created extensive flooding in Houston, Texas. Therefore, preparedness is crucial.

Twelve significant tornado events with a magnitude of 2 or above were observed in Decatur and Seminole Counties between 1950 and 2010. All were within 15 miles of the city. The National Weather Service also tracked six tornadoes in Decatur County since 2010, including an EF-1 storm along Spring Creek Road in 2019 and an EF-0 storm that uprooted trees and damaged roofs from Evans Street to Albany Road in 2020.

Factors contributing to wind damage vulnerability in Bainbridge include construction quality and the orientation of buildings in relation to prevailing winds. Other preparatory actions may include limiting potential debris, protecting utilities and public infrastructure from wind events, maintaining updated construction codes, and using construction materials that can help reduce damage.

Flood vulnerability is concentrated along the Flint River and in the low-lying areas identified in the city's floodplain maps. The most likely cause of flooding is excessive precipitation in a short time frame, which can lead to pooling and backed-up storm drains on properties, roadways, and parking areas. The city engineer's stormwater management program provides planning and engineering to reduce the impacts of storm-event flooding.

The number of poor air quality days with an Air Quality Index (AQI) rating over 100 is currently five days per year compared to 15 years ago when the city had seven AQI days above 100. The AQI is not expected to increase, assuming U.S. regulations for preventing air pollution and support for low-emission technologies continue to reduce the particulate matter and ozone in the air. Bainbridge has better air quality than 75% of the other cities in Georgia and is considered at a moderate risk of poor air quality.

Four significant wildfires were recorded near Bainbridge between 1984 and 2021, and a wildfire covering two square miles in April 2005 impacted four buildings in the city. The city fire department and public safety are the primary advocates for fire protection, and [wildfirerisk.org](http://wildfirerisk.org) provides additional community tools to address wildfire risk and evacuation and safety protocols.

Bainbridge is at risk of severe heat. All properties within the city are at risk when dangerously hot days and heatwaves occur. Temperatures exceeding 90° Fahrenheit (F) are dangerous for high-risk individuals, and 100° F is dangerous for everyone. Bainbridge experiences approximately 135 days a year with temperatures above 90°F and 20 to 30 days per year with ambient temperatures above 100°F. A severely hot day is when the "feels like" temperature reaches 109°F. Bainbridge currently experiences approximately seven severe days each year. However, climate projections assume the city will experience up to 19 severe days annually. Key vulnerability issues include construction materials that trap heat, distance to water and vegetation, and human activities that release heat as a by-product.

The Decatur County Emergency Management Agency serves Bainbridge and Decatur County to coordinate the response of local agencies in an emergency. The Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMA/HS) and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) provide statewide planning and emergency measures to help minimize uncertainties and the potential chaos created by a major storm event or other possible disasters. Georgia DOT identifies a response timeline beginning as soon as NOAA and the National Weather Service identify a potential storm event and continuing through 24 to 48 hours after the storm when teams start to clean up debris and reopen access. GEMA and its federal partner, FEMA, may provide services for an extended period post-event to support state and local agencies in initiating response and recovery.



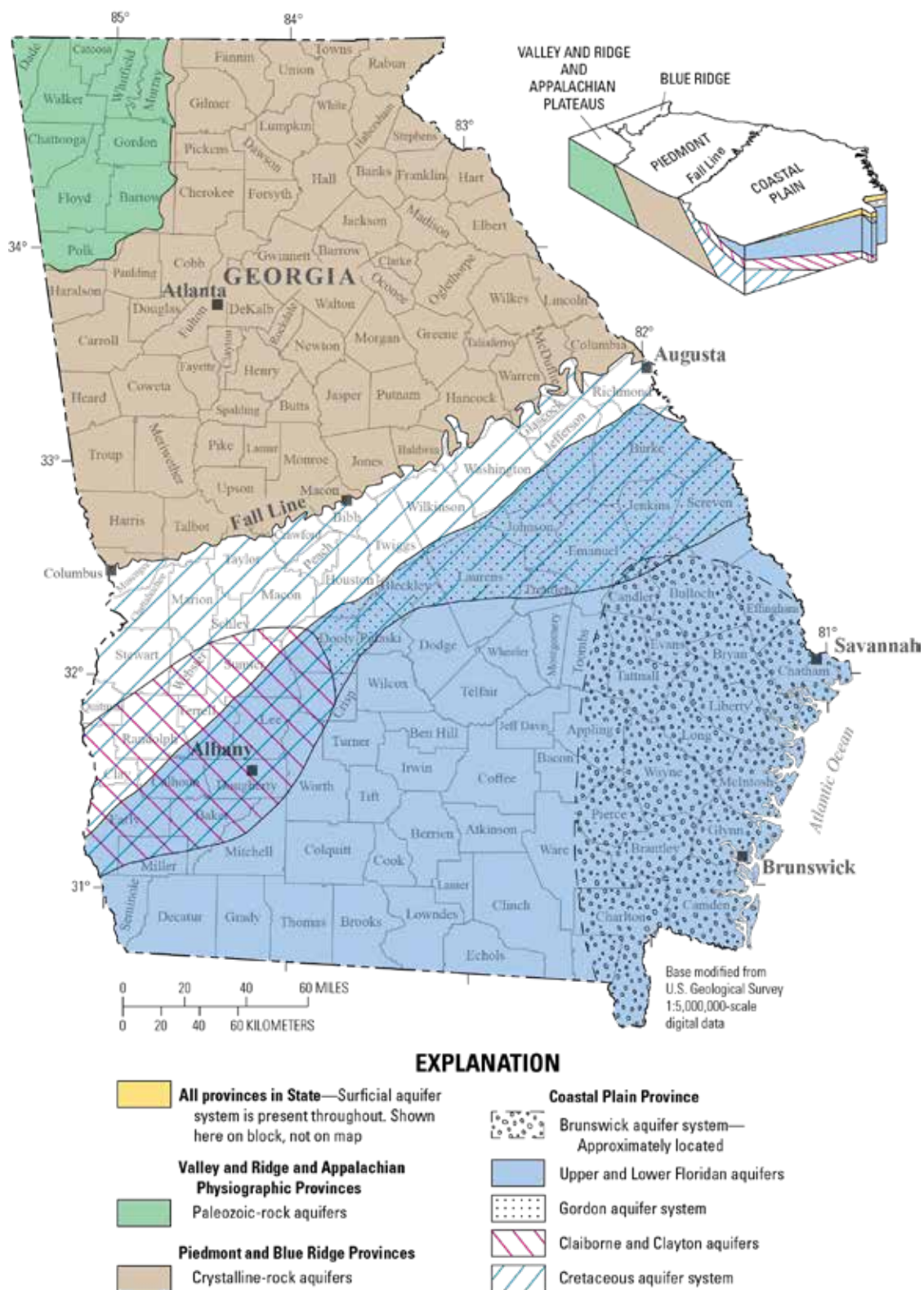


Figure 1.10: Georgia Aquifer Map  
Source: <https://ga.water.usgs.gov>



# Topography & Drainage

Bainbridge, Georgia, features relatively flat terrain with elevations ranging from approximately 72 feet to 308 feet above sea level, with an average elevation of around 121 feet.<sup>23</sup> The city is situated within Decatur County and is characterized by a level topography conducive to various land uses, including residential, commercial, and industrial development.

The drainage system in Bainbridge is significantly influenced by the Flint River, which bisects the city. The Flint River watershed covers a vast area — the river originates near the Atlanta Hartsfield Jackson International Airport in Clayton County, flowing southward through 15 counties,<sup>24</sup> and ending when it converges with the Chattahoochee River at Lake Seminole on the Georgia-Florida border. Surface water runoff in Bainbridge generally flows south, eventually draining into the Flint River. This natural drainage pattern helps manage excess water, particularly during heavy rainfall and storm events, reducing the risk of flooding.

The region's industrial parks, such as Downrange Industrial Park, the Decatur County Industrial Park and the Commodore Industrial Park, benefit from the level topography, facilitating the development of these large industrial sites. These parks are strategically located to take advantage of the existing drainage patterns, ensuring efficient water management and minimizing the impact on surrounding areas.

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23 Worldwide Elevation Finder. "Elevation of Bainbridge, GA, USA" [https://elevation.maplogs.com/poi/bainbridge\\_ga\\_usa.16085.html](https://elevation.maplogs.com/poi/bainbridge_ga_usa.16085.html).

24 Clayton, Fayette, Spalding, Upson, Talbot, Taylor, Macon, Dooly, Crisp, Sumter, Lee, Dougherty, Mitchell, Baker, and Decatur.



# Water Quality & Management

The Flint River, which runs through Bainbridge, is a primary water source, significantly influencing local water quality. The US Geological Survey (USGS) monitors water quality parameters at the Flint River, including temperature, dissolved oxygen, specific conductance, pH, and nutrient levels, to ensure the water meets public and ecological health safety standards.

To control pollution, Bainbridge adheres to guidelines set by the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) of Georgia and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), focusing on managing agricultural runoff, controlling industrial discharges, and monitoring urban stormwater runoff. The City of Bainbridge sources its drinking water from the Floridan Aquifer through groundwater wells. Water is treated at the well sites using chlorination and other processes to ensure it meets or exceeds state and federal safety standards. The City of Bainbridge Utilities staff conducts daily testing to maintain water quality. Annual Water Quality Reports are published to keep residents informed about the safety and composition of their drinking water.<sup>25</sup>

Bainbridge also implements stormwater management systems to handle runoff effectively, using infrastructure such as retention basins and drainage channels to reduce flooding, minimize erosion, and prevent pollutants from entering water bodies. The city's wastewater treatment facility treats sewage and industrial wastewater before releasing effluent into the Flint River, ensuring treated effluent meets environmental standards.

Water conservation programs, including educational campaigns and incentives for using water-saving appliances, are promoted to encourage efficient water use among residents and businesses. Despite these efforts, challenges such as nonpoint source pollution from runoff and the need for continuous infrastructure upgrades remain significant. Maintaining high water quality standards and implementing effective management practices are essential to ensuring the sustainability and health of local water resources in Bainbridge.

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25 City of Bainbridge. 2023. "Annual Water Quality Report." [https://core-docs.s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded\\_file/4404/bainbridgecity/4117227/Annual\\_Water\\_Quality\\_Report\\_2023.pdf](https://core-docs.s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/4404/bainbridgecity/4117227/Annual_Water_Quality_Report_2023.pdf).

# Air Quality & Management

Air quality in Bainbridge, Georgia, is generally good, but specific environmental and management challenges exist. Primary sources of air pollution in Bainbridge include vehicle emissions, industrial activities, and agricultural practices, which release pollutants such as particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10), nitrogen oxides (NOx), sulfur dioxide (SO2), carbon monoxide (CO), and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into the atmosphere. Bainbridge experiences moderate air quality with occasional days of unhealthy air quality due to these pollutants.<sup>26</sup>

Bainbridge adheres to standards the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets to manage air quality and collaborates with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD). Strategies include promoting cleaner fuels, encouraging public transportation, and implementing regulations to control industrial emissions.

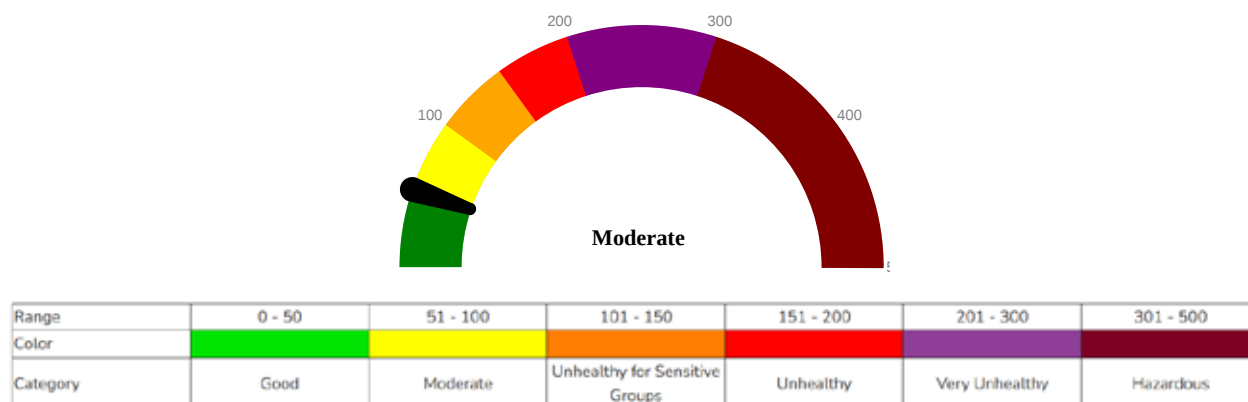


Figure 1.11: Average Air Quality Index for Bainbridge (2024)  
Source: [https://firststreet.org/city/bainbridge-ga/1304896\\_fsid/air](https://firststreet.org/city/bainbridge-ga/1304896_fsid/air)

Efforts to reduce emissions from agricultural activities in Bainbridge, Georgia, include promoting best practices for pesticide and fertilizer use. These initiatives are part of broader state and federal programs to mitigate agricultural greenhouse gas emissions and enhance sustainability. The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension in Decatur County supports these efforts by providing resources and training to local farmers on sustainable agricultural practices, including integrated pest management and optimized nutrient management.

26 IQAir. "Air Quality in Bainbridge." <https://www.iqair.com/us/usa/georgia/bainbridge>.

To minimize farming's environmental impact while maintaining productivity, practices such as integrated pest management, cover cropping, and optimized nutrient management are encouraged. These measures help reduce emissions of pollutants like nitrous oxide, a significant greenhouse gas emitted from fertilizer use.<sup>27 28</sup>

Programs like the USDA's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) offer technical and financial assistance to farmers to implement climate-smart practices. These practices include cover cropping, conservation tillage, and nutrient management, which help reduce nitrous oxide emissions from fertilizers and improve soil health.<sup>29 30</sup>

Moreover, recent legislation signed by Governor Brian Kemp aims to strengthen Georgia's agricultural sector by promoting sustainable practices and conservation efforts. This includes creating funds to support farmland conservation and encouraging practices that reduce environmental impacts.<sup>31</sup>

Public awareness campaigns are a significant part of Bainbridge's air quality management strategy. These campaigns educate residents about the sources and effects of air pollution and encourage behaviors that can improve air quality, such as reducing vehicle idling and supporting local clean air initiatives. Continuous monitoring and reporting help track air quality trends and inform policy decisions to mitigate pollution.<sup>32</sup>

Overall, Bainbridge strives to maintain and improve air quality through regulatory measures, technological advancements, and public education, ensuring a healthier environment for its residents. Regular monitoring and proactive management are essential to address potential air quality issues and maintain compliance with air quality standards.

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27 McKinsey & Company. "Reducing Agriculture Emissions Through Improved Farming Practices." <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/agriculture/our-insights/reducing-agriculture-emissions-through-improved-farming-practices>.

28 International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI). "Climate-Smart Agriculture Practices for Mitigating Greenhouse Gas Emissions." <https://www.ilri.org/knowledge/publications/climate-smart-agriculture-practices-mitigating-greenhouse-gas-emissions>.

29 USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS). "Optimizing Agricultural Management to Mitigate Climate Change Impacts." <https://www.ars.usda.gov/research/annual-report-on-science-accomplishments/fy-2020/optimizing-agricultural-management-to-mitigate-climate-change-impacts/>.

30 American Farmland Trust. "Climate-Smart Beef." <https://farmland.org/climate-smart-beef>.

31 Office of Governor Brian Kemp. "Gov. Kemp Signs Legislation to Support Georgia Agriculture." <https://gov.georgia.gov/press-releases/2023-04-18/gov-kemp-signs-legislation-support-georgia-agriculture>.

32 IQAir. "Air Quality in Bainbridge." <https://www.iqair.com/us/usa/georgia/bainbridge>.



# Alternative Energy

## Solar

Solar irradiance is the power per unit area received from the sun through electromagnetic radiation. Areas with high solar irradiance are more suitable for solar panels than areas with lower solar irradiance. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) is a federally funded laboratory within the United States Department of Energy (DOE) that focuses on research, development, and deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies. NREL creates solar maps that provide detailed information about the solar energy potential of a specific geographic area by showing the amount of solar radiation (solar irradiance) that different regions receive over a given period of time.

