




CHAPTER 2 POPULATION



Chapter 2 – Population

INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes information about Augusta's residents and households, including past trends, current characteristics, and demographic forecasts. The data sources used in this chapter include the U. S. Bureau of the Census, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and ESRI, Inc. Forecast of future population and employment were made by the Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission. The data in this chapter are an important part of the Community Assessment. Population, household and employment forecasts help determine the future demand for housing, jobs, infrastructure improvements, and land development in the city.

THE PLANNING AREA

Augusta, the county seat for Richmond County, is located in east central Georgia adjacent to the state's border with South Carolina. There are two other incorporated places in Richmond County, the city of Hephzibah and the city of Blythe. Augusta is a central city in the Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Other counties in the MSA are Columbia, McDuffie and Burke in Georgia and Aiken and Edgefield in South Carolina. Burke County was added to the MSA in 2003.

Augusta's Comprehensive Plan covers all of Richmond County, except for Hephzibah, Blythe and Fort Gordon. Hephzibah and Blythe have their own comprehensive plans, and separate planning programs. Fort Gordon is a federal military installation. Data comparisons include the other cities and counties in the metropolitan area, as appropriate. In addition, some trends in Augusta are compared to those in other Georgia cities and the state of Georgia.

POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD TRENDS

Augusta's population and household characteristics reflect those of an older city that has merged with newer suburbs. Augusta and Richmond County consolidated on January 1, 1996. Table P-1 shows the change in population and households in Richmond County between 1980 and 2000. Overall, the local changes reflect the trend toward suburbanization evident throughout the United States in recent decades. As the total population and households in the "old" city declined, comparable figures for the then unincorporated part of Richmond County rose. The 2000 Census figures reflect the consolidation of the city and the county, so the suburbanization trend is not as evident.

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**Table P-1
Population and Household Trends, 1980-2000
Richmond County**

	1980	1990	2000
Total Population			
Richmond County	181,620	189,719	199,775
Augusta*	47,532	44,639	195,182
Hephzibah**	1,452	2,466	3,880
Blythe**	365	300	713
Unincorporated	132,280	142,314	0
Total Households			
Richmond County	59,501	68,675	73,920
Augusta	19,108	18,819	72,307
Hephzibah	435	822	1,374
Blythe	121	101	240
Unincorporated	39,837	48,933	0
Average Household Size			
Richmond County	2.81	2.61	2.55
Augusta	2.40	2.26	2.55

Notes: * Augusta and Richmond County consolidated on January 1, 1996
 ** Hephzibah annexed additional land area during the 1980s and early 1990s
 ** Blythe annexed additional land during the early 1990s

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990 and 2000

Richmond County's population growth, and by extension the city of Augusta's, is relatively low in comparison to the other counties in the Augusta MSA and the state of Georgia. Table P-2 shows that between 1990 and the year 2000, Richmond County's population growth rate was lower than the other counties, the MSA, and the state of Georgia. A similar trend was evident in earlier decades. Census Bureau estimates, included in the same table, reveal that since the year 2000, Richmond County's population has actually declined by an estimated 2.69 percent. The population in the other MSA counties continued to increase, with Columbia County leading the way with an estimated 19.1% increase in population.

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Table P-2
Comparison of Population Trends, 1990-2006
Augusta MSA Counties and the State of Georgia

	Total Population			Percent Change	
	1990	2000	2006	1990-2000	2000-2006
Burke Co., GA	20,579	22,243	22,986	8.09%	3.34%
Columbia Co., GA	66,910	89,288	106,887	33.44%	19.71%
McDuffie Co., GA	20,119	21,231	21,917	5.53%	3.23%
Richmond Co., GA	189,719	199,775	194,398	5.30%	-2.69%
Aiken Co., SC	120,940	142,552	151,800	17.87%	6.49%
Edgefield Co., SC	18,375	24,595	25,261	33.85%	2.71%
Augusta MSA	436,642	499,684	523,249	14.44%	4.72%
State of Georgia	6,478,216	8,186,453	9,363,941	26.37%	14.38%

SOURCE: U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000. Census Bureau Estimates, July 1, 2006

Recent forecasts by ESRI indicate that the total population of Augusta and Richmond County is declining slightly at the present time, even as the total number of households increases. Table P-3 indicates that the annual rate of change in total population and households in the city, county and MSA are lower than comparable figures for the state of Georgia

Table P-3
Recent Population and Household Trends, 2000-2010
Georgia, Augusta MSA, Richmond County and Augusta

	2000	2005	2010	Annual Rate of Change 2005-2010
Total Population				
Georgia	8,186,453	9,133,680	10,162,517	2.16%
Augusta-Aiken MSA	499,684	522,838	544,179	0.8%
Richmond County	199,775	200,438	199,901	-0.05%
Augusta	195,182	195,621	195,018	-0.06%
Total Households				
Georgia	3,006,369	3,371,161	3,756,173	2.19%
Augusta-Aiken MSA	184,801	196,009	205,553	0.96%

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Richmond County	73,920	74,837	74,980	0.04%
Augusta	72,307	73,127	73,238	0.03%
Average Household Size				
Georgia	2.65	2.64	2.64	
Augusta-Aiken MSA	2.61	2.58	2.56	
Richmond County	2.55	2.53	2.52	
Augusta	2.55	2.52	2.51	

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000; ESRI Forecasts for 2005 and 2010

