

Chapter 2: Population

Introduction

The population element provides the Elbert County, Bowman, and Elberton with the opportunity to inventory and assess population trends and characteristics. The information provided in the population element will form the basis for several planning decisions on the Economic Development, Community Facilities, Housing and Land Use elements of the comprehensive plan. A community's future goals are heavily dependent on population growth rates and demographic patterns. This chapter will present and analyze past and present population trends to determine future population projections. Components of this element include: population, households, age distribution, racial composition, education attainment, and personal/household income level.

Population Trends

The history of population in Elbert County and its cities is shown in Table 1. The population of Elbert County declined during the period after World War II until the 1970's, when it began a slow but consistent growth trend, reaching a population of 20,511 by the year 2000. The City of Bowman has followed a similar trend. The City of Elberton, in contrast, has shown a steady decline in population. This is apparently due to the gradual replacement of residential areas with commercial land uses.

Table 1 Historic Populations Elbert County, Bowman, and Elberton 1960 - 2000			
Year	Elbert Co	Bowman	Elberton
1960	18,585	654	7,107
1965	17,924	689	6,773
1970	17,262	724	6,438
1975	18,010	807	6,062
1980	18,758	890	5,686
1985	18,854	841	5,684
1990	18,949	791	5,682
1995	19,730	845	5,213
2000	20,511	898	4,743
Source: U.S. Census 1960 - 2000; interpolations by NEGRDC, 2003			

Table 2 compares the rates of growth for Elbert County and its cities with those of the nation, the state, and the Northeast Georgia region. While the state's population has increased rapidly, and the region as a whole has been growing at rate exceeding that of the state, Elbert County has experienced moderate increases. Bowman's percentage rate of change has fluctuated over the two decades, as is to be expected with a small population size. Elberton has shown steady decreases in population.

Table 2 Comparative Rates of Change Elbert County, Bowman, Elberton and Selected Areas 1980 - 2000		
	% Change 1980 -1990	% Change 1990 - 2000
Elbert County	1.0	8.3
Bowman	-11.1	13.5
Elberton	-0.1	16.5
Region	19.2	33.5
State	18.6	26.4
U.S.	9.8	13.2
Source: U.S. Census, 1980 – 2000		

The number of births less the number of deaths is the population change due to natural increase. The remainder of population change is attributable to net migration, that is, the number of people moving into an area less the number moving out. The population increases in Georgia generally and in Northeast Georgia especially tend to be driven more by net migration than by natural increase. Table 3 compares the sources of population increase for Elbert County with those of the region and the state. In Elbert County, too, the majority of population growth is due to a net in-migration rather than natural increase.

As may be expected from the foregoing, the population living in Elbert County has been quite mobile. Table 4 shows where people lived five years before the 2000 Census. About 15% of people in Elbert County moved into the county in the previous five years. In Bowman, the percentage was higher, more than 28%. About 13% of Elberton's residents in 2000 had moved into the county since 1995.

Table 3 Sources of Population Increase Elbert County and Selected Areas 1990 - 2000					
	Change 1990 - 2000	Natural Increase	Percent	Migration	Percent
Elbert County	1,562	441	28.2	1,121	71.8
Region	110,077	26,598	24.2	83,479	75.8
Georgia	1,708,304	582,140	34.1	1,126,164	65.9
Source: Georgia County Guide, 2002					

Table 4 Mobility of the Population 2000		
Elbert County		
Residence in 1995	Number	Percent
Same house	12144	63.1
Same county	4236	22.0
Different county in GA	1634	8.5
Different state	1063	5.5
Other	170	0.9
Bowman		
Residence in 1995	Number	Percent
Same house	518	56.6
Same county	137	15.0
Different county in GA	180	19.7
Different state	77	8.4
Other	4	0.4
Elberton		
Residence in 1995	Number	Percent
Same house	2415	54.5
Same county	1427	32.2
Different county in GA	251	5.7
Different state	254	5.7
Other	86	1.9
Source: U.S. Census, 2000		

Elbert County is considered primarily rural, with only two cities in the county. As shown in Table 5, the 200 Census found that less than one third of Elbert County's population lived in an urban area, compared with 47% in the region as a whole and nearly 72% statewide. The urban proportion of the population rose slightly in the decade from 1990 to 2000, but not as much as the rise in urbanization in the region and the state.