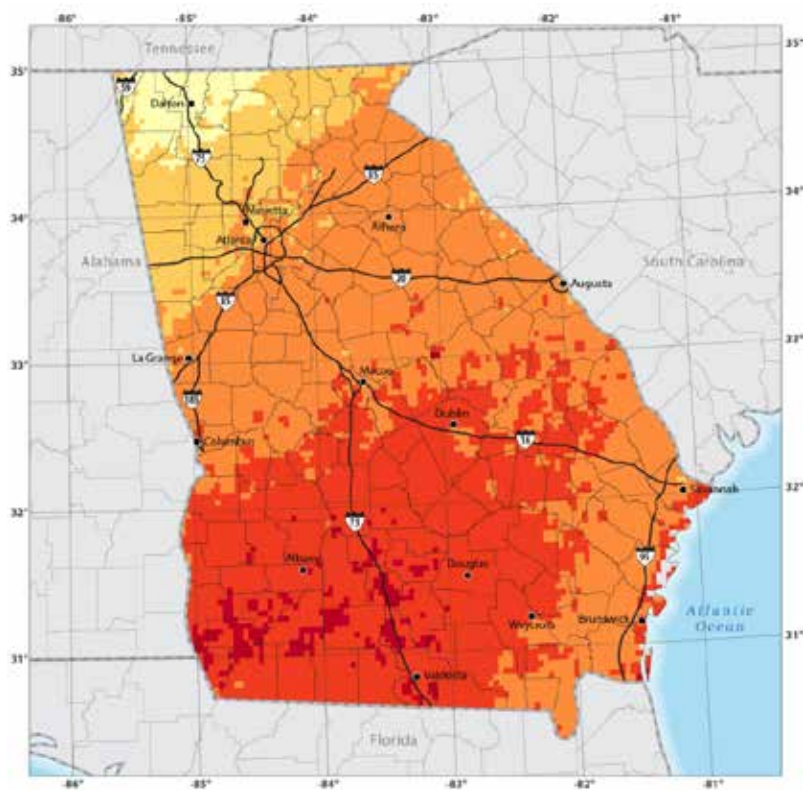


Figure 1.12: Georgia's Direct Solar Energy Potential  
Source: National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)

Solar irradiance and solar insolation are related but distinct concepts in solar energy. Solar Insolation is the total amount of solar radiation received on a given surface area during a specified time, often expressed in kilowatt-hours per square meter per day (kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/day). It represents the cumulative solar energy received over a period (typically daily). Two-thirds of Georgia receives solar insolation values equivalent to most of the state of Florida, making solar energy a viable option in Georgia.

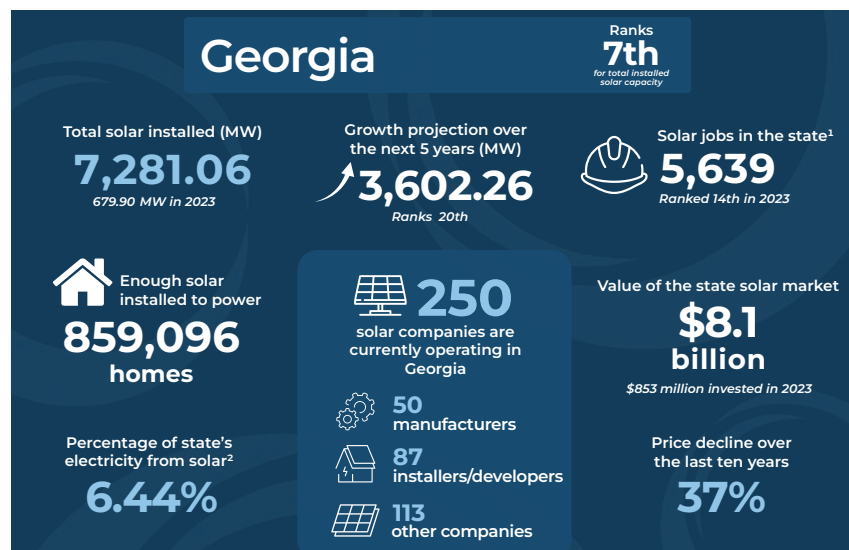


Figure 1.13: Total Solar Installations in Georgia (2024)  
Source: <https://seia.org>

Although the efficiency of solar panels can slightly decrease with higher temperatures, the significant amount of solar energy available in Southwest Georgia makes solar power a viable and productive energy source. Southwest Georgia receives substantial solar radiation, ensuring solar panels can generate significant electricity even if their efficiency decreases slightly in higher temperatures.

Homeowners, commercial businesses, and other private and public institutions that install solar energy systems can benefit from a substantial federal income tax credit known as the Investment Tax Credit (ITC). This credit allows for a 30% claim for the cost of solar installations as a tax credit for systems placed in service before December 31, 2032. The ITC significantly reduces the overall cost of solar systems, making solar energy more financially accessible. However, the credit is set to decrease gradually, dropping to 26% for systems installed in 2033 and to 22% for those installed in 2034. The tax credit is scheduled to expire in 2035 unless Congress renews it. This potential expiration emphasizes the importance of taking advantage of the credit while it is available. The ITC provides financial savings by reducing tax liabilities and promotes environmental benefits by encouraging the adoption of renewable energy, thus contributing to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, the ITC supports economic growth by fostering job creation and technological advancements in the solar industry.<sup>33 34</sup>

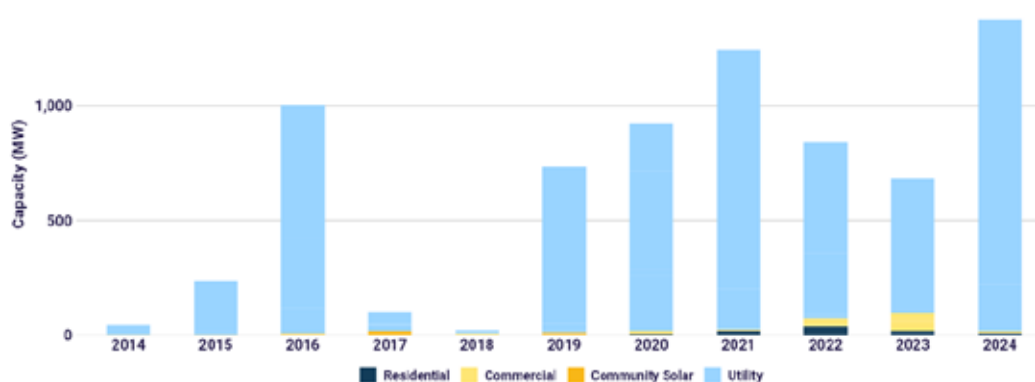


Figure 1.14: Annual Solar installations in Georgia  
Source: <https://seia.org>

The Cool Springs Solar Energy Center in Bainbridge, Georgia, developed by NextEra Energy Resources, became operational in 2021. This substantial 298-megawatt (MW) solar project is one of the largest in the state and can produce enough electricity to power approximately 35,303 homes annually. The facility spans around 1,750 acres and includes a significant battery storage component, with a 51-MW battery storage system designed to enhance the reliability and efficiency of the energy supply by storing excess solar energy for use during periods of low solar generation or high demand.<sup>35 36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Solar Energy Industries Association. 2024. "Solar Growth Georgia." <https://seia.org/state-solar-policy/georgia-solar/>.

<sup>34</sup> The Post-Searchlight. 2021. "Georgia's Newest Large-Scale Solar Energy Project Cuts Ribbon." <https://thepostsearchlight.com/2021/11/24/georgias-newest-large-scale-solar-energy-project-cuts-ribbon/>.

<sup>35</sup> Solar Energy Industries Association. 2024. "Solar Growth Georgia." <https://seia.org/state-solar-policy/georgia-solar/>.

<sup>36</sup> Next Era Energy Resources. "Cool Springs Solar Project." <https://www.nexteraenergyresources.com/cool-springs-solar/project-overview.html>.

The project represents a significant investment in renewable energy for Decatur County, providing clean energy and substantial economic benefits. During its construction, it created around 350 jobs and continues to contribute to the local economy through additional tax revenues. The energy generated at Cool Springs Solar is sold to Georgia Power under a long-term power purchase agreement, ensuring a stable and sustainable energy supply for the region.<sup>37 38 39</sup> While this utility-scale project serves a regional energy need, the feasibility of additional large-scale solar facilities within Bainbridge is significantly constrained by available land and competing development priorities.

## Wind

While wind power is one of the lowest-cost electricity sources per unit of energy produced, wind power generation in Georgia is less prevalent due to the state's generally lower wind speeds, which are less conducive to large-scale wind farm operations than other regions with higher average wind velocities. However, small-scale wind turbine technology advancements have improved the efficiency and feasibility of wind energy generated for localized applications, such as residential, agricultural, and small business purposes. Smaller turbines can operate effectively at lower wind speeds, making them suitable for Georgia's conditions. Despite these advancements, the potential for large-scale wind farms remains limited in Georgia due to the insufficient and inconsistent wind speeds necessary for the optimal performance of larger turbines. This makes the widespread deployment of large wind farms less viable compared to other renewable energy sources like solar power, which has proven more effective given the state's high solar irradiance.<sup>40</sup>

In 2020, wind energy contributed less than 1% to Georgia's total electricity generation, in stark contrast to states where wind power is more viable, like Iowa and South Dakota, where over 50% of electricity is generated from wind power. This discrepancy highlights the regional differences in wind energy feasibility and development. Additionally, states with significant wind energy production often have strong policy support, including renewable portfolio standards (RPS), incentives, and subsidies encouraging wind energy development. In comparison, Georgia's policy environment has been more favorable to solar energy (due to the latter's energy production potential compared to wind within the state), as evidenced by the growth in solar installations and related incentives.

While advancements in small-scale wind turbine technology could enhance the feasibility of localized wind applications in Georgia, large-scale wind farms remain less viable due to the region's wind conditions. Emerging technologies and hybrid systems combining wind, solar, and battery storage might offer more integrated solutions in the future.

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37 Solar Energy Industries Association. 2024. "Solar Growth Georgia." <https://seia.org/state-solar-policy/georgia-solar/>.

38 The Post-Searchlight. 2021. "Georgia's Newest Large-Scale Solar Energy Project Cuts Ribbon." <https://thepostsearchlight.com/2021/11/24/georgias-newest-large-scale-solar-energy-project-cuts-ribbon/>.

39 Next Era Energy Resources. "Cool Springs Solar Project." <https://www.nexteraenergyresources.com/cool-springs-solar/project-overview.html>.

40 Solar Energy Industries Association. 2024. "Solar Growth Georgia." <https://seia.org/state-solar-policy/georgia-solar/>.

# Geothermal

Geothermal energy in Southwest Georgia holds potential primarily for direct-use applications and geothermal heat pumps rather than for large-scale electricity generation. The region's relatively stable ground temperatures make it ideal for geothermal heat pumps, which can provide efficient heating and cooling solutions for residential, commercial, and institutional buildings. These systems leverage the consistent temperatures just a few feet below the surface to reduce energy consumption and lower utility costs. While Georgia does not have the high-temperature geothermal resources necessary for generating electricity on a large scale, advancements in geothermal technology and increased interest in sustainable energy solutions encourage more widespread adoption of geothermal heat pumps. Additionally, state incentives and federal tax credits can help offset the initial installation costs, making geothermal a viable and attractive option for energy-efficient heating and cooling in Southwest Georgia.<sup>41</sup>

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41 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). "Geothermal Heating and Cooling Technologies." [https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/rhc/geothermal-heating-and-cooling-technologies\\_.html](https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/rhc/geothermal-heating-and-cooling-technologies_.html).





# Green Space

The City of Bainbridge is home to several well-loved venues that host community festivals and celebrations throughout the year. From scenic riverside parks like Earle May Boat Basin, Cheney Griffin Park, and Chason Park to the more centrally located Willis Park in the historic downtown square, these spaces support Bainbridge's vibrant cultural life. Smaller parks and community spaces like the Joe L. Sweet Community Center, Coyle Park, College Street Park, and Helen Street Park provide accessible gathering places and recreational amenities within residential neighborhoods. The grounds of the former High School and vacated Middle School provide locations for some events pending input from the Decatur County Board of Education.

Bainbridge's parks include Bill Reynolds Sports Park, Chason Park, Carson Hatcher Park, College Street Playground, Willis Park in the historic town square, Hook and Ladder Playground, Blue Hole Park, Helen Street Park, Andrews Street Playground, and Coyle Park.<sup>42</sup>



Figure 1.15: Carson Hatcher Park Entrance



Figure 1.16: Willis Park

The city's most notable green space is Earle May Boat Basin Park, which offers a range of outdoor activities, including boating, fishing, picnicking, and walking trails. The park is also popular for community events and festivals, contributing to Bainbridge's social and cultural fabric. A new 18-hole disc golf course completed in 2024 follows along the river walk.<sup>43</sup>

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42 City of Bainbridge. "Parks & Facilities." <https://www.bainbridgecity.com/page/parks-facilities>.

43 City of Bainbridge. "Parks & Facilities." <https://www.bainbridgecity.com/page/parks-facilities>.

Another important green space is Cheney Griffin Park, which offers shaded picnic areas, paved walking paths, and access to the scenic riverfront. The park features “Story Walk” panels that combine outdoor activity with early literacy, benches and sitting areas ideal for quiet reflection or birdwatching, and green open spaces for family gatherings or casual recreation. It also provides a visual connection to Bainbridge’s historic railroad bridge and is linked to the larger riverwalk system, making it a key recreational and cultural asset in the city’s park network. These parks underscore the city’s commitment to maintaining natural areas that promote physical activity and community engagement.

The 91-acre Bill Reynolds Sports Park has eight baseball fields, eight softball fields, five basketball courts, fourteen tennis courts, and two multi-purpose soccer/football fields. Picnic sites, public restrooms, concession stands, and ample free parking are available on-site.<sup>44</sup> New additions to the Sports Park are an indoor basketball court and dedicated senior programming, expanding year-round access to health and wellness opportunities for residents of all ages. The park is well-suited for walking and running, with well-maintained trails surrounded by lush greenery and a serene ambiance. This makes it a popular spot for those seeking an active outdoor experience amidst nature. The extensive trail network caters to enthusiasts of all skill levels, offering scenic routes highlighting the area’s natural beauty.<sup>45</sup>

The central square in downtown Bainbridge revolves around Willis Park, a scenic and historic green space. The park is known for its well-maintained gardens, walkways, and historic gazebo, which often hosts local events, concerts, and weddings. The park’s central location and amenities make it a key venue for public events, including festivals and holiday celebrations, contributing to the vibrant cultural life of Bainbridge.

Bainbridge is part of the larger Flint River ecosystem, which provides significant ecological benefits and recreational opportunities. The Flint River’s associated green spaces help preserve local wildlife habitats and offer scenic views and water-based activities like kayaking and fishing.