NOTE: Burke County, Georgia was added to the Augusta-Aiken MSA in December 2003

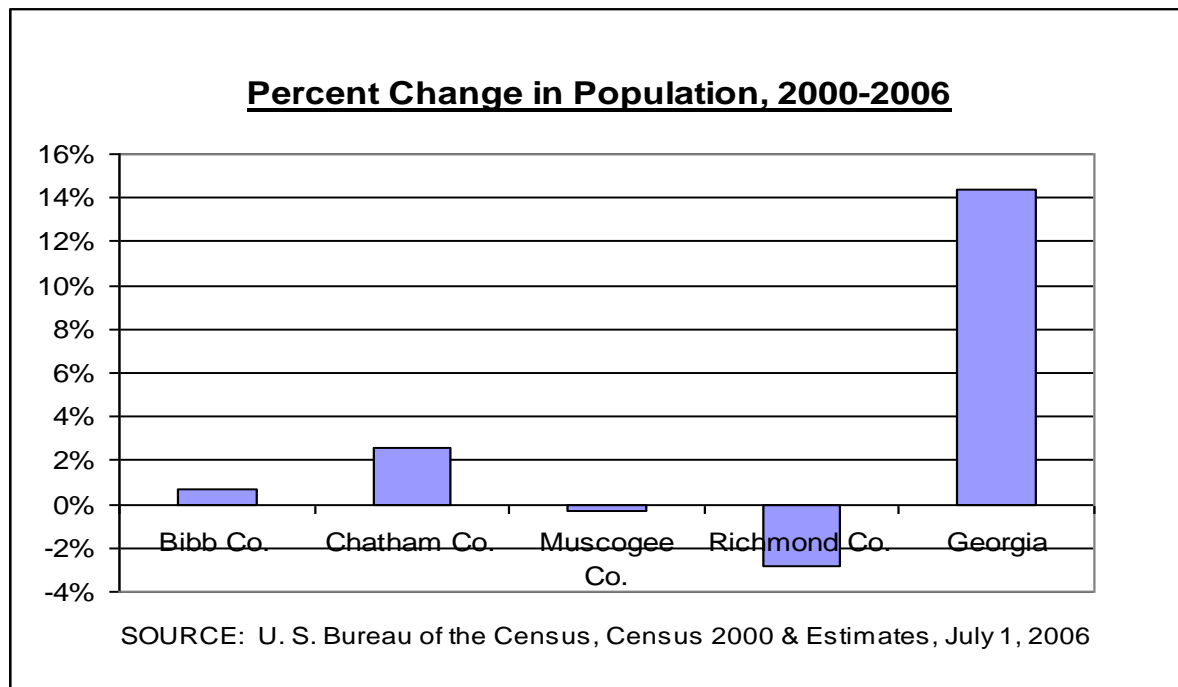
Low population growth, or population decline, is common among the second tier cities in the state. Table P-4 compares year 2000 Census and year 2006 Census estimates of total population in four counties with those of the corresponding metropolitan areas in which they are located. The table reveals that between 2000 and 2006 the counties that are home to Macon, Savannah, Columbus and Augusta experienced lower population growth than the corresponding metropolitan area. In the case of Muscogee County (Columbus) and Richmond County (Augusta), total population is estimated to have declined slightly. The chart following the table compares the percent change in population in the subject counties with the state of Georgia change between 2000 and 2006.

Table P-4
Comparisons of Population Trends, 2000-2006
Selected Counties and MSAs in Georgia

County	Total Population		Change in Population	
	2000	2006	Number	Percent
Bibb	153,887	154,903	1,016	0.66%
Chatham	232,048	238,039	5,991	2.58%
Muscogee	186,291	185,799	-492	-0.26%
Richmond	199,775	194,135	-5,640	-2.82%
Metropolitan Statistical Area				
Macon, GA	222,368	229,326	6,958	3.13%
Savannah, GA	293,000	320,013	27,013	9.22%
Columbus, GA-AL	281,768	288,847	7,079	2.51%
Augusta-Aiken, GA-SC	499,684	523,249	23,565	4.72%

SOURCE: U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000. Census Bureau Estimates, July 1, 2006. Macon is in Bibb County; Savannah is in Chatham County and Columbus is in Muscogee County.

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Race and Sex Characteristics

Table P-5 shows the 2000 population by race and Hispanic Origin, and forecasts for the years 2005 and 2010, for Richmond County and Augusta. The table indicates that as of the 2000 Census Blacks/African-Americans accounted for 49.8% of Richmond County's total population and Whites comprised 45.6% of the county's population. The number of persons of other races comprised only 4.6 % of the total population, but has more than doubled in the past 20 years.

Being the largest municipality in Richmond County, Augusta's racial makeup mirrors that of the county as a whole. In the year 2000, Augusta's population was 44% White, 50.4% Black or African-American, and 4.7% other races. Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin totaled 5,447 or 2.8% of the city's population. This represents an increase of 1,783 (48.6%) in the Hispanic population since 1990. The forecasts for the year 2005 and 2010, as well as the chart on the next page, show that the trend of increasing minority population is projected to continue in the future.

