

8

Transportation

The Transportation Element provides the following:

- an inventory of the components of the local transportation network,
- an assessment of their adequacy for serving current and future population and economic development needs, and
- goals and strategies for providing the desired level of transportation facilities and services.

What is transportation planning?

Transportation planning is a **process** for identifying current and future transportation needs and developing solutions to meet those needs. Its purpose is to provide policy and program options and implementation strategies to elected officials and transportation partners so they can make transportation investment decisions which meet the community's needs.

The ultimate goal is to maximize the benefits derived from the transportation system while reducing the associated negative aspects such as congestion and pollution. Ideally, transportation planning will result in a transportation system which accomplishes the following:

- supports economic vitality
- increases safety
- increases mobility, accessibility, and connectivity
- protects the environment
- improves quality of life
- promotes efficient system management

While vehicular and truck traffic is typically the primary focus of transportation planning, this transportation element also highlights other aspects of Gilmer County's transportation network including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, public transportation, rail service, and air service.

Element Outline:

8.1. Inventory

8.1.1. Streets, Roads, and Highways

- Roadway Network and Functional Classification
- City Streets
- Traffic Volumes
- Roadway Conditions
- Accident Data

8.1.2. Bridges

8.1.3. Signalization and Signage

8.1.4. Parking Facilities

8.1.5. Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

8.1.4. Public Transportation

8.1.5. Railroad

8.1.6. Airport

8.2. Assessment of Current and Future Needs

8.3. Community Goal and Implementation Program

8.1. Inventory

8.1.1. Streets, Roads, and Highways

8.1.1.1. Roadway Network and Functional Classification

Functional classification is a way of grouping roads, streets, and highways in a hierarchy based on the type of highway service they provide. A typical hierarchy includes arterials, collectors, and local roads.

Streets and highways perform two types of service: traffic mobility and land access. In general, the greater the mobility afforded by a street, the less access to adjacent land it provides and vice versa. This is illustrated in Figure 8-A.

Gilmer County contains approximately 1,009 miles of roads in its transportation network. The roads in Gilmer County can be categorized into the following five functional classifications.

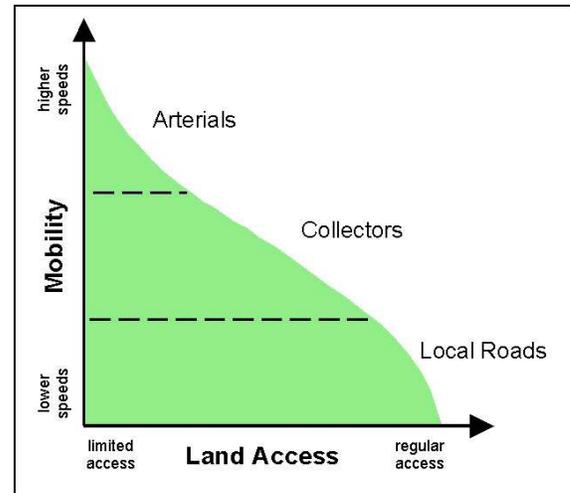


Figure 8-A. Functional Classification and the Relationship Between Access and Mobility

Principal Arterial. (Example: GA 515) A principal arterial provides for high speed travel and is typically used for longer vehicle trips. Mobility through an area rather than access to adjacent properties is the primary function of an arterial. Often curb cuts are limited, as is the case with GA Highway 515. Traffic volumes are typically highest on principal arterials.

Minor Arterial. (Example: GA 2/52 West) A minor arterial provides for relatively high speed travel and is used to serve traffic generators which attract travel over longer distances (e.g. shopping centers, large schools).

Major Collector. (Example: Old Highway 5) A major collector usually connects commercial centers and other large traffic generators to an arterial road. Collector roads provide both mobility and land access, with major collectors providing more mobility and less land access than a minor collector. Generally, trip lengths, speeds, and volumes are moderate.

Minor Collector. (Example: Clear Creek Road) A minor collector typically collects traffic from local roads and distributes it to major collectors or arterials. Minor collectors provide both mobility and land access with a greater emphasis on land access than a major collector. Generally, trip lengths, speeds, and volumes are moderate.

Local Road. (Example: North Gilmer Street) The primary function of a local road is to provide land access. Speed limits and traffic volumes are generally low. Most side streets in downtown areas and most streets in residential neighborhoods are classified as local roads. Generally, through traffic is limited because these roads are short and often end in cul-de-sacs. Rural local roads typically serve residences and scattered businesses which individually do not generate large volumes of traffic.

Table 8-A provides mileage by functional classification of the roads in Gilmer County while Figure 8-B provides an illustration of the various road types in the county.

Table 8-A. Classification of Roads in Gilmer County

Classification	Mileage by Location (not by ownership*)			Total	% of total
	Ellijay	East Ellijay	Unincorp. County		
Principal Arterial (GA 515 and GA 282)	1.2	7.4	26.6	35.2	3.5%
Minor Arterial (e.g. GA 2/52)	1.7	0.6	11.3	13.6	1.3%
Major Collector (e.g. GA 382, Old Highway 5, Yukon Road)	3.3	1.9	83.7	88.9	8.8%
Minor Collector (e.g. Pleasant Hill Road, Clear Creek Road)	0.0	0.0	36.4	36.4	3.6%
Other Local Roads	22.4	10.2	802.5	835.1	82.7%
Total	28.6	20.1	960.5	1,009.2	100%

Source: NGRDC GIS and GDOT, Office of Information Services, 400 Series Reports, 1DPP445-PDS

* Not all streets in Ellijay and East Ellijay are city-owned. Some are private roads, while others are County or State roads. For this reason, the mileage in this table may not equal the mileage listed in other tables in this element.

8.1.1.2. City Streets

Ellijay. The City of Ellijay owns 19.55 miles of streets within its limits. Table 8-B provides a listing of the of those streets. Note that not all streets located within the city are city-owned.

Table 8-B. Ellijay City Streets

Street	Miles	Class	Street	Miles	Class
Alpine Way	0.1	local	Lucille Avenue	0.3	local
Barclay Street	0.1	local	Maddox Drive	0.5	local
Boardtown Road	0.5	major collector	Main Street, North	0.8	major collector
Broad Street	0.15	local	Main Street, South	2.2	major collector
Cedar Street	0.1	local	Maple Street	0.1	local
Cemetery Circle	0.4	local	Mary Ann Street	0.15	local
Church Street	0.15	local	McCutchen Street	0.7	local
College Street	0.2	local	North Avenue	0.2	local
Corbin Hill	1.0	local	Oak Street	0.1	local
Cox Creek Road	0.8	local	Orr Street	0.2	local
Crawford Street	0.3	local	Parks Avenue	0.25	local
Depot Street	0.1	local	Penland Street	0.35	local
Dogwood Street	0.1	local	Pine Street	0.1	local
Forest Glen	0.1	local	Poplar Street	0.05	local
Gartrell Street	0.35	local	Progress Road	1.0	local
Gilmer Street (N & S)	0.2	local	Sailors Drive	0.35	local
Gudger Street	0.1	local	Sand Street	0.1	local
Hancock Drive	0.6	local	Seminary Circle	0.1	local
Hospital Circle	0.3	local	Skyline Drive	0.6	local
Jeff Drive	0.45	local	Spring Street	0.25	local
Kell Street	0.3	local	Tabor Street	0.1	local
Legion Road	0.2	local	Teem Street	0.1	local
Letch Drive	0.6	local	Timberland Drive	0.3	local
Logan Circle	0.6	local	Victory Drive	0.5	local
Logan Street	0.2	local	Vista Drive	0.5	local
Logan Lane	0.25	local	Westwoods Drive	0.5	local
Logan Way	0.1	local	Wikle Road	0.5	local
Lois Parks Drive	0.1	local	Woodland Drive	0.2	local

Source: City of Ellijay

Note: The length of the streets in this table were measured in the field by city personnel. As such, the mileage may differ slightly from that used by GDOT or calculated by the NGRDC GIS data.

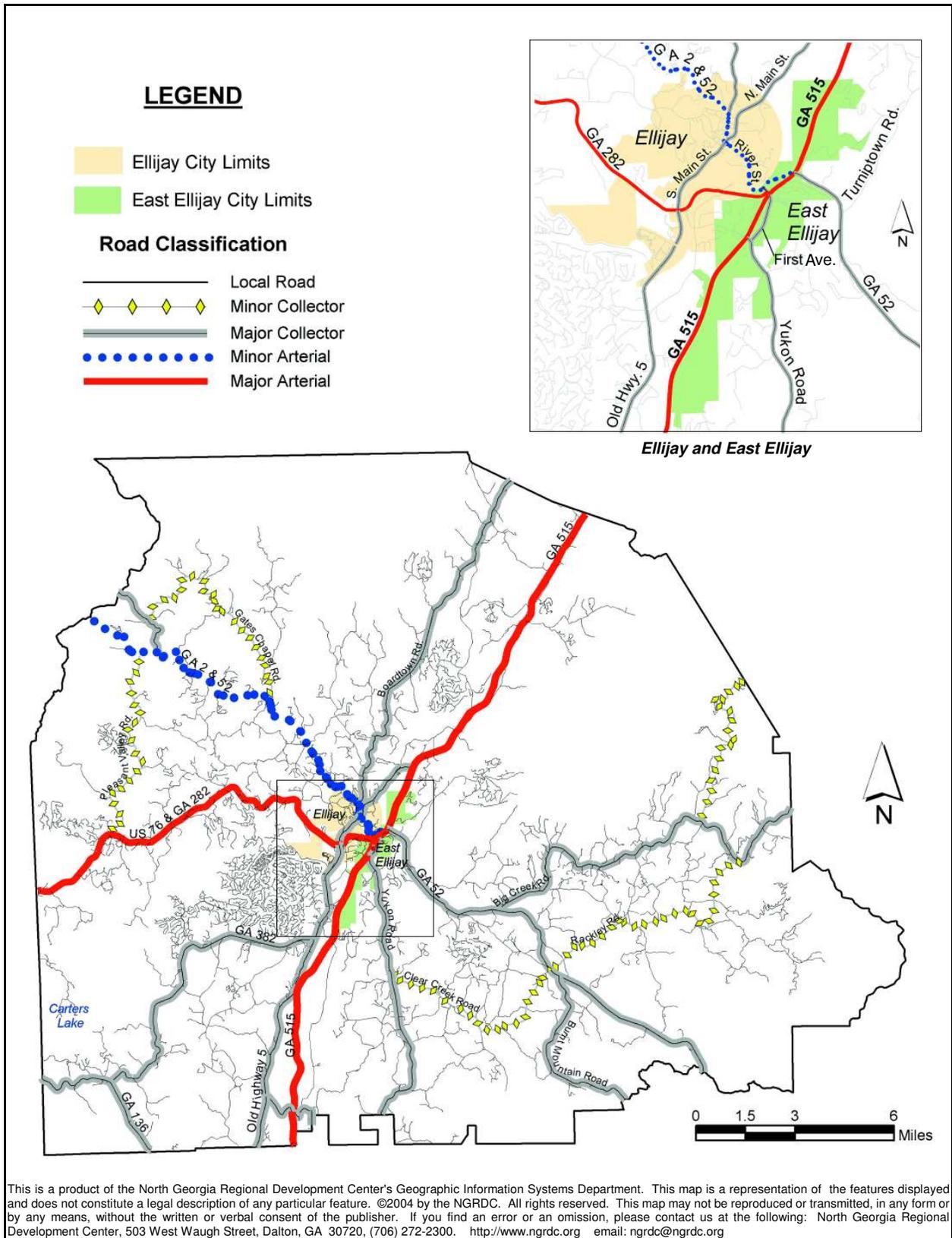


Figure 8-B. Functional Classification of Roads in Gilmer County

East Ellijay. The City of East Ellijay is responsible for 17.04 miles of streets within its limits. Table 8-C provides a listing of those streets. Not all streets in the city are city-owned or maintained.