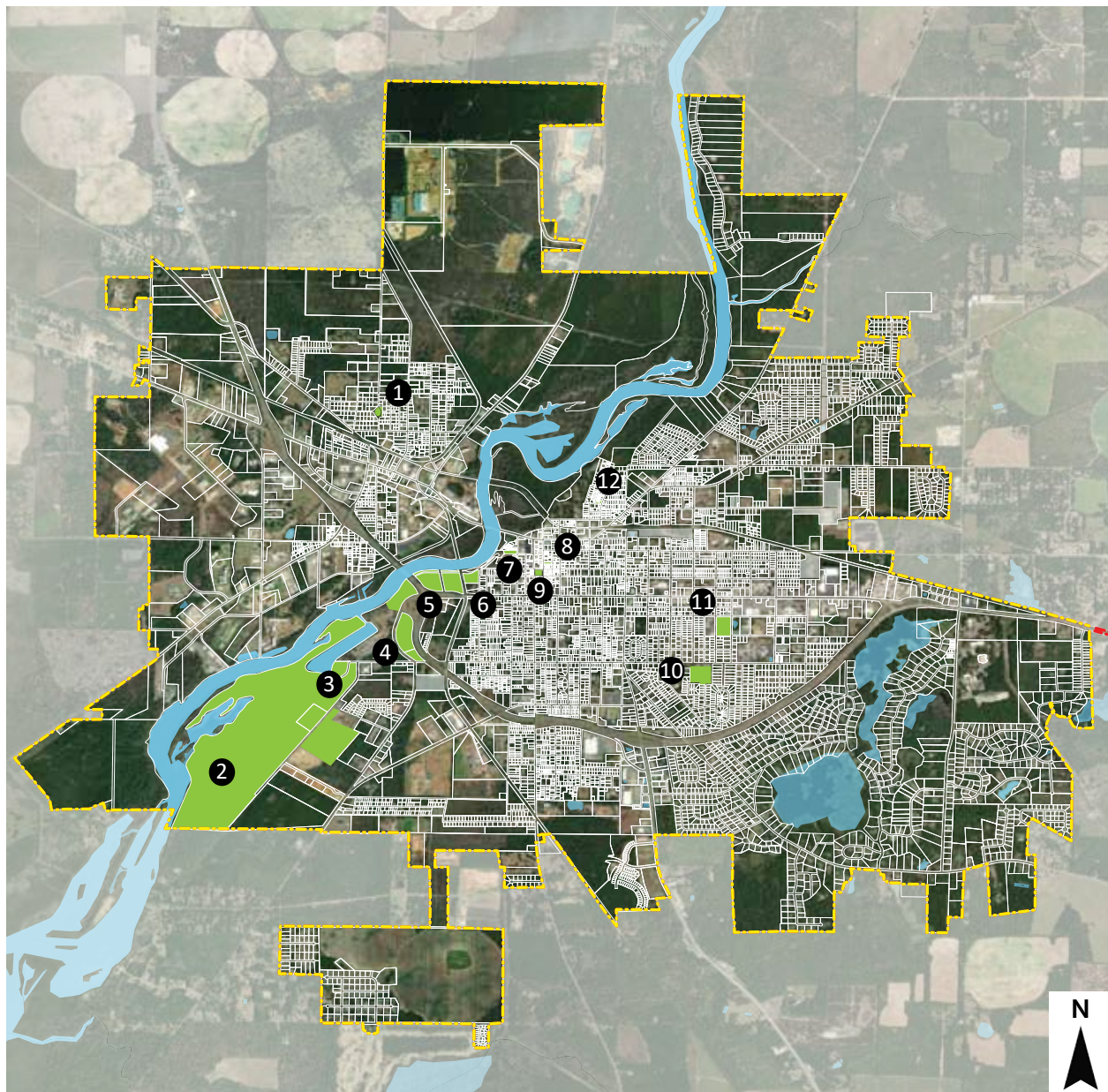
Local government initiatives and community organizations support efforts to expand and maintain these green spaces, ensuring that Bainbridge continues to benefit from its natural resources. These green spaces provide recreational and aesthetic value and contribute to the region’s environmental health by offering natural areas for wildlife and helping to mitigate the urban heat island effect.

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44 Explore Georgia. “Bill Reynolds Sports Park.” <https://www.exploregeorgia.org/bainbridge/sports-racing/sports-venues-facilities/bill-reynolds-sports-park>.

45 My Pacer. “Bill Reynolds Sports Park in Bainbridge.” <https://www.mypacer.com/parks/167441/bill-reynolds-sports-park-bainbridge>.





- Parks and Recreation Areas
- Bainbridge City Limit



Key Plan



Figure 1.17: Enlarged Plan showing parks and recreation spaces





1 Blue Hole Park



2 Bill Reynolds Sports Park



3 Earle May Boat Basin Park



4 Andrew Street Playground



5 Carson Hatcher Park



6 Cheney Griffin Park



7 Chason Park



8 Hook and Ladder Park



9 Willis Park



10 College Street Playground



11 Coyle Park



11 Helen Street Park

# Biodiversity, Connected Corridors, & Existing Habitat Protection

Bainbridge, Georgia, is dedicated to maintaining and enhancing its biodiversity, connected corridors, and existing habitat protection efforts. The city's rich natural environment, including the Flint River and its associated ecosystems, provides a critical habitat for various species of flora and fauna. Efforts to preserve and protect these habitats are evident in local initiatives that maintain green spaces, such as Earle May Boat Basin Park and Cheney Griffin Park, which are essential refuges for wildlife and native plants.

Connected corridors, essential for wildlife movement and migration, are supported through preserving natural landscapes and implementing strategic planning efforts. These corridors help ensure that wildlife can move safely between different habitats, reducing the risk of fragmentation and promoting genetic diversity. The Flint River acts as a major ecological corridor, supporting a range of species and connecting various habitats along its course.

Existing habitat protection in Bainbridge involves collaboration between local government, environmental organizations, and the community to implement conservation practices and sustainable land use planning. This includes protecting wetlands, maintaining riparian buffers along waterways, and promoting the use of native plants in landscaping. These efforts support biodiversity and contribute to the ecosystem's health by improving water quality and reducing soil erosion.





# Demographic Profile

Bainbridge, GA, presents a diverse demographic profile with approximately 14,401 residents in 2024. The gender distribution is relatively balanced, and the community shows a broad age range, with a significant proportion of residents in the working-age bracket. Ethnically, Bainbridge is diverse, with a notable representation of African American, White, and Hispanic communities. Educational attainment in Bainbridge varies, with a substantial portion of the population having completed high school and a growing number pursuing higher education degrees. The employment landscape in Bainbridge is characterized by a mix of industries, with significant employment in manufacturing, healthcare, retail, and education sectors. Housing in Bainbridge includes a range of options from single-family homes to apartments, reflecting the town's varied economic profile. The cost of living is relatively affordable, making it an attractive place for families and individuals seeking a balanced lifestyle in a small-town setting.

# Population

As of the most recent census (2020), the population of Bainbridge, Georgia, was approximately 14,468 people. This was an increase of approximately 10.56%, or 1,382 new residents, between 2020 and the previous census in 2010.<sup>46</sup> In 2023, the population was estimated at 15,039, and the population was projected to reach 15,408 residents in 2028. These numbers show steady population growth over the last 13 years, which was projected to taper off through 2028 (0.49% growth from 2023 to 2028).<sup>47</sup>

The 2023 daytime population, which includes residents and workers, is higher than the 2023 residential population. The daytime population of 16,993, being higher than the 2023 residential population of 15,039, suggests that the city attracts a considerable number of workers from surrounding areas. At the same time, it may be fair to assume some current residents also commute out of the city for work.

		Percent of Total	Growth / Year
2010 Total Population	13,086	100%	N/A
2020 Total Population	14,468	100%	138.2/year
2023 Total Population	15,039	100%	188.0/year
2023 Total Daytime Population	16,993	100%	N/A
• Workers	7,508	44.6%	N/A
• Residents	9,413	55.4%	N/A
2023-2028 Annual Growth Rate (Projected)	75	0.49%	73.8/year
2028 Total Population (Projected)	15,408	100%	N/A

Table 1.01: Projected Population Growth from 2010 to 2028  
Source: ESRI Community Profile

46 ESRI. 2024. "Community Profile."

47 ESRI. 2024. "Community Profile."

## Diversity

Bainbridge is a racially and ethnically diverse community with a majority African American population (56.03%), followed by White residents (35.29%), Hispanic or Latino residents (5.31%), and smaller percentages of Asian, Native American, and multiracial individuals. This diversity contributes to a rich cultural fabric reflected in the city's architecture, local institutions, and community events.

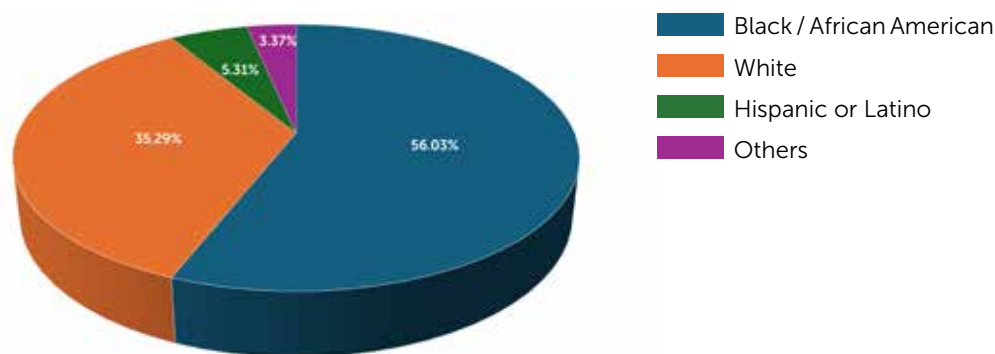


Figure 1.18: Diversity

In addition to racial and ethnic diversity, Bainbridge exhibits diversity across economic, educational, and generational lines. The city includes long-time residents whose families have lived in Bainbridge for generations, as well as newer residents drawn by its affordability and employment opportunities. The presence of a growing Hispanic population adds to the city's linguistic diversity, with Spanish increasingly spoken in homes and businesses.

Religious and cultural traditions also vary across communities, creating opportunities for cross-cultural exchange and collaboration. While some cultural divisions persist, the diversity of Bainbridge is a source of community resilience and vibrancy. Continued investment in inclusive public spaces, community programs, and equitable access to services will help Bainbridge ensure that all residents, regardless of background, feel a sense of belonging and opportunity.

## Educational Attainment

Approximately 31.32% of residents have completed high school or earned an equivalent qualification. Additionally, around 17.49% have attended college for at least one year without obtaining a degree, while about 12.19% have earned an associate degree. Notably, 13.11% of the population holds a bachelor's degree, and a smaller proportion has pursued further education, with 7.05% obtaining a master's degree, 1.55% holding a professional degree, and 0.77% achieving a doctorate.

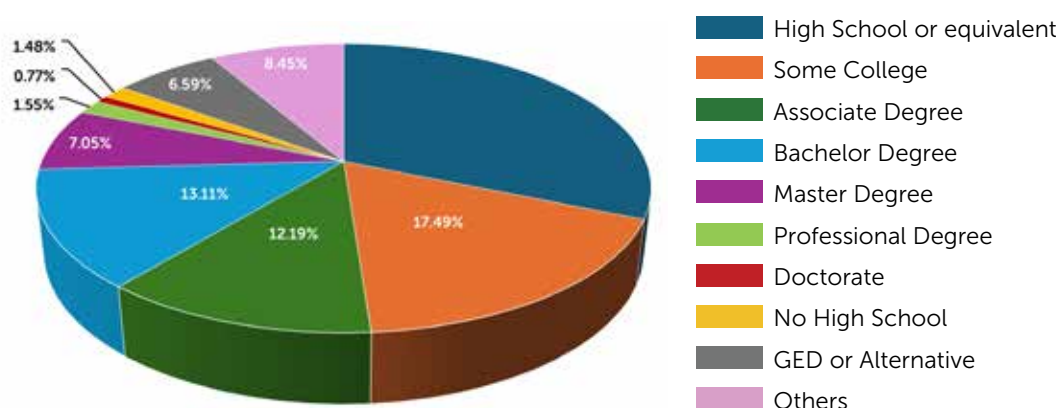


Figure 1.19: Educational Attainment

Despite these achievements, a small portion of the population, 1.48%, did not complete high school, and 6.59% have obtained a GED or alternative credential. Bainbridge is home to several educational institutions, including Bainbridge State College, which plays a significant role in the local educational landscape by awarding numerous degrees each year. The student population at these institutions is predominantly Black or African American (50.6%), followed by White (43.8%), with smaller percentages of Hispanic or Latino, and individuals of two or more races.<sup>48 49</sup>

48 Data USA. "Bainbridge, GA." <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/bainbridge-ga/>.

49 Zip Data and Maps. "Zip Code 39819 – Bainbridge Georgia." <https://www.zipdatamaps.com/39819>.

# Housing

Housing in Bainbridge, Georgia, presents a diverse range of structures and conditions, reflecting the community's historical development and current challenges. For 2020, Bainbridge was estimated to have approximately 5,711 housing units,<sup>50</sup> predominantly composed of single-family detached structures, which comprise 70.9% of the housing stock.<sup>51</sup> Other housing types include triplexes and quadruplexes (10.1%), duplexes (7.3%), and units in buildings with five to nine units (6.3%). Mobile homes constitute about 3%, and structures with 10 to 19 units make up 1.1% of the housing stock.<sup>52 53</sup>

The age of the housing stock varies significantly, with about 54.9% of the occupied units built in 1980 or later and 45% constructed before 1980. This includes a notable share of homes built between 1940 and 1999. However, very few owner-occupied units have been constructed in the past decade.<sup>54</sup>



Figure 1.20: Single Family Housing



Figure 1.21: Single Family Housing

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50 2016-2020 American Community Survey. "Five-Year Estimates."

51 City of Bainbridge. "Bainbridge Housing Needs Assessment," pg. 16.

52 ESRI. 2024. "Community Profile."

53 City of Bainbridge. "Bainbridge Housing Needs Assessment," pg. 16.

54 City of Bainbridge. "Bainbridge Housing Needs Assessment," pg. 19.



Ownership patterns show that slightly less than half of the households in Bainbridge are owner-occupied (47.3%), which is lower than the county average of 61.9%. Most owner-occupied units are single-unit homes (96.3%), with minimal representation from other housing types such as duplexes and multi-unit structures. In contrast, renter-occupied units are more evenly distributed among different housing types, with 50.2% in structures with two or more units and 47.9% in single-unit homes.<sup>55</sup>

A visual survey identified some areas with housing in good or fair condition, as well as sections of the city with a significant number of deteriorating and/or dilapidated structures. Newer developments, particularly those built between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, such as Ridgefield Place and Pine Ridge Estates, generally exhibit good condition. Conversely, older areas, especially parts of the historic district and certain neighborhoods west of the Flint River, have higher concentrations of deteriorating and dilapidated homes.



Figure 1.22: Flint River RV Park



Figure 1.23: Affordable Housing

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55 City of Bainbridge. "Bainbridge Housing Needs Assessment," pgs. 17-18.

While Bainbridge is designated as a city, it exhibits some characteristics typical of a “rural area.”<sup>56</sup> Among such characteristics, Bainbridge faces housing challenges common to a rural area, such as high poverty rates, substandard housing conditions, and limited economic investment.<sup>57</sup>

Bainbridge’s population has been steadily increasing, with a corresponding decrease in number of households and a slight rise in household size.<sup>58</sup> This could indicate population outpacing the provision of new housing and/or the number of existing housing options in fair condition is dwindling.

Bainbridge experiences significant poverty, particularly among Black (35% below poverty level) and Hispanic (89% below poverty level) residents.<sup>59</sup> The housing market is characterized by a high percentage of single-family homes (70.9% single-family detached structures) and a substantial number of older housing units, many of which are in poor condition.<sup>60</sup> Critical housing needs include constructing new affordable housing, addressing existing blight, and improving property maintenance.<sup>61</sup>

The private sector is currently making some efforts. Platform Bainbridge is a new multi-family housing development with 1- to 3- bedroom apartments near the corner of Avenue A and Faceville Highway (State Route 97) in southwest Bainbridge.



Figure 1.24: “Flint River Platform Apartments” - under construction



Figure 1.25: “Flint River Platform Apartments” - finished construction

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56 The terms “rural” and “urban” often refer to broader economic, social, and infrastructural contexts, rather than strictly population size or administrative status.

57 City of Bainbridge. “Bainbridge Housing Needs Assessment,” pgs. 2-3.

58 City of Bainbridge. “Bainbridge Housing Needs Assessment,” pgs. 4-5.

59 City of Bainbridge. “Bainbridge Housing Needs Assessment,” pgs. 7-8.

60 City of Bainbridge. “Bainbridge Housing Needs Assessment,” pgs. 16-18.

61 City of Bainbridge. “Bainbridge Housing Needs Assessment,” pgs. 37-39.

West Bainbridge, Georgia, a predominantly industrial and residential area located west of the Flint River, presents a mixed picture of housing conditions. Historically known as the town of Diffee, this area once provided workforce housing for local mill workers and was later divided by the construction of the US-84 bypass during the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Currently, West Bainbridge contains some of the city's largest shares of deteriorating and dilapidated housing. Approximately 70% of residential structures in this area are in either deteriorating or dilapidated condition.