Table 5 Urban and Rural Population Elbert County and Selected Areas 1990 and 2000								
	2000				1990			
	Urban	Percent	Rural	Percent	Urban	Percent	Rural	Percent
Elbert	6,428	31.3	14,083	68.7	5,682	30.0	13,267	70.0
Region	206,056	47.0	232,244	43.0	127,173	38.7	201,050	61.3
Georgia	5,866,567	71.7	2,319,886	28.3	4,096,078	63.2	2,382,138	36.8
Source: Georgia County Guide, 2002								

There are only very small seasonal changes in the population of Elbert County. Although Lake Russell is a summer time attraction and several seasonal or part-time residences have been built to take advantage of it, the impact on population is minimal. In the 2000 Census, Elbert County had 286 vacant residences identified for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. These represented 25% of the vacant residences, but only 3% of total housing units in the county. In comparison, Greene County (adjacent to Lake Oconee and a popular hunting area) had 11% of its housing units identified as seasonal and vacant; and Hart County (adjacent to Lake Hartwell) had 10% of its housing stock so identified. Elberton and Bowman had 0.6% and 1.9% of their housing stock, respectively, identified as seasonal.

Commuting patterns do not significantly affect the population of Elbert County. Although 1,524 employed persons enter the county to work, 2,338 commute out of the county. The net change of -814 persons is not a significant one. (See Chapter 3, Economic Development, for a more detailed discussion of commuting patterns. The net loss of people during the workday is partly offset by the entry of persons for business in Elberton and attendance at the Athens Tech campus. These visitors have not been quantified, but it is not believed to have a significant effect on the daily population of Elbert County or Elberton.

Population Projections

The Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center (RDC) prepared alternative population projections for the county and the cities. Using historical population trends, the historical population was fit to a linear and exponential growth curve. The RDC has also prepared regional population projections for counties (but not for cities). The results of these calculations were presented in Tables 6 through 8 for consideration by the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee. The projections selected for use in other elements of the comprehensive plan were, in all cases, Series B, the projections based on exponential regression.

The population projections presented in this plan are statistical projections based on past trends. They assume that the past trends will continue into the future. No attempt has been made to make assumptions about future cause and effect relationships. The principal factor that has governed population change in Elbert County and its cities for the past few decades has been the general trend for jobs and people to migrate to the Piedmont region of the Southeast. Elbert County has benefited somewhat from that trend, but not as much as other parts of the state or the region due to limited transportation connections to markets, lack of adjacent metropolitan areas for jobs, and lack of high-paying jobs within the Elbert County community. The City of Elberton has developed as a sub-regional retail and service center, drawing business from surrounding counties such as Wilkes, Oglethorpe, and Hart. This has fueled the modest population growth of the past twenty years.

