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Population

The Population Element of this Joint Comprehensive Plan provides an inventory and assessment of the growth trends and demographic characteristics of the populations of Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay. It forms the framework for other elements of the Plan, and as such is used to identify current and future trends related to employment opportunities, housing and infrastructure needs, the provision of community services and facilities, and future land use needs.

Element Outline:

1.1. Inventory

- 1.1.1. Total Population
- 1.1.2. Households
- 1.1.3. Age Distribution
- 1.1.4. Racial Composition
- 1.1.5. Educational Attainment
- 1.1.6. Income

1.2. Assessment

1.1. Inventory

1.1.1. Total Population

In terms of total population, Gilmer County ranked 68th out of the 159 counties in Georgia in the year 2000. Its population in that year according to the US Bureau of the Census was 23,456 persons. In that same year, the populations of Ellijay and East Ellijay were 1,578 and 797 persons respectively.

As illustrated in Figure 1-A to the right, the overall population of Gilmer County grew from 13,368 people in 1990 to 23,456 in 2000, an increase of just over 75%. Approximately 90% of this increase was due to migration rather than births.

Between 1990 and 2000, Gilmer County had the fourth highest growth rate of all counties in Georgia. As shown in Figure 1-B on the following page, Gilmer County outpaced the region and the state in terms of population growth. While the cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay experienced population decline during the 1980s, their populations grew by 34% and 133%, respectively, during the 1990s.

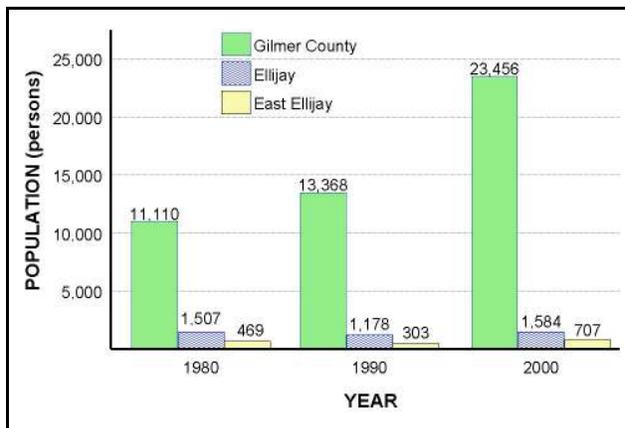


FIGURE 1-A. Gilmer County Population

Population projections for Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay were prepared through the year 2025 and are shown in Table 1-A and Figure 1-C. These projections were developed by the North Georgia Regional Development Center utilizing a statistical model based upon the cohort survival-migration method, with 2000 as the base year. This method projects total population based upon the cumulative increase of specific age and sex groups (cohorts), with separate adjustments made for each of the three major components of population change:

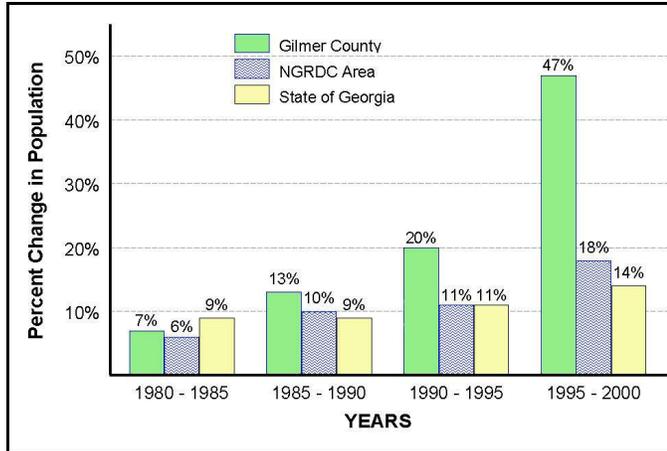


FIGURE 1-B. Population Growth in Gilmer County

deaths, births, and net migration. Hence, the projected population equals the sum of natural aging of the base population, minus deaths, plus births, and plus or minus net migration of cohorts over time.

The population projection method used assumes no significant changes in county migration patterns, birth rates, and death rates through the year 2025.

Population projections based upon the cohort survival-migration methodology can be used as a general indicator of future growth; however, because these projections are based upon past assumptions, such as death, birth, and migration rates, they do not account for certain local conditions. Some of the conditions which may lead to a different growth in population include the following:

- land and environmental policies dictating the type and amount of private development,
- the growth of local and regional economies that provide employment to the residents,
- access between employment centers and residential centers,
- the status of the regional real estate market,
- participation in federal and state programs to provide affordable housing, and
- municipal annexation policies.

TABLE 1-A. Total Population

Year	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	Gilmer Co. Seasonal	NGRDC Area	Georgia
1980	11,110	1,507	469	460	122,984	5,462,982
1985	11,844	1,343	386	1,000	129,787	5,962,639
1990	13,368	1,178	303	2,182	142,401	6,478,216
1995	16,007	1,134	496	2,840	158,518	7,188,538
2000	23,456	1,584	707	3,692	186,268	8,186,453
2002	25,203	1,578	797	—	197,389	8,560,310
2003	26,297	1,590	828	—	—	8,560,620
2004	27,759	1,630	870	—	—	8,670,510
2005	29,171	1,670	912	—	—	8,895,580
2006	30,514	1,710	954	—	—	8,895,580
2007	31,915	1,750	996	—	—	9,008,670
2008	33,353	1,795	1,036	—	—	9,120,929
2009	34,855	1,842	1,078	—	—	9,234,586
2010	36,425	1,890	1,122	—	—	9,349,660
2015	45,119	2,010	1,332	—	—	9,940,380
2020	55,650	2,130	1,542	—	—	10,550,700
2025	68,241	2,250	1,752	—	—	11,185,100

Sources: 1990 Census CPH-2-12, Table 8; 2000 Census SF 1, Table P1; US Bureau of the Census, 2002 Population Estimates, Table T1; Others: NGRDC

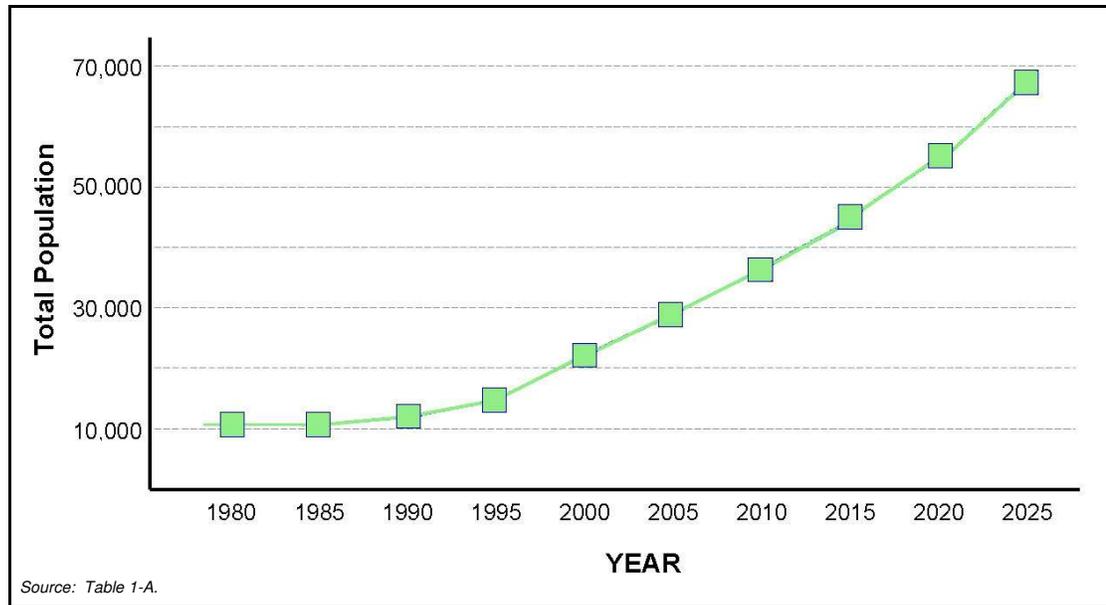


FIGURE 1-C. Total Population in Gilmer County, Past and Projected.