The neighborhoods along Spring Creek and Airport Roads in West Bainbridge show significant signs of neglect. Around 59% of residential structures north of Butler Ferry Road, including those along Church Street and Dothan Road, are categorized as deteriorating. Additionally, 41% of all housing units along Spring Creek Road are in similar condition. This high prevalence of housing disrepair indicates a substantial need for housing rehabilitation and development investment to improve living conditions and support community revitalization.

Despite these challenges, some areas of West Bainbridge, particularly those south of Dothan Road, have a higher percentage of housing in good condition (74%) compared to other sections, where only 29-34% of the housing is in good shape. This variation underscores the disparities within the community and the need for targeted interventions to address housing quality and availability across different neighborhoods.

Overall, the housing conditions in West Bainbridge highlight significant challenges related to aging infrastructure and the impacts of historical industrial activity. Addressing these issues is crucial for the community's development, requiring coordinated efforts to improve housing conditions, support economic growth, and enhance the quality of life for residents.

Southeast of West Bainbridge, Shotwell and Scott street corridors were the subject of a dedicated economic development plan conducted by Robert and Company and adopted by Bainbridge City Council in December 2023.

Overall, Bainbridge's housing market is characterized by a mix of older and newer properties, varying conditions, and a need for increased housing development to meet the demands of its growing population. The city's efforts to address these housing challenges are ongoing, focusing on improving existing housing conditions and expanding the housing stock to accommodate future growth.

# Economy

Bainbridge, an important economic player in the Southwest Georgia region, relies heavily on agriculture and forestry products and is experiencing slow but steady population growth while incrementally expanding its infrastructure networks such as water, sewer, and high-speed internet.<sup>62</sup> Bainbridge faces competition from surrounding regions and cities, particularly in retail and industrial development. This necessitates efforts to attract and expand businesses that can compete effectively within the regional market.<sup>63</sup>

## Employment & Industry

The employment landscape in Bainbridge has traditionally been rooted in agriculture, with Decatur County historically known for producing crops such as cotton, peanuts, and corn. This agricultural heritage has played a significant role in shaping the local economy and community identity. However, recent developments indicate a diversification of the local industrial base, presenting new opportunities for future employment and industry growth in the region.

A significant boost to the local economy comes from Anovion Technologies' decision to build a new manufacturing facility in Bainbridge in the Downrange Industrial Park. This location will house the company's 1,500,000-square-foot facility, which is set to become the first of its size and scale in North America for the production of synthetic graphite anode materials used in lithium-ion batteries. The project is expected to create over 400 jobs and represents an investment of more than \$800 million. Anovion Technologies will produce synthetic graphite anode materials for lithium-ion batteries used in electric vehicles and other applications. This facility, located at Downrange Industrial Park, will be the first of its size and scale in North America and is set to begin operations in late 2025.<sup>64</sup> <sup>65</sup> <sup>66</sup> The facility will bring a variety of technical, production, and engineering roles, as well as administrative and management positions, contributing to the region's economic development.

Taurus USA, which established operations in 2018, played a pivotal role in kickstarting this momentum, attracting further investment and job creation in the area. More recently, A-1 Truss Company, located in the County Industrial Park, has provided a substantial boost to the local economy, reinforcing Bainbridge's position as a growing hub for industrial development.

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62 City of Bainbridge. "2030 Plan Update," pgs. 28-29.

63 City of Bainbridge. "2030 Plan Update," pgs. 28-29.

64 Explore Georgia. "Anovion Technologies to Create Over 400 Jobs in Bainbridge, Invest \$800M in Manufacturing Facility." <https://georgia.org/press-release/anovion-technologies-create-over-400-jobs-bainbridge-invest-800m-manufacturing>.

65 Office of Governor Brian P. Kemp. "Gov. Kemp: Anovion Technologies to Create Over 400 Jobs in Bainbridge, Invest \$800M in Manufacturing Facility." <https://gov.georgia.gov/press-releases/2023-05-15/gov-kemp-anovion-technologies-create-over-400-jobs-bainbridge-invest-800m>.

66 Location Georgia. 2023. "Anovion Technologies to Create Over 400 Jobs in Bainbridge, Invest \$800M in Manufacturing Facility." <https://www.locationgeorgia.com/anovion-technologies-to-invest-800m-in-manufacturing-facility-in-bainbridge-february-2023/>.



Figure 1.26: Commercial Land Use



Figure 1.27: Industrial Land Use



In addition to advanced manufacturing, other sectors show promise for future employment and industry growth in Bainbridge. The clean energy sector, particularly related to electric vehicles and renewable energy technologies, is expected to grow. Bainbridge's strategic location and the presence of a skilled workforce make it an attractive site for green industries and related supply chain activities.<sup>67 68</sup>

Healthcare and social assistance services account for a significant portion of local employment<sup>69</sup> and offer substantial growth opportunities. With an increasing focus on improving healthcare services and facilities, there is potential for job creation in various healthcare professions, ranging from medical practitioners to administrative roles. The expansion of healthcare services will not only provide employment but also enhance the overall quality of life for Bainbridge residents.

The education and professional services sectors are also poised for growth. As the region attracts more businesses and industries, there will be a corresponding demand for educational opportunities corresponding to shifts in emerging economic sectors. Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC) and Southern Regional Technical College (SRTC) provide career-focused education in fields like nursing, agriculture, business, and technology. Technical colleges can equip Bainbridge and other local residents with the skills needed to participate in the region's evolving economic landscape if future training programs tailored to emerging industries' needs are offered.

The retail sector is seeing significant development along Tallahassee Highway, which branches from Scott Street and leads south across the southern city limits. A new 46,791 square-foot Publix store is expected to open on Tallahassee Highway in late 2025 and will create numerous jobs in retail and support services, further diversifying employment opportunities in Bainbridge.<sup>70</sup>

Overall, Bainbridge is transitioning from its agricultural roots to a more diversified and resilient economy. The introduction of advanced manufacturing, the clean energy sector's growth, the expansion of healthcare services, and the opportunity to develop additional Higher-Education training programs highlight the region's potential for future employment and industry growth. These developments are supported by the community's commitment to fostering a robust and dynamic local economy, with collaborations between local authorities, the Georgia Department of Economic Development, and other stakeholders underscoring the region's dedication to innovation and sustainable growth.

In 2018, Bainbridge qualified for Georgia's Rural Zone Tax Credit program, which is open to cities with no more than 15,000 people. From 2018 to 2022, the Rural Zone Tax Credit Program helped Bainbridge open 21 new businesses

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67 Explore Georgia. "Anovion Technologies to Create Over 400 Jobs in Bainbridge, Invest \$800M in Manufacturing Facility." <https://georgia.org/press-release/anovion-technologies-create-over-400-jobs-bainbridge-invest-800m-manufacturing>.

68 Location Georgia. 2023. "Anovion Technologies to Create Over 400 Jobs in Bainbridge, Invest \$800M in Manufacturing Facility." <https://www.locationgeorgia.com/anovion-technologies-to-invest-800m-in-manufacturing-facility-in-bainbridge-february-2023/>.

69 Data USA. "Bainbridge, GA." <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/bainbridge-ga/>.

70 Post Searchlight. 8-7-24 Issue.



and create 169 jobs, despite the Covid-19 pandemic, through tax credits for job creation and renovations on existing properties. These developments include The Willis Park Hotel, new dining options like The Recovery Room's, and the Hook and Ladder project, and an open-air event venue.<sup>71</sup>



Figure 1.28: Hook and Ladder Open Air Venue and Park

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71 South Georgia Magazine

# Income

The per capita income in Bainbridge in 2022 stood at \$23,115,<sup>72</sup> compared to the state median of \$37,836 and the national median of \$47,960.<sup>73 74</sup> As of 2022, the median household income in Bainbridge was \$42,093, significantly lower than the state median of \$71,355 and the national median of \$74,580.<sup>75 76</sup> Bainbridge has a high poverty rate, with approximately 27.1% of its population living below the federal poverty line in 2022 numbers, nearly double the state rate of 13.5% and considerably higher than the national rate of 11.4%.<sup>77</sup>

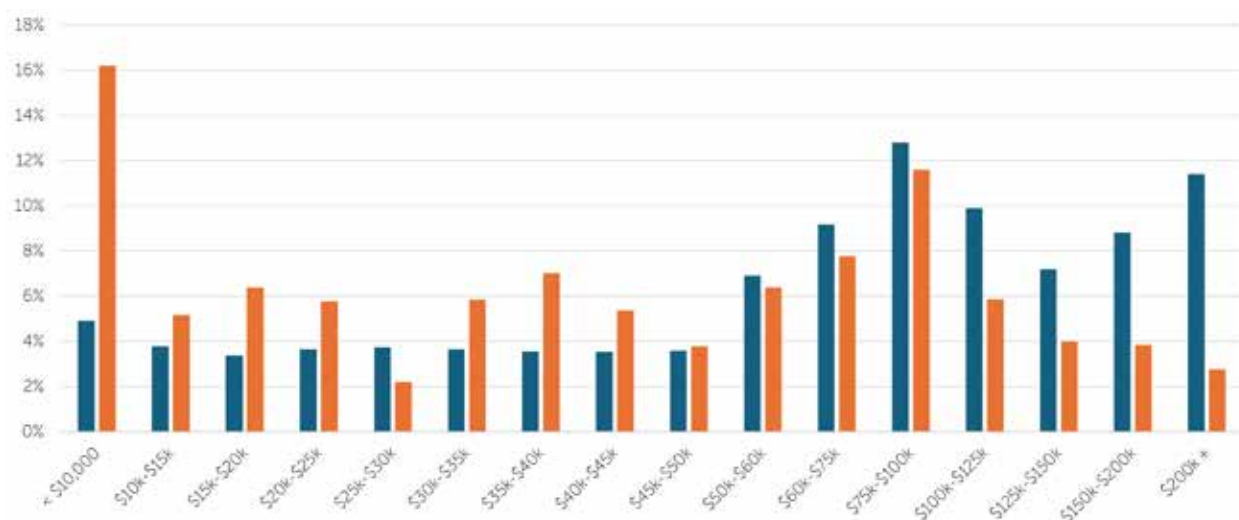


Figure 1.29: Graph comparing the Median Household Income for Bainbridge with the National Average

Source: <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/bainbridge-ga#economy>

■ United States of America  
 ■ Bainbridge, Georgia

72 Census Reporter. "Bainbridge, GA." <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US1304896-bainbridge-ga/>.

73 2022 Median Earnings for Total Workers ("Men and Women" combined) was \$47,960. For "Full-Time, Year-Round Workers" (again "Men and Women" combined), the figure was higher — \$60,070. Source: US Census. "Figure 4. Median Earnings and Percent Change by Work Status and Sex." <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/visualizations/2023/demo/p60-279/figure4.pdf>.

74 US Census. "Figure 4. Median Earnings and Percent Change by Work Status and Sex." <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/visualizations/2023/demo/p60-279/figure4.pdf>.

75 Census Reporter. "Bainbridge, GA." <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US1304896-bainbridge-ga/>.

76 US Census. 2022. "Income in the United States: 2022." <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2023/demo/p60-279.html>.

77 Census Reporter. "Bainbridge, GA." <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US1304896-bainbridge-ga/>.

## Affordability

While housing costs in Bainbridge are relatively low, many residents still face affordability challenges due to the city's lower median incomes and higher poverty rates compared to state and national benchmarks.<sup>78</sup> Although median home values and rental rates are below Georgia and U.S. averages, the financial burden of housing remains high for many households simply because income levels are significantly lower. A household is considered cost-burdened when it spends more than 30% of its income on housing expenses, and this threshold is more frequently crossed in lower-income communities, even when housing costs appear modest on paper.

In Bainbridge, this dynamic means that even “affordable” housing may still place strain on household budgets — particularly for renters, seniors on fixed incomes, and working families with limited earning potential. As such, expanding affordable housing options, preserving existing stock, and improving access to social services are key strategies to alleviate financial stress on vulnerable populations.

Moreover, affordability is not just about housing. It extends to other essential costs of living such as transportation, food, healthcare, and childcare. While Bainbridge benefits from a lower overall cost of living across many of these categories, the impact of lower incomes means residents may still struggle to build savings, invest in education, or access preventive care — all of which contribute to long-term financial stability. As a result, improving economic mobility and income opportunities is just as important to affordability as keeping costs low.

## Consumer Spending

Despite economic challenges such as lower median incomes and higher poverty rates, the relatively lower cost of living in Bainbridge helps balance overall affordability, influencing consumer spending patterns and providing insights into its residents' economic behavior and priorities.

Consumer spending in Bainbridge, GA, spans a diverse range of expenditure categories, reflecting the various economic activities present in the community. While Bainbridge housing costs<sup>79</sup> are 22.0% lower than the national average and 12.0% lower than the state average, housing expenses are a significant portion of consumer spending for Bainbridge residents, as median income levels are also much lower than national and state figures (i.e., Bainbridge residents spend less on housing costs but also earn considerably lower incomes than others in the state and across the nation, on average). Food expenditure covers groceries and dining out, with costs in Bainbridge being 19.1% lower than the national average and 9.1% lower than the state average. Transportation spending includes vehicle purchases, fuel, maintenance, and public transit, with transportation costs being 15.8% lower than the national average and 5.8% lower than the state average.<sup>80 81</sup>

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78 For-profit developers are less likely to be attracted to areas that fail to offer significant return on investment. Non-profit developers, like Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH), are relatively rare compared to for-profit developers.

79 “Housing costs” includes mortgage or rent payments, property taxes, utilities, and maintenance costs.

80 US Bureau of Economic Analysis. 2023. “Consumer Spending by State.” <https://www.bea.gov/data/consumer-spending/state>.

81 Salary.com. “Cost of Living in Bainbridge, GA 2025.” <https://www.salary.com/research/cost-of-living/bainbridge-ga>.

Healthcare spending encompasses insurance premiums, medical services, and prescription drugs. Bainbridge's healthcare costs are significantly lower, at 27.7% below the national average and 17.7% below the state average.<sup>82</sup> Entertainment and recreation expenses reflect community engagement in leisure activities, contributing to the local economy through support for entertainment venues and recreational services. Spending on apparel and services includes clothing, footwear, and related services, influenced by fashion trends and personal preferences, playing a role in the local retail market. Miscellaneous expenses cover a range of smaller, often discretionary spending on personal care products, education, financial services, and other minor categories.<sup>83</sup> Events and community activities, such as those organized by the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), also influence local consumer spending. These activities foster community engagement and stimulate local economic activity, drawing residents and visitors to spend within the local economy.

## Market Sheds & Competition

A recent Economic Leakage Report<sup>84</sup> created by ECG analyzed the 1-mile radius around Bainbridge. The study indicated key areas of retail leakage, including Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers, Building/Garden Equipment & Supply Stores, Food & Beverage Stores, and Health & Personal Care Stores. Two categories showed a surplus (i.e., sales exceeded local demand) Electronics/Appliances Stores and Clothing/Accessories Stores. Unlike economic leakage, economic surpluses are favorable for the local economy. An influx of shoppers from outside the city generates increased revenue for local stores and boosts tax revenue, contributing to overall economic growth.

For a 5-mile radius,<sup>85</sup> the total retail trade demand is \$145,847,369, with a supply of \$217,763,000, indicating a retail gap of -\$71,915,631. This surplus highlights Bainbridge's ability to capture spending from outside its immediate trade area. If we imagine Bainbridge as an "economic vacuum cleaner," the retail gap of -\$71,915,631 shows that Bainbridge is "sucking in" more retail spending than the residents alone would account for. This means the city effectively pulls in shoppers and their dollars from a wider area, creating a strong and vibrant retail market.

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82 Salary.com. "Cost of Living in Bainbridge, GA." <https://www.salary.com/research/cost-of-living/bainbridge-ga>.

