Chapter Eight

Transportation & Mobility

Introduction

Transportation planning is a critical component of Bainbridge's desire to ensure safe, equitable, and enjoyable mobility for all residents and visitors. Bainbridge sits at the crossroads of major state and federal highways and within commuting distance of the expanding Tallahassee metropolitan area. These factors — combined with the city's role as a regional employment and services hub — make mobility and connectivity essential to Bainbridge's future growth, economic resilience, and quality of life. This chapter addresses both existing conditions and future needs related to roadways, pedestrian and bicycle networks, freight movement, and the relationship between transportation and land use. By taking a comprehensive and forward-looking approach, Bainbridge aims to maintain and enhance its transportation systems in ways that support local goals while coordinating effectively with regional and state partners.

Key Community Concerns about Transportation & Mobility

Expectations

- Can industrial truck traffic be removed or directed around the central residential and commercial core of the city to avoid traffic congestion and bottlenecks?
- Can downtown Bainbridge better accommodate events that create vehicle traffic and potential conflicts with pedestrian access?
- Can Bainbridge reduce the number of curb cuts on major roadways to better manage turning movements and improve traffic flow?
- What can the city do to protect pedestrians and bicyclists in commercial areas affected by multiple curb cuts and driver distractions?
- Can the city improve pedestrian paths and sidewalks along commercial corridors and between residential areas and areas that provide retail commercial and job opportunities?
- Can the city improve crosswalk access on major streets including Shotwell, Scott, and Tallahassee Highway?
- What can the city do to support people (Including the disabled, elderly, young, or economically disadvantaged persons) that do not drive to move around the city? Is transit an option?
- Can the city provide better control of vehicle speeds through residential areas?
- Can the city provide mitigation of delays to access and traffic flow created by stormwater impacts on roadways created during periods of intense rainfall?
- Can the city maintain or improve accessibility to ensure safety during emergency conditions?

Impact of Mobility & Connectivity on Community Development

Mobility is the ability or capability to move freely[1] whether physically or in society. Barriers to mobility may block or restrict economic success, autonomy, and access to jobs, education, healthcare, entertainment, and religious or social opportunities. This chapter includes assessment of the functional network of transportation resources available to the community and an awareness of the physical and social context regarding how residents and visitors can use the connectivity network for essential and casual trips as part of daily life.

The city's vision to provide economic prosperity requires an assumption that great places should be considered in their context of design and usefulness. Although some opportunities can be pursued from any location through modern communications and technologies, many opportunities will require travel by investors, suppliers, buyers, and workers.

Bainbridge benefits from the legacy of numerous deciduous trees planted along many of the streets developed prior to the 1920s and 1930s. These trees once shaded pedestrians traveling by foot, wagon, or carriage, at a time when riverboats and railroads served as the primary forms of regional transportation. Over the past century, the automobile has reshaped American life and altered development patterns. Yet Bainbridge's older grid pattern endures, continuing to connect the downtown core with the commercial corridors along Shotwell and Scott Streets.

A balance between land use, economic development, and transportation is essential to maintaining the economic vitality and renewal of the city. Redevelopment of quality living spaces close to jobs and shopping is an essential part of this balance and provides an alternative to the development of new subdivisions at the fringe of the urban area that would require new utilities and expanded travel corridors to reach jobs, resources, and recreation at the core or on the city's other side.

The transportation element includes a review of the systems that physically connect the city's different parts, and the trends that portend future mobility for everyone in the community to identify strategic actions that can balance public investments in maintenance. These investments should include the improvement of existing transportation resources and identify opportunities to enhance access and connectivity for persons that cannot drive.

1 Merriam Webster Dictionary.

Key Thoroughfares, Roadways, & Streets

The United States is highly dependent on the system of roads, streets, and highways that move automobiles, buses, and trucks to move people and goods from place to place. The system of roadways can be divided into several different roadway types including interstate highways, the U.S. numbered highway system, state highways, county roads, municipal streets, private streets, etc.