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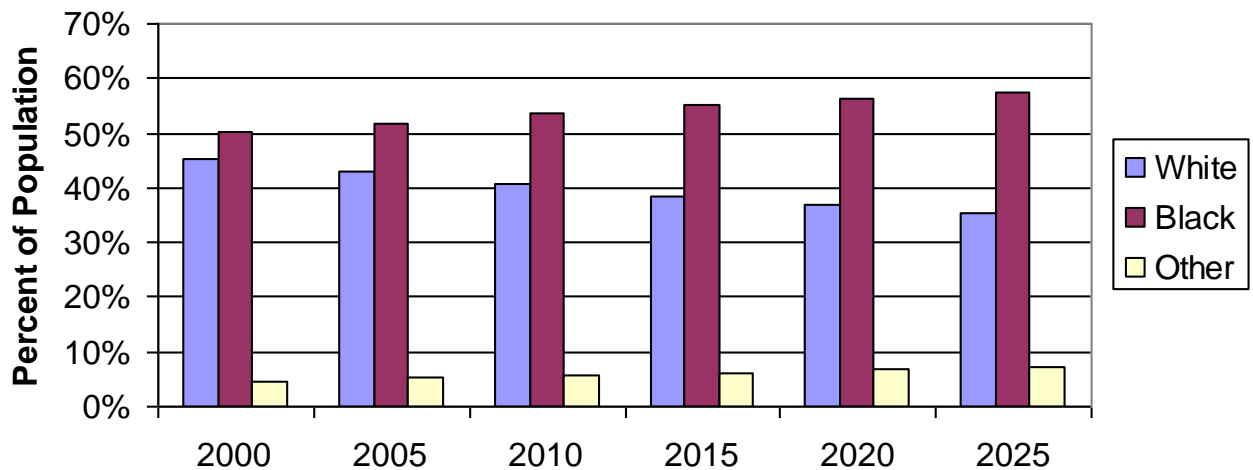
**Table P-5
Population Trends by Race and Hispanic Origin, 2000-2010
Richmond County**

Year	2000		2005		2010	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Richmond County						
White	91,006	45.6%	84,243	42.0%	77,559	38.8%
Black	99,391	49.8%	105,422	52.5%	110,177	55.1%
Other	9,378	4.6%	10,773	5.5%	12,165	6.1%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	5,545	2.8%	6,732	3.4%	8,036	4.0%
Augusta						
White	87,651	44.9%	80,989	41.4%	74,477	38.2%
Black	98,320	50.4%	104,131	53.2%	108,704	55.7%
Other	9,211	4.7%	10,499	5.4%	11,836	6.1%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	5,447	2.8%	6,588	3.4%	7,849	4.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population and Housing. ESRI forecasts for 2005 and 2010

Projection of Racial Trends Richmond County, 2005-2025

Source: Woods & Poole, Inc.



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Table P-6 compares 1990 and 2000 population by sex for Richmond County and the state of Georgia. The figures indicate that the percentage of males and females in Richmond County is forecasted to change only slightly between 2000 and 2010. Compared to the state, Richmond County has a higher percentage of females and lower percentage of males.

Table P-6
Population by Sex, 2000-2010
Richmond County and the State of Georgia

Year	2000		2005		2010	
	Richmond Co.	Georgia	Richmond Co.	Georgia	Richmond Co.	Georgia
Male	96,375	4,027,113	97,021	4,512,311	96,859	5,028,496
Female	103,400	4,159,340	103,417	4,621,369	103,042	5,134,021
% Male	48.2%	49.2%	48.4%	49.4%	48.5%	49.5%
% Female	51.8%	50.8%	51.6%	50.6%	51.5%	50.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population and Housing. ESRI forecasts for 2005 and 2010

Population by Age

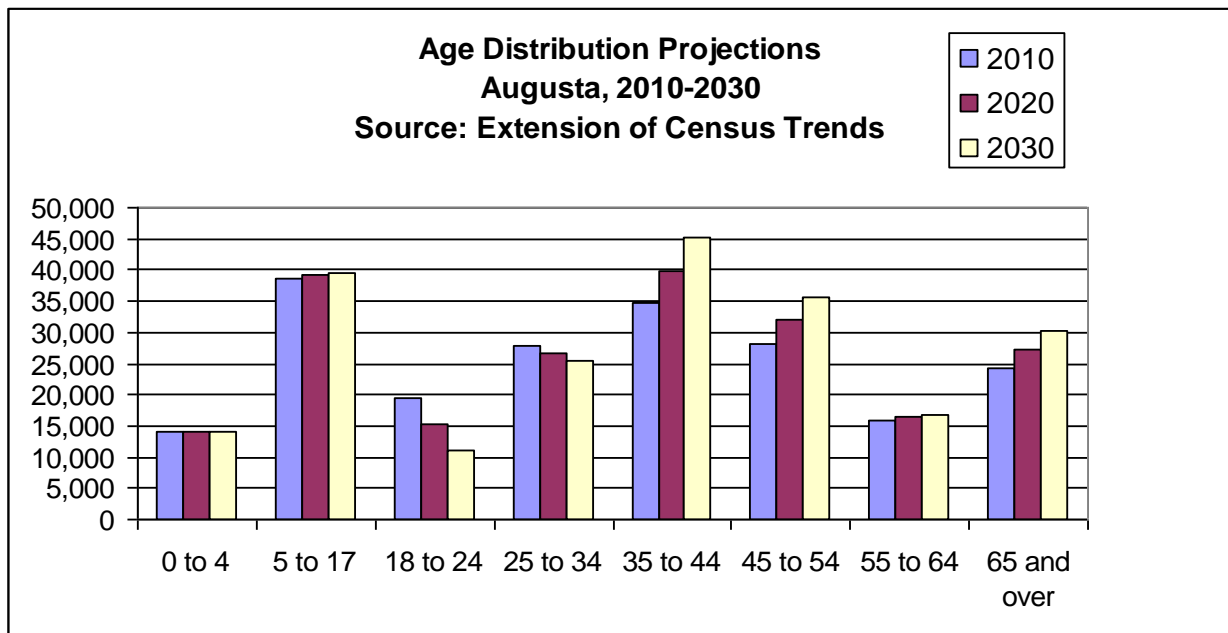
Augusta and Richmond County continue to reflect the age characteristics of a relatively mature community. Table P-7 shows forecasted trends in age distribution for Richmond County between 2000 and 2010. Overall, the figures project a decline in the number of children ages 5-13, teenagers and young adults, and an increase in the number of middle-age, older adults and the elderly. The chart following Table P-7 shows age distribution projections for the county to the year 2030. The chart reflects a continuation of recent trends, namely a decline in the number of young adults and a net increase in the number of middle-age and older adults. The number of pre-school children is expected to remain static, but the school-age population is projected to increase over the long term.