Table 8-C. East Ellijay City Streets

Street	Miles	Class	Street	Miles	Class
Bailey Street	0.10	local	Martin Street	0.10	local
Cherry Street	0.10	local	Mountain View Lane	0.30	local
Coosawattee Drive	0.30	local	Mulberry Street	0.40	local
Craig Street	0.44	local	Oak Street	0.20	local
Cross Street (E & W)	0.18	local	Orchard Drive	0.30	local
Dogwood Drive	0.20	local	River Street	0.10	minor arterial
First Ave.	1.70	major collector	Riverside Drive	0.50	local
Fowler Street	0.40	local	School Street	0.10	local
Greenfield Ridge	0.10	local	Spring Street	0.30	local
Greenfield Road	0.90	local	Swamp Creek Lane	0.15	local
Hefner Street	0.40	local	Sycamore Street	0.10	local
Highland Crossing	0.68	local	Walnut Street	0.35	local
Highland Parkway	0.45	local	Water Tower Lane	0.20	local
Hill Street	0.15	local	West Avenue	0.20	local
Lanning Road	0.10	local	Willow Street	0.10	local
Laurel Street	0.25	local	Highway 52	1.23	major collector
Maddox Drive	0.53	local	Highway 282	0.27	major arterial
Maple Street	0.10	local	Highway 515	4.76	major arterial

Source: City of East Ellijay

Note: The length of the streets in this table were measured in the field by city personnel. As such, the mileage may differ slightly from that used by GDOT or calculated by the NGRDC GIS data.

8.1.1.3. Traffic Volumes

Given the population growth Gilmer County has experienced over the past ten years, it is not surprising that traffic volumes have also steadily increased. For example, volumes on GA 515 increased by between 66% and 93% between 1992 and 2002. The locations of various traffic count stations are illustrated in Figure 8-C on the following page. The inset in Figure 8-C provides the locations of the traffic stations in Ellijay and East Ellijay.

Historical traffic volumes for arterials and major collectors in Gilmer County are presented in Table 8-D below.

Table 8-D. Traffic Counts (Estimated Annual Average Daily Trips) at Select Stations in Gilmer County

Highway and Station #	1992	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	% Change		
								'92-'02	'97-'02	
Principal Arterials										
GA 515 139	8,322	10,140	8,980	9,115	10,520	13,677	14,629	76%	44%	
"" 247	7,376	9,753	8,844	8,977	10,400	13,293	14,205	93%	46%	
"" 250	7,489	6,697	8,770	8,902	12,656	13,100	13,646	82%	104%	
"" 252	9,435	11,815	13,545	13,748	15,380	1,524	15,699	66%	33%	
"" 254	8,848	10,262	10,260	12,776	13,014	13,729	16,602	88%	62%	
GA 282 154	5,026	5,230	4,989	5,501	5,314	5,336	6,624	32%	27%	
Industrial Blvd. 187	7,546	11,027	12,046	9,405	11,657	12,157	12,578	67%	14%	
Minor Arterials										
GA 2 / 52 164	951	1,067	1,118	1,356	1,300	1,339	1,426	50%	34%	
Dalton Street 179	6,374	9,034	8,661	8,393	7,762	8,100	8,468	33%	-6%	
River Street 185	6,656	4,523	4,458	4,320	8,576	8,900	8,856	33%	96%	
Major Collector										
Old Hwy. 5 105	1,904	2,414	2,421	1,989	2,486	2,586	1,833	-4%	-24%	
S. Main Street 121	10,598	21,428	16,790	17,210	21,600	14,281	16,695	58%	-22%	
N. Main Street 131	2,511	3,248	3,368	3,452	2,779	2,900	3,085	23%	-5%	
GA 382 145	1,253	990	1,050	1,076	1,624	1,700	1,436	15%	45%	
"" 149	2,893	4,202	4,233	4,339	4,720	3,274	3,581	24%	-15%	
GA 52 195	6,999	6,440	6,800	7,966	10,756	11,200	10,657	52%	65%	
"" 204	6,314	7,275	7,453	8,183	7,771	7,871	9,926	57%	36%	
"" 210	3,206	2,421	2,814	3,845	3,186	3,275	4,606	44%	90%	
Big Creek Road 207	1,731	2,223	2,634	2,700	2,827	2,800	2,542	47%	14%	
Yukon Road 217	1,465	2,226	2,108	2,161	2,186	2,550	2,787	90%	25%	
"" 222	3,324	3,179	3,313	3,396	4,891	5,100	5,820	75%	83%	
Boardtown Road 234	609	830	831	699	843	882	830	36%	0%	
Minor Collector and Local Roads	There are no traffic count stations on minor collector or local roads.									

Source: Georgia DOT, Annual Traffic Counts

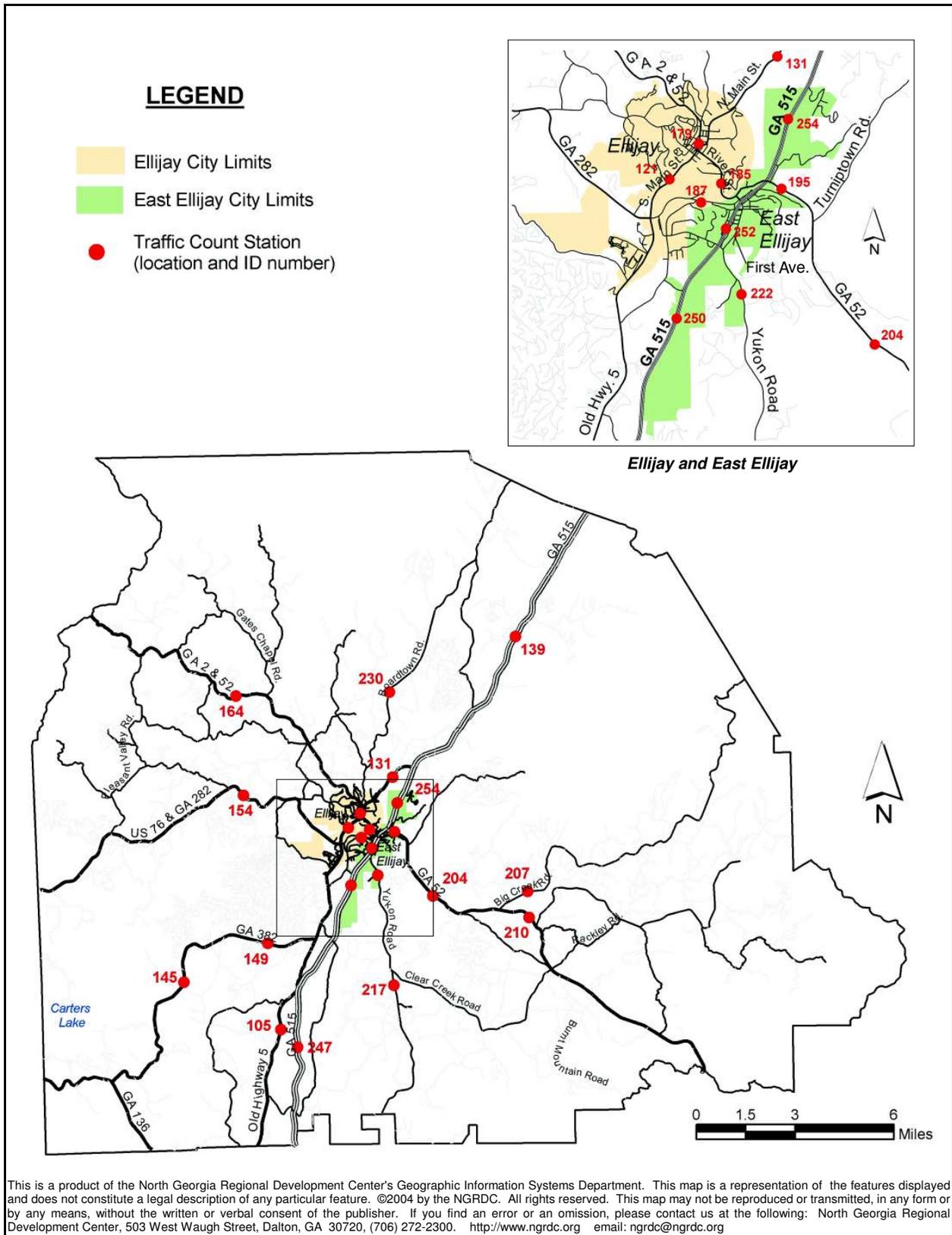


Figure 8-C. Select Traffic Count Stations

As shown in Table 8-E to the right, traffic volumes on Highway 515 have increased significantly, particularly on the segment near Highlands Center. Other roads in Gilmer County which have experienced greater than average (4 – 5%) growth in traffic volumes are shown in Table 8-F below. Given the rapid growth in the county in the late 1990s and early 2000s, it is not surprising that certain roads experienced much greater average annual growth during the five year period from 1997 to 2002 than during the ten year period from 1992 to 2002.