Figure 8.01: US 84 looking west from Lake Douglas Road

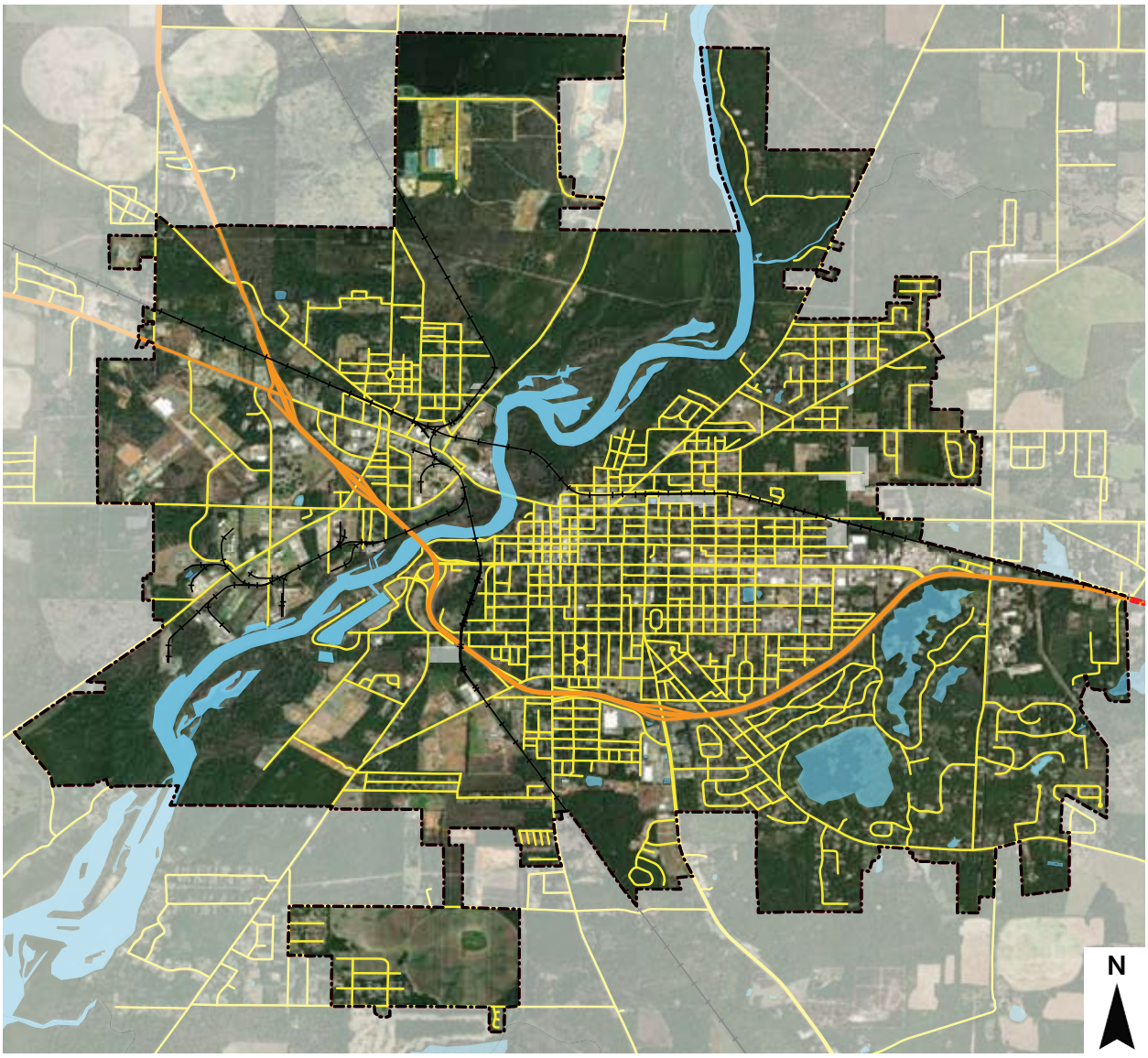
Major Highways

In support of the Bainbridge Comprehensive Plan, Sain Associates conducted a planning-level transportation analysis to evaluate existing and future conditions. Bainbridge, Georgia is in the southwest corner of the state approximately 40 miles north of Tallahassee, Florida. Bainbridge's transportation network consists of several US and state highways and a local arterial grid network concentrated in the historical central city area.

Bainbridge is served by two major federally designated highways — US 27 and US 84 — which intersect in the city and provide critical connections within Georgia and across the southeastern United States. Both corridors are part of the National Highway System. As part of Georgia's Governor's Road Improvement Program (GRIP), each has been upgraded to a four-lane (mostly divided) developmental highway, supporting regional travel, freight movement, and continued economic growth.

In Bainbridge, the important roadways and streets that are part of the federal and state highways systems are as follows:

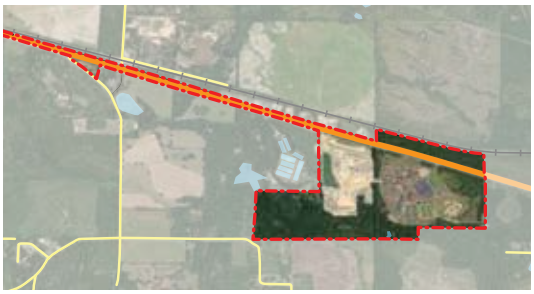
- US 84 / Georgia State Route 38 functions as a four-lane limited access east-west bypass around Bainbridge, known locally as the Wiregrass Georgia Parkway. It provides regional connectivity from Interstate 95 near Midway, Georgia, through Valdosta and Thomasville to Bainbridge, and continues west through Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, and ultimately to Colorado. Daily traffic volumes along US 84 range from 9,500 to 18,700 vehicles, and the posted speed limit is 55 mph. The corridor offers access to I-75 near Valdosta approximately 80 miles to the east.
- US 27 / Georgia State Route 1 is a four-lane north-south highway that connects Bainbridge to Tallahassee to the south and Columbus and Rome to the north. The corridor runs through several states, ultimately linking Fort Wayne, Indiana, with Miami, Florida. In Georgia, it is designated the Martha Berry Highway and the Scenic Hometown Highway for tourism enhancement purposes. Within Bainbridge, US 84 / Georgia State Route 38 includes Dothan Road, the Bainbridge Bypass (Wiregrass Georgia Parkway), and Thomasville Road. South of US-84, the roadway has a five-lane cross section with a center two-way left turn lane. Interstate 10 is located about 24 miles south of Bainbridge and Interstate 185 (with access to Interstate 85) is approximately 120 miles to the north. 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.
- Georgia State Route 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. This state highway connects local roads at the Florida state line through southwest Decatur County and Faceville, Georgia to Bainbridge and extends northeast toward Pelham, Georgia. The route enters the city of Bainbridge on Faceville Highway just north of River Chase Drive, splits at an angled intersection with Old Quincy Road (the former SR97 Connector), and crosses over the Bainbridge Bypass.



US Highways
Primary Roads
Railways

Figure 8.02: Street Network

Key Plan



Street Network Enlarged Plan

- Georgia State Route 253 (SR 253) 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. It connects the north shore of Lake Seminole and Reynoldsville State Park to Bainbridge, entering the city on the west side of the Flint River on Spring Creek Road. SR253 passes under the Bainbridge Bypass (US27/US984/SR1/SR38 / Georgia Wiregrass Parkway) at a full diamond interchange and intersects Dothan Road (US27 Business/SR38 Business). SR253 turns east for 2,000 feet and turns north at Newton Road. SR253 exits the city about 1.6 miles to the north and continues towards Newton, Georgia on the west side of the Flint River.