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**Table P-7
Trends in Population by Age
Richmond County, 2000-2010**

<u>Age Bracket</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>Change, 2000 - 2010</u>	
				<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Under 5 years	14,244	14,479	14,356	112	0.79%
5-13	27,528	24,884	23,188	(4,340)	-15.77%
14-17	11,836	11,491	10,843	(993)	-8.39%
18-20	10,836	10,998	10,834	(2)	-0.02%
21-24	13,045	13,809	13,889	844	6.47%
25-34	29,633	29,841	29,381	(252)	-0.85%
35-44	30,053	27,185	25,691	(4,362)	-14.51%
45-54	25,076	27,117	26,955	1,879	7.49%
55-64	15,879	18,175	21,354	5,475	34.48%
65 and over	21,645	22,459	23,408	1,763	8.15%
TOTAL Population	199,775	200,438	199,899	124	0.06%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population and Housing. ESRI forecasts for 2005 and 2010



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Educational Attainment

Overall education levels are improving in Richmond County. Table P-8 shows that the number and percentage of adult residents with less than a high school education declined between 1990 and 2000. The percentage of the population with at least a high school education increased from 71% to 78%. The number and percentage of residents with a Bachelor's and/advanced degree increased as well.

When compared to neighboring counties and the state of Georgia, however, Richmond County lags in terms of educational attainment. Statewide, a higher proportion of adults have college degrees, and a lower percentage have less than high school education. Almost a third of the adults in Columbia County have a college degree, compared to only 18.6 % in Richmond County. The contrast among educational attainment levels in Richmond, Columbia and McDuffie Counties is partly explained by the fact that demographic characteristics vary widely in the three counties. Table P-9 shows recent trends in high school graduation test scores, high school dropout rates and the percentage of Richmond County high school graduates attending Georgia public colleges and technical schools.

School Years Completed	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less Than 9 th Grade	14,136	12.3%	9,144	7.5%
12 th Grade, No Diploma	19,191	16.7%	17,867	14.6%
High School Graduate	34,495	30.1%	36,323	29.6%
Some College, No Degree	20,628	18.0%	28,392	23.2%
Associate Degree	6,451	5.6%	7,957	6.5%
Bachelor's Degree	13,185	11.5%	14,767	12.0%
Graduate Degree	6,604	5.8%	8,142	6.6%
Total Persons 25+	114,690		122,592	
% High School Graduates	70.9%		78.0%	

SOURCE: U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000

Educational Attainment, 2000	Richmond County	Columbia County	McDuffie County	Georgia
Not High School Graduate	22.10%	12.10%	33.30%	21.40%
High School Graduate	59.30%	55.90%	55.00%	54.30%
College Degree	18.60%	32.00%	11.70%	24.30%

SOURCE: U. S. Bureau of the Census, SF 3, 2000

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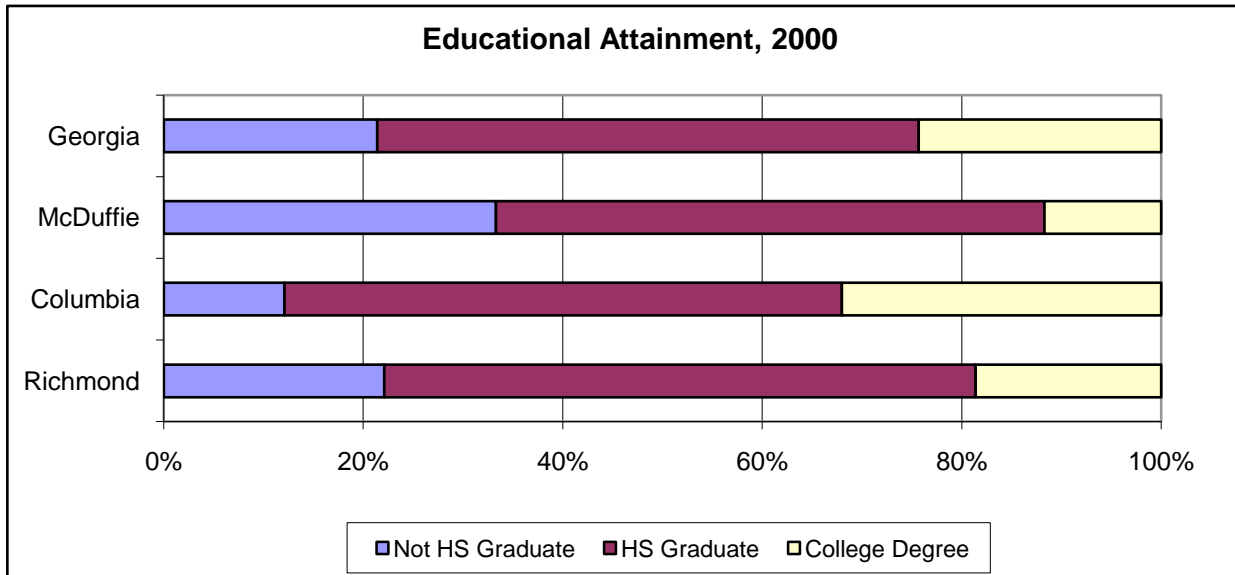