Table 8-E. Growth in Traffic Volumes on Highway 515

GA 515 Segment and Station #		Average Annual Traffic Volume Growth	
		1992 - 2002	1997 - 2002
Pickens Co. to Talona Rd.	247	6.8%	7.8%
Talona Road to Maddox Drive	250	6.2%	15.3%
Maddox Drive to First Avenue	252	5.2%	5.8%
First Ave. to Old Hwy. 5 North	254	6.5%	10.1%
Old Hwy. 5 North to Fannin Co.	139	5.8%	7.6%

Source: Georgia DOT, Annual Traffic Counts

Table 8-F. Highway Segments (Excluding GA 515) with Greatest Average Annual Growth in Traffic Volumes

Highway and Jurisdiction*	Station Number	1992	1997	2002	Average Annual Traffic Volume Growth	
					1992 - 2002	1997 - 2002
GA 2/52 W GC	164	951	1,067	1,426	4.1%	6.0%
River Street E	185	6,656	4,523	8,856	2.9%	14.4%
GA 382 GC	145	1,253	990	1,436	1.4%	7.7%
GA 52 E EE	195	6,999	6,440	10,657	4.3%	10.6%
GA 52 E GC	204	6,314	7,275	9,926	4.6%	6.4%
GA 52 E GC	210	3,206	2,421	4,606	3.7%	13.7%
Yukon Road EE	222	3,324	3,179	5,820	5.8%	12.9%

Source: Georgia DOT, Annual Traffic Counts

*GC – unincorporated Gilmer County; E – City of Ellijay; EE – City of East Ellijay

8.1.1.4. Roadway Conditions

There are approximately 1,185 lane miles of public roads in Gilmer County. According to the Georgia DOT, in 2002, 68% of the public lane miles in Gilmer County were paved, compared to the statewide figure of 74%. Table 8-G provides data on the type of surface found on the public roads in Gilmer County.

Table 8-G. Lane Mileage of Public Roads by Surface Type in 2002

Type of Street (Public Streets Only)	Total Lane Miles*	Mileage by Surface Type				% of miles paved	
		Unpaved	Low Type Bitum.	High Type Bitum.	P.C. Concrete	Gilmer	Georgia
State Routes	207	0	0	187	20	100%	100%
County Roads	876	330	311	234	0	62%	65%
City Streets	38	1	8	30	0	98%	96%
Other Public Roads	64	48	6	10	0	26%	38%
Total Lane Miles	1,185	379	325	461	20	68%	74%

Source: GDOT, Office of Information Services, 400 Series Reports, 1DPP452-PDS

*The lanes miles in this table will not equal highway mileage figures in other tables two reasons: the data source and date. It does, however, provide useful data pertaining to surface type.

According to the local GDOT office in Gilmer County, heavily loaded truck traffic is a major cause of road deterioration. Road surface conditions can change very quickly if truck traffic increases on a particular road segment. For this reason, GDOT does not program resurfacing projects beyond one or two years. State roads which are scheduled for resurfacing in the near future include the following:

- SR 2/52 from Murray County to Dawson County
- SR 282 from Old Highway 5 to a point approximately 2 miles north
- SR 515 from just north of County Road 8 to Fannin County (all lanes in both directions)

Gilmer County's Road Department maintains a schedule of roads which need to be paved or resurfaced. County roads which are scheduled for resurfacing in the near future include the following:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| ▪ Turniptown Road | ▪ Yukon Road |
| ▪ Lucious Road | ▪ Ponderosa Road |
| ▪ John Teem Road | ▪ Doves Chapel Road |
| ▪ Lower Cartecay Road | ▪ Tails Creek Church Road |

City roads which are scheduled for resurfacing using Local Road Assistance Program (LARP) funds from the Georgia DOT include the following:

Ellijay

- Mary Ann Street
- North Avenue
- McCutchen Street
- Teem Street
- Oak Street
- Depot Street
- Seminary Circle

East Ellijay

- Maddox Drive*
- Fowler Street
- Walnut Street
- Sycamore Street
- Willow Street

8.1.1.5. Accident Data

Table 8-H provides traffic accident data from the Georgia Department of Motor Vehicle Safety (DMVS). While there were more accidents in 2002 than in 1997, the number of crashes per mile of travel actually decreased. In Gilmer County, crashes were more likely to be a result of unsafe or illegal speed than from alcohol and/or drug use. According to the DMVS, throughout Georgia the number of alcohol related crashes is declining while the number of drug related crashes is increasing.

Table 8-H. Gilmer County Traffic Accident Data

	1997	2002	% Change
Number of Crashes	414	436	5%
Crashes per 100 Million Vehicle Miles Traveled	170.9	116.8*	-32%
Number of Crashes with Injuries	219	248	13%
Injuries per 100 Million Vehicle Miles Traveled	90.4	66.4	-27%
Number of Crashes with Fatalities	10	2	-80%
Fatalities per 100 Million Vehicle Miles Traveled	4.13	--	--
Crashes Related to Unsafe or Illegal Speed	76	73	-4%
Crashes per 100,000 Licensed Drivers	530.9	353.4	33%
Crashes Related to Alcohol or Drug Use	28	34	21%
Crashes per 100,000 Licensed Drivers	195.6	164.6	-16%

*The average figure for all of Georgia was 307 crashes per 100 million VMT.
Source: Georgia Department of Motor Vehicle Safety

Figures 8-D and 8-E below compare accident statistics for Gilmer County with nearby counties and the entire state. Gilmer County has a lower ratio of crashes related to alcohol and/or drugs than the state, but a higher ratio for crashes related to unsafe or illegal speeds.

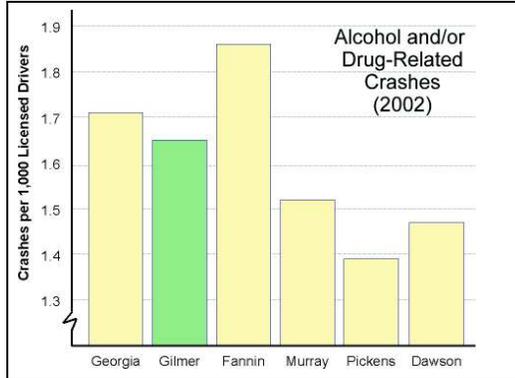


Figure 8-D. Alcohol and/or Drug Related Crashes in 2002. (Source: GA DMVS)

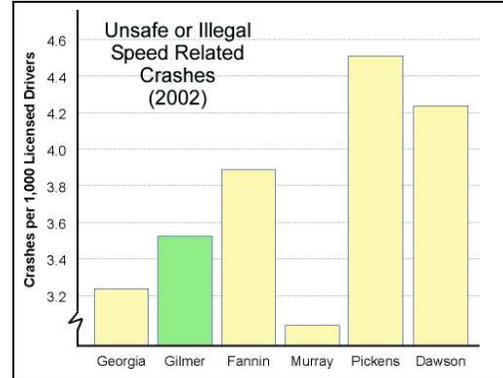


Figure 8-E. Unsafe or Illegal Speed Related Crashes in 2002. (Source: GA DMVS)

8.1.2. Bridges

All bridges in Gilmer County which have a span of 20 feet or more are inspected every two years by GDOT's Bridge Inspection Division. (There are 71 bridges in Gilmer County which span over 20 feet.) A copy of the inspection report is provided to the Gilmer County Road Department. Table 8-I below and on the following pages lists the bridges in the county which are inspected by GDOT.

Table 8-I. Locally Owned Federal Aid Route Inspected Bridges in Gilmer County

Location	ID	Type	Condition
CR 191, Boardtown Road over Ellijay River Tributary	0031	bridge culvert	good
CR 191, Boardtown Road over Ellijay River Tributary	0032	bridge culvert	good
CR 191, Boardtown Road over Kells Creek	0033	bridge structure	good/fair
CR 191, Boardtown Road over Ross Creek	0034	bridge culvert	good
CR 191, Boardtown Road over Jones Creek	0035	bridge culvert	good
CR 191, Boardtown Road over Boardtown Creek	0036	bridge structure	good
CR 191, Boardtown Road over Boardtown Creek	0037	bridge structure	good
CR 191, Boardtown Road over Boardtown Creek	0038	bridge structure	satisfactory
CR 192, Big Creek Road over Anderson Creek	0039	all conc. bridge structure	good
CR 192, Big Creek Road over Holden Creek	0040	bridge culvert	good
CR 192, Big Creek Road over Stover Creek	0041	bridge culvert	good
CR 192, Big Creek Road over Stover Creek	0046	bridge culvert	good
CR 192, Big Creek Road over Bailey Creek	0047	bridge culvert	good

Source: GDOT, Gilmer County Office

Table 8-1. Locally Owned Federal Aid Route Inspected Bridges in Gilmer County (continued)

Location	ID	Type	Condition
CR 193, Yukon Road over Fausett Creek	0042	bridge culvert	good
CR 240, Ellijay Road over Town Creek Tributary	0001	bridge culvert	fair
CR 240, Ellijay Road over Pickett Branch	0002	bridge culvert	good
CR 240, Ellijay Road over Town Creek Tributary	0003	bridge culvert	fair
CR 240, Ellijay Road over Town Creek	0004	bridge culvert	good
CR 239, Ellijay Road over Coosawattee River	0005	all conc. bridge structure	good/fair
CR 239, North Main Street over Ellijay River Tributary	0006	bridge culvert	good
CR 239, North Main Street over Ellijay River	0007	bridge structure	satisfactory
CR 239, North Main Street over CSX Railroad	0008	bridge structure	good/fair
CR 6, Northcutt Road over Ellijay River Tributary	5001	bridge structure	good
CR 6, Northcutt Road under CSX Railroad	5050	non-roadway structure	--
CR 9, Northcutt Road over Big Turniptown Creek	5002	bridge culvert	good
CR 12, White Path Road over Jones Creek	5003	bridge culvert	good
CR 12, White Path Road over Ellijay River	5004	all conc. bridge structure	good
CR 14, Bushy Head Gap Road over Fightingtown Creek	5005	bridge culvert	good
CR 15, Clear Creek Road over Clear Creek	5006	bridge structure	good/fair
CR 15, Clear Creek Road over Turkey Creek	5007	bridge structure	good/satisf.
CR 16, Roy Road over Anderson Creek	5008	bridge structure	good/satisf.
CR 27, Craigtown Road over Little Mountain Creek	5011	bridge structure	good
CR 58, Seth Hyatt Road over Davis Creek	5014	bridge culvert	good
CR 59, Taylor Pritchett Road over Davis Creek	5015	bridge structure	fair
CR 60, Mountaintown Road over Conasauga Creek	5016	bridge culvert	good
CR 64, Sam Hill road over Mountaintown Creek	5017	bridge structure	good
CR 65, Gates Chapel Road over Little Mountaintown Cr.	5018	bridge structure	good
CR 65, Gates Chapel Road over Mountaintown Creek	5045	bridge structure	good
CR 92, Orchard Lane over Clear Creek	5051	bridge culvert	good
CR 97, Henry Evans Road over Turkey Creek	5019	bridge structure	satisfactory
CR 98, Johnson Mill Road over Clear Creek	5020	all conc. bridge structure	good
CR 99, Blackberry Mountain Road over Clear Creek	5021	bridge structure	good
CR 101, Lower Cartecay Road over Cartecay River	5024	bridge structure	good
CR 120, Holt Bridge Road over Cartecay River	5026	bridge structure	fair
CR 121, Owl Town Road over Cartecay River Tributary	5059	bridge structure	good
CR 121, Owl Town Road over Cartecay River Tributary	5058	bridge structure	good
CR 121, Owl Town Road over Cartecay River Tributary	5060	bridge structure	good
CR 127, River Hill Road over Cartecay River	5031	bridge structure	closed
CR 129, East New Hope Road over Stover Creek	5030	bridge structure	good
CR 131, Old Bucktown Road over Tickenetley Creek	5032	bridge structure	fair
CR 131, Old Bucktown Road over Tickenetley Creek	5033	bridge structure	satisfactory
CR 131, Old Bucktown Road over Tickenetley Creek	5034	bridge structure	good