- Georgia State Route 309 begins at the Florida state line, connects Fowlstown and extends north into Bainbridge on South West Street. SR309 crosses over the Bainbridge Bypass (US27/US84/SR1/SR38) at a half-diamond interchange with access limited to the east and south only. North of the Bypass, SR309 joins SR97 to run concurrently through the city. The concurrent routes continue to West Shotwell, turn east for one block and turn north on North Broad Street and travel seven blocks to an intersection with Dothan Road and East Calhoun Street. The concurrent routes turn east on East Calhoun Street, diverges to the north at Albany Road, and diverges to east on Vada Road at an angled intersection with East River Road (SR311). SR97 exits the city towards the northeast to a terminus at Pelham Road (SR262).

- Georgia State Route 311 (East River Road) is a minor north-south arterial with a two-lane undivided section. The posted speed limit is 45 mph. Daily traffic volumes range from 1,500 to 2,300. It begins at an intersection with SR97 and SR309 at an intersection with Albany Road to the southwest and Vada Road to the east and extends north exiting the city approximately 2.2 miles to the north. The corridor provides access on the east side of the Flint River towards Hopeful and Pelham.

- Whigham Dairy Road provides a north/south connector road between Vada Road (SR97/SR309) and Thomasville Highway (US84 and SR38) to the east of Bainbridge (The corridor is identified as College Road between Thomasville Highway and Lake Douglas Road). The segment between Vada Road and Thomasville Highway is being reconstructed by Georgia DOT to meet state standards for a two-lane rural highway design with turn lanes at most intersections. Design will include 12-foot lanes with 10-foot (6.5-foot paved) wide shoulders, turn lanes, widened shoulders, widened and flattened side slopes, adequately sized open ditches, and realigned intersections to correct substandard skew angles.

It is assumed that Bainbridge will see some slight development as a residential community for the Tallahassee metropolitan area during the time frame of this plan. The distance is 40 miles, and a one-way trip is expected to take less than an hour. The Comprehensive Plan anticipates greater economic connections with Florida's capital city providing more advanced healthcare, entertainment, and cultural activities in addition to economic resources that are available in a much larger population base. Bainbridge provides a smaller urban community in a rural setting that may be attractive as an alternative to the more densely populated metropolitan area yet within an easy commuting distance.

Figure 8.03: Signage along Shotwell Street highlights Bainbridge's strategic location and regional highway connections to nearby cities in Georgia, Alabama, and Florida

A significant number of the employed population commute across county lines between their residences and jobs in adjacent counties. A plurality of commuters travel less than 10 miles within the Southwest Georgia regional Commission area. However, 21% commute more than 50 miles to their place of employment. Commuting distances may rise and fall as workers try to balance employment with home and family. As an urban community within a predominantly rural area, Bainbridge acts as a job center and should expect to be a center for commutes from Seminole, Miller, Baker, Mitchell, and Grady Counties in addition to unincorporated Decatur County.

Bainbridge works closely with Decatur County and the GDOT district office to identify regional transportation issues and potential solutions to intercity transportation. The Whigham Dairy Road project was identified in response to issues created by logging trucks traveling through the heart of downtown Bainbridge from Mitchell and Baker Counties.

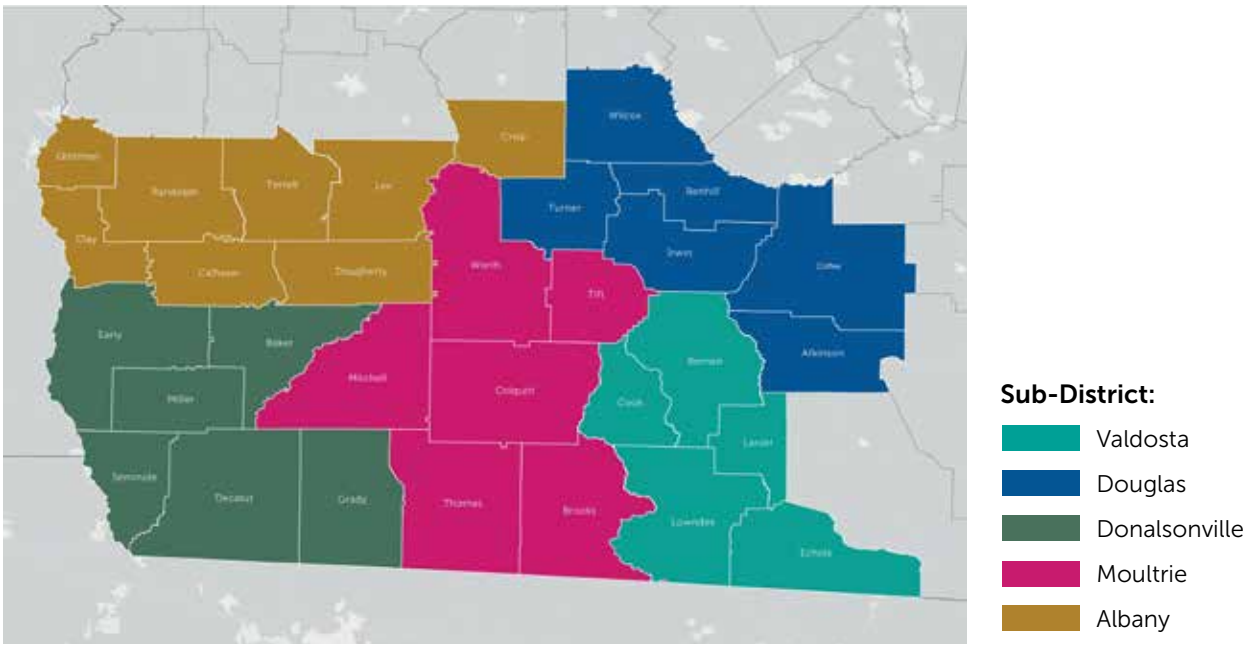


Figure 8.04: GDOT District 4 - Southwest Georgia
Source: https://www.dot.ga.gov/GDOT/Pages/District4.aspx

Upon completion of the improvements on Whigham Dairy Road, the state route designations of SR97 and SR309 through downtown Bainbridge are proposed to be moved to Whigham Dairy Road to decrease the volume of truck traffic downtown and reduce the potential for crashes throughout the corridor. The current scheduled completion date is spring of 2027. The total cost of the project is approximately $17 Million including engineering, right of way, and construction.