TABLE 1-B. Growth in Total Population

Year	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	Gilmer Co. Seasonal	NGRDC Area	Georgia
1980-1985	7%	-11%	-18%	117%	6%	9%
1985-1990	13%	-12%	-22%	118%	10%	9%
1990-1995	20%	-4%	64%	30%	11%	11%
1995-2000	47%	40%	43%	30%	18%	14%
2000-2005	24%	5%	29%	—	—	9%
2005-2010	25%	13%	23%	—	—	5%
2010-2015	24%	6%	19%	—	—	6%
2015-2020	23%	6%	16%	—	—	6%
2020-2025	23%	6%	14%	—	—	6%

Source: Table 1-A.

Gilmer County has a significant seasonal population. According to the 2000 Census, the seasonal population was 3,692 persons which was greater than the combined population of the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay (2,291). The seasonal population is expected to remain at or above recent levels throughout the planning period.

Because the County does not draw a large number of employees from surrounding counties, the daytime, work week population does not fluctuate significantly. Unless the County develops industries with jobs which are attractive to residents of neighboring areas, this characteristic will continue in the future.

1.1.2. Households

A household is defined by the Census Bureau as a group of people sharing the same housing unit, whether related or not. A household may or may not constitute a family. For example, a single person living alone in an apartment is considered to be a household, but not a family. A family is a household with two or more family members.

Table 1-C shows trends and projections for the total number of households and average household size for Georgia, Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay. The number of households has increased steadily in all areas. Nationally, household size has declined over the past several decades. This trend holds true in Gilmer County; however, average household size increased in Ellijay and East Ellijay between 1990 and 2000.

Projections for the total number of households were derived by subtracting the projected group quarter population from the total projected population and dividing by the projected average household size.

TABLE 1-C. Total Number of Households and Average Household Size (Persons)

Year	Gilmer County		Ellijay		East Ellijay		Georgia	
	#	Size	#	Size	#	Size	#	Size
1980	3,937	2.77	568	2.41	180	2.61	1,871,652	2.84
1985	4,436	2.67	549	2.61	157	2.48	2,112,449	2.70
1990	5,072	2.60	516	2.24	133	2.28	2,366,615	2.63
1995	5,682	2.53	549	2.51	134	2.30	2,638,284	2.61
2000	9,071	2.57	593	2.49	251	2.82	3,006,369	2.65
2005	11,281	2.57	629	2.49	286	2.82	3,340,171	2.59
2010	14,150	2.56	762	2.48	362	2.81	3,555,004	2.58
2015	17,607	2.55	814	2.47	440	2.79	3,794,038	2.58
2020	21,815	2.54	866	2.46	519	2.77	4,042,414	2.57
2025	26,764	2.54	915	2.46	599	2.75	4,301,962	2.57

Sources: 1980 Census, PHC80-3-12, Table 1; 1990 Census STF 1, Table P0003; 2000 Census SF 1, Tables P15 and P17; Others: NGRDC

The increase in household size is due primarily to the influx of Hispanic and Latino residents into the cities. Many of the households of more recent immigrants contain either extended families or two or more unrelated families.

Figure 1-D on the following page illustrates that between 60% and 62% of all households in Gilmer County are 1-person or 2-person households. A greater percentage of the households in the cities are 1-person households, while more of the households in the unincorporated areas are 2-person households. Nearly 60% of the 1-person households in the cities contain individuals who are 65 years of age and over although this age group only accounts for 19% of the total population.

A larger percentage of households in the cities have five or more persons than in the unincorporated areas (14% vs. 9%).

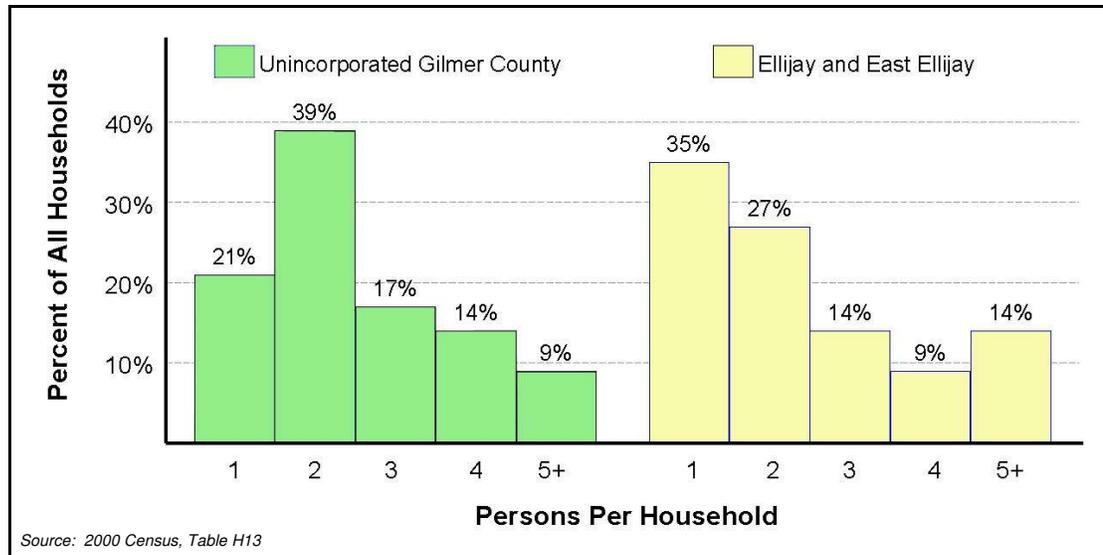


FIGURE 1-D. Persons Per Household in the Incorporated and Unincorporated Parts of Gilmer County: 2000

As illustrated in Table 1-D, white, non-Hispanic households tend to have a smaller average size than do households of other races. The difference in household size by race is less distinct nationally than it is in Gilmer County and Georgia. For example, in Gilmer County, the average household size for Hispanic/Latino Household is 4.80 persons per household, whereas in the United States, the figure is 3.62 persons per household.

TABLE 1-D. Average Household Size by Race: 2000

	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	GA	USA
Total Population	2.57	2.49	2.82	2.65	2.59
White, not Hispanic or Latino	2.47	2.06	2.29	2.50	2.43
Hispanic or Latino, any race	4.80	5.32	5.15	4.06	3.62
Black or African American only	*	*	*	2.81	2.73
American Indian only	*	*	*	2.68	2.99
Asian only	*	*	*	3.21	3.10

Source: 2000 Census SF2, PCT8
 *Data not available due to population size.