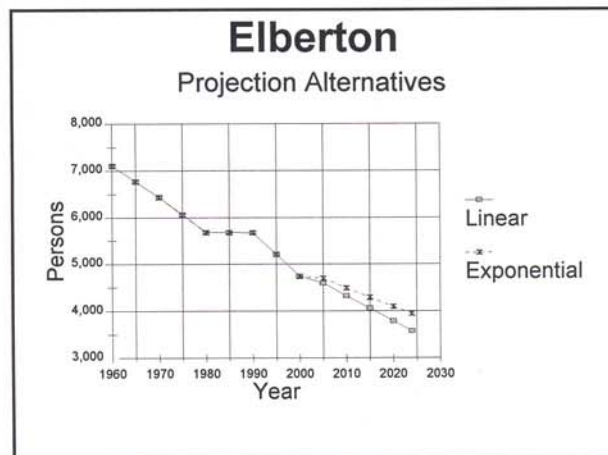
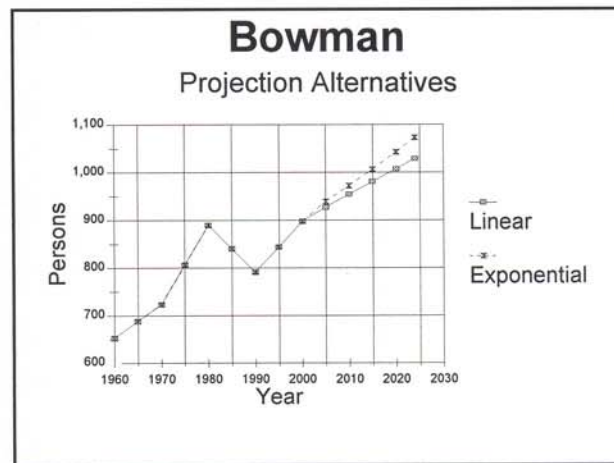
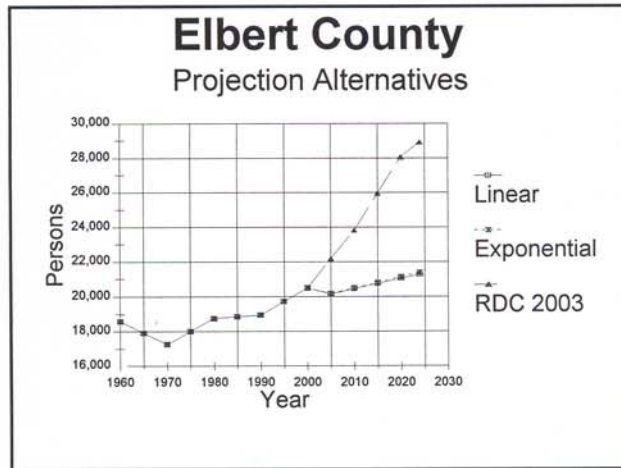
Paradoxically, the development of Elberton as a retail and service center and job center, combined with its reluctance to aggressively annex property, is the most probable explanation for its recent decline in population. Residential areas have been replaced by commercial development, which has reduced the housing stock and, hence, the population. New residences are increasingly being constructed outside the city limits in the unincorporated county. On the other hand, there are very few businesses locating in the unincorporated county.

The gradual growth of the population and the economy has introduced new people, migrating into the county from other locations, and has brought and will bring changes to the community. The effects have not been as striking as they have been in other, very rapidly growing, areas of the state and region, however. No noticeable effects or issues were revealed in discussions with the task force.

Table 6 Population Projection Alternatives Elbert County 2005 - 2024			
	Series A	Series B	Series C
2000	20,511	20,511	20,511
2004	20,243	20,255	21,843
2005	20,176	20,191	22,176
2006	20,234	20,253	22,508
2007	20,292	20,315	22,841
2008	20,350	20,377	23,174
2009	20,408	20,439	23,507
2010	20,465	20,501	23,840
2015	20,754	20,816	25,955
2020	21,043	21,136	28,070
2024	21,275	21,395	28,916
Source: U.S. Census 2000; NEGRDC 2003			

Table 7 Population Projection Alternatives City of Bowman 2005 - 2024		
	Series A	Series BI
2000	898	898
2004	921	931
2005	927	939
2006	933	946
2007	938	953
2008	943	959
2009	949	966
2010	954	973
2015	981	1,007
2020	1,008	1,043
2024	1,029	1,073
Source: U.S. Census 2000; NEGRDC, 2003.		

Table 8 Population Projection Alternatives City of Elberton 2005 - 2024		
	Series A	Series B
2000	4,743	4,743
2004	4,626	4,706
2005	4,596	4,696
2006	4,543	4,655
2007	4,490	4,613
2008	4,436	4,572
2009	4,383	4,530
2010	4,329	4,488
2015	4,062	4,290
2020	3,795	4,100
2024	3,581	3,954
Source: U.S. Census 2000; NEGRDC, 2003.		



Households

Table 9 shows the historical and projected households for the county and its cities. To project the number of households in the future, several assumptions must be made. First, the number of persons per household is not constant. The average household size for each jurisdiction was therefore projected into the future based on an extrapolation of historical trends (Table 10). Second, the number of persons in each jurisdiction must be projected. For purposes of preparing the household projections, the exponential projection of population was used for all three jurisdictions (Series B in Tables 6 - 8). Finally, the number of households was projected by dividing the total population by the average household size.