Local streets within the city limits are maintained by the Bainbridge Public Works Department. Many of the original streets in Bainbridge were laid out in a north and south grid pattern. The main east/west grid streets are Martin Luther King Jr, Broughton, Shotwell and College Streets with West Street marking the division into “East” and “West” street names. The primary north/south streets are West, Scott, Sims, and Wheat Streets. The Bypass, Bethel Road, Dothan Highway, Spring Creek Road, Albany Road, Vada Road, and Lake Douglas Road are exceptions to the grid pattern providing radial patterns connecting to other communities.

The accessible grid streets are easy to navigate, and a driver may avoid a congestion point or go around an accident by choosing an alternate route to a destination. The grid pattern also supports efficient land use, connectivity, and easy orientation. The street rights of way are adequate for residential speeds although some impatient drivers do travel too fast for conditions. A looser grid is observed in West Bainbridge to the north of the railroad and to the south of Dothan Highway but is smaller and more disjointed. These streets are less efficient in their use of land but offer a more organic layout, often shaped by the surrounding terrain to manage stormwater or highlight views and architectural features.

Figure 8.05: Organic, non-gridded street network in the new "Southgate" residential neighborhood

Traffic Conditions

Existing traffic congestion in the city is concentrated primarily on Business Route 84 (BUS-84), State Route 309 (SR-309), and United States Highway 27 (US-27) during the PM Peak hour. The U.S. numbered highways including the Bypass carry the heaviest traffic volumes. Traffic on US27 ranges from 6,500 vehicles per day north of Bethel Road, rise above 12,700 south of Dothan Road, 19,700 across the Flint River, 15,400 at Faceville Highway, 11,200 west of Tallahassee Highway, and 8,280 on Tallahassee Highway at the southern city limits. Vehicle counts on US84 on the Bypass east of Tallahassee Highway (US84) are 9,120, then drop to 6,650 at Nebo Church Road.

Dothan Highway east of the Bypass carries more than 5,000 vehicles per day, the segment between Spring Creek Road and Newton Road increases to 8,280, and volumes across the Flint River bridge are 10,200. Volumes on SR 97 exceed 5,000 vehicles per day on Vada Road and Faceville Road. South West Street and Shotwell Street add 4,500 and 9,100 vehicles. These volumes are disbursed into the downtown grid streets.

East Shotwell Street traffic volumes on the 4-lane segment east of South Scott Street range from 11,400 near the Winn Dixie shopping center to 8,120 near the hospital and 6,600 at the YMCA.

Parking

Parking has been cited as an issue by local residents, particularly in the historic downtown district. While on most days automobile parking in Bainbridge is not a problem — spaces are generally close to stores and most retail patrons can complete their business within a couple of hours — residents still express frustration when convenient spaces aren't immediately available. This perception often becomes more pronounced during events, when demand is temporarily higher and organizers must ensure that parking is within a reasonable walking distance and that spaces remain accessible for longer durations.

The city has conducted parking studies in the past which illustrated that there is sufficient overall parking supply downtown. This finding was reinforced by field observations conducted by Planning Team and Sain staff prior to the public meeting on October 24, 2024. However, despite evidence of adequate supply, parking continues to

be perceived as a challenge by residents. The Downtown Development Authority is working on plans to improve access, streetscapes, and wayfinding to support pedestrian movement and to make parking more intuitive and convenient for eventgoers, customers, and downtown employees.

Communication and wayfinding remain key to ensuring that the search for a parking space does not deter visitors from finding a spot near their destination. Clear signage directing users to overflow parking and appropriately designating spaces for workers can help ease congestion in high-demand areas. As future developments are planned downtown and parking demand increases, continued efforts to improve parking management — such as evaluating time-limited zones, expanding shared-use parking agreements, or issuing vouchers or parking passes for longer stays — can help ensure that parking resources are used efficiently.[2] Additionally, the city's current approach of handling parking concerns on a case-by-case basis allows for a more business- and customer-friendly environment that can adapt to varying needs and contexts.

Curb Cuts

Curb cuts are ramps in sidewalks that help people and vehicles get on and off the street. They were first created after World War II to enhance accessibility for disabled veterans and proved important for other persons to cross over a raised curb, including people with strollers or suitcases, bikers, delivery vehicle workers, and others.[3] Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides rules for curb ramps and pedestrian crossings.[4]

During the public engagement process, residents raised concerns about the number of curb cuts along active streets. In urban design, curbs play a critical role not only in accessibility but also in managing how people walk, where vehicles park, how stormwater is handled, and how space at the edge of the street can support public and commercial uses. Poorly managed curb cuts can reduce sidewalk continuity, create conflicts for drivers, and weaken the pedestrian environment.[5]

2 "Preventing the Parking Crunch," Uptown Magazine, published by the Municipal Association of South Carolina (Referenced comment from Uptown Greenwood, 2020, Greenwood South Carolina.

3 "Equity: Not a Zero-Sum Game," Angela Glover Blackwell, published in Stanford Social Innovation review, Winter 2017.

4 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, Chapter 6: Curb Ramps and Pedestrian Crossing under Title II.