It is likely that after the immigrant population has been established in the area for a longer period of time, many of the individuals and families who are presently sharing homes will be able to purchase or rent their own homes or apartments.

1.1.3. Age Distribution

The median age of residents in Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay is shown in Table 1-E. According to the 2000 Census, the median age of the total population in Gilmer County was 37.3 years. This was lower than that of white/non-Hispanic population (39.3 years), and substantially higher than the Hispanic population (23.2 years). In Ellijay and East Ellijay, the differences were even more noticeable.

TABLE 1-E. Median Age of Residents: 2000

	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay
Total Population	37.3	37.8	30.5
White, not Hispanic or Latino	39.3	49.1	38.5
Hispanic or Latino	23.2	23.2	23.9
Black or African American only	28.5	18.0	--
American Indian only	34.8	23.5	32.5
Asian only	30.2	29.5	--

Source: 2000 Census SF 3, P13, P13B, P13D, P13C, P13H, P13I

Figure 1-E provides a very generalized comparison of the age groups in Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay, and Georgia. The age distribution of Gilmer County and East Ellijay is very similar to that of the state, while Ellijay has a more elderly population with 22% of persons being 65 years of age or over. Only 10% of residents throughout the state are 65 years of age or older.

Tables 1-F, 1-G, and 1-H on the following pages provide more detailed information on the age of the population by dividing it into smaller age groups. Also provided are projections of median age and age distribution.

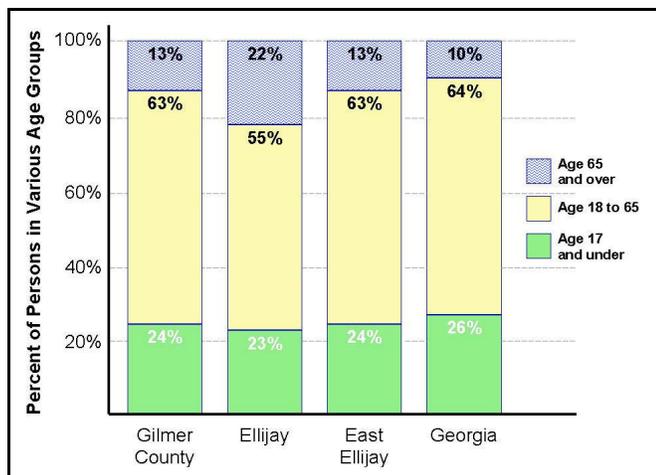


FIGURE 1-E. Population by Age Groups: 2000

Nationally, the trend is toward an aging population. While the population projections prepared for Gilmer County reflect this trend, it is likely that if the influx of younger persons of Hispanic or Latino origin continues at the rate that it has over the past decade, the median age could remain the same or even decrease.

In terms of the ratio of males to females, most age groups have a fairly even split between the two sexes with the exception of two age groups: individuals who are 65 or older and those who are

between the ages of 20 and 29. As is typical throughout the United States, there are more women than men who are 65 years of age or over. This holds true in Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay where 54%, 72%, and 68% of the residents who are 65 or older are women.

In the 20 to 29 year old age group a variation exists between what is typical throughout Georgia and what is found in Ellijay and East Ellijay. According to the 2000 Census, 51% of the residents of Georgia and 53% of the residents of Gilmer County in this age group were male. In Ellijay and East Ellijay, 69% and 63% of the residents were male. This statistic is reflective of the immigrant population found in both cities.

TABLE 1-F. Population Trends and Projections by Age Group in Gilmer County

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total Population	11,110	11,844	13,368	16,007	23,456	29,171	36,425	45,119	55,650	68,241
0 to 4 years	# 781 % 7%	# 825 % 7%	# 863 % 6%	# 960 % 6%	# 1,679 % 7%	# 1,718 % 6%	# 1,965 % 5%	# 2,336 % 5%	# 2,921 % 5%	# 3,625 % 5%
5 to 14 years	# 1,763 % 16%	# 1780 % 15%	# 1,908 % 14%	# 2256 % 14%	# 3,085 % 13%	# 3,995 % 14%	# 4,757 % 13%	# 5,230 % 12%	# 6,079 % 11%	# 7,409 % 11%
15 to 24 years	# 1,823 % 16%	# 1832 % 15%	# 1,870 % 14%	# 2075 % 13%	# 2,927 % 12%	# 3,666 % 13%	# 4,300 % 12%	# 5,681 % 13%	# 6,800 % 12%	# 7,544 % 11%
25 to 34 years	# 1,624 % 15%	# 1785 % 15%	# 1,963 % 15%	# 2385 % 15%	# 3,196 % 14%	# 3,834 % 13%	# 4,424 % 12%	# 4,812 % 11%	# 5,595 % 10%	# 7,363 % 11%
35 to 44 years	# 1,374 % 12%	# 1517 % 13%	# 1,920 % 14%	# 2405 % 15%	# 3,488 % 15%	# 4,237 % 15%	# 5,106 % 14%	# 6,001 % 13%	# 6,853 % 12%	# 7,614 % 11%
45 to 54 years	# 1,144 % 10%	# 1299 % 11%	# 1,573 % 12%	# 2082 % 13%	# 3,228 % 14%	# 3,826 % 13%	# 5,135 % 14%	# 6,525 % 14%	# 7,818 % 14%	# 9,033 % 13%
55 to 64 years	# 1,151 % 10%	# 1265 % 11%	# 1,453 % 11%	# 1761 % 11%	# 2,771 % 12%	# 3,783 % 13%	# 5,009 % 14%	# 6,327 % 14%	# 8,384 % 15%	# 10,688 % 16%
65 to 74 years	# 934 % 8%	# 948 % 8%	# 1,069 % 8%	# 1277 % 8%	# 1,936 % 8%	# 2,579 % 9%	# 3,652 % 10%	# 5,364 % 12%	# 7,170 % 13%	# 9,066 % 13%
75 to 84 years	# 407 % 4%	# 473 % 4%	# 583 % 4%	# 636 % 4%	# 864 % 4%	# 1,179 % 4%	# 1,640 % 5%	# 2,263 % 5%	# 3,230 % 6%	# 4,800 % 7%
85+ years	# 109 % 1%	# 120 % 1%	# 166 % 1%	# 170 % 1%	# 282 % 1%	# 354 % 1%	# 437 % 1%	# 580 % 1%	# 800 % 1%	# 1,099 % 2%
Median Age	32.4	33.9	35.4	36.3	37.3	38.6	40.5	42.8	44.8	45.7

Sources: 1980 Census, STF 3A, Table 5, 1990 Census STF 1, Table P011, 2000 Census SF 1, Table P12, Others: NGRDC