Projections of households are based only on historical trends in household size. They are rough estimates only, since they are based on assumptions about the future size of households in the county and its cities. They should be used for general planning purposes only.

Historically, household size has been diminishing throughout the nation. It is generally accepted that this is the result of people postponing starting families more than in the past, higher rates of single-family parents, and the aging population of “empty nesters” and single survivors.

As a result, the number of housing units is projected to grow faster than the population since the number of persons per housing unit is projected to be reduced. In fact, the projections for the City of Elberton show an increase in housing units despite a slight decrease in population. This is also an artifact of using linear regression, which is based on thirty-year trends rather than ten-year trends, producing an artificial “jump” in housing between 2000 and 2010.

Table 9 Historical and Projected Number of Households Elbert County, Bowman, and Elberton 1970 - 2024			
	Elbert County	Bowman	Elberton
1970	5,458	227	1,694
1975	6,004	269	1,948
1980	6,549	310	2,201
1985	6,832	310	2,275
1990	7,115	310	2,348
1995	7,560	344	2,167
2000	8,004	377	1,985
2005	8,546	417	2,350
2010	9,023	454	2,422
2015	9,526	494	2,497
2020	10,057	538	2,574
2024	10,503	576	2,637
Sources: U.S. Census, 1970, 1980, 1990; 2000 NEGRDC, 2003.			

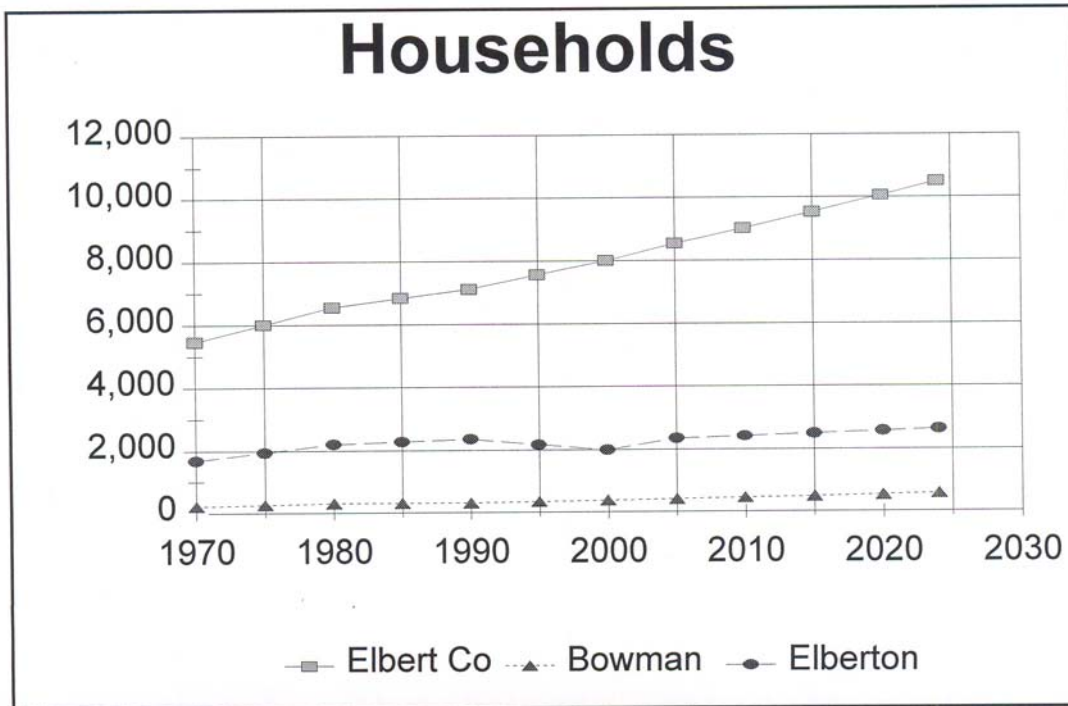


Table 10
Historical Average Household Size
Elbert County, Bowman, Elberton, and Selected Areas, 1970 - 2000
and Projected Household Size
Elbert County, Elberton, 2005 - 2024