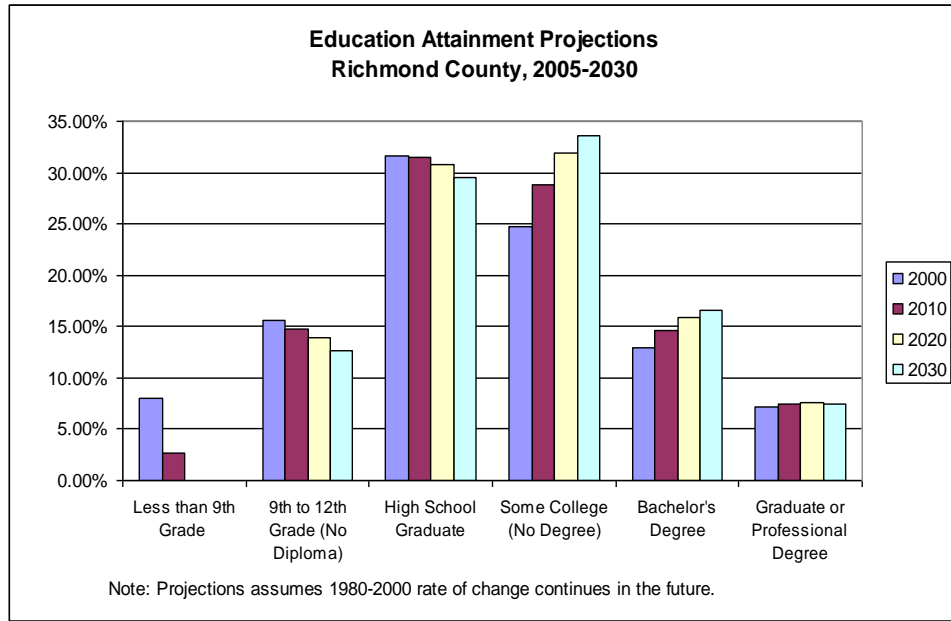
Table P-9
Selected Education Statistics
Richmond County, 1995-2001

Category	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
High School Graduation Test Scores (All Components)	77%	70%	57%	59%	58%	60%	61%
High School Dropout Rate	12.40%	10.30%	7.90%	7.50%	5.90%	6.10%	5.40%
Graduates Attending Georgia Public Colleges	25.80%	34.90%	33.40%	32.90%	30.00%	NA	NA
Graduates Attending Georgia Public Technical Schools	12.00%	9.50%	6.80%	6.60%	8.00%	10.10%	NA

Source: Georgia Department of Education

The following chart shows the forecasted change in education attainment for Richmond County over the next two decades. The forecast is based on the assumption that current trends will continue in the future. This means that as time goes by a higher percentage of Richmond County adults will have attained some college or a college degree. Conversely, the number of adults without a high school diploma will decline.

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Income

Historically, Richmond County has ranked in the top ten counties in the state in terms of total personal income. Total personal income is defined as the income that is received by, or on behalf of, all the residents who live in the county. The high rank order is due in large part to the fact that Richmond County is among the largest in terms of population. The figures in Table P-10 show that total personal income of Richmond County residents rose each year between 2000 and 2005. Even so, the average annual growth rate of total personal income in Richmond County is still lower than the state and metropolitan area averages.

**Table P-10
Total Personal Income Trends, 2000-2005
Richmond, Columbia & McDuffie County, Augusta MSA and Georgia**

	Richmond	Columbia	McDuffie	Augusta MSA	Georgia
Total Personal Income*					
2000	\$4,410.9	\$2,672.4	\$480.6	\$11,963.4	\$230,355.7
2001	\$4,532.0	\$2,767.8	\$509.2	\$12,471.9	\$240,616.1
2002	\$4,741.9	\$2,898.1	\$506.0	\$12,938.5	\$244,957.0
2003	\$4,806.5	\$3,090.3	\$513.6	\$13,311.3	\$250,805.6
2004	\$4,955.5	\$3,347.1	\$545.0	\$13,944.5	\$264,728.0
2005	\$5,152.2	\$3,655.7	\$564.2	\$14,687.0	\$282,321.9

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Average Annual Growth Rate, 1969- 2005	6.7%	11.5%	7.3%	7.8%	8.6%
* In millions of dollars SOURCE: U. S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, website Download, October 9, 2007					

Median household income and per capita income are indicators of the buying power of residents in a community. Table P-11 indicates that median household and per capita income in Augusta and Richmond County are projected to increase between 2000 and 2010. Even with the increases, Augusta figures continue to lag behind comparable averages for the state and metropolitan area. Among the factors that probably contribute to Augusta's low averages are higher percentages of poverty households, non-family households, and households receiving public assistance.