83 Salary.com. "Cost of Living in Bainbridge, GA." <https://www.salary.com/research/cost-of-living/bainbridge-ga>.

84 The Economic and Community Development (ECD) team of Electric Cities of Georgia (ECG) created a Leakage Report for Bainbridge, GA. ECG is an organization that collaborates with the Georgia Department of Economic Development and other entities to support industrial, commercial, and retail recruitment and development across Georgia. They provide customized research, GIS mapping, and strategic marketing services to help communities attract and retain businesses. Their efforts aim to foster economic growth and development, particularly in smaller cities and rural areas within the state.

85 While the leakage report contains study areas of 1-, 5-, and 10-mile radii, the 5-mile study area provides a balanced view of both local and somewhat broader economic conditions, and hence it is highlighted here.





Figure 1.30: Downtown Bainbridge

## Local History

Bainbridge occupies a location close to the trading path between the Creek Indian Chattahoochee Valley and the Spanish mission towns near what is now Tallahassee, Florida. Historical sources identify a small, but important battle in 1704 by American Indian allies of the English versus a Spanish-led Indian raiding party that set a cultural border between Florida to the south and Georgia and Alabama to the north. In the early years of the new United States, native Americans and Euro-American pioneers skirmished over the lands claimed by the Creeks and other Indian tribes. Treaties were made and violated until the Creeks were defeated by American troops and forced to move west. Other tribes continued to contest settlement until they were forced south into Florida and integrated into the Seminole nation.

The City of Bainbridge was planned as the county seat for the newly established Decatur County in 1824, and named after U.S. Navy Commodore William Bainbridge, the commander of the USS Constitution. The chosen site was on a bluff adjacent to the Flint River near an old trading post. The city was incorporated on December 22, 1829.

Early settlers came upriver from the Apalachicola, and the city grew as the uppermost port available to sailing ships on the Flint River and became a trans-shipment point for agricultural goods and timber in Southwest Georgia, including cotton in the 1850s to 1900. The city continues as a small port city via the Bainbridge Terminal facility that can handle cottonseed, urea, gypsum, ammonium sulfate, nitrogen solution, and cypress bark mulch using barge traffic to move bulk cargo.

Bainbridge currently serves as a small market town and employment center for Decatur County and southwest Georgia. Recent efforts by the city and Decatur County have attracted interest in new manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution facilities using the excellent highway system to Georgia, Alabama, and Florida Panhandle. More dramatically, the city has invested in the downtown core and the adjacent Flint River to attract tourism and recreation to the city.



# Cultural Resources

The city's historic downtown area is key to its cultural assets. It features numerous well-preserved buildings dating back to the 19th and early 20th centuries, offering a glimpse into the architectural styles and urban development of those periods.

The Decatur County Courthouse, constructed in 1902, is a prominent landmark listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Another notable cultural resource is the First African Missionary Baptist Church, a Romanesque Revival-style building completed in 1909. Designed by Thomas H. Bynes, a Tuskegee Institute graduate and church deacon, it stands as an exceptional example of early 20th-century African-American church architecture in Georgia. The church's distinctive features include two entrance towers of differing heights, elaborate stained-glass windows, and a vaulted wood ceiling with tongue-and-groove bead board. Its inclusion in the National Register in 2002 underscores its architectural significance and its role in the community's religious and social history.



Figure 1.31: Decatur County Courthouse

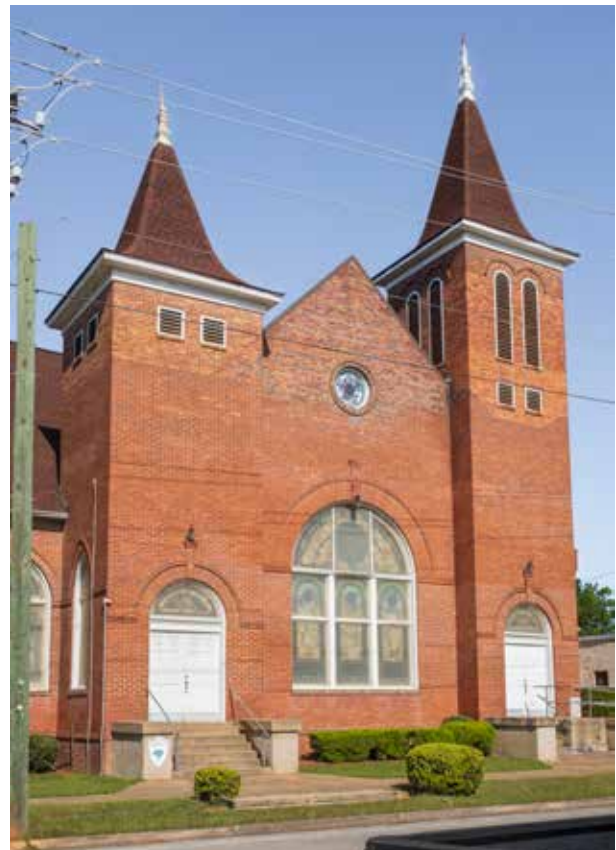


Figure 1.32: First African Missionary Baptist Church

Bainbridge is also home to the Firehouse Center and Gallery, which is housed in a historic fire station and serves as a hub for local art exhibitions and cultural events.

The Decatur County Historical Museum, operated by the Decatur County Historical Society, preserves and showcases the area's history through artifacts, documents, and exhibits that highlight the region's development over time. The museum provides residents and visitors with a deeper understanding of Bainbridge's historical legacy.

The Bainbridge Little Theatre adds to the city's cultural landscape by offering a venue for local theatrical productions, fostering community engagement and appreciation for the performing arts. Annual events such as River Town Days, the Swine Time Festival, and the Decatur County Fall Festival and Fair celebrate the community's traditions and provide opportunities for residents and visitors to experience local culture and heritage.

The city's location along the Flint River adds to its cultural richness, with the riverfront serving as a site for recreational activities and community gatherings. Additionally, the nearby Lake Seminole, created by the Jim Woodruff Dam, is a vital resource for historical and contemporary outdoor activities.

The Decatur County – Gilbert H. Gragg Library serves as the headquarters for the Southwest Georgia Regional Library System with a wide range of contemporary and classic fiction and nonfiction titles, books on CD, large print materials, music CDs, and DVDs. Members can borrow materials from across the State of Georgia, and the genealogy room offers local histories, yearbooks, microfilm of local newspapers, and other helpful resources. The library's public computers provide opportunities for library patrons to check emails, do research work, or use the Internet.

Overall, Bainbridge's cultural resources are deeply intertwined with its history, offering residents and visitors a wealth of opportunities to explore and appreciate the city's unique heritage and community spirit.

# Education

## Public K-12 Schools

The Decatur County School District oversees the public education system, which includes several elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. Elementary schools in the area include John Johnson Elementary School, West Bainbridge Elementary School, and Jones- Elementary School. These schools provide foundational education, focusing on core subjects such as mathematics, science, language arts, and social studies while also offering various extracurricular activities to support students' overall development.



Figure 1.33: Hutto Elementary School

Bainbridge Middle School serves students in grades six through eight, bridging elementary and high school education. The middle school curriculum is designed to build on the foundational knowledge acquired in elementary school and prepare students for the more rigorous academic challenges of high school. Bainbridge High School, the primary high school in Decatur County, offers a comprehensive education that includes a wide range of academic subjects, advanced placement (AP) courses, and vocational training programs. The school also supports Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) pathways, along with work-based learning and youth apprenticeship.

opportunities that connect students to real-world job experiences. Numerous extracurricular activities — including sports, arts, and student organizations — foster well-rounded development and help prepare students for post-secondary education and careers.

Bainbridge High School was relocated to a new facility in 2009. Bainbridge High School is located along Highway 84 (Thomasville Road), approximately 2.75 miles east of the intersection with Whigham Dairy Road. The Bainbridge city limits were relocated to include the High School property.

The Bainbridge Middle School moved into the former high school building at 1301 East College Street in 2009. A new Bainbridge Middle School has since been constructed on Highway 84 adjacent to the high school, and the new facility is now fully occupied. The updated middle and high school campuses are designed to provide improved learning environments with modern infrastructure and enhanced resources to better support students and staff. These changes reflect the community’s ongoing commitment to strengthening educational opportunities and upholding high standards for student achievement.

The public schools in Bainbridge emphasize community involvement, aiming to create a supportive and engaging educational environment for all students. Despite the education system’s strengths, challenges such as funding, access to resources, and maintaining high academic standards remain areas of focus for continuous improvement. Overall, the education system in Bainbridge, from elementary through high school, strives to provide quality education and opportunities for all its students.<sup>86</sup>

School	Address	Grades	Enrollment
Bainbridge High School	84 Highway (Thomasville Road)	9th to 12th	1229
Bainbridge Middle School	1301 East College Street	6th to 8th	934
Hutto Elementary School	1201 MLK Jr. Drive	3rd to 5th	858
Jones Wheat Primary School	1401 East Shotwell Street	Pre-K to 2nd	685
West Bainbridge Primary School	915 Zorn Road	Pre-K to 2nd	496
New Beginnings Learning Center	Potter Street	6th to 12th	147

Table 1.02: Public Schools in Bainbridge  
Source: Enrollment from US News and World Report Rankings

Bainbridge High School was cited as the standout school outperforming the Decatur County School District and Georgia averages on state assessments in several subject areas. U.S. News and World Report identified 30% of elementary students tested at or above the proficient level for reading and 31% tested at or above the proficient

<sup>86</sup> Data USA. "Bainbridge, GA." <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/bainbridge-ga/>.

level for math.<sup>87</sup> At the high school level, 26% tested at or above the proficient level for reading and 42% tested at or above that level for math.

Spring Creek Charter Academy is a public State Commission Charter School located at 2501 Vada Road. A charter school is a public school of choice that operates under the terms of a charter, or contract, with an authorizer, such as the state or local boards of education. Charter schools receive flexibility from certain state and local rules in exchange for higher accountability for raising student achievement and are held accountable by their authorizer(s) for upholding the terms of their charter. Spring Creek opened in 2019 with grades Pre-K through 6th and has added one grade level each year. The school will serve its first 12th-grade class beginning in the fall of 2025. Spring Creek serves students in Decatur, Grady, Miller, and Seminole Counties.

## Private K-12 Schools

Approximately 9% of students in Bainbridge attend private schools (compared to 8% statewide). The Private School Review website identifies two schools in Bainbridge: Grace Christian Academy and Morningside Church Weekly Education (CWE).

Morningside CWE is sponsored by Morningside Baptist Church located at 1303 Vada Road and offers classes for 3- and 4-year-olds. The Review website identified 78 students in PK and kindergarten at Morningside CWE.

Grace Christian Academy is a fully accredited interdenominational Christian school serving students from K3 (preschool for three-year-olds) through 12th grade. The school is located at 1302 Lake Douglas Road and is a ministry of Grace Church. Established in 1994, the school is a member of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), the Georgia Accrediting Commission, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The school serves approximately 245 students.

The number of home-schooled students is unknown but there are several agencies that provide online assistance to homeschool teachers/parents including the Southwest Georgia Homeschool Association based on Albany, Georgia. Other resources include numerous online entities including Georgia Home School, the Georgia Home Education Association, Georgia "Unschoolers," the Home Education Information Resource (HEIR), Secular Homeschoolers of Georgia (SHOG) and others.

The Bainbridge YMCA also provides physical education classes to support home school students staying physically and socially active.

A GED program in Decatur County is offered at Southern Regional Technical College. GED stands for General Equivalency Development and certifies that someone has the same academic skills as a traditional high school graduate.

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87 U.S. News and World Report. 2025.



## Higher Education

Bainbridge State College and Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC) have played a significant role in the region's educational landscape. Bainbridge Junior College was established in 1970; the name was changed in 2006 to Bainbridge College to better reflect its expanded academic offerings. Later, in 2013, it was again renamed Bainbridge State College to further signify its status within the University System of Georgia and its broader educational scope. In 2017, Bainbridge State College merged with Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC), and the Bainbridge campus became part of ABAC, continuing to offer a wide range of educational programs under the ABAC umbrella.

ABAC's Bainbridge campus serves as an extension, maintaining a strong emphasis on practical and career-oriented education, consistent with ABAC's overall mission. As ABAC is part of the 26-member University of Georgia system, the merger was part of the University System of Georgia's efforts to streamline and enhance educational offerings across the state, ensuring that students in Bainbridge and the surrounding areas have access to the same quality education as those at the main campus in Tifton. Students at ABAC enjoy the advantage of transferring credits seamlessly between institutions within the University System of Georgia, which is particularly beneficial for those who wish to start their education at ABAC and continue at another USG institution or vice-versa. The integrated system ensures that ABAC students have a broad range of opportunities and resources to support their educational and professional goals.<sup>88</sup>



Figure 1.34: Southern Regional Technical College and Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

ABAC's Bainbridge campus offers a variety of degree programs, including associate degrees, certificates, and transfer programs designed to prepare students for further education at four-year institutions. The student population remains diverse, with a significant proportion of graduates being Black or African American (50.6%), followed by White students (43.8%), and smaller percentages of Hispanic or Latino students and individuals of two or more races.<sup>89 90</sup>

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88 Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. "Learn More About ABAC." <https://www.abac.edu/about/index.html>.

89 Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. "Learn More About ABAC." <https://www.abac.edu/about/index.html>.

90 Data USA. "Bainbridge, GA." <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/bainbridge-ga/>.

The presence of ABAC's Bainbridge campus supports local economic development by providing education and training that align with the needs of local employers. The campus fosters lifelong learning and skill enhancement through various continuing education and professional development programs. In addition, Southern Regional Technical College offers workforce training through Georgia's nationally recognized Quick Start program, which provides free, customized training to qualified businesses in the region. Despite these strengths, there may be challenges related to access and affordability that need addressing to ensure higher education is attainable for all residents. Additionally, efforts to improve retention and graduation rates are ongoing to ensure students successfully complete their programs.

Southern Regional Technical College (SRTC), as one unit of the larger Technical College System of Georgia, is a regional college accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools with four campuses and twenty-one Adult Education sites throughout Southwest Georgia. One of the four SRTC campuses is located in Bainbridge, and it shares a collaborative relationship with ABAC, particularly in terms of medical programs. SRTC Bainbridge programs are organized into five schools: the School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Business, the School of Health Sciences, the School of Industrial Technology, and the School of Professional Services. SRTC shares a collaborative partnership with ABAC, which allows students to benefit from the specialized programs and resources of both institutions.<sup>91</sup> SRTC grads can transfer to four-year colleges and universities, and the local ABAC is among them.

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91 Shortly after the calendar flipped into 2017, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia approved the consolidation of Bainbridge State College (BSC) and Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC). Not long after that approval was finalized, Southern Regional Technical College (SRTC) was asked to assume responsibility for the technical programs being offered by BSC. Source: Southern Regional Technical College. "SRTC Acquisition of BSC to Provide New Opportunities for Area Students." <https://southernregional.edu/blog/srtc-acquisition-of-bsc-to-provide-new-opportunities-for-area-students>.

# Cultural Events

Bainbridge celebrates numerous cultural events and festivals throughout each year. Living History Tours in Downtown Bainbridge and Oak City Cemetery provide education regarding the City's former residents and folklore in the spring and fall. The city also attracts visitors to Downtown Bainbridge every "Second Saturday" each month.

"River Town Days" are held in the Earle May Boat Basin with a community festival featuring children's rides and activities, free stage entertainment, and a marketplace with multiple arts, crafts, and food vendors. Typically held the 2nd weekend in March and sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, the event coincides with the Downtown Sidewalk Sale on the second Saturday that month.

"Star Spangled Flint" is the city's 4th of July festival with live music, food vendors, kid's activities, and Fireworks.

Early October brings the "Flint River Fair" on the banks of the Flint River. Later in October the "Munchkin Masquerade" is held in Willis Park. The River South Music Festival, a growing downtown music and arts festival, takes place in mid-to-late fall. River South brings a variety of musical artists, activities, and food and craft vendors to downtown.

Winter holidays arrive with the "Holiday Open House" hosted by the merchants of Downtown Bainbridge on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. In late November, the "Southwest Georgia Tinsel Trail" opens in the Earle May Boat Basin with uniquely decorated Christmas trees on public display. Each night in December, "Lights Along the River" provides a mile-long display of Christmas lights and themed exhibits in the Earle May Boat Basin. The Bainbridge "Christmas Parade" is held on the second Thursday of December and usually begins at Bainbridge Middle School, ending in Downtown Bainbridge.