5 Grabar, Henry. "Give the Curb Your Enthusiasm." Slate Magazine, 2018.

North American design practice generally separates streets and sidewalks for safety.[6] Driveways offer efficient access to parking, but as corridors evolve, older curb cuts can become obsolete. Without proper management, these leftover cuts multiply visual and functional disruptions for both drivers and pedestrians. Effective street design must ensure that curbs balance multiple objectives:

- Provide access to meet ADA requirements.
- Provide access for persons entering and leaving a property fronting the street.
- Manage stormwater flow during intense rain events.
- Provide safe separation of automobiles and pedestrians.

Inclusive Design and Accessibility

Urban places are rarely created from a greenfield. They evolve from rural places in a near organic way by accreting layers of development over time. ADA provides guidelines for ensuring that the public realm supplies accessibility for all, including the disabled. Equality is not easy, and many elements of the ADA may be perceived as difficult to implement with limited budgets and unknown value assessments. However, the "curb cut effect"[7] shows that some improvements made for a limited population may have more benefits than are initially assumed.

Complete Streets are roadway corridors designed to be safe and accessible for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, transit riders, and delivery drivers. A complete streets program is designed to include sidewalks, bicycle lanes, bus lanes, crosswalks, lighting, planters, trees, benches, signage, and wayfinding. Benefits can help improve safety and accessibility for all users and "Complete Street" policies have been adopted by many local, county, regional, and state government to consider systematic investment in all elements of the street as a valued place.[8]

Future Traffic Conditions

The Georgia statewide model was used to evaluate future traffic conditions in the city. The lack of congestion on the arterial network could be leveraged to implement road diets on select corridors which would improve multi-modal connectivity and safety. Road diets can be implemented as a part of the city's resurfacing program.

6 Simval84 transportation blog. 2020. "Urban Kchoze." http://urbankchoze.blogspot.com.

7 Defined as the "phenomenon of disability-friendly features being used and appreciated by a larger group than the people they were designed for."

8 Smart Growth America. "National Complete Streets Coalition." https://smartgrowthamerica.org/what-are-complete-streets/.

Regional Bus Systems

Bainbridge and Decatur County are members of the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission which operates the Southwest Georgia Regional Transit (SWGRT) to provide rural public and human services transportation throughout 14 counties.

Southwest Georgia Regional Transit operates 77 vehicles in 13 counties within the region. Counties served include Baker County, Calhoun County, Colquitt County, Decatur County, Dougherty County, Early County, Grady County, Lee County, Miller County, Mitchell County, Seminole County, Terrell County, and Worth County.

Services are provided Monday through Friday from 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM and Saturday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM on a first come/first serve basis. Riders may call up to one week in advance to schedule a trip; or, at a minimum, call no later than 2:00 PM, the day before they need a trip.

Transit fares range from $3.00 for an in-county trip one-way, $5.00 for a one-way trip of less than 50 miles into another county, and more for a longer multi-county trip. Frequent riders and older persons may get a discount. The transit program is part of the Federal program to ensure rural communities have access to jobs, medical care, pharmacies, worship, and cultural activities. These transportation options are supported by the Federal Formula Grants for Rural Areas program managed by the Federal Transit Administration.

A list of transit grant programs is available at www.transit.dot.gov/grants.

All 14 counties within the Southwest Georgia Region have GDOT-administered public transit services. There are currently three public transit services operating within Southwest Georgia:

- Southwest Georgia Regional Transit (SWGRT) provides regional demand-response transit service to Baker, Calhoun, Colquitt, Decatur, Dougherty, Early, Grady, Lee, Miller, Mitchell, Seminole, Terrell, and Worth Counties.
- Thomas County Transit provides countywide demand- response transit service.
- Albany Transit System (ATS) provides city bus and Ram Rush student shuttle services within the Albany urbanized area. ATS also operates ADA comparable paratransit service.

Weekday hours of service vary by system. Thomas County Transit operates during business hours. SWGRT and ATS provide extended weekday service hours. ATS offers Saturday service and SWGRT provides some limited Saturday medical trips. Rural transit fares in the region are distance based. Rural transit trips and the ATS paratransit service require appointments to be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance.

SWGRT receives funding through the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Section 5311 rural area formula grant program. Transit services are handicap accessible to provide safe and efficient transportation for the disabled community. Lift equipment complies with ADA requirements. Transit information is available in large print, braille, or alternative and electronic format. Services for the hearing and speaking impaired are available through telecommunications relay service (TCS) to obtain direct assistance.

Micro-Transit

Federal funding programs that can be used to establish or support micro-transit systems serving Bainbridge include the following resources (as of January 2025):

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Programs

- Rural Area Formula Grants (5311): Provides funding to states for public transportation in rural areas, including micro-transit services.
- Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (Section 5310): Supports transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities, including specialized transportation and micro-transit options.
- Low or No Emission (Low-No) Grant Program: Funds the purchase or lease of zero-emission and low-emission transit buses, including microtransit vehicles.
- Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grants Program: Provides funding for projects that use data and technology to improve transportation efficiency and safety, which could include microtransit initiatives.

Other Federal Programs

- Community Project Funding/Earmarks: Members of Congress can request funding for specific projects in their districts, including microtransit initiatives. This program is managed through individual Congressional offices.

Bicycle & Pedestrian Systems

Cyclists

The Georgia DOT approved the first Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Corridor Plan in 1995 and identified 12 intercity bicycle and pedestrian corridors including the Southern Bicycle Crossing (Georgia Bicycle Route 10) from the intersection of River Road and Georgia State Route 253 in Seminole County to the eastern end of the Georgia 520 bridge spanning the Intracoastal Waterway at Jekyll Island (246.3 miles). The route through Decatur County follows State Route 253 and US27 Business into Bainbridge, then uses Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and Old Whigham Road to the Grady County line.