Source: GDOT, Gilmer County Office

Table 8-I. Locally Owned Federal Aid Route Inspected Bridges in Gilmer County (continued)

Location	ID	Type	Condition
CR 132, Buford Weaver Road over Tickanetley Creek	5061	bridge structure	good
CR 132, Buford Weaver Road over Tickanetley Creek	5036	bridge structure	good
CR 133, Tickanetley Road over Tickanetley Creek	5037	bridge structure	good
CR 136, Diamond Road over Anderson Creek	5038	bridge structure	good
CR 138, Macedonia Road over Anderson Creek	5039	bridge structure	good
CR 140, Pole Coffee Circle over Rolston Creek	5040	bridge structure	good
CR 141, New Liberty Road over Holden Creek	5041	corrug. metal pipe culv.	good
CR 144, Pisgah Road over Holden Creek	5053	corrug. metal pipe culv.	good
CR 145, Ray Mountain Road over Big Turnip Town Cr.	5057	bridge structure	good/satisf.
CR 151, Rock Creek Church Road over Rock Creek	5052	bridge structure	good
CR 153, Rock Creek Road over Rock Creek	5043	bridge structure	satisfactory
CR 184, Zion Hill Road over Harper Creek	5054	bridge structure	good/satisf.
CR 187, South Lucius Road over Cherrylog Creek	506	bridge culvert	good
CR 226, White Stone Road over Talona Creek	5048	bridge culvert	good
CR 234, Talona Road over Talona Creek	5012	bridge culvert	good
CR 257, Cherry Log Street over Rock Creek	0013	all conc. bridge structure	satisfactory
CR 258, Rock Creek Road over Rock Creek	5042	bridge structure	good
CR 280, Kells Ridge Road over Kells Creek	5056	bridge structure	good
CS 542, McCutchen Street over Ellijay River	5049	bridge structure	good/satisf.

Source: GDOT, Gilmer County Office

According to the most recent inspection report, all bridges on state routes are structurally sufficient. The following bridges are scheduled for replacement under Georgia's Transportation Improvement Program (STIP):

- Rock Creek Road at Rock Creek, 9 miles northeast of Ellijay (2004)
- GA 282 over Tails Creek west of Ellijay (2005)
- GA 2 over Ellijay River in Ellijay (after 2006)

In terms of evacuation, a closing of the bridge located on Old Highway 5 over the Coosawattee River, just south of Legion Road, could have an impact on a school evacuation should one be necessary.

8.1.3. Signalization and Signage

There are six signalized intersections in Gilmer County, all of which are on state highways and are located in the incorporated cities. The locations are shown in Figure 8-F below. As traffic volumes increase, more signals may be warranted. Possible locations of future signals are also shown on Figure 8-F.

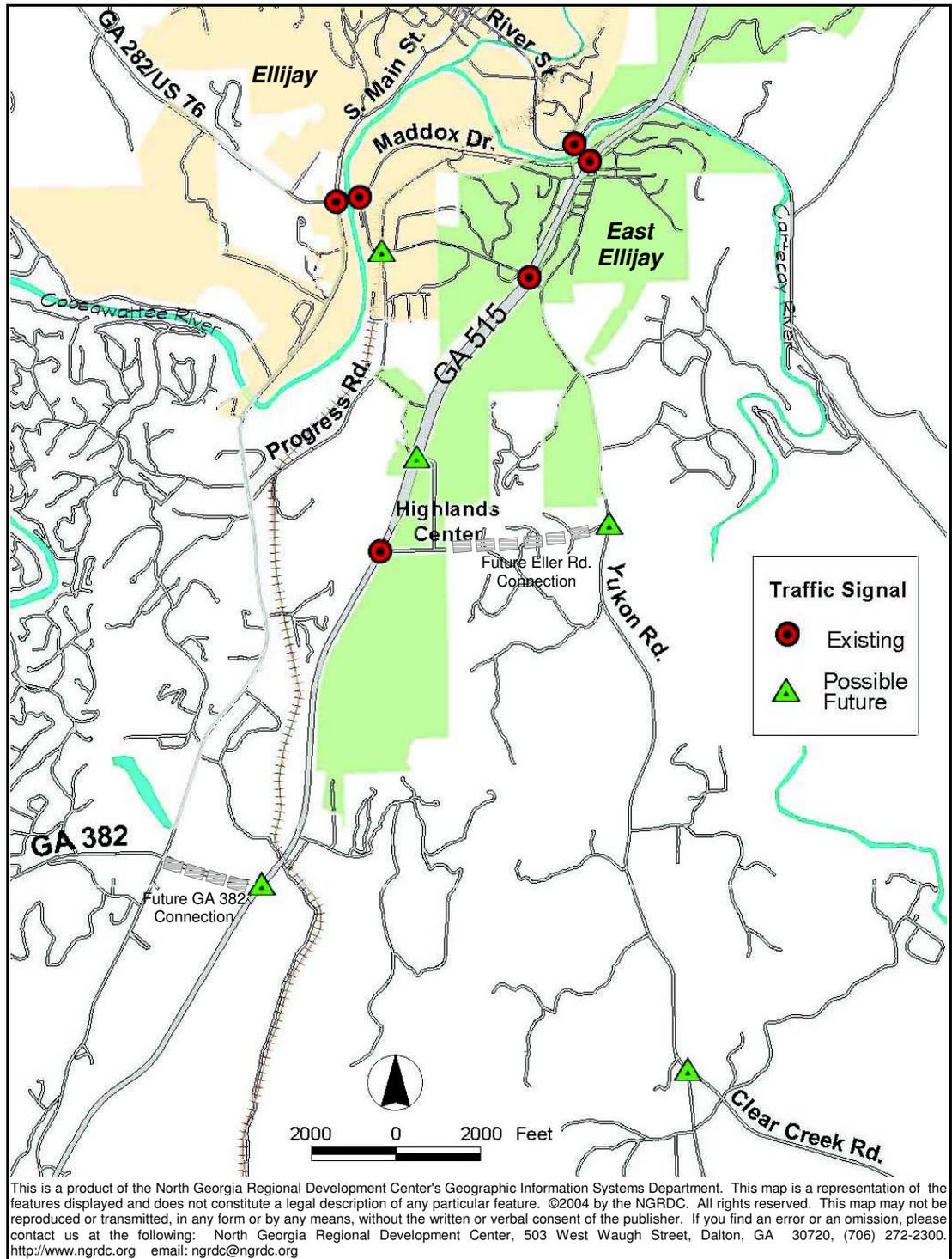


Figure 8-F. Signalized Intersections in Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay

8.1.4. Parking Facilities

Ellijay. On-street parking is available along most streets in downtown Ellijay. There are two public parking areas: one is off River Street and the other is off Broad Street in front of the Senior Center and behind the library. The new County Courthouse will be constructed on much of the Broad Street parking lot; therefore, a new lot is planned off South Dalton Street. Several existing County government buildings will be demolished to accommodate the new parking lot.

The newly constructed lot off of River Street has alleviated much of the parking problem for the businesses on River Street. Parking around the courthouse tends to be a problem when court is in session.



On-street parking is available along many streets in downtown Ellijay.

At present, there are no parking decks existing in or planned for Ellijay, East Ellijay, or the unincorporated areas of Gilmer County.

East Ellijay. There is one park-and-ride facility located on Craig Street, just off Highway 515 in East Ellijay. On-street parking is available along most side streets in the city.

Unincorporated Areas. There are no designated parking facilities in the unincorporated areas of Gilmer County.

8.1.5. Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Bike Routes. The Georgia Bicycle Master Plan, developed by GDOT, includes 14 bicycle routes. The "Mountain Crossing" bike route, which is included in the plan, traverses Gilmer County from east to west along GA 52 and goes through both Ellijay and East Ellijay. Approximately 3.2 miles of the Mountain Crossing Route in Gilmer County contain bike lanes and these bike lanes are located along GA 52 East. As other portions of GA 52 are improved by GDOT, more bike lanes will be added to this route. There are no designated bike lanes along city streets in Ellijay or East Ellijay.

The North Georgia and Coosa Valley RDCs are currently working on a joint project to develop a regional bicycle and pedestrian plan. The purpose of the plan is to enhance and promote bicycle and pedestrian transportation throughout the region. The plan is funded by GDOT and is expected to influence GDOT's long range work program elements for bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the region.

Sidewalks. Gilmer County contains 5.9 miles of sidewalks, the majority of which are located in the City of Ellijay. (See Figure 8-G.) The City of Ellijay has benefited greatly from receiving a series of Transportation Enhancement grants which have helped fund downtown streetscape projects, including sidewalk improvements. The City will continue to apply for funding for sidewalk improvement projects in the future.

East Ellijay contains a limited number of sidewalks as shown in Figure 8-G. There are no sidewalks in the unincorporated areas of the county.



Sidewalks have been improved in Ellijay with Transportation Enhancement and local funding.