Table P-11
Household and Per Capita Income Trends, 2000-2010
Augusta, Richmond County, Augusta MSA and Georgia

					Augusta as a Percentage of		
	Augusta	Richmond County	Augusta MSA	Georgia	Richmond County	Augusta MSA	GA
Per Capita Income							
2000	\$17,117	\$17,088	\$18,494	\$21,154	100.01%	92.55%	81.0
2005	\$20,997	\$20,940	\$22,728	\$26,533	100.02%	92.38%	79.1
2010	\$26,538	\$26,452	\$28,304	\$33,740	100.03%	93.76%	78.6
Median Household Income							
2000	\$33,058	\$33,161	\$37,689	\$42,686	99.69%	87.71%	77.4
2005	\$38,730	\$38,849	\$44,827	\$51,646	99.69%	86.40%	75.0
2010	\$45,281	\$45,419	\$52,877	\$62,385	99.69%	85.63%	72.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population and Housing. ESRI forecasts for 2005 and 2010

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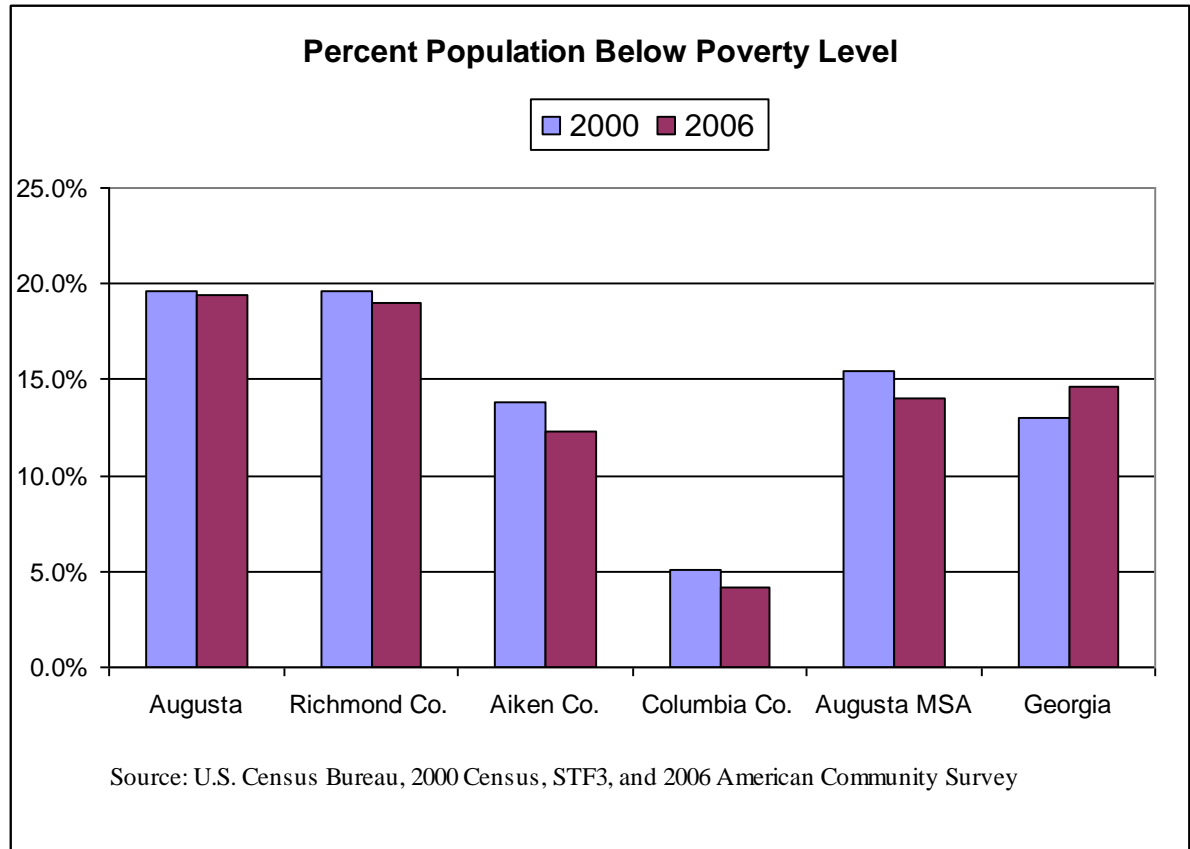
Table P-12 summarizes the estimated change in household income distribution for Augusta between 2000 and 2010. The table shows that the number of households with income below \$35,000 is expected to decline during the decade. During the same period the number of households with income \$35,000 and higher is forecast to increase. The forecasted increase is particularly significant for households with income of \$75,000 and higher.

	Number of Households		Percent of Total Households	
	2000	2010	2000	2010
< \$15,000	15,964	12,119	22.10%	16.50%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	11,377	8,543	15.70%	11.70%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	10,638	7,942	14.70%	10.80%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	12,995	11,394	18.00%	15.60%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	11,677	13,387	16.10%	18.30%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	5,040	7,364	7.00%	10.10%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	2,858	7,058	3.90%	9.60%
\$150,000 - \$199,000	709	2,345	1.00%	3.20%
\$200,000+	1,102	3,088	1.50%	4.20%
Total Households	72,360	73,240		

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population and Housing. ESRI forecast for 2010

The two preceding tables indicate that household and per capita income levels in Augusta will continue to rise. The following chart indicates that the poverty level in Augusta and Richmond County remains higher than comparable levels for the Augusta MSA, the state of Georgia and selected counties in the Augusta MSA.

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Population by Census Tracts

Census tracts are small, relatively permanent statistical subdivisions of a county delineated for the purpose of presenting census data. Census tracts are delineated by local officials and are designed to be relatively homogeneous units with regard to population characteristics, economic status, and to contain between 2,500 and 8,000 residents. For the 2000 Census, Richmond County was divided into forty (40) census tracts, the same number as in the 1990 census.