Georgia Bicycle Route 10 enters West Bainbridge on Spring Creek Road and passes through the industrial area and across a bridge over the railroad and turns east onto US27/SR38 (Dothan Highway) to cross the Flint River bridge. The corridor turns south onto North Broad Street for one block and turns left east onto Planters Street (Martin Luther King Jr. Drive). The regional route is utilitarian and the only two markers are signs warning drivers to "share the road" across the two bridges used by the route.

No dedicated bicycle lanes were observed in the city although several adult and youth cyclists were seen traveling to and from the retail commercial areas along and across Shotwell and Scott Streets. Persons attending the public meetings also identified a need for cyclist access in West Bainbridge, across the Bypass south of the city to Wal-Mart, downtown, and to the recreation areas along the Flint River. The relatively flat terrain and moderate weather in the Spring, Fall, and (sometimes) Winter and Summer make bicycle access a viable alternative along the secondary streets of the grid system although the location of the Middle and High Schools several miles to the east reduces the opportunity for older children to bicycle to or from school. Additional signage is desirable to help drivers recognize when bicyclists may be present.

Pedestrians

As the city explores new sidewalk connections to enhance walkability it is essential to integrate sustainable stormwater solutions into these improvements. Eco-friendly drainage practices can help manage runoff while supporting safe, accessible pedestrian infrastructure.

At the public meeting on August 29, 2024, residents raised drainage as a recurring concern throughout the city. Given Bainbridge's climate, which includes frequent afternoon thunderstorms during the summer months, the city should consider innovative approaches to stormwater management.

These types of installations may be especially effective at problem intersections such as Shotwell Street at Scott Street, as well as along corridors with a history of flooding. In addition, repaving streets with permeable pavement could help reduce surface runoff during heavy rain events by allowing water to filter through the asphalt into underlying drainage systems, whether natural or engineered.

Figure 8.06: Brick Paving surrounding Willis Park

Figure 8.07: Sidewalk on East College Street

Figure 8.08: CSX Rail Line, looking south from Shotwell Street

Freight & Goods Movement

Cargo Carriers & Logistics

The Georgia ports Authority operates a multi-modal terminal for transfer between barge, rail, and trucks. Choice Terminal provides a bulk transfer facility to move materials between rail cars and trucks. Trucking carriers find the convenience of the US27 and US84 corridors and the multi-modal opportunities provide an excellent incentive for logistics operations in and around Bainbridge.

Rail Transportation

CSX offers mainline rail service into Bainbridge and the Georgia Southwestern Railroad provides short line services to portions of the county including the Decatur County Industrial Park and Downrange Industrial Park. The short line railroad connects to both CSX and Norfolk Southern. The Decatur County Industrial Park houses a transload facility with two spurs approximately two thousand feet in length. Decatur County owns over 14,000 feet of rail spurs in the Decatur County Industrial Park.

The Georgia Southwestern Railroad has multiple rail lines across Southwestern Georgia and Southeastern Alabama with one of the lines running from Bainbridge, GA to Columbus, GA and another line that runs directly to the port at Panama City, Florida.

Known as "The Lumber Line," the Bainbridge Northern Railway was operated by the Flint River Lumber Company as a logging railway between Bainbridge and Eldorendo, Georgia between 1896 and 1899, and then extended to Paulina. It also operated passenger service until 1908. The railroad quit operating about 1925. The Bainbridge Northeastern Railway ran 18 miles (29 km) between Swindell Landing and Mount Royal, USA, starting in 1908 but failed two years later.

River Transportation

The Flint River flows right through the heart of Bainbridge and water levels are maintained by the Corps of Engineers and the Chattahoochee Lock & Dam located 19 miles south of Bainbridge. The Corps of Engineers monitors and maintains river levels and depths, including dredging the river bottom when needed.

- Bainbridge is located 63 miles north of the Gulf of Mexico and was Georgia's first Inland Port City.
- The Georgia Ports Authority operates an inland barge terminal in Bainbridge on the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint Waterway, or Tri-Rivers System. The facility is equipped to handle a variety of bulk cargo via barge traffic, including nitrogen solution, gypsum, ammonium sulfate, urea, cottonseed and cypress bark mulch – handling both bulk and liquid cargo, making shipping by barge a viable option for finished products and/or raw materials. The facility includes 67 acres for handling dry bulk materials and 93,000 square feet of warehouses and a T-shed.

Georgia's "Port Tax Credit Bonus" is available for industries that locate or expand, in Georgia and use Georgia's ports. This incentive offers additional job tax credits to businesses for Georgia of counties that add the required threshold of jobs and increase their port traffic through Georgia's port facilities by 10% in one year from the base level. The bonus for Decatur County is a job tax credit of $4,000.

Air Transportation

The Decatur County Industrial Air Park (BGE) is located six miles north of the city and features two runways. BGE is designated as a Level III General Aviation Airport in the Georgia State Aviation System Plan.[9] The main 5,500' long runway is lighted and has a Localizer Approach and Medium Intensity Approach Lighting System with Runway Alignment Indicator Lights (MALSR). The secondary runway is shorter at 5,000 feet long. The airport features:

- Aviation fuel (100LL Avgas and Jet-A) available at the pump and by truck
- Aircraft parking (ramp/tiedown)
- Passenger terminal and lounge with restrooms (available 24 hours / 7 days a week)
- Computerized weather system
- Internet access
- Courtesy cars (free for pilots to use in the local area)
- Public telephone (available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

9 Moffatt & Nichol. "Georgia State Aviation System Plan." Jviation, 2018.

The airport primarily uses fees and grants to generate financial resources for maintenance and capital improvements. A 5-year capital improvements plan is reviewed annually by the Georgia DOT Aviation division. Operating costs are approximately $800,00 per year[10] using money from the state, Decatur County and the city in addition to federal grants.