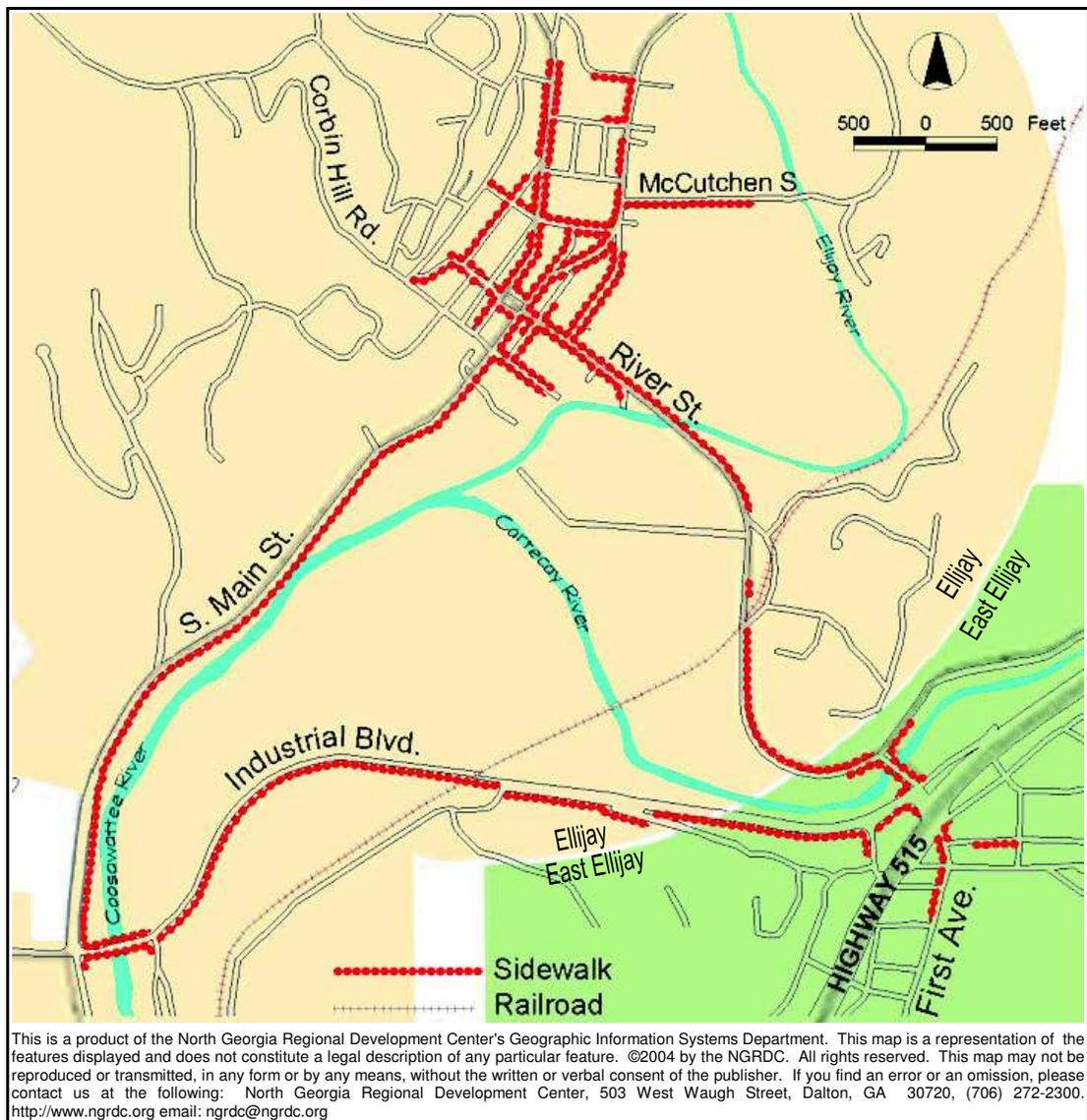


Figure 8-G. Sidewalks in Ellijay and East Ellijay

Trails. Gilmer County contains several miles of recreational trails, most of which are located in the Chattahoochee National Forest. The North Georgia Regional Development Center is in the process of mapping certain trails in Gilmer and surrounding counties for the Georgia DOT. More information on trails in Gilmer County can be found at <http://georgiatrails.com>.

The County River Park also contains a multi-purpose trail parallel to the Coosawattee River. This trail is a great amenity to the community and there are plans to extend it in the future.



Gilmer County contains several miles of recreational and nature trails.

8.1.6. Public Transportation

Gilmer County contracts with the North Georgia Community Action Agency, d.b.a. the Mountain Area Transportation System (MATS), to operate the county public transit system. Four buses, two of which have wheelchair lifts, operate on a flexible, fixed route schedule, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Each vehicle averages 500 one-way passenger trips per month. This figure has been fairly consistent over the past ten years.

MATS provides curb-to-curb and shared-ride service. Individual fare service is provided with 24-hour advance notice. Pre-arranged charter services is also available.

8.1.7. Railroad

The location of rail lines in Gilmer County is shown in Figure 8-H. The county is currently served by the Georgia Northeastern Railroad (GNRR). GNRR operates over the former Louisville & Nashville Hook and Eye line from a connection with CSX at Elizabeth (Marietta) to Ellijay (66 miles).

Timber, grain, poultry, and marble products are the primary goods which are hauled. Daily service to Gilmer County is available.

GNRR also operates the Georgia Marble Company's railroad at Tate and the Blue Ridge Scenic Railroad. In past years, the Blue Ridge Scenic Railroad made trips to Ellijay during the summer, with the train stopping at the depot on River Street and a shuttle taking tourists to the square in Ellijay. This did not occur in 2003 and will not occur in 2004. The Downtown Ellijay Merchants and Associates (DEMA) will continue to approach the Scenic Railroad in the future to reestablish trips to Ellijay.

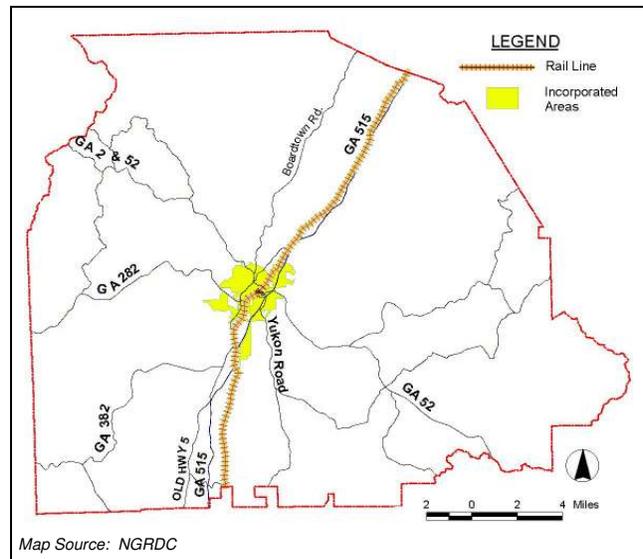


Figure 8-H. Rail Lines in Gilmer County.

The overall rail system for the northern half of Georgia is shown in Figure 8-I on the following page.

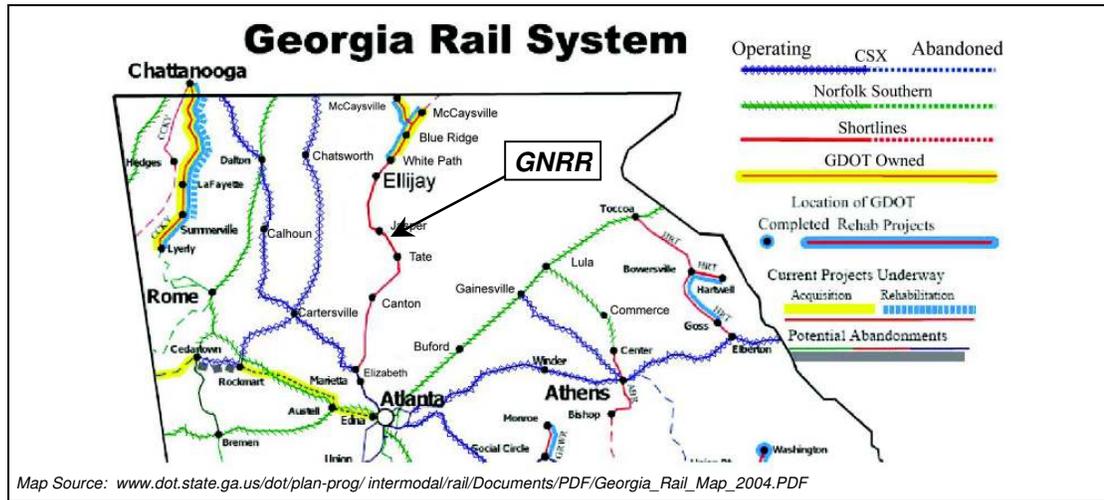


Figure 8-I. Georgia Rail System, January 2004. (Source: GDOT, Office of Intermodal Programs)

No passenger rail service is available in Gilmer or adjacent counties; however, a commuter rail station is proposed for Canton, just 35 miles from downtown Ellijay. While the construction of this station is very unlikely in the next ten years, it is likely to be constructed within the next twenty years. Having a commuter rail station this close to Gilmer County could have a significant impact upon growth in the county. The Georgia Rail Passenger Program map is shown in Figure 8-J below.