TABLE 1-G. Population Trends and Projections by Age Group in Ellijay

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total Population	1,516	1,343	1,178	1,134	1,584	1,670	1,890	2,010	2,130	2,240
0 to 4 years	# 103 % 7%	# 94 % 7%	# 84 % 7%	# 79 % 7%	# 107 % 7%	# 107 % 6%	# 112 % 6%	# 114 % 6%	# 118 % 6%	# 122 % 5%
5 to 14 years	# 200 % 13%	# 188 % 14%	# 181 % 15%	# 147 % 13%	# 187 % 12%	# 205 % 12%	# 216 % 11%	# 227 % 11%	# 238 % 11%	# 247 % 11%
15 to 24 years	# 222 % 15%	# 188.02 % 14%	# 156 % 13%	# 159 % 14%	# 235 % 15%	# 227 % 14%	# 234 % 12%	# 240 % 12%	# 248 % 12%	# 256 % 11%
25 to 34 years	# 243 % 16%	# 201.45 % 15%	# 165 % 14%	# 159 % 14%	# 212 % 13%	# 225 % 13%	# 243 % 13%	# 251 % 12%	# 260 % 12%	# 268 % 12%
35 to 44 years	# 146 % 10%	# 147.73 % 11%	# 148 % 13%	# 136 % 12%	# 184 % 12%	# 198 % 12%	# 230 % 12%	# 245 % 12%	# 256 % 12%	# 267 % 12%
45 to 54 years	# 159 % 10%	# 134.3 % 10%	# 107 % 9%	# 113 % 10%	# 159 % 10%	# 172 % 10%	# 212 % 11%	# 228 % 11%	# 245 % 12%	# 261 % 12%
55 to 64 years	# 134 % 9%	# 120.87 % 9%	# 115 % 10%	# 113 % 10%	# 153 % 10%	# 162 % 10%	# 203 % 11%	# 221 % 11%	# 232 % 11%	# 247 % 11%
65 to 74 years	# 167 % 11%	# 134.3 % 10%	# 97 % 8%	# 102 % 9%	# 151 % 10%	# 157 % 9%	# 185 % 10%	# 201 % 10%	# 223 % 10%	# 240 % 11%
75 to 84 years	# 109 % 7%	# 107.44 % 8%	# 105 % 9%	# 92 % 8%	# 109 % 7%	# 129 % 8%	# 157 % 8%	# 175 % 9%	# 194 % 9%	# 209 % 9%
85+ years	# 33 % 2%	# 26.86 % 2%	# 20 % 2%	# 34 % 3%	# 87 % 5%	# 88 % 5%	# 98 % 5%	# 108 % 5%	# 116 % 5%	# 123 % 5%
Median Age	32.1	33.2	33.7	35.2	36.5	38.4	41.0	42.0	42.8	43.5

Sources: 1980 Census, STF 3A, Table 5, 1990 Census STF 1, Table P011, 2000 Census SF 1, Table P12, Others: NGRDC

TABLE 1-G. Population Trends and Projections by Age Group in East Ellijay

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total Population	460	386	303	496	707	907	1,117	1,327	1,537	1,747
0 to 4 years	# 37 % 8%	# 26 % 7%	# 20 % 7%	# 36 % 7%	# 54 % 8%	# 70 % 8%	# 79 % 7%	# 85 % 6%	# 92 % 6%	# 101 % 6%
5 to 14 years	# 68 % 15%	# 51 % 13%	# 35 % 12%	# 61 % 12%	# 92 % 13%	# 123 % 14%	# 151 % 14%	# 170 % 13%	# 184 % 12%	# 202 % 12%
15 to 24 years	# 84 % 18%	# 62 % 15%	# 33 % 11%	# 85 % 17%	# 140 % 20%	# 142 % 16%	# 160 % 14%	# 172 % 13%	# 191 % 12%	# 209 % 12%
25 to 34 years	# 68 % 15%	# 57 % 15%	# 45 % 15%	# 79 % 16%	# 113 % 16%	# 147 % 16%	# 179 % 16%	# 199 % 15%	# 213 % 14%	# 230 % 13%
35 to 44 years	# 47 % 10%	# 37 % 10%	# 31 % 10%	# 59 % 12%	# 96 % 14%	# 116 % 13%	# 135 % 12%	# 168 % 13%	# 207 % 13%	# 232 % 13%
45 to 54 years	# 41 % 9%	# 39 % 10%	# 34 % 11%	# 50 % 10%	# 69 % 10%	# 95 % 10%	# 122 % 11%	# 146 % 11%	# 168 % 11%	# 202 % 12%
55 to 64 years	# 60 % 13%	# 55 % 14%	# 44 % 15%	# 48 % 10%	# 53 % 7%	# 73 % 8%	# 96 % 9%	# 129 % 10%	# 164 % 11%	# 184 % 11%
65 to 74 years	# 34 % 7%	# 35 % 10%	# 36 % 12%	# 44 % 9%	# 46 % 7%	# 61 % 7%	# 88 % 8%	# 112 % 8%	# 138 % 9%	# 169 % 10%
75 to 84 years	# 18 % 5%	# 21 % 6%	# 22 % 7%	# 29 % 6%	# 37 % 5%	# 54 % 6%	# 73 % 7%	# 100 % 8%	# 126 % 8%	# 148 % 8%
85+ years	# 3 % 0%	# 3 % 0%	# 3 % 1%	# 5 % 1%	# 7 % 1%	# 26 % 3%	# 34 % 3%	# 46 % 3%	# 54 % 4%	# 70 % 4%
Median Age	28.8	34.3	39.9	35.1	30.5	32.5	34.4	36.9	39.2	40.7

Sources: 1980 Census, STF 3A, Table 5, 1990 Census STF 1, Table P011, 2000 Census SF 1, Table P12, Others: NGRDC

1.1.4. Racial Composition

Gilmer County experienced little change in racial composition until the mid-1990s. Prior to that time, the county was predominantly white and non-Hispanic. Table 1-I provides a breakdown of population in terms of race.

TABLE 1-I. Population by Race as a Percentage of Total Population

Gilmer Co.	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
White, non-Hispanic	99.2%	98.7%	98.7%	98.2%	90.8%
Black, non-Hispanic	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%
Hispanic/Latino	0.4%	0.7%	0.8%	0.9%	7.7%
Other	0.2%	0.4%	0.2%	0.6%	1.3%
Ellijay	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
White, non-Hispanic	98.8%	99.2%	99.2%	97.1%	71.4%
Black, non-Hispanic	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	1.3%
Hispanic/Latino	0.7%	0.8%	0.8%	1.0%	25.2%
Other	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	2.1%
East Ellijay	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
White, non-Hispanic	100.0%	100.0%	99.3%	94.4%	64.5%
Black, non-Hispanic	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.5%	0.0%
Hispanic/Latino	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.4%
Other	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	1.1%	2.1%

Sources: 1980 Census STF 3A, Tables 3 and 4; 1990 Census STF 1, Tables P006 and P008; 2000 Census SF 1, P8; Others: NGRDC

As shown in Figure 1-F below, the majority of the foreign-born population in Gilmer County and its municipalities comes from Mexico or Guatemala. The foreign-born populations in Ellijay and East Ellijay are less ethnically diverse than those in Gilmer County and Georgia. For example, according to the 2000 census, 69% of the foreign-born population in East Ellijay was from Guatemala and 31% was from Mexico. In Ellijay, 79% of the foreign-born population was from Guatemala, 13% was from Mexico, 3% was from Europe, and 6% was from Asia.