Figure 2 shows the population trends by census tract for Richmond County. Overall the information offers more evidence of the trend toward suburbanization. During the 1990s the population declined in several census tracts in and near the old city limits. Conversely, census tracts experiencing the largest net population increase are concentrated in south and west Augusta. This continues a trend observed over the last three decades.

POPULATION, HOUSEHOLD AND EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

The Community Assessment includes projections of population, household and employment growth to the year 2030. The forecasts are made based on the assumption that the city limits of the three municipalities - Augusta, Hephzibah and Blythe - will not change. Georgia law

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prohibits municipal annexation within three miles of another municipality. Augusta shares a common border with both Hephzibah and Blythe.

Population Projections

Table P-13 shows population projections for Richmond County, Augusta, Hephzibah and Blythe in five-year increments to the year 2030. The projections are based on an extension of population trends experienced over the last twenty-five years. While recent Census Bureau estimates reflect a decline in Augusta’s population since the 2000 Census, the projections reflect an expected increase in population over the long term. The projections assume that Hephzibah and Blythe will continue to account for a relatively small percentage of the county's total population. Three sets of projections - high, medium, and low - were made for the county. The projections reflected growth rates below, on, and above the population change experienced during the last twenty-five years. Population was then allocated to each of the three municipalities based on the percentage of the population each has historically captured. The medium level projection was selected for use in the Comprehensive Plan.

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Richmond County	199,775	200,075	202,476	205,715	209,521	214,445	219,913
Augusta	195,182	194,953	197,292	200,449	204,157	208,955	214,283
Hephzibah	3,880	4,322	4,373	4,443	4,526	4,632	4,750
Blythe	713	800	810	823	838	858	880

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; 2005-2030 Projections by the Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission, October 2007

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Household and Housing Projections

Table P-14 includes household and housing unit projections for Augusta. The projections are based on the foregoing population forecasts. They are limited to Augusta because this is the area the City Commission has authority over regarding land use decisions.

The number of households is based on the average size for the city projected at five-year intervals to 2030. Dividing the future population in households by the average household size yields the number of households at each five-year interval. The population in group quarters (e.g. dormitories, correctional facilities, nursing homes) is assumed to remain approximately 5.4% of the total population over the forecast period. The total number of households in Augusta is projected to increase by over 11,000 between 2010 and 2030. The number of households is the same as the number of occupied housing units. Applying an occupancy factor yields the total number of housing units, including those that are vacant. The occupancy factor represents the percentage of all units expected to be occupied.

Table P- 14
Household and Housing Unit Projections
Augusta, 2005-2030
October 2, 2007

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Number of Households	72,307	73,629	76,033	78,859	81,679	84,675	87,967
Persons Per Household	2.55	2.5	2.45	2.4	2.36	2.33	2.3
Population in Households	184,312	184,072	186,281	189,262	192,763	197,293	202,324
Group Quarters Pop.	10,870	10,881	11,011	11,187	11,394	11,662	11,959
Total Population	195,182	194,953	197,292	200,449	204,157	208,955	214,283
Occupancy Rate	0.898	0.915	0.925	0.925	0.925	0.925	0.925
Total Housing Units	80,481	80,292	82,192	85,247	88,295	91,534	95,092

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; 2005-2030 Projections by the Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission, October 2007

Employment Projections

The Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission prepared employment projections for the Comprehensive Plan. The projections are based on an analysis of employment trends over the last four decades, with a particular emphasis on the last twenty years. Sources of

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information reviewed include the U. S. Bureau of the Census and the Georgia Department of Labor. The projections use employment categories as reported to the Georgia Department of Labor and based on the North American Industrial Classification System. The projections are based on the following assumptions:

- ❑ Augusta will continue to serve as the economic hub of the metropolitan area even as some suburban counties increase employment at a faster rate
- ❑ The Service, Retail Trade and Government categories will continue to account for more than 80% of the jobs in Richmond County.

Employment in Richmond County is projected to increase by approximately 21% over the next two decades or so, from 103,000 in 2006 to over 124,000 in 2030. It is important to note that this is the number of people working in the county, not the number of county residents who have jobs. The projections indicate that employment in the Service, Retail Trade, and Government sectors will increase the most over the planning period. Table-15 shows the forecasted changes in all of the major employment sectors.

CATEGORY	YEAR						
	2001	2006	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Construction	4,696	4,525	4,743	4,932	5,105	5,269	5,453
Manufacturing	11,894	9,823	10,296	10,708	11,082	11,437	11,837
Wholesale Trade	2,239	3,196	3,350	3,484	3,606	3,721	3,851
Retail Trade	13,092	11,992	12,569	13,072	13,530	13,962	14,451
Service	47,851	48,614	50,954	52,992	54,847	56,602	58,583
Government	24,282	24,984	26,187	27,234	28,187	29,089	30,107
Other*	524	303	318	330	342	353	365
TOTAL	104,578	103,437	108,416	112,752	116,699	120,433	124,648
* Other includes Agriculture, Mining and unclassified jobs							
Sources: Georgia Department of Labor, 2001 and 2006: 2010-2030 projections by the Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission							

Chapter 2 – Population

ASSESSMENT

Population and Households

Augusta-Richmond County is a consolidated city – county whose population and household growth reflect the overall trend toward suburbanization over the last several decades. Prior to World War II the then city of Augusta accounted for the largest percentage of the population and households in Richmond County. Following the war, the area's population and households increased with the development of several large facilities in the region (e.g. Clarks Hill Dam and Lake, Savannah River Plant). These and other developments resulted in a substantial increase in population and households, primarily in the then unincorporated part of Richmond County and in other counties and cities in the metropolitan area. Census data show that between 1950 and 1990 the population of unincorporated Richmond County increased from 36,575 to 142,394. During the same period, the population of the then city of Augusta declined from 71,508 to 44,639.