## Local / Regional Organization & Networks

Bainbridge, GA, hosts a variety of organizations and networks that contribute significantly to the community's social, economic, and cultural development. Key organizations include the Bainbridge Advocacy Individual Network (BAIN INC), established in 1995 as a grassroots non-profit dedicated to advocating for people with disabilities. BAIN INC is a consumer-driven, non-residential Center for Independent Living (CIL) that serves eleven counties throughout Southwest Georgia, helping individuals with disabilities live independently. The Bainbridge-Decatur County Chamber of Commerce supports local businesses, attracts new enterprises, and serves as a nexus for economic development and quality of life improvement through business development resources and community initiatives. The Oak House Children's Advocacy Center (formerly Lily Pad SANE Center) provides crucial support related to child advocacy and sexual assault response. Additional organizations that play important roles in community well-being include the Decatur County Family Connection Collaborative, the Bainbridge-Decatur County Arts Council, and the local Salvation Army, each of which supports vital cultural, educational, and social service efforts across the region. The Oak House Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) (Previously known as Lily Pad SANE Center) offers crucial support and services related to child advocacy and sexual assault, serving as a critical resource for the community.

Decatur County Historical Society (DCHS) is a non-profit community organization that focuses on preserving the history of Decatur County. DCHS operates a historical library and offers programs and events to engage visitors with local history.

The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission (SWGRC) is a public agency established by the Georgia Planning Act (O.C.G.A. 50-8-32) to assist southwest Georgia local governments achieve planning goals. The SWGARC region, which includes 14 counties and 43 cities, includes Bainbridge and Decatur County. SWGRC supports Bainbridge and Decatur County with economic development, planning, and resource management assistance.

# City Organizations & Local Services

The City of Bainbridge operates under a council-manager form of government, which combines elected officials' leadership with the administrative expertise of a City Manager appointed by the City Council. The Bainbridge City Council consists of the Mayor and six Council Members. All are elected on a non-partisan basis and serve staggered four-year terms. The council is responsible for enacting ordinances, setting policies, and making significant decisions that guide the city's operations. The Mayor and Councilperson for Seat 1 are elected at-large, representing the entire city, while two other council members represent District A and three represent District B.<sup>92 93</sup>

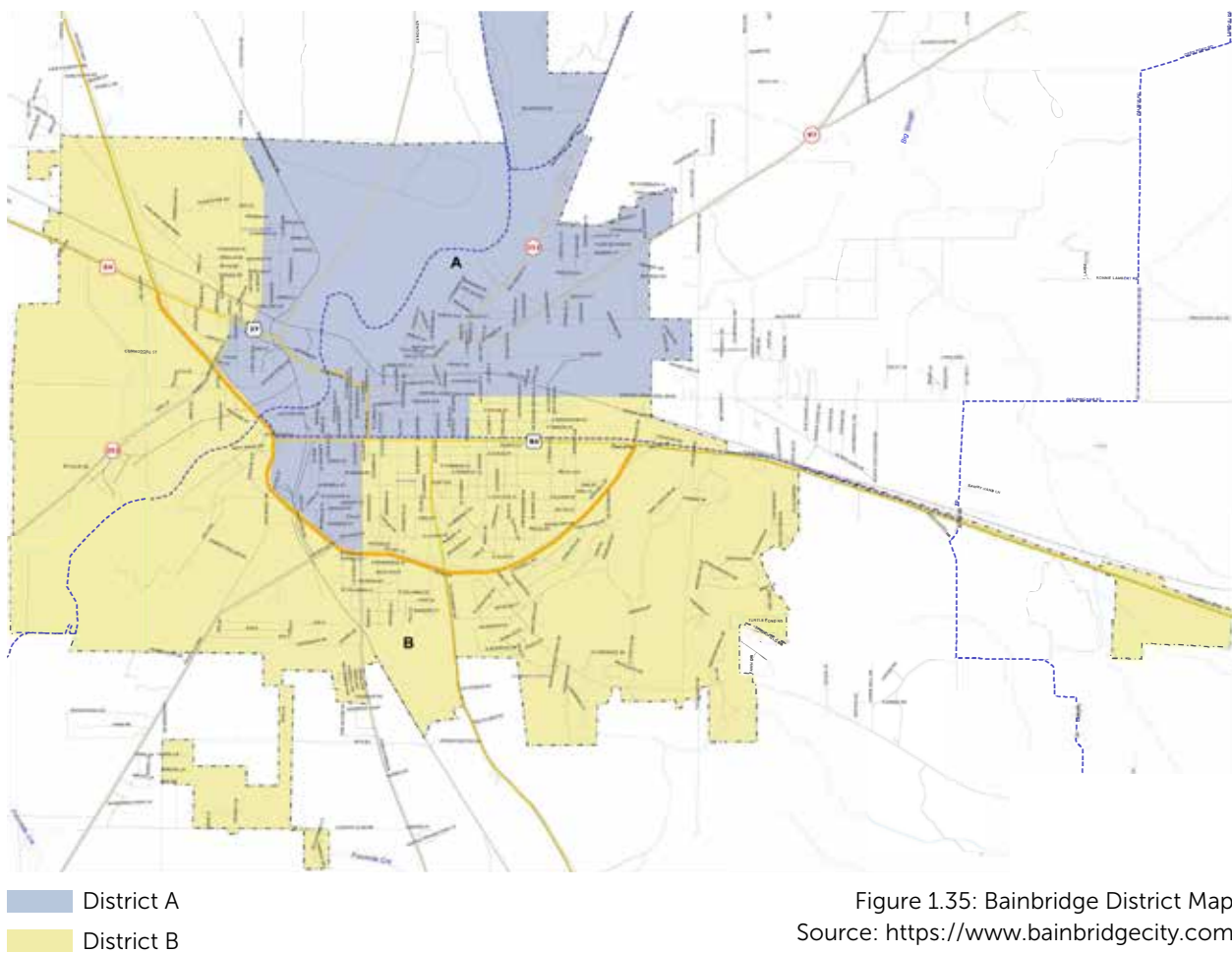


Figure 1.35: Bainbridge District Map  
Source: <https://www.bainbridgecity.com>

92 City of Bainbridge. "City Council." <https://www.bainbridgecity.com/page/city-council>.

93 Georgia Municipal Association. "Bainbridge." <https://www.gacities.com/gma-cities-districts/BAINBRIDGE/04896>.



The City Manager is responsible for the daily administration of city affairs, implementing council policies, managing city staff, and overseeing the budget.<sup>94</sup> The City Manager oversees all city departments, including public safety, public services, community and economic development, and others.

Bainbridge has several boards and commissions, such as the Planning & Zoning Commission, the Downtown Development Authority, and the Historic Preservation Commission, each of which supports specific functions and community development initiatives. The Historic Preservation Commission plays a key role in protecting and promoting the city's architectural heritage by reviewing proposed changes to designated historic properties and districts. Members of these city boards and commissions bring specialized knowledge and focus to particular areas of governance and help ensure a more detailed and informed decision-making process.

The city holds council meetings on the third Tuesday of each month, allowing for public participation in local governance.<sup>95 96</sup>

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94 City of Bainbridge. "City Manager's Office." <https://www.bainbridgecity.com/page/city-managers-office>.

95 City of Bainbridge. "City Council." <https://www.bainbridgecity.com/page/city-council>.

96 City of Bainbridge. "City Manager's Office." <https://www.bainbridgecity.com/page/city-managers-office>.

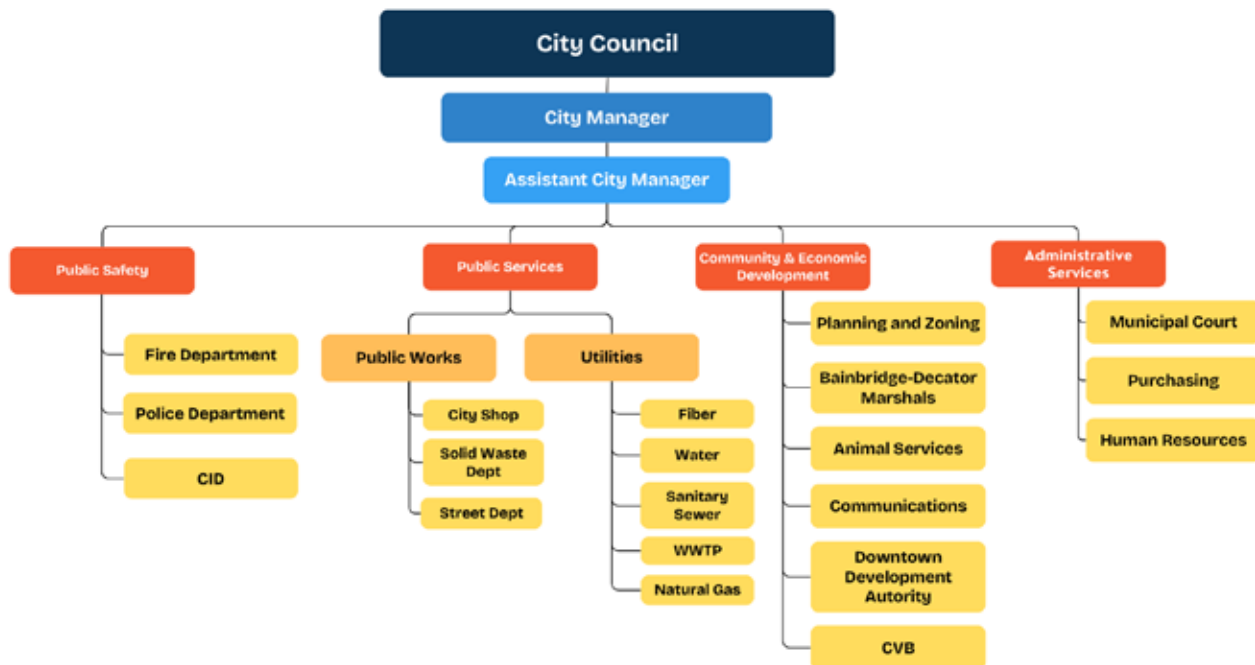


Figure 1.36: City Government Organizational Chart

## Administrative Services Division

Bainbridge, GA's Administrative Services, consists of three departments<sup>97</sup> performing several key functions essential to the city's operations. The Municipal Court in Bainbridge is responsible for handling cases related to local ordinance violations, traffic offenses, and other minor criminal matters, ensuring that justice is administered at the municipal level. The Purchasing Department manages the procurement of goods and services for all city departments, ensuring that purchases comply with local, state, and federal regulations while seeking the best value for the city. The City's Department of Administrative Services also oversees the city's financial management, including budgeting, accounting, revenue collection, and payroll processing. This department plays a crucial role in maintaining the city's financial stability and ensuring that all financial activities align with best practices and legal requirements.<sup>98</sup> The Human Resources Department's responsibilities include overseeing the city's employment process, ensuring compliance with state and federal laws, administering employee benefits, and managing the city's payroll.<sup>99</sup>

97 The Municipal Court, Purchasing Department, and Human Resources.

98 City of Bainbridge. "Administrative Services." <https://www.bainbridgecity.com/page/administrative-services>.

99 City of Bainbridge. "Human Resources." <https://www.bainbridgecity.com/page/human-resources>.

# Community & Economic Development Division

The Community & Economic Development Division of Bainbridge, GA, is the primary point of contact for all development activities within the city limits. It aims to develop plans and programs that foster thriving, livable neighborhoods, create predictable land use permitting processes, and enhance economic development opportunities. The division focuses on improving the quality of life for Bainbridge residents through community development, public awareness, and safeguarding the health, safety, and welfare of all citizens.

The division provides recommendations and guidance to various bodies, including the City Council, Bainbridge-Decatur County Planning Commission, and Historic Preservation Commission, on comprehensive land use policies, zoning recommendations, special permits, and historic preservation. Additionally, it administers zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, building codes, and property maintenance codes, and is responsible for permitting, inspections, animal control, and cemetery management.<sup>100 101</sup>

The Community & Economic Development Division contains six departments: Planning & Zoning, Bainbridge-Decatur Marshal's Office, Bainbridge-Decatur Animal Services, Communications, Downtown Development Authority, and the Convention and Visitors' Bureau. The Director of Community & Economic Development manages these six departments.

This department also oversees the Oscar Jackson Outdoor Camp, a program that connects children with Bainbridge's natural resources through outdoor activities such as archery, fishing, and wildlife discovery.<sup>102</sup>

## Planning & Zoning

The Planning & Zoning Department responsible for planning, zoning, reviewing and approving building plans, enforcing the Building Code, and ensuring compliance with other related city and county ordinances, such as those governing manufactured homes, multi-family housing, flood prevention, and telecommunications infrastructure. The department issues various permits for construction-related activities, including building, HVAC, plumbing, and electrical work. Additionally, it handles zoning matters, subdivision requests, variance requests, and more.<sup>103</sup>

## Downtown Development Authority

The Bainbridge Downtown Development Authority (DDA) plays a vital role in promoting the economic and cultural vibrancy of the city's historic downtown. The DDA works to recruit and retain downtown businesses, enhance

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100 City of Bainbridge. "Bainbridge-Decatur County Planning Department." <https://www.bainbridgecity.com/page/planning-zoning>.

101 City of Bainbridge. "Community and Economic Development." <https://www.bainbridgecity.com/page/community-and-economic-development>.

102 City of Bainbridge. "Oscar Jackson Outdoor Camp." <https://www.bainbridgecity.com/page/the-oscar-jackson-outdoor-camp>.

103 City of Bainbridge. "Building Department." <https://www.bainbridgecity.com/page/building-permits-applications>.

public spaces, and support revitalization efforts that attract residents, visitors, and private investment. Through initiatives such as façade improvement programs, business incentives, and strategic partnerships, the DDA helps maintain a dynamic downtown environment.

## Bainbridge-Decatur Animal Services

The City has an Animal Services Department, in partnership with the Humane Society, in charge of animal control as part of the city's broader public safety efforts. The Animal Services Department is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the city's animal shelter and associated adoption programs and public outreach efforts, supporting the safety and well-being of stray, abandoned, and surrendered animals within the city. This includes handling stray animals, addressing complaints about dangerous or nuisance animals, and promoting responsible pet ownership. This team works to protect animal welfare and public health by managing animal populations and preventing the spread of diseases.<sup>104</sup>

The city runs an Online Permitting System that allows citizens and contractors to apply for building and planning/zoning permits for Bainbridge and Decatur County from home or office. After registering, users can apply for permits, submit PDF drawings and documents, pay fees, request inspections, check application status, review parcel information, and submit code enforcement requests through the web portal.<sup>105</sup> The Bainbridge-Decatur County Marshal's Office enforces state and local laws related to planning, zoning, property maintenance, and historic preservation codes and is responsible for city and county planning and development services such as Issuing building permits, performing inspections, and enforcing all applicable ordinances, zoning, regulations, and laws under the jurisdiction of the City of Bainbridge or Decatur County. The department investigates and acts upon complaints and violations reported to the city or county or any of its departments. These include code violations such as dilapidated structures, exterior building maintenance, address numbers, overgrown lots, abandoned motor vehicles, junk, trash, soil erosion, and illegal dump sites. The department also inspects businesses for occupation tax certificates, alcohol licensing, and issues notices to those not in compliance.

## Public Safety Division

The city's Public Safety Division oversees the local Police, Fire, and Criminal Investigation Departments. The Police Department handles patrols, traffic safety, and community programs like Kids 'n Kops. The Fire Department focuses on fire safety and public education on fire safety-related matters. The Criminal Investigation Department focuses on criminal investigations. The Public Safety headquarters is located at 510 East Louise Street (phone: 229-248-2038). Staff are cross-trained and cross-certified in police services and fire services. The Bainbridge Public Safety Division manages 52 public safety officers and 45 career fire fighters. Station 2 is located at Spring Creek Road and serves as a substation to headquarters and is most often manned 24 hours per day by firefighters.

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104 City of Bainbridge. "Animal Services Center." <https://www.bainbridgecity.com/page/city-of-bainbridge-animal-service-center>.