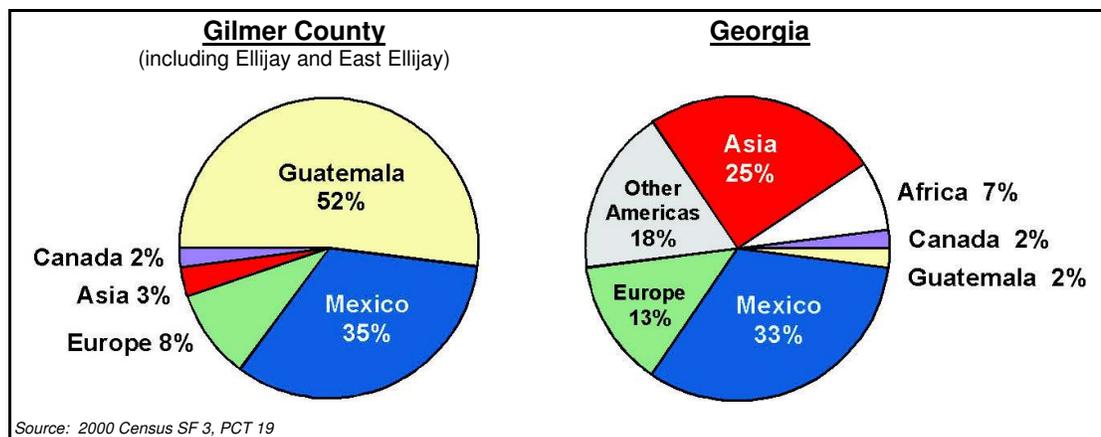


FIGURE 1-F. Place of Birth of the Foreign-Born Population in Gilmer County and Georgia: 2000

1.1.5. Educational Attainment

1.1.5.1. Highest Level of Attainment

As shown in Table 1-J below, the level of educational attainment of adults over the age of 25 has continued to improve over the past several decades in Gilmer County. For example, in 1980, only 38% of Gilmer County's residents over the age of 25 had a high school diploma or better. By 2000, that figure had jumped to 65%. This figure is slightly higher than the regional rate of 64%, but significantly lower than the state's figure of 78%.

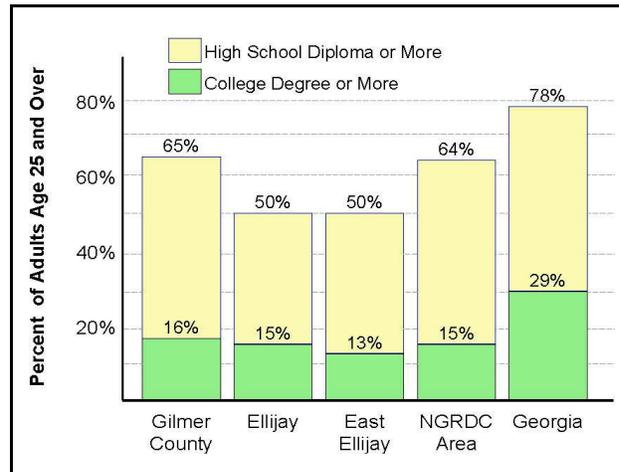


FIGURE 1-G. Educational Attainment: 2000

Figure 1-G provides a simplified illustration of the educational attainment of the population in 2000. In Ellijay and East Ellijay, only 50% of residents over the age of 25 had a high school diploma or better. This lower rate likely reflects the larger proportion of elderly and immigrant residents found in the cities.

TABLE 1-J. Highest Level of Educational Attainment of Persons Age 25 and Older as a % of Population

1980	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	NGRDC Area	Georgia
Less than 9th Grade	45%	45%	50%	38%	24%
High School (No Diploma)	17%	18%	30%	21%	20%
High School Graduate	24%	20%	17%	25%	28%
College, No Degree	7%	7%	1%	9%	13%
College Degree or Higher	7%	11%	2%	8%	15%
1990	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	NGRDC Area	Georgia
Less than 9th Grade	24%	30%	37%	22%	12%
High School (No Diploma)	23%	23%	29%	21%	17%
High School Graduate	31%	23%	28%	30%	30%
College, No Degree	11%	12%	6%	13%	17%
College Associate Degree	2%	1%	0%	4%	5%
College Bachelor's Degree	6%	7%	0%	6%	13%
Graduate or Professional Degree	3%	5%	0%	3%	6%
2000	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	NGRDC Area	Georgia
Less than 9th Grade	14%	32%	35%	16%	8%
High School (No Diploma)	20%	19%	16%	19%	14%
High School Graduate	33%	23%	26%	32%	29%
College, No Degree	16%	12%	11%	17%	20%
College Associate Degree	3%	4%	4%	4%	5%
College Bachelor's Degree	8%	7%	5%	7%	16%
Graduate or Professional Degree	5%	4%	4%	4%	8%

Sources: 1980 Census STF 3, Table 50; 1990 Census STF 3, P057; 2000 Census SF 3, P37

1.1.5.2. Drop Out Rate

The drop out rate is a percentage calculated by dividing the number of students in grades 9 through 12 who drop out of school by the total number of students enrolled. Drop out rates in Gilmer County have fluctuated over the past several years, but have shown a general downward trend as illustrated in Figure 1-H.

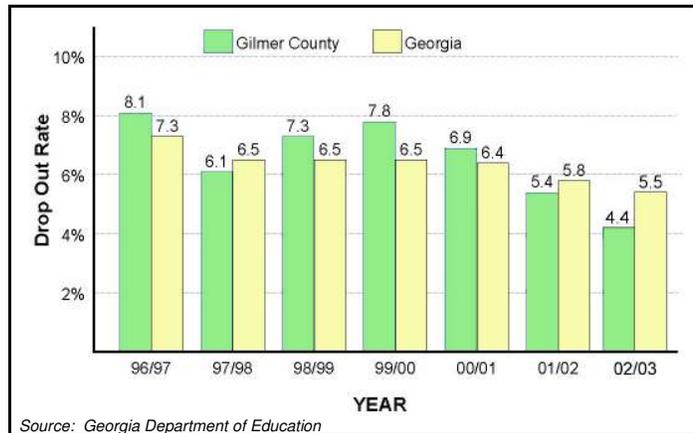


FIGURE 1-H. Drop Out Rate of Students in Grades 9 to 12

In recent years, the Gilmer County School system has received funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission for a two-part drop-out prevention program. One part of the program involves a summer session to assist students with their transition from middle school to high school. The second part of the program involves mentoring for at-risk students.

1.1.5.3. Standardized Achievement Test Scores

As illustrated in Figures 1-I and 1-J, scores on both the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and the American College Test (ACT) have fluctuated over the past several years, but Gilmer County's average scores have typically exceeded the state average.

In the most recent school year for which data is available (2002/2003), SAT average scores for Gilmer County and Georgia were equal: 980. The average ACT score for Gilmer County students during that same school year was 21.7 compared to a statewide average score of 19.8.