Year	Elbert County	Bowman	Elberton	NEGRDC	State	U.S.
1970	3.2	3.2	3.8	3.1	3.3	3.1
1975	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.0	3.1	3.0
1980	2.8	2.9	2.6	2.8	2.8	2.8
1985	2.7	2.8	2.5	2.7	2.8	2.7
1990	2.6	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.7	2.6
1995	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.7	2.6
2000	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.2	2.7	2.6
2005	2.4	2.3	2.0			
2010	2.3	2.1	1.9			
2015	2.2	2.0	1.7			
2020	2.1	1.9	1.6			
2024	2.0	1.9	1.5			

Source: U.S. Census, 1970 - 2000; NEGRDC, 2003

Age Distribution

Table 11 presents the historical trends in the age distribution of Elbert County and its cities. Table 12 presents the same data as percentages of the population and compares those percentages to the region, the state, and the nation. Overall, there are not many significant differences in the distribution of ages between the county and cities. The City of Elberton has a slightly higher proportion of older persons, a trend that is not unusual as older persons often migrate into cities from rural areas and rarely the reverse.

Elbert County had a somewhat lower proportion of the population in the middle age groups, aged 25 through 44, than the average for the state or region. This is the age group of the population most likely to migrate in response to employment opportunities or other factors. Therefore, areas with high growth rates often have a higher proportion of population in these age groups, and areas where there is significant out-migration tend to lose more of this segment of the population.

Table 13 presents projected changes in the age distribution of the populations. To derive these projections, trends in the age group percentages were extrapolated using linear regression. The resulting percentages were then multiplied by the total population projections (Series B in all cases) to arrive at the projected populations by age group.

Table 14 shows the historical and projected median age for each jurisdiction through 2024. The figures were derived by applying linear regression to the historical trends from 1970 through 2000.

Table 11							
Population of Elbert County, Bowman, and Elberton by Age Group							
1970 - 2000							
Age Group	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Elbert County							
0-4	1,496	1,453	1,410	1,392	1,373	1,339	1,304
5-14	3,453	3,265	3,077	2,862	2,647	2,826	3,004
15-24	2,744	2,974	3,203	3,024	2,844	2,784	2,723
25-34	1,996	2,348	2,699	2,739	2,779	2,702	2,625
35-44	1,806	1,934	2,061	2,334	2,607	2,784	2,961
45-54	1,965	1,926	1,887	1,973	2,058	2,421	2,784
55-64	1,915	1,901	1,887	1,826	1,765	1,908	2,050
65 +	1,887	2,211	2,534	2,705	2,876	2,968	3,060
Bowman							
0-4	N/A	N/A	56	58	59	61	62
5-14	N/A	N/A	179	142	105	118	130
15-24	N/A	N/A	141	133	124	118	111
25-34	N/A	N/A	129	120	110	109	108
35-44	N/A	N/A	96	98	100	117	134
45-54	N/A	N/A	70	75	80	99	117
55-64	N/A	N/A	85	80	74	88	102
65 +	N/A	N/A	134	137	139	137	134

Age Group	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Elberton							
0-4	522	465	408	412	416	356	296
5-14	1240	1,033	825	821	816	766	716
15-24	965	957	948	815	681	671	661
25-34	704	717	730	761	791	703	614
35-44	697	623	549	614	678	641	603
45-54	832	707	581	572	563	549	535
55-64	740	705	669	618	567	498	429
65 +	738	857	976	1,073	1170	1,030	889
Source: U.S. Census, 1970 -2000; NEGRDC, 2003							