105 City of Bainbridge. "Online Permit Portal." <https://www.bainbridgecity.com/page/licenses-permits>.

Public safety is an important area for cooperations between all government levels. The City of Bainbridge Public Safety Divisions works closely with County, State of Georgia and federal officials to ensure safety during all times, including during extraordinary natural or man-made events.

The Georgia Public Safety Training Center (GPSTC) provides comprehensive training for all state and local public safety units of government in Georgia to promote performance, safety, and responsibility for first responders. The GPSTC in Bainbridge conducts basic police officer training, basic jail officer training and specialized training courses at 1947 South West Street. Classes are held at the training center on an as-needed basis programmed by the GPSTC Academy manager, located in Forsyth, Georgia.

## Public Services Division

The City of Bainbridge Public Services division manages the maintenance and delivery of essential services, including natural gas, sanitary sewer, solid waste, streets, water, stormwater, and water pollution control. They are also responsible for maintaining infrastructure and operating the wastewater treatment plant, ensuring the city's utilities and services function efficiently. The City Civil Engineer oversees this division.

The City of Bainbridge utilizes Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) and Transportation SPLOST (TSPLOST) proceeds to fund various infrastructure projects, including water and sewer services, road construction, and public safety resources.<sup>106</sup>

## Utilities

The City of Bainbridge Utility Department provides water, sewer, stormwater, natural gas, and fiber services. Residents can sign up for utilities online, ensuring easy access to services. The Utilities Department accepts calls from residents for assistance during business hours and has an emergency line for after-hours assistance.

- **Water, Sanitary Sewer, and Wastewater Treatment:** The Public Services Division ensures safe drinking water through regular testing and maintenance and handles wastewater collection and transport to the treatment plant. This Division also oversees the Wastewater Treatment Plant, which processes and treats sewage to meet environmental standards before releasing it back into the Flint River, playing a critical role in protecting local water resources.
- **Natural Gas:** The City of Bainbridge's Natural Gas Department provides reliable energy services to the city and three industrial parks<sup>107</sup> in Decatur County. The Natural Gas Department supports residents by

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<sup>106</sup> Public Safety Resources includes tools, devices, and systems used by law enforcement, fire departments, and emergency medical services.

<sup>107</sup> Decatur County Industrial Park, Commodore Industrial Park, and Downrange Industrial Park. Source: Development Authority of Bainbridge and Decatur County. "Industrial Parks." <https://www.bainbridgedecaturga.com/about/industrial-parks/>.



overseeing a program that assists them with financing options for eco-friendly natural gas appliances. There is a department showroom where residents can familiarize themselves with and/or purchase natural gas appliances with 0% interest financing and rebates up to \$300. The Department Showroom serves as an educational resource on natural gas benefits. The Natural Gas Department promotes safety through semi-annual safety pamphlets.

- Fiber: Bainbridge Fiber provides high-speed internet services for local homes and businesses.

## Public Works

The Bainbridge Public Works Department is housed under the Public Services Division and consists of three groups: Streets, Solid Waste, and the City Shop.

- Streets: The city of Bainbridge's Street Department maintains street infrastructure, focusing on pothole repairs, paving projects, street repairs, and other construction activities to ensure safe and smooth mobility. They also handle curb and gutter sweeping and the removal of dead trees from roadways to maintain safety and cleanliness. Their work improves the functionality of streets and enhances the overall aesthetics and quality of life in the community.
- City Shop: The City Shop is a single centralized facility where the city's vehicles, equipment, and machinery are maintained and repaired. This includes vehicle fleet management, routine maintenance, and repairs for city-owned vehicles (police cars, fire trucks, and public works vehicles).
- Solid Waste Department: Solid waste refers to any wasted substance that is not a liquid, or a gas, and includes trash from households and industries. The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) provides the federal framework for US hazardous and non-hazardous waste management. Nearly everything that humans do leaves some kind of waste behind. RCRA states that "solid waste" refers to any garbage or refuse, including sludge from a wastewater treatment or water treatment plant, air pollution control facility, and other discarded or abandoned materials resulting from industrial, commercial, mining, agricultural, or community activity.

Examples of solid wastes include:

- Household waste: Common objects such as discarded food, paper products, glass, plastics, and metals, including discarded electrical devices, outdated laptops, TVs, and mobile phones. Paper is particularly prevalent in landfills, taking up as much as 40% of the space.
- Industrial waste: Scrap metal, chemical waste, and other manufacturing by-products. Some of these materials may be harmful to human health and the environment if not managed carefully. Used oil and waste tires may also be placed in this category to accommodate appropriate disposal and encourage recycling.

- Hazardous waste: Used medical supplies, used batteries, and toxic materials that require certain disposal procedures to lessen the negative effects that these types of waste have on human health and the environment.
- Construction and Demolition waste: Discarded construction materials, including asphalt, concrete, and wood, and discarded pieces of metal and electrical machinery.
- Agricultural waste: Ruined crops, unused agricultural by-products, and animal waste, such as manure.
- Electronic waste, also known as "E-Waste," refers to a variety of discarded electronic devices, such as televisions, computers, and mobile phones that may no longer work. E-waste is considered the fastest-growing solid waste stream in the world, increasing three times faster than the world's population.



Figure 1.37: Sanitation Service Do's and Don'ts  
Source: <https://www.bainbridgecity.com>

Federal EPA regulations define what materials qualify as solid waste or as hazardous waste. EPA provides detailed criteria regarding what is defined as solid waste and solid and hazardous exclusions on their website.<sup>108</sup>

108 United States Environmental Protection Agency. "Hazardous Waste." <https://www.epa.gov/hw/>.

The Bainbridge Sanitation Department provides removal of household garbage and yard debris for both residential and commercial customers. The department uses an automated method for pickup using a truck equipped with a robotic system to grab, lift, and tip waste from containers into the body of the truck. Sanitation trucks are also equipped with video and tracking technology to monitor activities in and around the truck. Commercial pickup resources provide equipment to collect rapid rail containers and large dumpsters to efficiently remove larger amounts of waste.

Decatur County Solid Waste Facility	2023 Remaining Capacity (yd3)	Est. Pct. Cover (%)	2023 Net Remaining (yd3)	Average Daily Tons	Net Volume /Year (yd3)	Rate of Fill (yd3/day)	2023 Est. of Years Remaining	Est. Fill Year	Operating Days per Year Enrollment
Municipal Solid Waste Landfill	4,664,570	7.5	4,314,727	336	122,890	433	35	2,058	284
Construction & Demolition Landfill	94,639	7.5	87,541	33	13,988	49	6	2,029	284

Table 1.03: Estimated fill year for municipal waste and waste construction materials (2023)

The City of Bainbridge Sanitation Department also provides garbage pickup in unincorporated Decatur County under a contract with the County. The Bainbridge/Decatur County transfer station is located at 1009 Avenue C, Bainbridge, and is operated by a contractor (currently Young Recycling and Dumpster Services). Transfer station hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 4:30pm. The transfer station does not accept liquids or hazardous materials. More information (including service registration and fees) is available on the city's website.<sup>109</sup>

The County operates the Decatur County Solid Waste Facility at mile marker 3 on US Highway 27, three (3) miles north of the Georgia/Florida state line. Commercial and residential garbage, including inert materials and construction and demolition materials, is accepted at this facility Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. and on the first and third Saturdays each month between 8:00 a.m. and noon.

109 City of Bainbridge. "Public Works." <https://bainbridgecity.com/page/public-works>.

## Emergency Management

Emergency management in Bainbridge, GA, is a coordinated effort managed primarily by the Decatur County Emergency Management Agency (EMA). The EMA is responsible for preparing and responding to various emergencies, including natural disasters, public health crises, and other critical incidents. The agency is led by Co-Directors, including the Fire Chief and the E-911 Director, who work alongside a team to provide comprehensive emergency services.

The EMA's key functions include disaster preparedness, emergency response coordination, and public information dissemination. They manage the Decatur-Grady 911 system, which is the primary communication link between the public and emergency services, including police, fire, and medical responders. The system ensures rapid activation of public safety services and provides essential support and coordination for all county public safety and support agencies.<sup>110 111 112</sup>

Additionally, the EMA works in collaboration with local, state, and federal agencies, including the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency, to enhance the overall safety and resilience of the community. This collaboration allows for effective management of resources and support during emergencies, ensuring a prompt and organized response to protect public safety.

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110 Decatur County. "Emergency Management Agency." <https://www.decaturoctyga.gov/departments-agencies/emergency-management-agency/>.

111 Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency. "Decatur Emergency Management Agency." <https://gema.georgia.gov/locations/decaturoctyga>.

112 Decatur County. "Emergency Management Agency." <https://www.decaturoctyga.gov/departments-agencies/emergency-management-agency/>.

# Health Care & Hospital Services

## Public Health

The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) is the lead agency in preventing disease, injury and disability, promoting health and well-being, and preparing for and responding to disasters from a health perspective. In 2011, the General Assembly restored DPH to its own state agency after more than 30 years of consolidation with other departments. At the state level, DPH functions through numerous divisions, sections, programs and offices. Locally, DPH funds and collaborates with Georgia's 159 county health departments and 18 public health districts. Through the changes, the mission has remained constant – to protect the lives of all Georgians. Today, DPH's main functions include Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, Maternal and Child Health, Infectious Disease and Immunization, Environmental Health, Epidemiology, Emergency Preparedness and Response, Emergency Medical Services, Pharmacy, Nursing, Volunteer Health Care, the Office of Health Equity, Vital Records, and the State Public Health Laboratory.



Figure 1.38: Bainbridge Memorial Hospital and Manor



The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) funds, and collaborates with, 18 separate public health districts throughout the state. Each district is comprised of one or more of Georgia's 159 counties. The Southwest Health District includes Decatur County and the Decatur County Health Department, located at 928 West Street in Bainbridge 39817 (Phone: (229) 248-3055). Decatur County Environmental Health is located at 101 South Broad Street in Bainbridge (Phone: (229) 515-4341), albeit the mailing address is the same as for the Health Department at 928 West Street.

The Southwest Health District and the Decatur County Health Department provide services to support women and children, immunizations, prevention of infectious diseases, and nutrition. The mission of the environmental health program is to identify, prevent, and abate conditions that adversely affect human health. Local environmental health specialists survey, assess, educate, and enforce measures such as environmental health inspections for food services, hotels, motels, campgrounds, tattoo establishments, swimming pools, septic tanks, and wells. The Health Department also receives information and educates the public about the prevention and treatment of rabies. The Health Department also provides information and connections to resources available through the Georgia Poison Center.<sup>113</sup>

More information regarding public health services is available online through the Southwest Health District of the Georgia Department of Public Health:

- Women's Health
- Child Health
- Immunizations
- Infectious Diseases
- Nutrition Services

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113 Health inspection data for the Decatur County Health Department. <https://ga.healthinspections.us/georgia/search.cfm?county=Decatur>.

# Hospital

The Bainbridge Memorial Hospital and Manor located at 1500 East Shotwell Street. The hospital opened in 1960 with 80 beds and the Manor added 67 beds in 1972 to provide long-term healthcare. Another 40 beds were added as part of the Nursing Home in 1979, and subsequent expansions added 10 Intensive Care beds in 1986 and 24 beds as part of the Willow Ridge Personal Care expansion in 1993. The Kirbo Women's Center (1993) also added eight labor/delivery/post-partum rooms and six gynecological rooms in 1993. The website [www.mh-m.org](http://www.mh-m.org) identifies plans for a new Same day Surgery Center with expanded laboratories, radiology, and other department facilities. The hospital provides emergency medicine, intensive care, in-patient care, long-term care, Orthopedics, Pediatrics, family medicine, eye care, IV-infusion, anti-coagulation, and laboratory services.

The Memorial and Manor Hospital operates under the Hospital Authority of the City of Bainbridge and Decatur County, and employs 475 professional, technical and support personnel, including 28 active medical and 20 consulting medical professionals.

Memorial Hospital and Manor offers a clinical setting for RN and LPN student training from ABAC (Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College) of Bainbridge which offers a Bachelor of Science in Business and Nursing without transferring to a different location. Students can also earn the Associate of Science in Core Curriculum (General Studies pathway) and the Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN leading to the RN) at this site. Students can complete the first two years of the B.S. programs in Biology, History and Government, and Writing and Communication at Bainbridge before transferring to ABAC Tifton for the final two years. Courses within the Core Curriculum are offered in Tifton and Bainbridge.

The Patient Experience Rating from [www.healthgrades.com](http://www.healthgrades.com) is 55% (about 9% below the national average). The 2023 measures are based on the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Provider and Systems (HCAHPS) survey data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

# Built Environment

## Community Infrastructure

Recent efforts include substantial investments in water and sewage systems. For instance, Bainbridge received a significant portion of a \$422 million allocation announced by Governor Brian Kemp to improve water treatment, wastewater management, and water system resiliency in high-need areas throughout Georgia. Specifically, Bainbridge was allotted nearly \$22 million to enhance these critical services.<sup>114 115</sup>

Additionally, Bainbridge secured a \$2 million loan from the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) to finance a water main extension project. This project aims to provide a reliable water supply to areas currently dependent on private wells, enhancing overall system reliability and emergency preparedness.<sup>116</sup>

These efforts are part of broader initiatives supported by federal programs like the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), which provides resources for various community development activities, focusing on benefiting low- to moderate-income residents. Projects funded through CDBG include improvements to public facilities, infrastructure, and economic development projects that significantly impact the community's quality of life.<sup>117</sup>

The City of Bainbridge began construction for its Bainbridge Fiber program in 2024. This initiative is designed to provide high-speed fiber-optic internet to local residents and businesses, significantly enhancing telecommunications capabilities.

The reliability of fiber-optic cables surpasses that of traditional copper-based connections, as they are less susceptible to interference and signal degradation. This results in a more stable and consistent internet connection with fewer outages.<sup>118</sup> Additionally, fiber-optic technology is scalable, making it capable of supporting increasing data demands, which is a significant investment into the community's future.<sup>119</sup> Fiber-optic networks deliver extremely fast internet speeds, ideal for activities such as video streaming, online gaming, remote work, and large file transfers.<sup>120</sup>

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114 "Governor Brian Kemp Announces \$422 Million to Improve Water and Sewage Infrastructure in District 11." <https://bainbridgega.com/2022/03/governor-brian-kemp-announces-422-million-to-improve-water-and-sewage-infrastructure-in-district-11/>.

115 Georgia Department of Community Affairs. "Community Development Block Grants." <https://dca.georgia.gov/financing-tools/infrastructure/community-development-block-grants-cdbg>.

116 Georgia Environmental Finance Authority. "Georgia communities receive infrastructure loans totaling \$43.1 million." <https://gefa.georgia.gov/press-releases/2024-01-29/georgia-communities-receive-infrastructure-loans-totaling-431-million>.

117 Georgia Department of Community Affairs. "Community Development Block Grants." <https://dca.georgia.gov/financing-tools/infrastructure/community-development-block-grants-cdbg>.

118 Bainbridge Fiber. "How it Works." <https://www.bainbridgefiber.com/how-it-works>.

119 Bainbridge Fiber. "How it Works." <https://www.bainbridgefiber.com/how-it-works>.

120 Bainbridge Fiber. "How it Works." <https://www.bainbridgefiber.com/how-it-works>.

The program offers a variety of pricing plans to meet different needs. Residential plans range from 100 Mbps at \$55.99 per month to 1000 Mbps at \$124.99 monthly, while commercial plans offer similar speed tiers with slightly higher pricing.<sup>121</sup> The program is actively expanding its coverage across Bainbridge, and residents can check the availability and expected rollout in their neighborhoods through the coverage map on the Bainbridge Fiber website. The construction process aims to minimize invasiveness and restore any disrupted areas to their original condition upon completion.<sup>122</sup>

## Zoning & Land Use

Like many US localities, Bainbridge regulates land use through zoning ordinances and designations, ensuring that it aligns with the community's vision and needs. Zoning regulations define specific areas for residential, commercial, industrial, and other types of development, helping to maintain order and compatibility within the city's built environment.

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121 Bainbridge Fiber. "How it Works." <https://www.bainbridgefiber.com/how-it-works>.