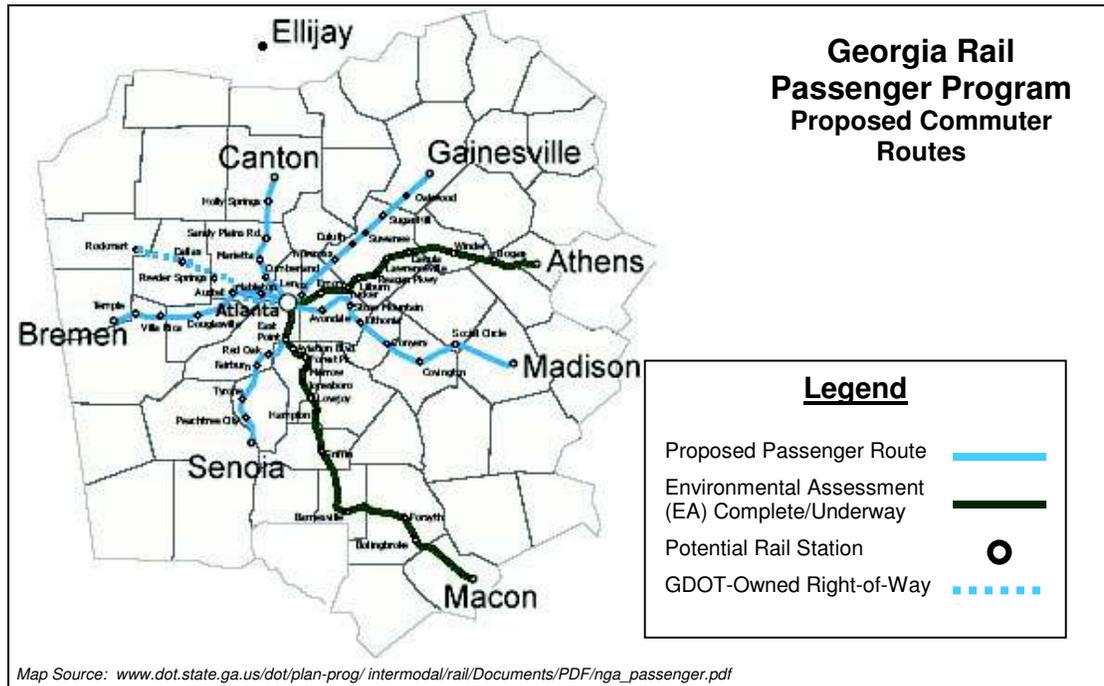


Figure 8-J. Proposed Commuter Routes (Source: GDOT, Office of Intermodal Programs)

8.1.8. Airport

The Gilmer County Airport is located on a 100 acre tract, south of Ellijay off Highway 382. (See Figure 8-K.) It was developed in the mid-1960s and serves Ellijay, East Ellijay, and Gilmer County. The airport is owned by Gilmer County.

The Airport Advisory Board is a 3-member board composed of citizens from the community selected because of their interest in and knowledge of aviation. The board is appointed by and reports to the Gilmer County Board of Commissioners.

The condition of the Gilmer County Airport has deteriorated over the past decade. Many of the buildings are in poor condition, the runway surface is cracked, and the airport beacon is inoperative. In addition, fuel services were removed in the late 1990s which resulted in some aircraft owners moving to other airfields.

In 2003, the Federal Aviation Administration awarded Gilmer County a \$450,000 grant to renovate and upgrade the airfield. The grant will fund 90% of the renovation project with the remaining funds coming from the State Department of Transportation Aviation Program (\$25,000) and Gilmer County (\$25,000). Renovations are expected to begin in the summer of 2004. The airport will be closed during renovations.

Elements of the renovation are still being determined and may include:

- rehabilitating and widening the runway,
- rehabilitating runway lighting, and
- updating the airport master plan.

The closest airports with commercial passenger flights are Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (85 miles from downtown Ellijay) and Chattanooga Metropolitan Airport (65 miles from downtown Ellijay).

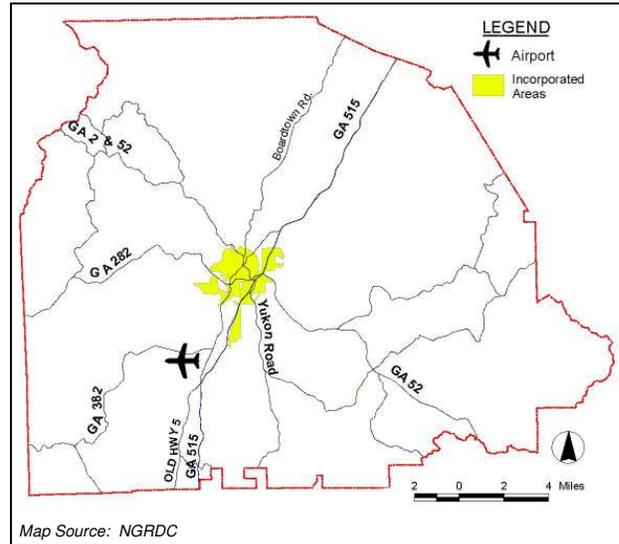


Figure 8-K. Gilmer County Airport Location

8.2. Assessment of Current and Future Needs

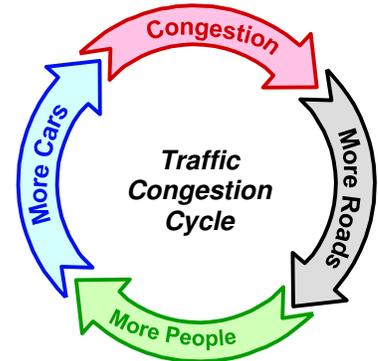
Section 8.1 provided an inventory of the components of Gilmer County’s transportation network. The assessment in this section answers the following question which was derived from the requirements in Section 110-12-1-.04(12)(h)ii of the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning:

Can the future needs of the community can be met with existing transportation facilities and services? If not, what improvements will be needed to (1) accommodate anticipated population and economic growth and (2) provide a safe and efficient transportation network?

Based on population and employment projections, the future transportation needs of Gilmer County cannot be met by the existing transportation facilities and services. The following facilities and services are analyzed in this section: streets, roads, and highways; parking facilities; bicycle and pedestrian facilities; and public transit.

8.2.1. Streets, Roads, and Highways

In most parts of the country, a “traffic congestion cycle” exists whereby a road is built or widened which adds capacity. Development then occurs along the road which attracts people who drive vehicles, which adds to congestion. New roads are built to add capacity, which attracts people, adding to congestion, and so on and so on. This cycle is illustrated to the right.



“Level of Service” (LOS) is a measure of traffic congestion along a segment of roadway and is expressed as letters “A” through “F” with “A” being the best travel condition and “F” being the worst. LOS can be further defined as follows:

- LOS A – Free flow or unrestricted traffic movement
- LOS B – Stable flow, noticeable traffic
- LOS C – Stable flow with more traffic interactions
- LOS D – High density traffic with restricted speed and freedom to maneuver
- LOS E – Road is operating at or near capacity, speed is low, convenience is poor
- LOS F – Unstable flow, severe congestion

GDOT’s MultiModal Transportation Planning Tool (MTPT) was used to perform a basic highway analysis for Gilmer County. The MTPT estimates the level of service for various road segments. The MTPT’s default values were used for the required data with the exception of traffic growth rates. The average annual growth rates for traffic volumes on arterials, collectors, and local roads in Gilmer County were changed from 5%, 2%, and 1% to 6%, 4%, and 2%, respectively. The revised rates better reflect historical growth in traffic volumes in Gilmer County, particularly along Highway 515.

It should be noted that the MTPT provides a simplified analysis of current and future traffic conditions in Gilmer County. A more accurate analysis would require the development of a model which is specifically tailored to Gilmer County's land use, population, traffic, and transportation network. In addition, the traffic network in the MTPT uses roads which were in existence in 1997. Various road improvements have been made since that time which would influence the output of the model. For example, passing lanes have been added to segments of GA 282 West, which have alleviated some congestion on this road.

While the MTPT does have its limitations, it is a valuable tool for providing a general picture of traffic conditions which are likely in Gilmer County in the future. The following sections (8.2.1.1., 8.2.1.2., and 8.2.1.3.) summarize the results from the MTPT analysis in terms of predicted levels of services for the current year, 2010, and 2020. The results are described in general terms first, and then more specifically by jurisdiction. Section 8.2.1.4. provides information on improvements planned by the GDOT and possible improvements to the road network which came out of the MTPT analysis.

8.2.1.1. Current Year LOS

Overview. Figure 8-L on the following page illustrates current (year 2000) traffic levels of service for various road segments in Gilmer County. The levels of service which are illustrated are for some time period during the day, most likely during the AM and PM peak hours, and not necessarily during the entire day. Construction of passing lanes has alleviated some of the congestion along the portions of GA 282 West and GA 52 East which are shown at LOS D and E. The model shows that two road segments, South Main Street between Industrial Boulevard and the square, and Industrial Boulevard between South Main Street and First Avenue operate at LOS F at some time period during the day.

Ellijay. The inset in Figure 8-L shows that in the City of Ellijay, South Main Street and a portion of GA 282 function at LOS F at some time period during the day. River Street functions at LOS E as does a portion of GA 2/52. Within the city limits, there are severe limitations to providing additional lanes to alleviate congestion. Limitations include inadequate right-of-way, steep topography, and natural resources such as the Ellijay and Coosawattee Rivers.

East Ellijay. In East Ellijay, GA 52 is operating at LOS E, Yukon Road is at LOS D, First Street is at LOS C, and portions of GA 515 are at LOS B. Within the city limits, there are severe limitations to providing additional lanes to alleviate congestion. Limitations include inadequate right-of-way, steep topography, and natural resources such as the Cartecay and Coosawattee Rivers.

The Eller Road extension (see Figure 8-F on page 8-13) from GA 515 to Yukon Road may help alleviate some of the congestion which is growing in the southern portion of the city around the new Highlands Shopping Center.

Unincorporated Areas. Most of the traffic congestion in Gilmer County is contained within the incorporated cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay. As stated previously, the provision of passing lanes has alleviated much of the congestion on GA 282 and GA 52 East.

An east/west connection between GA 382 and GA 515 is planned for some time between 2006 and 2009. (See Figure 8-F on page 8-13.) This is expected to redirect some traffic from the downtown areas and keep it on the less-traveled/higher capacity roads in the unincorporated areas.