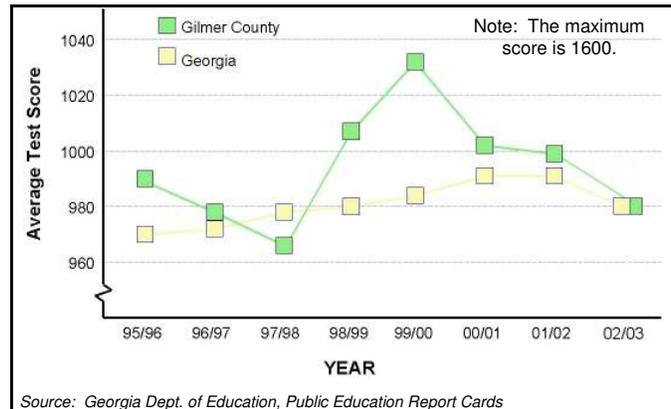


FIGURE 1-I. Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) Scores

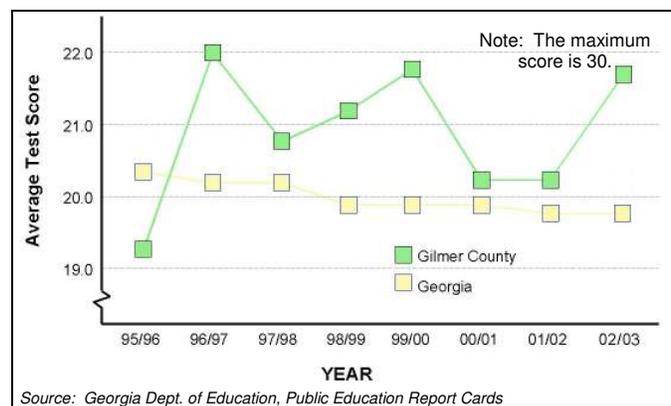


FIGURE 1-J. American College Test (ACT) Scores

1.1.5.4. Post-Secondary Education

Tables 1-K and 1-L show the percentage of Gilmer County students entering Georgia public colleges, universities, technical schools, and adult schools. The percentage of students entering Georgia Public Colleges and Universities is lower in Gilmer County than in Georgia. Also, the percentage requiring learning support when they enter college has been higher during recent years. For example, in the 2001/2002 school year, 26.4% of Gilmer County graduates required learning support upon entering Georgia Public Colleges and Universities compared with the state figure of 19.1%.

No significant trends are evident in the percentage of students entering technical schools and adult schools.

TABLE 1-K. Percentage of Graduates Entering Georgia Public Colleges and Universities

Gilmer County	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03*
% Entering	12.0%	26.9%	34.4%	27.1%	26.9%	27.5%	36.3%	18.4%
% Requiring Learning Support	0.0%	28.1%	22.2%	21.1%	17.1%	28.2%	26.4%	17.3%
Georgia	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03*
% Entering	12.0%	26.9%	38.8%	37.5%	37.3%	36.1%	36.1%	26.5%
% Requiring Learning Support	23.6%	23.3%	23.1%	22.1%	21.3%	20.0%	19.1%	18.7%

*Source: Georgia Department of Education, Public Education Report Cards. *Data for the 2002/2003 school year was obtained from the Governor's Office of Student Achievement as this data was not yet included in the Report Cards at the time of publication of this plan.*

TABLE 1-L. Percentage of Graduates Entering Georgia Public Technical and Adult Schools

Gilmer County	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03*
Current Year Graduates	22.3%	6.7%	35.9%	10.7%	5.4%	12.0%	11.6%	6.4%
Previous Year Graduates	0.0%	4.6%	16.8%	0.0%	10.7%	8.5%	9.2%	not avail.
Georgia	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03*
Current Year Graduates	6.2%	7.1%	6.5%	6.5%	7.4%	8.8%	9.7%	5.7%
Previous Year Graduates	4.0%	3.7%	3.2%	0.6%	7.7%	8.4%	--	not avail.

*Source: Georgia Department of Education, Public Education Report Cards. *Data for the 2002/2003 school year was obtained from the Governor's Office of Student Achievement as this data was not yet included in the Report Cards at the time of publication of this plan.*

1.1.6. Income

1.1.6.1. Per Capita Income

The US Census Bureau defines per capita income as the mean income computed for every person in a geographic area. Per capita income is calculated by dividing (a) the aggregate income of all people in an area who are 15 years of age or older by (b) the total population of an area.

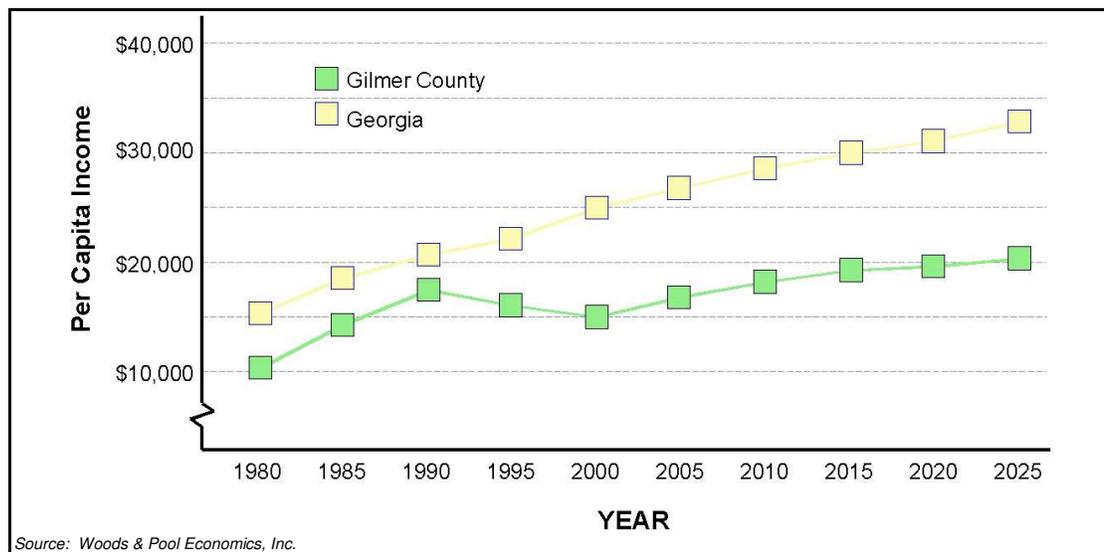
As shown in Table 1-M, per capita income in Gilmer County and its municipalities has consistently lagged behind that of the region and the state. Per capita income in 1999 was greater in Gilmer County than in Ellijay and East Ellijay.

TABLE 1-M. Per Capita Income*

Year		Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	NGRDC Area	Georgia
1979	\$	\$ 4,932	\$ 4,855	\$ 4,089	\$5,759	\$ 6,402
	% of GA \$	77%	76%	64%	90%	--
1989	\$	\$ 9,679	\$ 9,848	\$ 9,107	\$12,182	\$ 13,631
	% of GA \$	71%	72%	67%	89%	--
1999	\$	\$ 17,147	\$ 13,740	\$ 13,934	\$ 22,093	\$ 21,154
	% of GA \$	81%	65%	66%	104%	--

Sources: 1980 Census STF 3A, Table 75; 1990 Census STF 3, P114A; 2000 Census SF 3, P82
 *Income dollars are in terms of the year the census was taken.