122 Bainbridge Fiber. "How it Works." <https://www.bainbridgefiber.com/how-it-works>.

# Commuting & Mobility

The city's workforce includes residents who commute to neighboring areas for work and those from surrounding communities who commute into Bainbridge. The local transportation infrastructure supports this mobility, with major highways facilitating easy access.

Bainbridge's transportation system is bolstered by highways and local transit options, enabling efficient movement within and beyond the city. The city's strategic location and infrastructure support both daily commuting and business logistics. This connectivity is crucial for economic development, enabling access to a wider labor market and facilitating the movement of goods.<sup>123</sup>

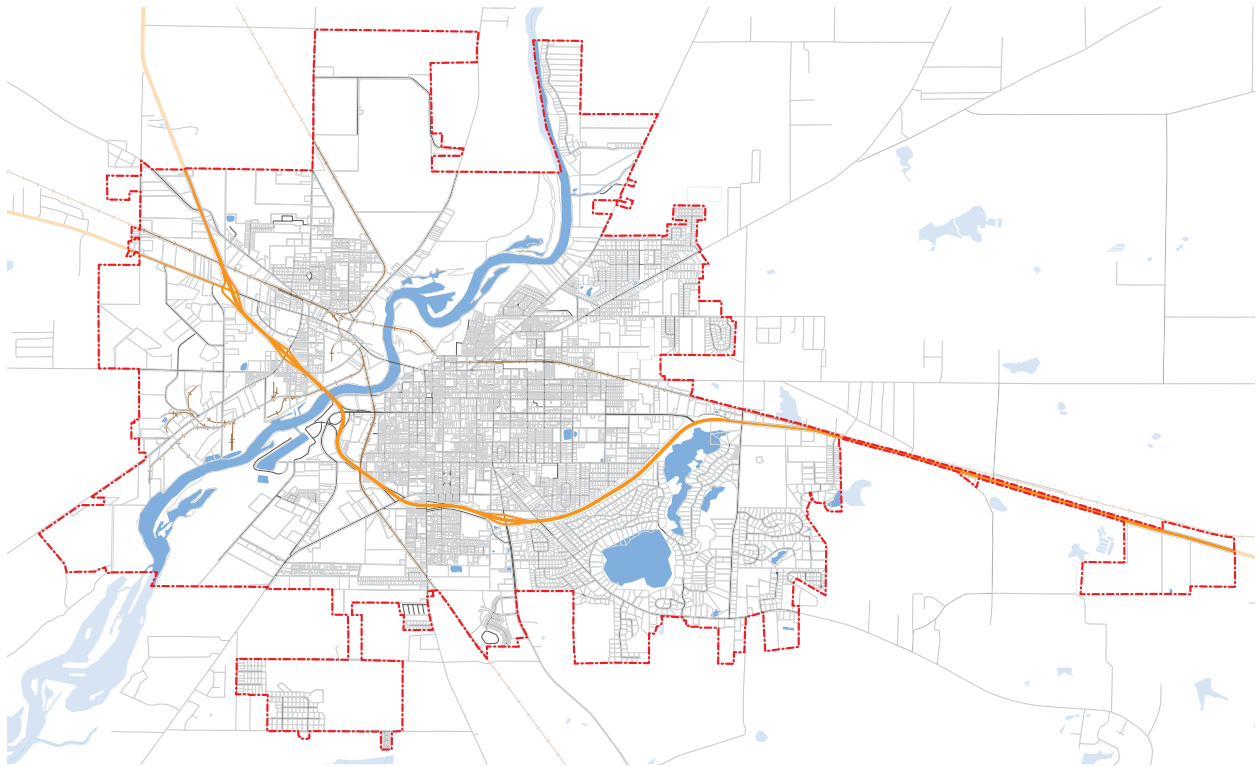


Figure 1.39: Bainbridge Road Network

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123 Office of Governor Brian P. Kemp. "Gov. Kemp: Anovion Technologies to Create Over 400 Jobs in Bainbridge, Invest \$800M in Manufacturing Facility." <https://gov.georgia.gov/press-releases/2023-05-15/gov-kemp-anovion-technologies-create-over-400-jobs-bainbridge-invest-800m>.



# Transportation

## Highways

US-84 is a four-lane limited access freeway that functions as the southern bypass around Bainbridge. The posted speed limit is 55 mph, and the daily traffic volumes range from 9,500 to 18,700. US-84 continues west to Dothan, Alabama, and east to Thomasville, Georgia.

US Business-84 (Shotwell Street) is an undivided arterial that functions as the main east-west route through the City of Bainbridge. The roadway varies from a two-lane section in the city's historical district to four lanes west of the historical district. East of the historic district, the roadway widens to a five-lane section to provide access to retail opportunities located along BUS-84. The posted speed limit is 45 mph outside the historical district and 30 mph in the historical district. Daily traffic volumes range from 6,500 to 13,400.

US-27 is a major north-south arterial. The roadway is a four-lane divided highway north of US-84. South of US-84, the roadway has a five-lane cross-section with a center two-way left turn lane. The posted speed limit varies from 45 to 55 mph, and the daily traffic is 8,200 south of the bypass. North of the bypass, the daily traffic is 10,500. US-27 continues north to Columbus, Georgia, and south to Tallahassee, Florida.

US Business-27 (Scott Street) is a minor north-south arterial in the city with a two-lane undivided cross section. The posted speed limit is 30 mph, and the daily traffic volume ranges from 7,600 to 8,800.

State Route (SR)-253 along Newton Road connecting the west side of the Flint River is a minor arterial on the northwest side of the city. The roadway has a two-lane undivided section in the city. The posted speed limit is 45 mph, and daily traffic volumes range from 2,100 to 6,700. SR-253 continues southwest along the Spring Creek Road towards Reynoldsville State Park and to the Chattahoochee River.

State Route (SR)-97 is a minor north-south arterial on the west side of the city. The roadway is a two-lane, undivided section with a posted speed limit of 45 mph. Daily traffic volumes range from 3,700 to 5,700. SR-97 connects to the western side of Camilla to the north and Faceville to the south.

SR-311 (East River Road) is a minor north-south arterial with a two-lane undivided section. The posted speed limit is 45 mph, and daily traffic volumes range from 1,500 to 2,300. SR 311 continues north along the east bank of the Flint River as an alternative route to Camilla.

To alleviate truck traffic in Downtown Bainbridge, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is working on the Whigham Dairy Road widening project, which will enhance the truck route infrastructure around the city. This project is expected to improve freight movement, reduce congestion along downtown corridors, and minimize roadway wear and tear on historic streets. By creating a more efficient route for heavy truck traffic, these improvements should enhance pedestrian and vehicular safety, improve overall traffic flow, and support economic development by making downtown more accessible and pedestrian friendly.

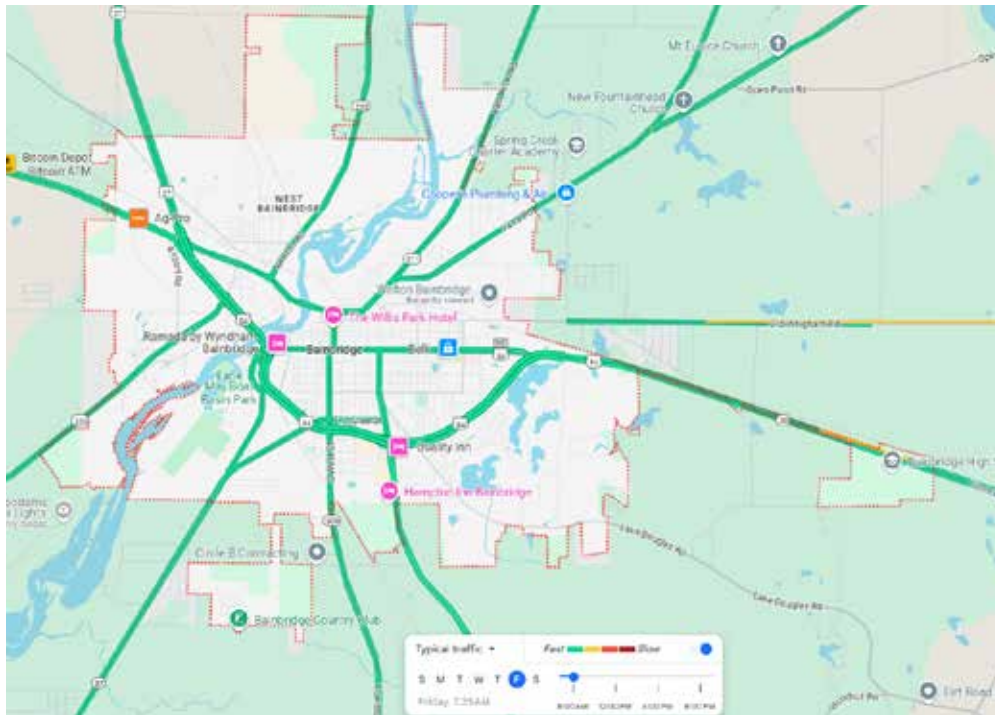


Figure 1.40: AM Peak Traffic Hour

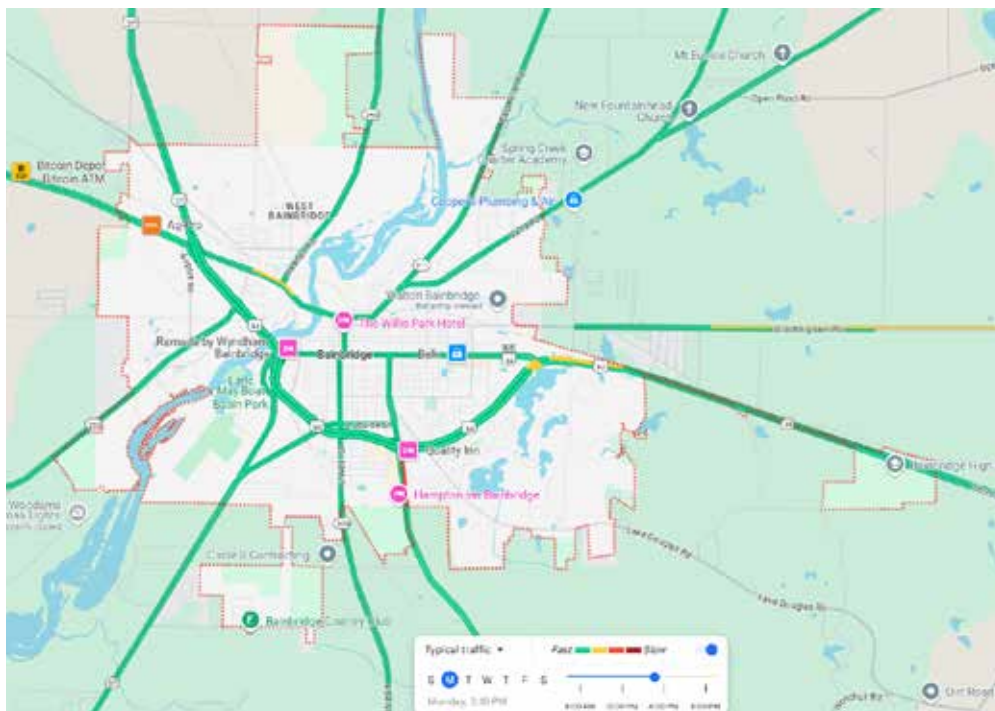


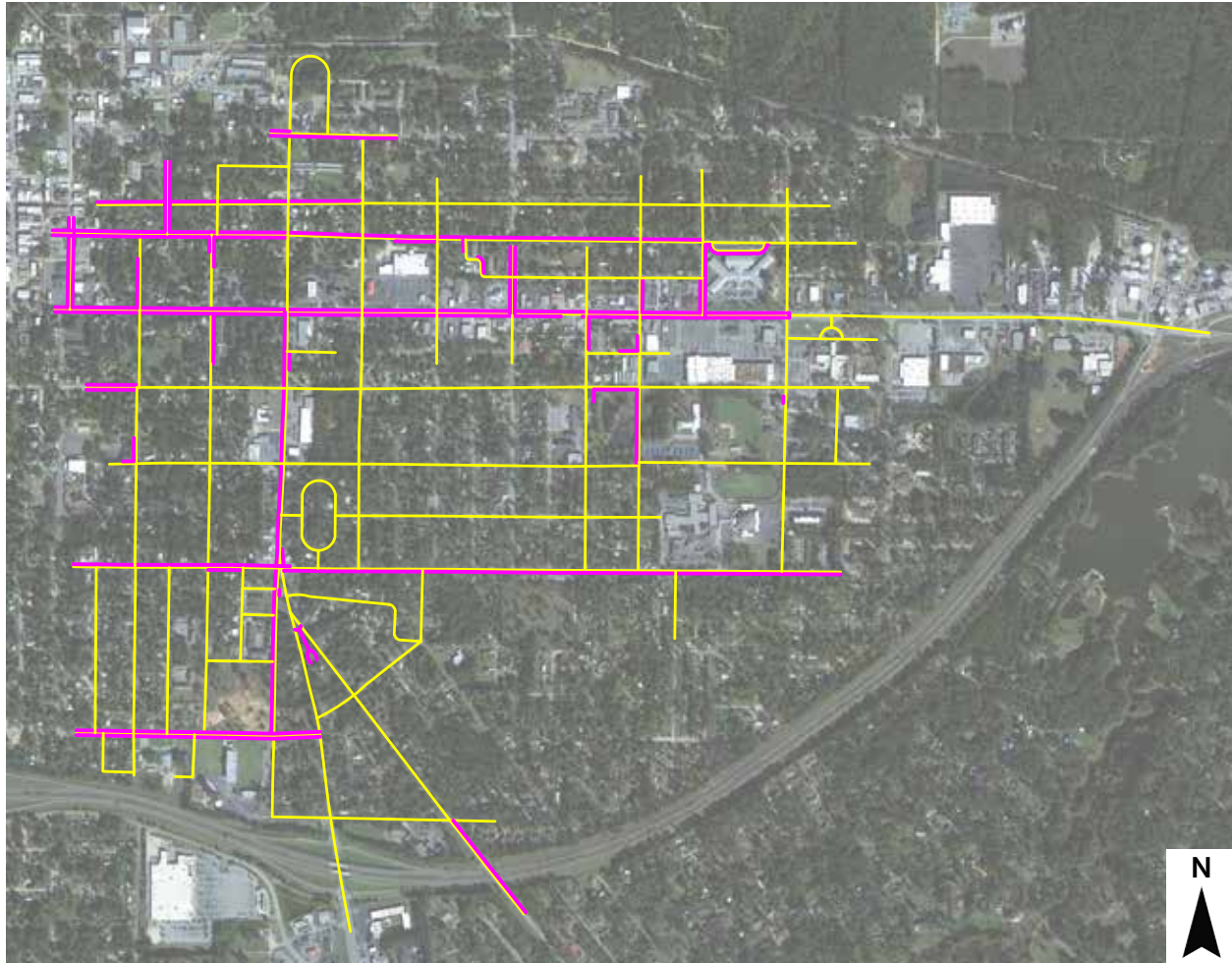
Figure 1.41: PM Peak Traffic Hour

## Pedestrian Mobility

Sidewalks are concentrated primarily in the historical section of the city. Outside of the historical district, sidewalks are located along Dothan Road, Martin Luther King Boulevard, East Broughton Street, Shotwell Street, College Street, Louise Street, South West Street, South Scott Street and North

Sims Street. There are short segments of sidewalks located across the city. Sidewalk conditions vary from new construction to older construction that does not meet ADA requirements. Field observations also indicated significant tree uprooting along BUS-84 in the historic district which has caused portions of the sidewalk to buckle and need repairs.

Beyond the sidewalks, Bainbridge features an extensive riverfront trail system south of the Calhoun Street Bridge, which allows for walking and bicycling along the Flint River. This continuous trail network connects Downtown Bainbridge to areas behind the tennis courts at the end of Cox Avenue. Future plans aim to expand connectivity from the riverfront to surrounding neighborhoods, enhancing pedestrian and bicycle access to key destinations throughout the city.



- Sidewalks
- Streets

Figure 1.42: Enlarged Plan showing Sidewalks along Select Street Segments



Key Plan