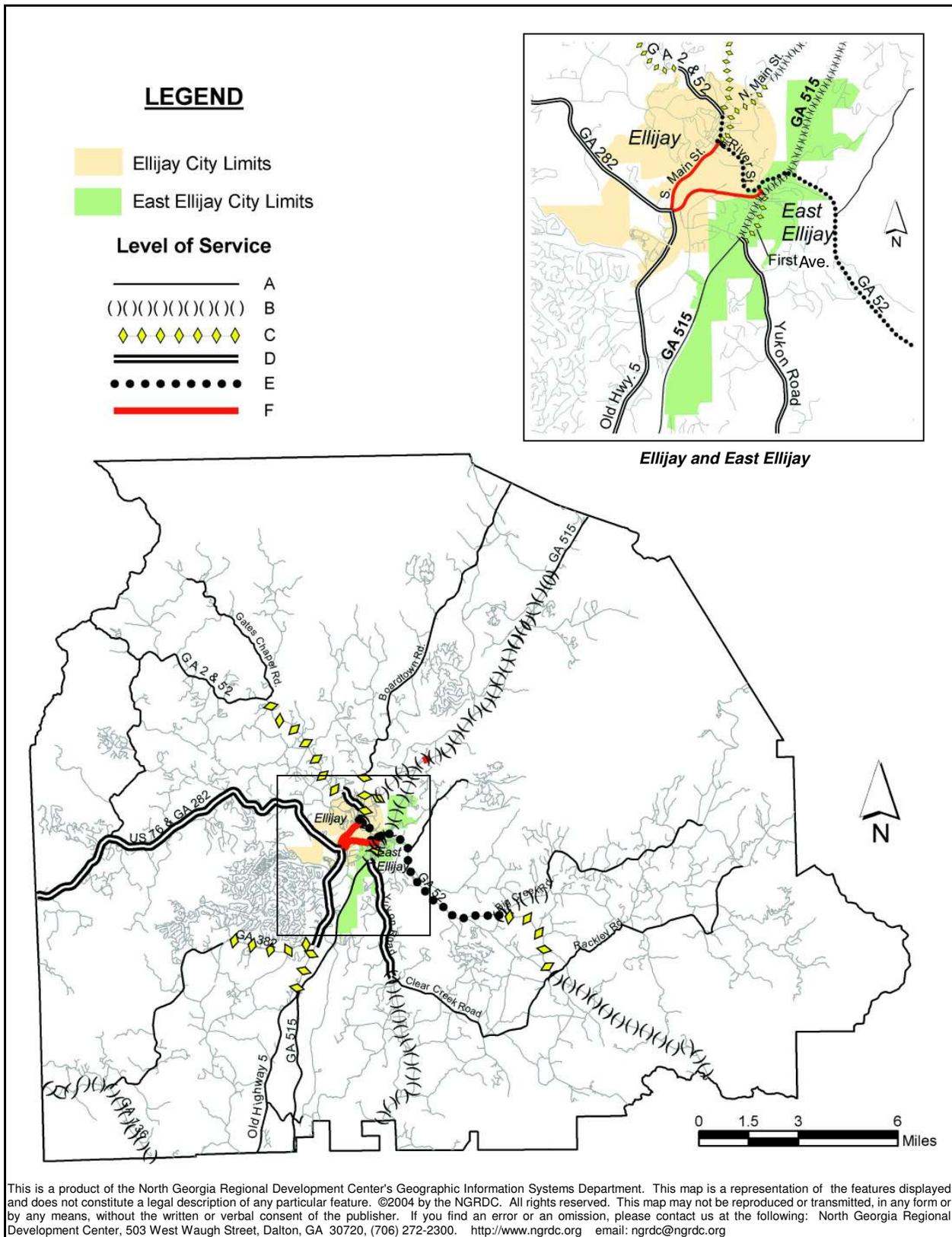
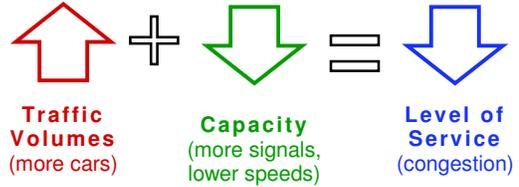


Figure 8-L. Year 2000 Levels of Service (Source: MTPT Analysis)

8.2.1.2. Year 2010 LOS

Overview. Figure 8-M on the following page illustrates likely traffic conditions in 2010. Traffic along major corridors is becoming more congested. Given the proliferation of new development along GA 515 in East Ellijay, the level of service will most likely be even worse than shown, and probably approach LOS D or E.

By 2010, not only will overall traffic volumes in the community be greater, but associated turning movements (right and left turns onto and off of a highway) will be greater as well. More traffic signals will be required and reduced speed limits will be requested in an attempt to improve safety. All of these factors



will contribute to a reduction in the overall capacity of the road network. Increased traffic volumes combined with decreased capacity will lead to lower levels of service.

Ellijay. THE MTPT predicts that in the City of Ellijay, North Main Street will function at LOS C while Boardtown Road will be at LOS D. Portions of GA 282, and Old Highway 5 will be at LOS E while South Main Street, River Street, GA 282, and portions of GA 2/52 will be at LOS F.

East Ellijay. In East Ellijay, GA 515 is predicted to function at either LOS B or C. First Avenue will be at LOS D, Yukon Road will be at LOS E, and GA 52 will be at LOS F.

Unincorporated Areas. By 2010, the MTPT predicts that GA 515 will be at either LOS B or C. The east/west corridors of GA 282 and GA 52 function at a range of service levels from B to F, with levels becoming worse the nearer the road segment is to the incorporated areas. Other collector roads are functioning at levels B and C. The worst congestion is still primarily within the limits of the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay.

The development of new east/west connections in the cities and county may help alleviate some of the developing congestion.

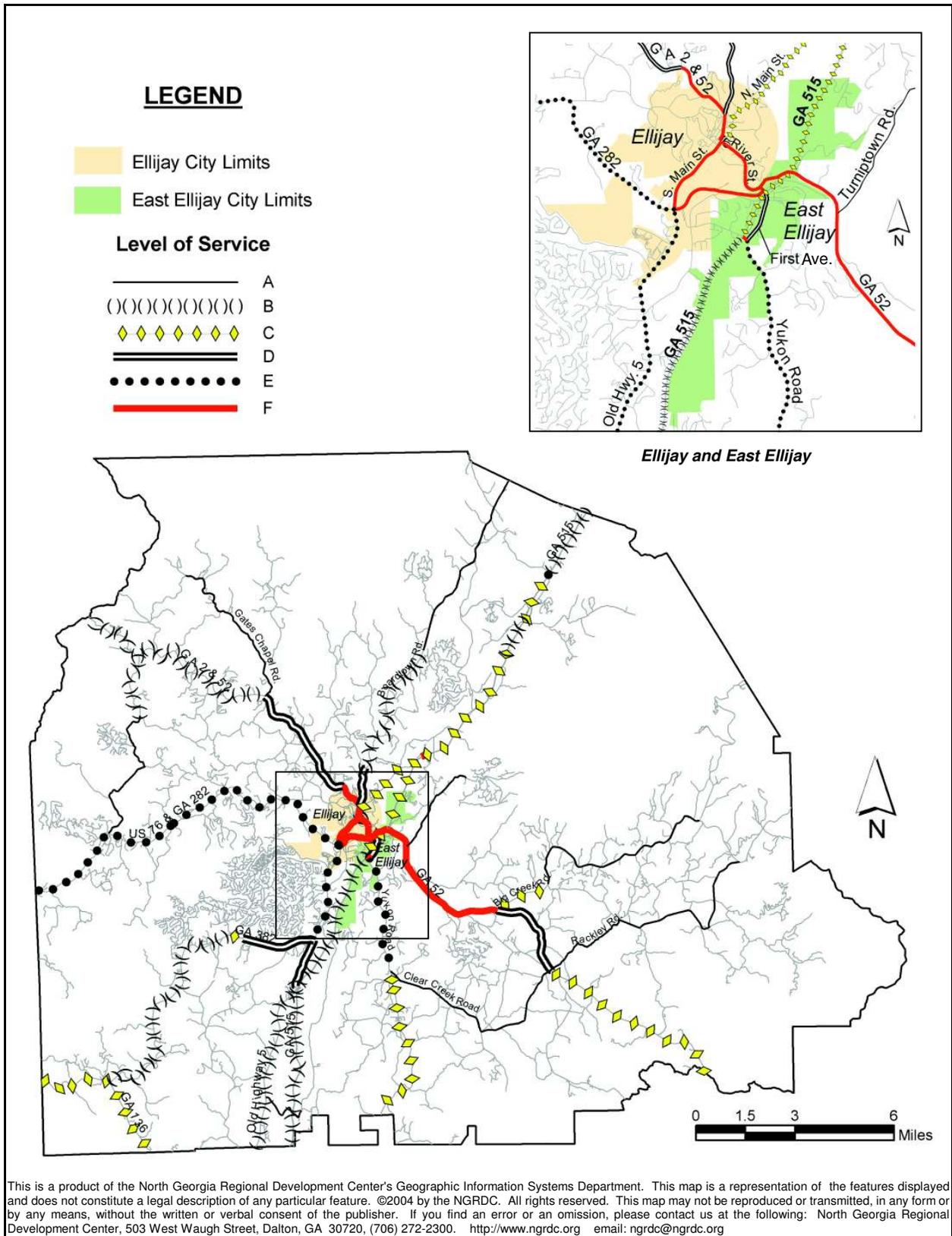


Figure 8-M. Projected Level of Service in 2010 (Source: MTPT Analysis)

8.2.1.3. Year 2030 LOS

Overview. Figure 8-N on the following page illustrates likely traffic conditions in 2020. Note that most major road corridors, including GA 515 are at LOS F for some portion of the day. Local roads are also beginning to show congestion. Improving connectivity throughout the county will be an important way of achieving relief from congestion.

Ellijay. As shown in the inset in Figure 8-N, in the City of Ellijay, nearly every main road will function at LOS F by the year 2020 if no improvements are made to the network. Few remedies exist to correct these problems.

East Ellijay. In East Ellijay, all major roads are predicted to function at LOS F by the year 2020. Given the amount of commercial development occurring in East Ellijay, it is likely that these roads will approach LOS F before the year 2020.

Unincorporated Areas. As illustrated in Figure 8-N, all of GA 515 is predicted to function at LOS F by the year 2020. In addition, all east/west routes are showing congestion at or above LOS C. Several local roads are beginning to show congestion.

8.2.1.4. Roadway Improvements

Gilmer County is growing rapidly and the strain on the existing transportation network is quickly reflecting this growth. It is not surprising that numerous improvements to county and state roads will be needed to enhance the capacity of the road network. Planned roadway improvements included in the State Transportation Improvement Program are listed in Table 8-J. These are the GDOT's committed road projects for the next three years. Also included in the table are projects in Gilmer County which are part of GDOT's construction work program.