Woods & Pool Economics, Inc. has projected per capita income at five-year intervals for each county in Georgia. As illustrated in Figure 1-K below, the projections show growth in per capita income for Gilmer County. Income levels in Gilmer County are projected to continue to lag behind state levels.



Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

FIGURE 1-K. Per Capita Income Trends and Projections (1996 \$)

Note: The inconsistency of the per capita income data shown Figure 1-K with similar census data shown in Table 1-M is due to the use of an econometric model which estimates five-year intervals based upon historical trends for the county and state. In addition, Woods & Pool uses 1996 dollars throughout their projections, but census figures are for the dollar value in the year the census was taken.

1.1.6.2. Household Income

According to US Census Bureau definitions, household income is the sum of money income received in a calendar year by all household members who are 15 years of age and older. It includes wage income, salary income, retirement and investment income, pensions, social security income, public assistance payments, and all other income.

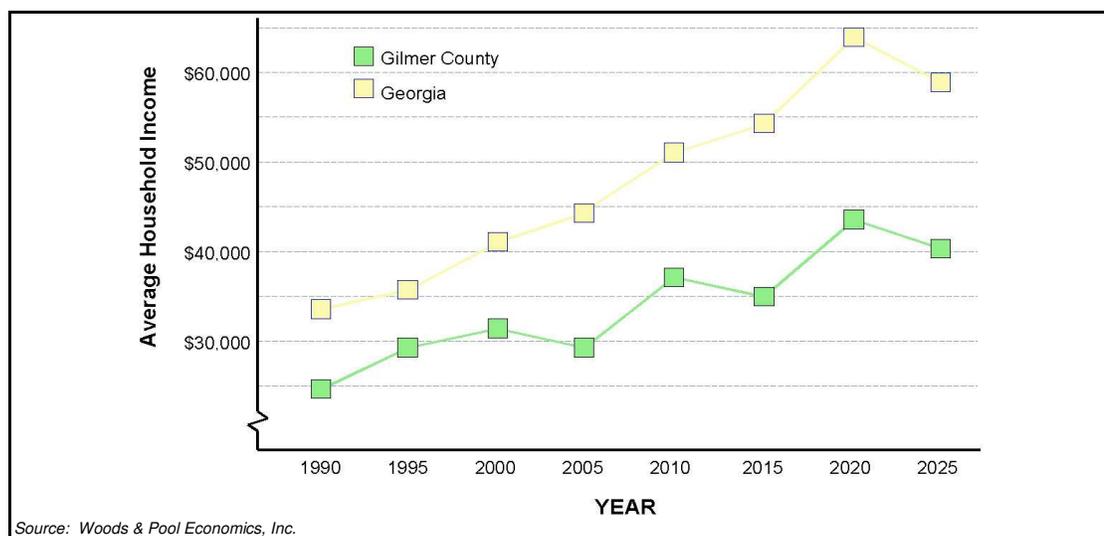
Household income in East Ellijay is much closer to the state average than per capita income. This is probably due to the fact that the average household size in East Ellijay is larger than the state average. With more persons per household, there are potentially more wage earners in the household; therefore, total household income should be greater.

TABLE 1-N. Average Household Income*: 1979 – 1999

Year		Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	NGRDC Area	Georgia
1979	\$	\$ 11,205	\$ 9,450	\$ 9,250	\$ 15,783	\$ 15,033
	% of GA \$	75%	63%	62%	105%	--
1984	\$	\$ 16,308	\$ 12,732	\$ 11,209	\$ 23,206	\$ 22,027
	% of GA \$	74%	58%	51%	105%	--
1989	\$	\$ 21,410	\$ 16,014	\$ 13,167	\$ 30,629	\$ 29,021
	% of GA \$	74%	55%	45%	106%	--
1994	\$	\$ 28,275	\$ 19,067	\$ 24,521	\$ 34,192	\$ 35,727
	% of GA \$	79%	53%	69%	96%	--
1999	\$	\$ 35,140	\$ 22,120	\$ 35,875	\$ 37,754	\$ 42,433
	% of GA \$	83%	52%	85%	90%	--

Sources: 1980 Census STF 3A, Table 71; 1990 Census STF 3, P080A; 2000 Census SF 3, P53; others NGRDC
*Income dollars are in terms of the year the census was taken.

Woods & Pool Economics, Inc. has projected average household income at five-year intervals for each county in Georgia (beginning with the year 1990). As illustrated in Figure 1-L below, the projections show a general growth trend in average household income for Gilmer County, but average household income will be lower than average levels for the state.



Source: Woods & Pool Economics, Inc.

FIGURE 1-L. Average Household Income Trends and Projections (Current Year \$)

Note: The inconsistency of the household income data shown Figure 1-L with similar census data shown in Table 1-N is due to the use of an econometric model which estimates five-year intervals based upon historical trends for the county and state.

1.1.6.3. Household Income Distribution

Household income distribution figures in Gilmer County are very similar to those for Georgia as shown in Table 1-O. Approximately 39% of households in Gilmer County have an income between \$35,000 and \$75,000 compared to 37% in Georgia. The percentage of households with incomes of \$75,000 or more in Gilmer County was 12%, compared to 23% in Georgia.

TABLE 1-O. Household Income Distribution: 1999

	Less than \$15,000	\$15,000 to \$24,999	\$25,000 to \$34,999	\$35,000 to \$49,999	\$50,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 to \$149,999	\$150,000 or more
Gilmer County	18%	16%	16%	20%	19%	6%	4%	2%
Ellijay	36%	16%	12%	13%	15%	7%	1%	2%
East Ellijay	18%	20%	11%	25%	17%	8%	1%	1%
Georgia	16%	12%	13%	17%	20%	10%	8%	5%

Source: 2000 Census, Table DP-3

1.1.6.4. Poverty Level

The US Census Bureau uses a set of income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is considered to be poor or below the poverty level. In 1999, the poverty level for a family of four with two adults and two related children under the age of 18 was set at \$16,895. (Note: Although not considered to be a “family,” the poverty level for a single householder age 65 or over was \$7,990.)

In Gilmer County, 9% of families were considered to be below poverty in 1999. (See Table 1-P.) This figure is slightly lower than the rate of 10% for Georgia. In Ellijay and East Ellijay on the other hand, greater percentages of families were classified as being below poverty level: 20% and 15% respectively.

TABLE 1-P. Families Below Poverty Level: 1999

Type of Family	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	Georgia
Total number of families	6,695	320	185	2,126,360
Total number of families below poverty level	620	65	27	210,138
Percentage of all families below poverty level	9%	20%	15%	10%

Source: 2000 Census, SF3 Table P90

As illustrated in Table 1-Q on the following page, in Gilmer County and East Ellijay, families which were below poverty level were more likely to be married couple families, whereas in Ellijay and Georgia, they were more likely have a female householder with no husband present.