	Age 0-4	Age 5-14	Age 15-24	Age 25-34	Age 35-44	Age 45-54	Age 55-64	Age 65+
1980								
Nation	7.2	15.3	18.7	16.5	11.4	10.0	9.6	11.3
State	7.6	16.7	19.1	17.1	11.9	9.6	8.5	9.5
Region	7.3	16.0	22.1	16.0	11.1	8.9	8.2	10.5
Elbert	7.5	16.4	17.1	14.4	11.0	10.1	10.1	13.5
Bowman	6.3	20.1	15.8	14.5	10.8	7.9	9.6	15.1
Elberton	6.7	13.5	15.5	11.9	9.0	9.5	10.9	15.9
1990								
Nation	7.6	14.1	14.8	17.3	15.1	10.1	8.5	12.5
State	7.9	14.6	15.7	18.1	15.7	10.3	7.6	10.1
Region	7.5	14.2	19.3	16.6	14.1	9.9	7.5	10.8
Elbert	7.2	14.0	15.0	14.7	13.8	10.9	9.3	15.2
Bowman	7.5	13.3	15.7	13.9	12.6	10.1	9.4	17.6
Elberton	7.3	14.4	12.0	13.9	11.9	9.9	10.0	20.6
2000								
Nation	6.8	14.6	13.9	14.2	16.0	13.4	8.6	12.4
State	7.3	14.9	14.5	15.9	16.5	13.2	8.1	9.6
Region	7.0	14.3	17.6	15.2	15.0	12.4	8.4	10.0
Elbert	6.4	14.6	13.3	12.8	14.4	13.6	10.0	14.9
Bowman	6.9	14.5	12.4	12.0	14.9	13.0	11.4	14.9
Elberton	6.2	15.1	13.9	12.9	12.7	11.3	9.0	18.7
Source: U.S. Census, 1980 - 2000; NEGRDC, 2003								

Table 13 Projected Populations by Age Elbert County, Bowman, Elberton 2005 - 2024					
Elbert County					
	2005	2010	2015	2020	2024
0-4	1,219	1,166	1,111	1,055	1,008
5-14	2,496	2,343	2,185	2,021	1,886
15-24	2,688	2,621	2,552	2,480	2,420
25-34	2,884	2,967	3,052	3,139	3,210
35-44	3,124	3,329	3,540	3,756	3,933
45-54	2,591	2,708	2,828	2,951	3,051
55-64	1,862	1,848	1,833	1,817	1,804
65 +	3,328	3,519	3,716	3,918	4,083
Bowman					
	2005	2010	2015	2020	2024
0-4	69	73	78	82	86
5-14	108	98	87	75	65
15-24	113	109	104	98	94
25-34	109	107	105	102	99
35-44	149	165	181	199	213
45-54	134	151	170	189	206
55-64	107	115	124	133	141
65 +	149	154	159	165	169
Elberton					
	2005	2010	2015	2020	2024
0-4	242	211	182	156	136
5-14	498	427	361	300	255
15-24	473	410	352	299	259
25-34	567	540	515	490	472
35-44	506	485	465	445	430
45-54	374	330	289	250	222
55-64	338	289	244	202	171
65 +	907	898	889	879	870
Source: NEGRDC, 2003					

Year	Elbert County	Bowman	Elberton
1970	29.5	<i>N/A</i>	31.7
1975	30.3	<i>N/A</i>	32.8
1980	31.1	30.3	33.9
1985	32.8	32.7	35.5
1990	34.4	35.0	37.0
1995	35.8	36.3	36.9
2000	37.2	37.5	36.7
2005	38.4	39.7	38.7
2010	39.7	41.5	39.6
2015	41.0	43.3	40.5
2020	42.4	45.1	41.5
2024	43.4	46.6	42.2

Racial Distribution

Table 15 shows the trends in the racial makeup of Elbert County from 1980 through 2000. The majority of the population of Elbert County and its cities is white. All three jurisdictions show a high level of racial diversity. The percentages of white persons in the county and the City of Bowman have remained virtually constant for the past two decades. The percentage of white persons in Elberton has decreased by about nine percentage points over the same time period. The number and percent of other races have remained quite low. It should be noted that prior to 2000, respondents to the Census had to choose one race on the questionnaire. In 2000, however, respondents were able to choose more than one race. In Table 15, all persons identifying themselves or their family members as more than one race are included in the "other" category.

There are no reasons to conclude that the trends in the racial mix of the three populations will change in the next two decades. The change in racial composition in Elbert County is very small; the county will probably continue to gradually become more diverse. The changes in Bowman are inconsistent, and its small population implies that the racial mix will continue to fluctuate as a percent as people of different races move in and out of the town. The racial mix of Elberton has shown a significant and steady decline in the percentage of the population that is white, and this trend will likely continue in the next two decades as a higher percentage of whites migrate out of the city than other races. It is also likely that in future censuses the proportion of persons identifying themselves as "more than one race" and races other than white or black will increase.