Augusta and Richmond County consolidated on January 1, 1996, so the suburbanization trend is not as evident in the 2000 census figures. Nonetheless, suburbanization continues to the present day, although the fastest-growing communities in the metropolitan area are outside Augusta-Richmond County. Among the current conditions and trends revealed by the data and projections are the following:

- Augusta-Richmond County's population growth rate has slowed in the last two decades as suburbanization has increased throughout the metropolitan area. County level population totals show this trend for Richmond County.
- Census Bureau estimates reveal that since the year 2000, Richmond County's population has declined by an estimated 2.69 percent. The population in the other MSA counties continued to increase, with Columbia County leading the way with an estimated 19.1% increase in population.
- Low population growth is common among the second tier cities / counties in the state of Georgia.
- Augusta-Richmond County's population is projected to increase modestly between 2005 and 2030, based on an extension of population trends experienced over the last twenty-five years.
- The number of households is projected to increase at a slightly faster rate than the population, due in part to the projected decline in the average household size.
- The average household size in Richmond County has declined steadily from 3.21 persons per household in 1970 to an estimated 2.34 persons per household in 2006. It is projected to continue to decrease between now and the year 2030. This has implications for the mix of housing types in the city. An increase in the number of patio homes, townhouses and condominiums in recent years is indicative of this trend.
- Within Augusta, population and household growth is highest in the southern part of the city, where vacant land is most plentiful and newer community facilities are present. This is an area that was part of unincorporated Richmond County prior to consolidation.

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**Table P-16
Population Trends
Richmond County, 1950-2000**

YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION	CHANGE	
		NUMBER	PERCENT
1950	108,876	-	-
1960	135,601	26,725	24.5%
1970	162,437	26,836	19.8%
1980	181,629	19,192	11.8%
1990	189,719	8,090	4.5%
2000	199,775	10,056	5.3%
SOURCE, Bureau of the Census, Census of Population			

Race and Ethnicity

The information in Table P-5 reflects the ongoing trend of increasing minority population and decreasing white population in Augusta and Richmond County. The table indicates that as of the 2000 Census Blacks/African-Americans accounted for 49.8% of Richmond County's total population and Whites comprised 45.6% of the county's population. The number of persons of other races comprised only 4.6 % of the total population, but has more than doubled in the past 20 years. Likewise, Hispanic residents accounted for only 2.8% of the total population (5,545), but this represents an increase of approximately 48.0% since the 1990 census. The forecasts for the year 2005 and 2010, as well as projections to the year 2025, show that the trend of increasing minority population is expected to continue in the future.

Age of the Population

Augusta-Richmond County reflects the age characteristics of a relatively mature community. The median age of Richmond County's population has risen from 23.9 years in 1970 to an estimated 33.5 years in 2006. Age distribution figures indicate that between 1980 and 2000 the county experienced a decline in the number of infants, pre-school children, teenagers and young adults and an increase in the number of adults ages 35 – 54 and the elderly (65+ years old). These trends could be due in part to the outmigration of households with children, young adults finding employment opportunities in other communities and the growth of empty-nester households. Projections to the year 2010 (**Table P-7**) indicate a general continuation of these trends, though the projections are based on an overall decline in population. Projections to the year 2030 indicate a slight increase in the school-age population and continued decline in young adults (18-34). The number of adults ages 35-54 and the elderly will continue to rise. These trends have implications for the types of housing units, living arrangements and services and facilities provided in the city.

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Educational Attainment

Overall education levels are improving in Richmond County. The number and percentage of adult residents with less than a high school education declined between 1990 and 2000. The percentage of the population with at least a high school education increased from 71% to 78%. The number and percentage of residents with a Bachelor's and advanced degrees increased as well. Projections to the year 2030 reflect continued improvement in education levels among county residents. Projections to the year 2030 reflect continued improvement in education levels among county residents.

When compared to neighboring counties and the state of Georgia, however, Richmond County lags in terms of educational attainment. Statewide, a higher proportion of adults have college degrees, and a lower percentage have less than high school education. Almost a third of the adults in Columbia County have a college degree, compared to only 18.6% in Richmond County. The contrast among educational attainment levels in Richmond, Columbia and McDuffie Counties is partly explained by the fact that demographic characteristics vary widely from one county to another.

Income and Poverty

Augusta's median household income and per capita income levels have increased in recent years and are projected to continue to rise. However, even with the increase, Augusta's figures continue to be lower than comparable averages for the state and metropolitan area. In the year 2000, Augusta's per capita income was 92.5 % of the MSA average and only 81.0% of the state average. The gap was even wider for median household income. Among the factors that probably contribute to Augusta's lower per capita and median household income levels are higher percentages of poverty households, non-family households, and households receiving public assistance.

The percentage of Augusta's population living in poverty is higher than comparable levels for the Augusta MSA, the state of Georgia and selected counties in the MSA. In the year 2000, the percentage of Augusta's population living in poverty was approximately 20%, compared to 14% for Aiken County, 5% for Columbia County, 15% for the MSA and 13% for the state of Georgia. Year 2006 census estimates indicate the city's poverty rate may have declined slightly, but remains relatively high. Factors probably contributing to the city's poverty rate include higher percentages of unemployment, single-parent households, non-family households and households receiving public assistance.