Table 8-J. 2004 – 2006 State Transportation Improvement Program (excludes bridge projects) and Selected Construction Work Program Projects for Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay

Project #	Description	Jurisdiction
631260	GA 382 Extension from Old Highway 5 to GA 515 (construction after 2006, programmed for 2009)	Gilmer County
M002537	GA 52 from GA 2 to Dawson County line – resurface and maintenance	Ellijay, East Ellijay, and Gilmer County
M002538	GA 2 from Murray County line to GA 515 – resurface and maintenance	Ellijay, East Ellijay, and Gilmer County
M002539	GA 282 from east of Corbin Hill Road to Old Highway 5 – resurface and maintenance	Ellijay and Gilmer County
S006111	Bobcat Trail at GA 515 – intersection improvements	Ellijay
S006934	Clear Creek Road and Yukon Road – widen and resurface	East Ellijay and Gilmer County
S005640	Cross Street in East Ellijay – resurface and maintenance	East Ellijay
S006173	Dogwood Drive in East Ellijay – resurface and maintenance	East Ellijay
S006174	Tabor Street and Church Street in Ellijay – resurface and maintenance	Ellijay

Source: Georgia DOT

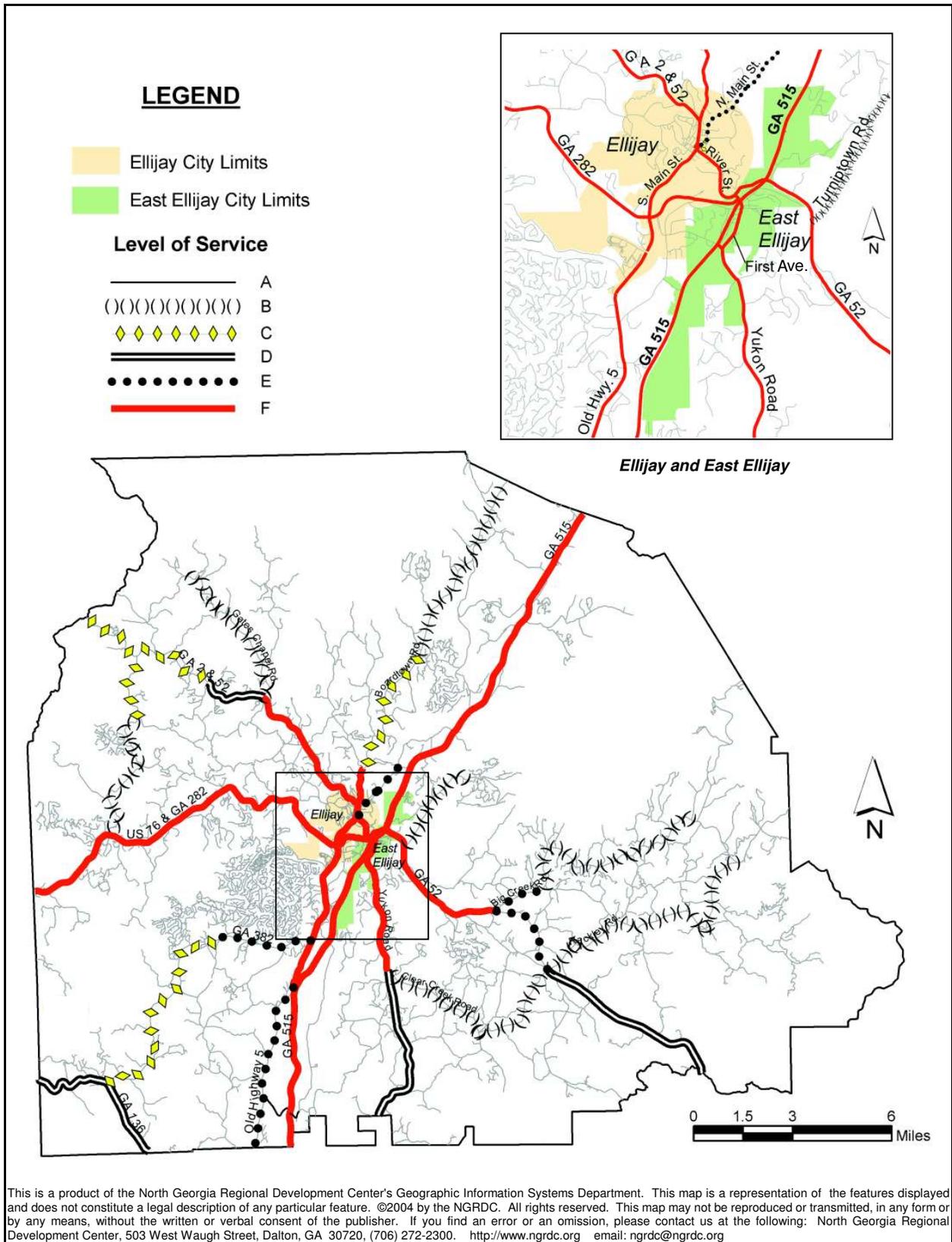


Figure 8-N. Projected Level of Service in 2020 (Source: MTPT Analysis)

While these projects will improve traffic operations, they will not enhance the capacity (add lanes) of the road network. The MTPT analysis proposes a number of projects to enhance traffic capacity. These projects, most of which are on roads which are in both incorporated and unincorporated portions of the county, are listed in Table 8-K. Estimated costs associated with these improvements are provided and are based upon an average statewide improvement cost. Actual costs could be significantly greater.

Table 8-K. Possible Future Roadway Improvements (Note: These projects are outputs of the MTPT computer analysis and are not necessarily projects which should or will occur in the future.)

Project Description	Jurisdiction	Length	Estimated Cost (in 2010 \$)	LOS in 2020	LOS with improvements
GA 515 – widen from 4 lanes to 6 lanes	GC, EE	22.06 mi.	\$58 million	F	D or E
S. Main Street – add one lane	GC, E	4.30 mi.	\$2.2 million	F	F
N. Main Street – add one lane	GC, E	3.43 mi.	\$1.2 million	F	D or E
Yukon Road from First Ave to Clear Creek Road – add one lane	GC, EE	3.69 mi.	\$1.9 million	F	F
First Avenue – add one lane	EE	0.65 mi.	\$0.4 million	F	E
Big Creek Road from GA 52 to Holt Bridge Road – add one lane	GC	1.76 mi.	\$0.9 million	E	D
Boardtown Road from GA 52 to Flat Branch Road – add one lane	GC, E	1.16 mi.	\$0.6 million	F	E

Note: The estimated cost is based upon the default construction cost included in the MTPT. The actual cost will likely be greater due to the county's terrain and escalating land prices. GC – Gilmer County, E – City of Ellijay, EE – City of East Ellijay

Given that the MTPT LOS projections are based upon traffic volume growth rates and not land use trends, and given that new roads, signalizations, intersection improvements, etc. cannot be programmed into the MTPT, it is recommended that a 20-year, county-wide Long Range Transportation Plan be prepared. Such a plan would be based upon projected growth in the community and compatibility with the future land use map included in this Comprehensive Plan. The plan would include both incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county.

This plan would include projects for improving operations, capacity, and connectivity (e.g. GA 382 extension, Eller Road extension). Other critical items which would be factored into the plan include the development of the new school on Clear Creek Road and the new development occurring and proposed on Highway 515.

The Transportation Plan would be implemented through a Capital Improvements Plan and Budget through a combination of financing methods which could include general fund, Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax, impact fees, and State and Federal assistance.

8.2.2. Parking Facilities

Additional parking will be needed in downtown Ellijay when the construction of the new courthouse is complete. Although a parking deck may seem unnecessary given today's parking needs, it would likely be a valuable asset to the downtown in the coming years. Development of such a facility as an alternative to conventional parking lots should be considered. Municipal parking is not projected to be a need in East Ellijay as the commercial developments occurring in the city provide on-site parking.

The need for public parking areas in the unincorporated portion of the county is not anticipated unless passenger rail service becomes available.

8.2.3. Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Making Gilmer County and its cities more bicycle friendly will enhance its attractiveness as a tourist destination and provide an alternative mode of transportation for those who either cannot afford a vehicle or prefer to use a bicycle. A regional bicycle plan is underway and recommendations for bicycle facilities for Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay should be pursued.

Downtown Ellijay currently has a good network of sidewalks. In some areas the sidewalks need to be improved to make them more user friendly and in some areas sidewalks do not exist. All public buildings in the downtown area should be linked with sidewalks. A pedestrian plan should be included as part of the recommended downtown revitalization plan.

Other areas which would benefit from additional pedestrian facilities include downtown East Ellijay, the Riverfront Park area, the existing public school campus, the new library, the proposed public school campus of Clear Creek Road, and the proposed hospital campus. Pedestrian links across the Coosawattee, Ellijay, and Cartecay Rivers should also be pursued.

8.2.4. Public Transportation

The need for public transportation service is expected to grow with the population. Expanding service should be investigated on an as-needed basis.

A segment of the population, primarily the immigrant population working in the poultry processing industry, has developed its own form of public transportation whereby one person purchases a van and charges between \$1.00 and \$1.50 per passenger for a trip to and from work. This system appears to be a satisfactory, temporary alternative to expanding public transportation to serve these individuals.

8.3. Community Goal and Implementation Program

As part of the comprehensive planning process outlined by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Gilmer County, Ellijay, and East Ellijay are required to develop community goals and an associated implementation program that sets forth a plan for the transportation system.

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

8.3.1. Community Vision

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

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

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

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

8.3.2. Goal, Policies, and Action Items

To support and achieve the Joint Vision Statement above, Gilmer County and the Cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay have developed the following transportation planning goal and associated policies and action items:

<p>Goal: To achieve a modern, well-funded multi-modal transportation network that is efficient, safe, and protects the environment while enhancing the area's economic development.</p>	
<p>Policy 1: Adequate Transportation System. A good transportation network is vital for the physical, social, and economic well-being of Gilmer County and the cities of Ellijay and East Ellijay; therefore transportation planning should be a priority for the community.</p>	<p>Action Items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Prepare a Long Range Transportation Plan and associated improvements program. b. After development of the Long Range Transportation Plan, evaluate setback requirements, access, and zoning activities for properties on roads which will be widened in the future. c. Pursue system-wide improvements, including new connector roads and alternate routes, to improve the level of service on the roads in the community. d. Complete renovations of the airport and update the Airport Master Plan. e. Maintain a positive working relationship with GNRR. f. Continue to utilize the Local Assistance Road Program for resurfacing projects.
<p>Policy 2: Transportation Alternatives.* Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available and greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.</p>	<p>Action Items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support the development and implementation of the regional bicycle and pedestrian plan. b. Seek funding to develop a downtown master plan for the City of Ellijay to address traffic, parking, and pedestrian facilities, and housing. c. Pursue funding for and develop additional pedestrian facilities to include sidewalks, trails, and river crossings.
<p>Policy 3: Regional Solutions. Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.</p>	<p>Action Items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support the development and implementation of the regional bicycle and pedestrian plan. b. Continue to advocate for Blue Ridge Scenic Railroad excursions to Ellijay.

* A DCA "Quality Communities" Objective