Pipelines & Terminals

Several pipeline and terminal facilities are located in Bainbridge. Pipelines supply the Global Bainbridge terminal which has three bays and bottom loading supplied by pipeline. Global Bainbridge handles gas, ethanol, and diesel. Liquid Transfer Terminals provides storage tanks for industrial and agricultural chemicals and petroleum products from a facility at 1025 Dickerson Street serving barge, rail, and trucking.

Colonial Pipeline is located at 1907 East Shotwell Street, and Sunoco LP is at 1909 East Shotwell Street along with TransMontaigne's Southeast Terminal. Motiva Enterprises is at 1803 East Shotwell. This concentration of fuel storage facilities provides a landmark at the eastern end of Shotwell Street with immediate proximity to US84.

Transmission Lines & Stations

The Walton Bainbridge power plant is located at the eastern end of Carter Street north of the Martin Luther King Jr. crossing over the CSX Railroad. The plant has a peak capacity of 80.0 MW generated by oil. The large East Bainbridge power substation is located to the northwest of the plant and power transmission lines extend west along Carter Street and to the north and east via dedicated power easements. A number of solar power receptors operated by BE Solar LLC are located to the north and west of the power plant.

10 A.J. Douglas. WTXL, Scripps Media, May 2024.

Figure 8.09: Freight rail lines in Bainbridge support regional goods movement and economic connectivity

Transportation & Mobility Priorities

Transportation & Land Use Placemaking

Memorable areas are usually defined by what attracts people to visit them and whether they are at an appropriate scale to enjoy the resources they provide.[11] Great places rely on good infrastructure combined with a mix of programming, public spaces, and opportunity for the people who inhabit them and bring them to life.[12] Infrastructure is understood to mean the physical and human resources that provide access, accommodation, and security to encourage exploration and social activity. A transportation planner's responsibilities have expanded to consider much more than level of service to consider safety, user diversity, apportionment of travel mode between motorized and non-motorized vehicles, pedestrians, and delivery systems. Many times, a "complete street" approach is needed to balance safety, convenience, comfort, identity, and image for a full spectrum of users.

The Florida Department of Transportation categorizes roadways based on land use, development patterns, and connectivity to design safer streets in recognition that each roadway location is unique, requiring a custom-fitted solution through context-sensitive "Complete Streets." Although the process in Georgia is not as defined, Bainbridge should consider adopting and using a context sensitive design process for roadway design based on "complete street" principles.

Regional Transportation

Bainbridge will work closely with Decatur County, Georgia DOT, GDOT District Four, and Southwest Georgia Regional Transit to coordinate the maintenance and improvement of regional highways, access, and mobility in context with the GDOT Statewide Strategic Transportation Plan as amended.

The city will continue to include consideration of regional transportation, access, and traffic flow as part of land use decisions for properties that are adjacent to (or rely on) the regional highway(s) for access and egress including the review and approval of zoning and development plans and permits. The city will work with GDOT to educate property owners, businesses, and developers regarding safe highway access and crossings that minimize conflicts created by curb and median cuts and promote safe crossings and intersections that maintain the flow of regional traffic.

11 Bruce Belmore. "Transportation's Role in Public Spaces and Placemaking." Institute of Transportation Engineers, 2019.

12 Transportation for America. "The Scenic Route: Eight Approaches to Creative Placemaking." t4america.org, 2024.

Local Streets

The city will prioritize the preparation of a street assets plan to identify issues and address requirements for timely maintenance and improvements of local streets. This activity will be part of a full utilities asset assessment to assist staff in developing capital improvement plans for the city that are consistent with the city's limited financial resources and provide opportunities for seeking available state, federal, and other grant and matching resources.

Mobility

Land use decisions throughout the US have historically been based on private investment decisions that the city reviews and addresses through plans, design, and construction regulations to mitigate negative impacts on surrounding properties or the public's health, safety, and welfare. The city's review process includes state and federal environmental protection requirements and design standards considered needed by engineers and policy planners. Developers must consider the economic implications of the requirements and make development and construction decisions, including the design of subdivision roadways, power, gas, water and sewer infrastructure, that still allow for profit and contingencies for unknown issues that may be discovered in the construction process. Larger cities play a more active role in development and redevelopment through incentives and other actions to promote investment.

Bainbridge residents have identified a desire for more restaurants and shops in diverse parts of the city, closer to where they live, and a small, dense community is more efficient than a large community that is spread out, and walking can be a reasonable option for many when the distance to travel is ¼ to ½ mile or less. Prior to the 1950s, jobs, groceries, and social interaction in Bainbridge were consistent with that efficiency. Urban development is more efficient when the density of population is high, and trips are shorter.

Bainbridge expanded eastward along Shotwell and across the river into West Bainbridge along Calhoun Street and Dothan Highway as automobiles became the primary conveyance for human activities that were more than a mile away. New commercial establishments located along those corridors and the distance to resources remained relatively consistent for residents even as a single car per family became the normal condition. However, the efficiency of a place is assumed to decline because resources are farther away, and trips become longer and more expensive. Recent trends by retailers to reduce product costs and services created larger but fewer places to shop and more congestion where those places continue to operate, increasing the cost of automobile mobility. A single large store may provide the lowest prices in town, but its location may not be convenient or create higher travel costs for its customers who must decide between automobile mobility and other costs of living such as housing or medical services.

While traditional fixed-route public transportation may not be feasible, improving access and mobility within Bainbridge remains an important goal. The Decatur County Board of Education operates school buses to ensure access to the County's public schools as part of their budget. Private schools, churches, and other organizations also operate vans to help their students, members, employees, and clients get around. Bainbridge should work with

Southwest Regional Transit to identify improved mobility for people who live and work in the city and need access to jobs, medical appointments, church, and other activities. Barriers to accessibility also need to be identified and mitigated through enhancement of roadway connections and alternate travel modes such as bicycle and pedestrian paths, especially where roads penetrate across the Bypass and the River.