**Table 15
Racial Composition of the Population
Elbert County, Bowman, and Elberton
1980 - 2000**

Number by Race															
	1980			1985			1990			1995			2000		
	White	Black	Other	White	Black	Other	White	Black	Other	White	Black	Other	White	Black	Other*
Elbert Co	12,762	5,767	61	12,891	5,743	98	13,019	5,718	134	13,375	6,023	294	13,730	6,328	453
Bowman	687	193	0	658	177	0	628	161	0	647	190	8	665	218	15
Elberton	3,570	2,023	26	3,534	2,066	26	3,497	2,109	26	3,037	2,074	77	2,577	2,039	127

Percent															
	1980			1985			1990			1995			2000		
	White	Black	Other	White	Black	Other	White	Black	Other	White	Black	Other	White	Black	Other*
Elbert Co	68.6	31.0	0.3	68.8	30.7	0.5	69.0	30.3	0.7	67.9	30.6	1.5	66.9	30.9	2.2
Bowman	78.1	21.9	0.0	78.8	21.2	0.0	79.6	20.4	0.0	76.6	22.5	0.9	74.1	24.3	1.7
Elberton	63.5	36.0	0.5	62.8	36.7	0.5	62.1	37.4	0.5	58.5	40.0	1.5	54.3	43.0	2.7

Source: U.S. Census, 1980 -2000

*Note: "Other" category for 2000 for the first time includes persons identifying themselves as more than one race.

Education

Table 16 presents data on the education attainment of persons 25 years of age or older for Elbert County, Bowman, and Elberton, by percent, and in comparison with the Northeast Georgia region, the state, and the nation. All of the jurisdictions have seen increases in the educational levels of their populations over the past two decades. However, all three jurisdictions lag behind the region, the state, and the nation in educational attainment.

Table 17 compares some standard measures of academic success for Elbert County schools with those of the region and the state. Elbert County schools show no significant difference in class completion or dropout rates. However, Elbert County students lag behind the state in advancing to post-secondary education and overall success on standardized tests.

Elbert County's (and the region's) high rate of persons with only a grade school education or less is generally thought to be a legacy of a time when school enrollment was not required past the eighth grade or, later, the early years of high school. Older people, who may not have attended higher grades, make up almost all of this population. (Local educators report that children are not leaving Elbert County schools before age 16.) The effect is masked in other, very rapidly growing areas, such as the state and the Northeast Georgia region as a whole, because the vast majority of people in-migrating to jobs have marketable skills and qualifications, including high school and college degrees. It is probable that Elbert County's slower rate of growth "reveals" this population rather than it being a characteristic of the current crop of students. In fact, Elbert County's rates of class completion and dropout rates are not significantly different from the state or region.

The low percentage of people in the county with higher education, i.e. 1-3 years of college or college degrees, is more of an issue. The primary reason for the low percentage of persons with higher degrees is the lack of jobs in the county requiring that level of education. That in turn provides little incentive for graduating students to move on to post-secondary education; and those that do generally leave the county to pursue their degree and do not return.

Finally, the lack of comparative success by Elbert County school graduates in measures of standardized tests indicates that there is room for improvement in the school system.

Table 16					
Educational Attainment					
Elbert County, Bowman, Elberton, and Selected Areas					
(Percent of Population 25 Years and Older)					
1980 - 2000					
	Elem 0-8	HS 1-3	HS Grad	Coll 1-3	Coll Grad +
1980					
Nation	18	14	37	15	17
State	24	20	28	13	15
Region	29	23	24	9	15
Elbert County	31	28	26	7	8
Bowman	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Elberton	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1990					
Nation	10	14	30	25	20
State	12	17	30	22	19
Region	15	21	30	16	17
Elbert County	18	28	34	10	11
Bowman	21	28	30	10	12
Elberton	19	28	31	11	12
2000					
Nation	8	12	29	21	31
State	8	14	29	20	30
Region	8	17	33	18	24
Elbert County	11	22	39	14	14
Bowman	16	19	35	17	14
Elberton	11	24	34	12	19
Source: U.S. Census, 1980 - 2000					