TABLE 1-Q. Types of Families Below Poverty Level: 1999

Type of Family	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	Georgia
Total number of families below poverty level	620	65	27	210,138
Married-couple family:	64%	37%	59%	35%
With related children under 18 years	31%	25%	37%	21%
No related children under 18 years	33%	12%	22%	14%
Male householder, no wife present:	10%	6%	0%	8%
With related children under 18 years	7%	1%	0%	6%
No related children under 18 years	3%	5%	0%	2%
Female householder, no husband present:	26%	57%	41%	57%
With related children under 18 years	22%	48%	41%	50%
No related children under 18 years	4%	9%	0%	7%

Source: 2000 Census, SF3 Table P90

Table 1-R provides data on the poverty status of individuals rather than families. In 1999, Ellijay and East Ellijay had a greater percentage of persons below poverty level than Gilmer County and Georgia. The distribution of poverty among age groups in the county and municipalities is similar to the state with a few exceptions. In Gilmer County and Ellijay for example, the percentage of persons below poverty is greater for adults over 65 and less for children age 17 and below. This is due in part to the fact that, when compared to the state, a greater percentage of the populations in Gilmer County and Ellijay are of persons over age 65 and a smaller percentage are of persons age 17 and below. (Refer to Tables 1-F, 1-G, and 1-H, Population by Age Group on pages 1-7 and 1-8.)

In Gilmer County, the age group with the greatest percentage of persons living in poverty in 1999 was the 65 and older category, where 16% of all residents in this age group had an income below poverty level. In Ellijay, 29% of the persons age 17 and under had incomes below poverty level, and in East Ellijay, 24% of persons between the ages of 18 and 65 had incomes below poverty level.

TABLE 1-R. Poverty Status by Age: 1999

	Gilmer County	Ellijay	East Ellijay	Georgia
Total Population	23,220	1,443	703	7,959,649
Persons with income in 1999 below poverty level	2,892	397	137	1,033,793
- as a percentage of total population	12%	28%	19%	13%
Age 17 and under	741	105	28	365,406
- as a percentage of persons below poverty level	26%	26%	20%	35%
- as a percentage of persons in this age group	13%	29%	16%	17%
Age 18 to 65	1,645	213	95	566,159
- as a percentage of persons below poverty level	57%	54%	69%	55%
- as a percentage of persons in this age group	11%	24%	21%	11%
Age 65 and over	506	79	14	102,228
- as a percentage of persons below poverty level	17%	20%	10%	10%
- as a percentage of persons in this age group	16%	23%	16%	13%

Source: 2000 Census, SF3 Table P87

Other indications of poverty include the number of persons receiving food stamps, the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch, and the percentage of households requiring energy assistance. These figures are provided in Tables 1-S, 1-T, and 1-U.

The number of persons receiving food stamps in Gilmer County has increased over the past five years according to data from the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services.

TABLE 1-S. Gilmer County Food Stamp Recipients

	Food Stamps (avg. # of recipients per month)
1999	978
2000	901
2001	829
2002	987
2003	1,289

Source: www.dfcsdata.state.ga.us

TABLE 1-T. Students Eligible to Receive Free or Reduced Price School Meals

	Gilmer County	Georgia
1998/1999	43.6%	43.4%
1999/2000	44.1%	42.9%
2000/2001	43.6%	43.2%
2001/2002	47.3%	44.2%

Source: "KidsFirst" profile for Gilmer County, www.aecf.org

As shown in Table 1-T, Gilmer County has had a greater percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch than has the state as a whole. In the 2001/2002 school year, almost half of the students were eligible for free or reduced price lunches.

In 2000, approximately 4% of households in Gilmer County required energy assistance compared with 2.6% of the households throughout Georgia. (See Table 1-U.)

TABLE 1-U. Percentage of Households Requiring Energy Assistance in 2000

	Gilmer County		Georgia	
	#	%	#	%
Households With Winter Energy Assistance	367	4.0%	77,623	2.6%
Households With Summer Energy Assistance	104	1.1%	27,292	0.9%
Total Number of Households	9,071		3,006,369	

Source: www.dfcsdata.state.ga.us

1.2. Assessment

The inventory of population presented in the previous section forms the framework for other elements of this Joint Comprehensive Plan. As such, the analysis of this information is presented, for the most part, within other plan elements and is used to determine appropriate economic development strategies, housing and community facility needs, land development patterns, etc. The assessment in this section simply answers the following question which was derived from the requirements in Section 110-12-1-.04(12)(a)ii of the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning:

What significant trends exist in terms of the size and characteristics of the populations of Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay, especially as compared with regional, state, and national trends?

This question is answered in the following sections in terms of population growth, household size, age, racial composition, educational attainment, and income.

1.2.1. Population Growth

Population growth is a basic indicator of future demands for housing, schools, hospitals, and other community facilities and services.

In terms of total population, Gilmer County ranked 68th out of the 159 counties in Georgia in the year 2000, but it ranked 4th in terms of population growth between 1990 and 2000. During this time it had a growth rate of 75.5%, which was much higher than the rates for the NGRDC region and the state. Approximately 90% of the population growth was due to net migration rather than natural increase (i.e. the difference between the number of births and the number of deaths), while just 66% of Georgia's population growth was due to net migration.

The area is expected to experience stable growth over the next decade, but at slightly lower rates than during the 1990s. This growth will continue to place a heavy demand on housing and community facilities and services.

1.2.2. Household Size

The average household size for the total population is similar to that of the state and nation. The average size of Hispanic or Latino households is somewhat larger than that of the state and nation.

1.2.3. Age

A "dependency ratio" is one way of characterizing an area's age distribution and is used to compare the number of persons receiving economic support to the number providing economic support. The dependency ratio is typically calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{\# of persons younger than 18} + \text{\# of persons age 65 or older}}{\text{\# of persons age 18 to 64 years}} = \text{dependency ratio}$$

A higher dependency ratio implies a greater demand for particular services and programs such as elderly housing and child or adult day care. Gilmer County's dependency ratio in 2000 was 59.9%, which is similar to the rates for the NGRDC region and Georgia, which were 59.7% and 56.5%, respectively. Because of the retirees entering the area, Gilmer County and the cities will continue to experience demand for services for the elderly. In addition, because of the influx of immigrants with young children, there will continue to be a heavy demand on schools and for children's services.

1.2.4. Racial Composition

The racial composition of Gilmer County's population is very different from that of Georgia. For example, according to the 2000 Census, in Georgia almost 29% of the population was African American, compared to less than 1% in Gilmer County. In addition, just over 5% of the population in Georgia was Hispanic or Latino while Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay had Hispanic or Latino populations of 8%, 25%, and 33%, respectively.

The recent influx of Hispanic and Latino immigrants into Gilmer County has had and will continue to have a great impact of community facilities and services, as will be discussed in more detail in other elements of this Plan. The Hispanic/Latino population will be significant in both Ellijay and East Ellijay in the future as it is now. The county-wide Hispanic/Latino population is expected to continue to grow during the planning period.

1.2.5. Educational Attainment

Education attainment in Gilmer County has increased steadily over the past 20 years. The percentage of persons in Gilmer County with high school diplomas or college degrees is very similar to the figures for the NGRDC region, but is still substantially lower than the figures for Georgia.

As education levels increase, Gilmer County will become more competitive in attracting industries that require a more skilled and educated labor force.

1.2.6. Income

Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay have consistently lagged behind the NGRDC region and the state in terms of per capita and household income. Gilmer County has a similar percentage of families below poverty level (9%) as compared to the state (10%), but the majority (64%) in Gilmer County are married couple families, whereas the majority (57%) in the state are families headed by a female with no husband present.