Figure 8.10: Varying street pavement conditions

Transportation & Mobility Action Plan

The Transportation Plan element for the Bainbridge Comprehensive Plan is intended to build on the strong existing transportation infrastructure in place and enhance mobility and modal choice options for city residents and visitors to safely and effectively get around the city for work, school, and quality of life. Regional and subregional access have been blessed by state investments in quality highway design, construction, and maintenance. US27 provides a four-lane divided highway connecting Bainbridge north to Columbus and south to Tallahassee. US84 serves east west traffic across Georgia and Alabama with a four-lane highway.

The Whigham Dairy Road improvements are under construction and a roundabout is proposed for the US27 and Bethel Road intersection. These projects are in the regional and state transportation implementation plans.

Transportation Goals & Recommendations

1. Plan for pedestrian and bicycle connections between major bicycle traffic generators and destinations (residential neighborhoods, schools, and shopping).

    1.1: Complete a survey and assessment of existing public streets, rights of way, and utility easements to catalogue the dimensions, age, and maintenance status of rights of way, travel and turn lane pavements, crosswalks, curbs, stormwater inlets, signage, parking spaces, sidewalks, driveway and curb cuts, bridge structures, pipes, and utility easements; potential traffic generators and destinations; accident data regarding location, severity, and assumed cause; and geolocation.

    1.2: Adopt a "Complete Streets" policy for the design of local roads and streets including pedestrian and bicycle facilities to serve all users.

    1.3: Incorporate bicycle and pedestrian access as part of transportation review for new development projects.

2. Support expansion of mobility opportunities for disabled and elderly citizens.

    2.1: Establish a task force to Identify and advocate for meeting the mobility needs of disabled and elderly persons through wayfinding marking and signage, crosswalk beacons (HAWK signals), and other tools including transit or on-call micro transit to healthcare and retail along primary travel corridors.

    2.2: Identify mobility opportunities requirements for Complete Streets as provided in Chapter 8 goal 1.2. above.

2.3: Provide Opportunities for Transit to jobs, medical care, and recreation.

The city should work with Southwest Georgia Regional Transit to identify regular routes for transit to jobs, schools, healthcare, retail, and recreation resources within the city.

3. Ensure Adequate Downtown Parking.

3.1: Identify parking spaces and resources as part of the streets and utilities assessment identified above as Chapter 8 goal 1.1 to determine the number of available parking spaces in the downtown area.

3.2: Create enhanced wayfinding resources between downtown attractions and parking areas and include apps to assist event sponsors and attendees to find a place to park and easy access to their venue(s).

3.3: Ensure parking spaces in the downtown area are safe and well-lighted during evening hours.

4. Work with GDOT to ensure safe regional truck access to appropriate activity areas and around inappropriate residential areas.

4.1: Work with GDOT and Decatur County to limit curb cuts and turning movements on Whigham Dairy Road to minimize land use access conflicts and protect the road as a primary corridor for trucks and through traffic around the east side of Bainbridge.

4.2: Review traffic counts and truck movements through downtown and on South West Street, South Scott Street, and East Shotwell Street before and after GDOT completed improvements on Whigham Dairy Road to assess truck movements.

4.3: Review traffic counts and truck movements on Dothan Road and Newton Road in West Bainbridge to assess hourly and peak hour traffic volumes traveling to and from the new Downrange Industrial Park.

4.4: Support the development of alternate access between Downrange Industrial Park and US27.

5. Support reinvestment in the Bainbridge Port Facilities and expand intermodal transportation facilities.

    5.1: Identify opportunities to expand barge traffic on the Flint River and expansion of the multi-modal port transportation facilities.

    5.2: Explore opportunities and needed actions to create a riverboat regional attraction on the Flint River (this activity may be a joint effort with other communities as part of a regional economic development effort).

Regional Cooperation Goals & Recommendations

6. Work with the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division to address air and water quality issues.

    6.1: Maintain traffic flow, support transit, walking, and bicycling as alternative modes and minimize traffic delays to protect air quality.

7. Work with GDOT to enhance safe regional truck access around activity areas.

    7.1: Work with GDOT to expedite regional truck traffic on approved truck routes.

Action Items

Based on the feedback received during the public engagement process, and results of the technical and field analysis, the following action items are recommended with regards to transportation:

- Develop a City-wide Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan for the city to prioritize corridors for bicycle and pedestrian improvements.
- Conduct detailed traffic studies to determine whether road diets are appropriate for specific corridors.
- Research drainage options and identify the most feasible option as part of the Asset Management Plan and implement improvements per a prioritized list consistent with the city's budget.
- Coordinate potential road diet implementation with city's pavement management plan.
- Evaluate the implementation of a real-time parking app for the downtown area.
- Develop Access Management Plan for the Tallahassee Highway (US 27) corridor south of the US-84 bypass. This is a key commuter and freight route between Bainbridge and Tallahassee, and it important to facilitate future land use development in a manner that would not adversely impact traffic speeds and operations on Tallahassee Highway (US 27).
- Monitor traffic on College Road and Toole Dairy Road around the southeast side of Bainbridge and manage the right-of-way to allow for future consideration of road improvements. This may include realigning the T-intersections of College Road and Toole Dairy Road at Lake Douglas Road to enable a continuous corridor in the future. While Toole Dairy Road does not currently extend to US-27, protecting and planning for potential connections could help establish a long-term freight bypass along the eastern side of Bainbridge. Such improvements would complement GDOT's planned upgrades to Whigham Dairy Road north of the bypass and could enhance access to US-84 and US-27, two major freight corridors in the Wiregrass region.