Table 17 Measures of Academic Success Elbert County and Selected Areas 1997 - 2001				
	Class Completion, 1997 - 2001 (%)	% of Graduating Class Attending Post-secondary Schools, 2001	Dropout Rates, Grades 9 - 12	% Passing All Four Graduation Tests on First Attempt
Region Average	69.3	42	6.9	62
State	71.1	45	6.4	65
Elbert County	69.5	35	6.7	53
Source: Georgia County Guide, 2002.				

Income

Table 18 compares Elbert County incomes with those of the state. Although Elbert County and its cities have lower incomes than the state, the situation is improving. For example, Elbert County raised its per capita income from 30% of the state's in 1969 to nearly 70% of the state's in 2000.

Table 19 shows the distribution of household incomes by income class for the county, the cities, and the state. The income distributions in the middle-income households are not significantly different from the state averages, but Elbert County and its cities have higher percentages of incomes in the lower groups than the state, and fewer in the very high-income categories.

Economic conditions, existing, past, and future, are addressed more fully in *Chapter 3: Economic Development*. However, some general comments are presented here. Historically, jobs in Elbert County have been concentrated in low-wage-paying industries such as agriculture, mineral extraction, and forestry. It is interesting that the recent introduction of poultry processing in the county and in neighboring counties is seen as having the potential for raising the income level of the residents. This has kept wages low generally in comparison with the state and region. The economic environment has had effects on other demographic characteristics: the slow rate of growth and immigration, the lack of incentive for seeking higher degrees than high school, and the out-migration of college-bound graduates.

In other, once-rural counties of Northeast Georgia, and of North Georgia generally, population, income, and wealth have increased rapidly when a county is adjacent to a powerful job center, such as the Metropolitan Statistical Areas of Atlanta, Athens, and Gainesville. Adjacent counties first become "bedroom communities" for the job centers, then commercial development follows to serve the burgeoning population, and finally larger, primary, industries follow and the "bedroom community" becomes a new job center in its own right. Elbert County is not adjacent to a growth center. Unless and until the economic structure of the county changes significantly, the county will continue to experience the trends in population, income, and education that it has experienced over the past thirty years. Such a change is likely to be gradual rather than swift.

Table 18
Trends in Selected Measures of Income
Elbert County, Bowman, Elberton, and the State
1969 - 1999

Per Capita Income							
Area	1969	1974	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999
Elbert County	2,081	3,552	5,023	7,156	9,288	11,912	14,535
Bowman	NA	NA	NA	NA	9,548	12,066	14,584
Elberton	NA	NA	5,505	7,433	9,361	12,424	15,486
Georgia	6,827	7,298	7,769	9,099	13,631	17,393	21,154
Median Household Income							
Area	1969	1974	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999
Elbert County	6,400	10,451	14,501	17,501	20,501	24,613	28,724
Bowman	NA	NA	NA	NA	17,589	20,836	24,083
Elberton	6,521	11,018	15,514	16,634	17,753	20,500	23,246
Georgia	24,461	23,410	22,358	25,261	29,021	35,727	42,433

Source: U.S. Census, 1970, 1980, 2000

Table 19
Distributions of Households by Income
Percent of Households
1999

	Elbert County	Bowman	Elberton	Georgia
Less than 10,000	15.2	23.7	23.5	10.1
10,000 to 14,999	12.3	14.4	11.3	5.9
15,000 to 24,999	16.6	13.3	17.5	12.3
25,000 to 34,999	15.2	13.1	12.8	12.6
35,000 to 49,999	17.5	16.5	12.9	16.7
50,000 to 74,999	14.5	8.5	11.8	19.7
75,000 to 99,999	4.8	2.9	5.4	10.4
100,000 to 149,999	2.5	6.1	3.0	7.8
150,000 to 199,999	0.6	0.8	0.7	2.2
200,000 or more	0.7	0.5	1.1	2.4

Source: U.S. Census, 2000